



Betty Griffiths

September 23, 1940 - November 17, 2014

Sept. 23, 1940 — Nov. 18, 2014

On Nov. 18, Betty Griffiths, 74, of Corvallis passed away on her own terms, of pancreatic cancer.

She was born on Sept. 23, 1940, in Boston, Massachusetts, to Ruth and Joseph Harrington. She attended public schools in Alexandria, Virginia, and continued her education at James Madison University, where she graduated with a degree in sociology and psychology. Betty met Bob in 1964 and married him the following year. While he worked on a master's degree, she worked as a secretary at Stanford University.

In 1968, she and her husband moved to Corvallis, where she finished a master's degree in counseling at Oregon State University. In 1974, they had a son, who is now married and working as a hydrologist in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Betty worked for more than 25 years in the field of human services and mental health, spending most of that time as the director of alcohol and drug treatment for Linn County, and volunteering for many organizations such as Community Outreach, Corvallis Community Day Care, Corvallis Neighborhood Housing Services and neighborhood groups to assist low-income residents.

From 1992 to 2006, she served on the Corvallis City Council, including service as president and vice president. On the council, she was a champion of sound planning in support of neighborhoods, increasing open space and advocating city sustainability.

She also advocated for increasing local and state support for parks, affordable housing and other social services. She tirelessly worked with the Greenbelt Land Trust to promote green spaces in and around Corvallis. Betty was instrumental in establishing and promoting the Friends of Corvallis Parks and Recreation.

Betty had a passion for all things outdoors, including canoeing, whitewater rafting, skiing, biking and backpacking. She also loved to travel, visiting many foreign countries and traveling extensively within the United States. Over the years, she made a great number of close friends who will greatly miss her humor, loyalty, intelligence, sense of civic involvement and the ability to have fun regardless of what she was doing.

A memorial service is planned for 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 25, at First Presbyterian Church, 114 S.W. Eighth St., Corvallis. In lieu of flowers, it is suggested that donations in Betty's name be made to the Greenbelt Land Trust Inc., 101 S.W. Western Blvd., Corvallis, OR 97333.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV **25**. 7:00 PM (PT)

First Presbyterian Church
114 SE 8th Street
Corvallis, OR 97333

Tribute Wall

GA

“ 5 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Gael - November 22, 2014 at 09:23 PM

JG

“ *Jeanette House Gregory lit a candle in memory of Betty Griffiths*



Jeanette House Gregory - November 21, 2014 at 01:18 PM

RS

“ *Thanks to Betty, Friends of Corvallis Parks & Recreation was established and has been working to benefit our community for the past couple of years. It was inspiring to be on the Board with her. Betty's leadership was exemplary. I recall meeting up with Betty on a trail near Chip Ross Park one day. There she was, "walking the walk" in regard to caring about and enjoying our parks and open spaces. She will be missed. —Roberta Sperling*

Roberta Sperling - November 20, 2014 at 12:01 PM

“ From the *Gazette Times*:

Former Corvallis city councilor and environmental advocate Betty Griffiths died Monday of pancreatic cancer at her Corvallis home. She was 74.

Griffiths served Ward 8 on the Corvallis City Council between 1993 and 2006.

Annette Mills, facilitator of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition, which Griffiths helped to found, said that Griffiths had remained a board member with the organization despite battling the cancer for the past year. In the last week of her life, Griffiths still was sending emails and remained actively involved with the organization.

“It was symbolic of her as a person,” Mills said.

“Her experience on the City Council really served to guide the Sustainability Coalition during its first few years,” said Mills, who worked with Griffiths since the organization’s 2007 founding.

Jessica McDonald, the development director for the Greenbelt Land Trust, said that Griffiths had a number of legacies during her 12 years on the organization’s board. These included facilitating a strategic plan that saw the organization grow from serving just Benton County to three other counties; helping develop a conservation plan for the new counties, serving as president of the board while the organization earned national land trust accreditation, and advocating for the organization’s purchase of Bald Hill Farm.

McDonald said Griffiths was particularly proud of the Bald Hill acquisition, and took an out-of-town friend to visit it in the week before her death.

“There’s really nobody like Betty,” she said. “She leaves a remarkably large hole.”

McDonald said Griffiths was fiercely passionate about causes she believed in, and was still involved in developing the land trust’s new strategic plan in the days leading up to her death, despite her illness.

“She’s been at every meeting. She’s been unstoppable. If you didn’t know it, you’d never have guessed she was battling a serious illness,” she said.

Tony Howell, who worked with Griffiths for two decades at the Linn County Alcohol & Drug Prevention Program and served on the Corvallis City Council with her between 1993 and 2003, said Griffiths was creative and passionate about a number of issues.

Linn County is unusual in still having a county-run drug and alcohol treatment program, according to Howell. He said Griffiths’ leadership was among the

reasons for the program's survival.

Her legacies on the City Council include her input into the Corvallis 2020 Vision Statement, the riverfront plan and a natural features inventory.

He added that he met his wife, Patricia Benner, through Griffiths.

“She was a really good friend,” he said. “I really valued having the chance to work with her for so many years, in so many avenues.”

Former Corvallis Mayor Charlie Tomlinson, who served on the council with Griffiths for six years, said he wished that more councilors had Griffiths’ focus and dedication.

“Everyone may not have always agreed with Betty, but she was always prepared,” he said.

Tomlinson said Griffiths’ legacy includes a strong land use system in the city and the 2000 passage of the open spaces land initiative, in which more than 500 acres of land were purchased for public stewardship.

“Betty was a civic leader and advocate who Corvallis will miss,” he said.

Griffiths also was a board member with the Friends of Corvallis Parks & Recreation.

Family and friends are invited to a Celebration of Betty's life, 7:00 pm on Tuesday, November 25, 2014 at the First Presbyterian Church, Dennis Hall, 114 SE 8th Street, Corvallis. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Green Belt Land Trust, www.greenbeltlandtrust.org

The public can share their condolences through the DeMoss-Durdan Funeral Home & Crematory at www.demossdurdan.com.

SP

“ I am so saddened to hear of Betty's passing. My sincerest condolences to her family. As long as we have lived in Corvallis, the Griffiths have been the most welcoming neighbors we could imagine. They have always made Taft Street feel like a special place on the map, introducing neighbors to each other, welcoming newcomers into their home, and throwing a wonderful annual picnic. I always loved seeing her pedal by my house, on her way to extend her profound and effective sense of community throughout Corvallis. She will be greatly missed by the Taft Street family.

Sue Phillips

Sue Phillips - November 19, 2014 at 12:51 PM

JG

“ My condolences to Betty's husband and her son for the loss of their wife and mother. Betty hired me and was the reason I relocated to Oregon from California some 24 years ago. She was an incredible human being so much energy, passion, vigor, and the call to serve those less fortunate than her and the environment that we lived. What an incredible role model she was to me in my work and my personal life. She leaves a legacy that I hope we will all aspire for. Though this is a huge loss for her family and our community her gifts will go on living in all the work she did and love she spread. Very sad loss but what a glorious gift.

Jim Gouveia

Jim Gouveia - November 19, 2014 at 09:52 AM