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Margaret Kerns

1941 - 2020

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Kerns, Margaret

"Peggy"

March 17, 1941 - Nov. 14, 2020

Margaret "Peggy" Kerns, n e Shoup, 79, died on Nov. 14, 2020.

The longtime Aurora, Colo., resident served four terms in the Colorado State Legislature from 1989 to 1997. During her last term, she was the House Minority Leader. While in office, she helped pass major legislation dealing with education, welfare, and domestic violence issues and earned numerous outstanding legislator awards from business, education, and nonprofit organizations. She served on the Aurora City Council from 1983 to 1988.

Peggy was born on March 17, 1941, in New Lexington, Ohio, to Ronald and Marie Strausbaugh Shoup. She graduated in 1959 from St. Aloysius High School in New Lexington and earned a journalism degree in 1963 from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. At Duquesne, she met her future husband, Pat. They were married on Nov. 9, 1963.

She got her first taste of politics in 1971 after the family had moved to Jackson, Miss. She joined a mothers' group to lobby the state legislature to fund public kindergarten. After moving to Aurora in 1972, she took advantage of volunteering opportunities in the fast-growing community. She was president of her children's school PTA, served on the Cherry Creek School District parents' council, and was a member of several charity boards. In the late 1970s, she returned to the workforce and held senior positions at Samsonite and Mountain Medical Equipment before leaving to focus on serving in the statehouse.

She retired from the state legislature due to term limits. In 1997, President Bill Clinton appointed her to be the deputy assistant secretary for the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs at the U.S. Department of Education, in Washington, D.C. In 1999, she returned to Colorado to become the first director of The Center for Ethics in Government at the National Conference of State Legislatures. She built the center into one of the most respected ethics training programs in the country. She retired in 2015.

Peggy loved to travel across the U.S. and visited five continents. After her husband passed away, her favorite traveling companion became her grandson Jack. Her favorite trip was visiting her grandchildren in Chicago. She delighted in her grandchildren, and they adored their "Ma." Peggy and her friends enjoyed attending the Colorado Symphony and theater. She was a charter season ticket holder of the Colorado Rockies and was

recently featured in the Rockies fan magazine.

She is survived by her two children and their families: son Jerry Kerns, his wife, Amy Settergren, and their children, Lillian, Henry, and Eleanor, all of Chicago; and daughter Deborah Kerns Lynch and her son, Jack, both of Castle Pines, Colo. She also leaves her sister, Janet Shoup Klein, and her partner, Dianne Fishman. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, and brother Mark Shoup.

The family will host a memorial service at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please donate in Peggy's name to the Aurora Museum Foundation, 15051 E. Alameda Parkway, Aurora, CO 80012.

To Plant Memorial Trees in memory, please visit our [Sympathy Store](#).

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November 22, 2020

Peggy was a member of my curves exercise facility. We enjoyed her very much. She was a firecracker! It was an honor to know her. Blessings to her family, Patty & Steve Ortiz

Patty Ortiz

Friend

November 22, 2020

My dear confidant from our years in Aurora, Democratic Party politics and living near each other during her DC residency as Clinton appointees. A wonderful counselor and steadfast friend who lit up the room with her presence. And will always treasure our Fred and Ginger dance number!

Michael Armstrong

Friend

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