



Press Release

City of Edmonds

Mayor Gary Haakenson

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For Immediate Release

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Edmonds Councilmember Peggy Pritchard Olson passes away

(Edmonds - WA) Yesterday morning, November 9, Edmonds City Councilmember Peggy Pritchard Olson passed away after a courageous battle with ALS.

Peggy served on the Edmonds City Council since January 2004 and was re-elected for a second term, which began in 2008.

“Peggy was a unique politician,” said Mayor Gary Haakenson. “She had perspective, compassion, a sense of humor, and wisdom, combined with the determination to serve our citizens. We are greatly saddened by her passing and are going to miss her as an elected, but even more so as a big part of our community, as a good friend, and as a truly wonderful human being.”

Peggy served on many Council committees, including most recently on the Community Services/Development Services Committee, Community Technology Advisory Committee, Long-Range Task Force, South County Cities Alliance, and the Highway 99 Task Force. She also served as Council president in 2007.

Peggy attended all but one Council meeting during her battle with this debilitating disease. She attended her last Council meeting on Monday, November 2, exactly one week before her passing.

In April, Peggy was presented with Senate Resolution #8654 by State Senator Paull Shin. Senator Shin recognized her contributions and lasting legacy in Edmonds and in the state, including her accomplishments as cofounder of the Washington Tea Party, a founding member of South County Cities Alliance, her 2008 “Citizen of the Year” award, and her service on the Edmonds City Council.

The resolution also recognized her work to establish an ALS support group at Stevens Hospital that has become one of the largest ALS support groups in a multi-state region.

“Peggy’s courage and determination have served as an inspiration to all, have generated public awareness of issues related to ALS, and have provided comfort to others who were coping with ALS but weren’t aware of resources,” stated the resolution.

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, is a disease of the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control muscle movement. This is a progressive neurodegenerative disease for which there is no cure. People with ALS become paralyzed when the motor neuron cells in their brain and spinal cord die, which results in muscles dying off as well. ALS is also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. Although the disease affects muscle movement, it does not affect the senses (sight, smell, taste, hearing, touch) or a person’s ability to think or reason.

Despite her diagnosis, Peggy retained her “the glass is half full” outlook as well as her sense of humor. Friends and family rallied behind Peggy and formed Team Peggy, a support and fundraising group that participated in and hosted several events, including a five-mile walk at Seward Park in Seattle, to bring awareness to the disease and to raise money for Peggy’s ongoing care.

Peggy was a long-time member of the Friends of the Edmonds Library, and she served on the Library Board from 1990-1999. She was the daughter of Joel Pritchard who served in the Washington State House of Representatives and then as Lieutenant Governor.

A memorial service for Peggy is being planned by her family and friends.

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