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Edy Schwartz leaves deep mark on the town of Moraga

By *Sophie Braccini*



Edy Schwartz

When Edy Schwartz passed away on Sept. 8 after a year struggling with brain cancer, the town of Moraga lost not only a former Citizen of the Year, activist, and visionary, but also a woman of rare quality, a seeker of wisdom. During the Sept. 12 town council meeting where she was honored, her friends and people who worked with her described her as a force that had changed many lives and influenced the town.

The proclamation that was given to her children and grandchildren talked about Schwartz's many achievements. She was the one everyone called simply Edy, who never sought any official position, personal benefit or egotistical gratification, and tirelessly worked for over 10 years for the public good in Moraga.

Mayor Dave Trotter talked about her civic involvement, including her work during the 1974 campaign to incorporate Moraga and the creation of the Moraga Citizens Network in 2005, her volunteerism as president of the Chamber of Commerce and her tireless efforts to save the Rheem Theatre. He also noted that Schwartz founded both the Moraga Community Foundation and Lamorinda Presents, and recognized the community conversations Schwartz initiated with her friend Maura Wolf after the 2016 presidential election.

Several people talked at the council meeting, telling their stories and how Schwartz had impacted them. Derek Zemrak, co-owner of the Rheem and Orinda theatres and founder of the California Independent Film Festival, unveiled a plaque engraved in Schwartz's name to be added to the theatres' Hall of fame.

Schwartz, who referred to herself as an introvert, was described by her very longtime friend Ellen Beans as a bridge builder, a visionary who saw possibilities because she had no bias, and could reach out to all because she was nonjudgmental.

A teacher and a psychologist she was a peace activist who believed in democracy. Her life was spent seeking people and convincing them of what could be. Beans confirmed privately that Schwartz's ultimate quest was spiritual. She was a humanist who believed in the power of being present. Schwartz was lead by the same principles she was living. She sought wisdom in her personal life to be able to lead from the wide lens of compassion. She thought that the key to affecting social change and being a leader was to take full responsibility for her life and align her values of humility, generosity, compassion, courage, equanimity, and joy with her everyday actions.

All these years, she also worked with groups of friends on her spiritual quest: reading, studying and always seeking to better herself and live her life by the values that were most important to her.

Schwartz was loved because she loved people, and inspired them to be their best. Her life was a process of bettering herself in order to better serve her country, her community and her family.

Schwartz is survived by her husband, Jeff, with whom she had been married for 55 years, her son and daughter, both living with their spouses in Moraga, and four grandsons. The family has invited her friends to a celebration of her life at 3 p.m. Oct. 6 in the Redwood Circle at Rancho Laguna Park. (See Remembrance, on Page A15.)

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