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Margaret DePriester - two-term mayor during the 1980s passes away leaving her imprint on Moraga

By Vera Kochan



Margaret DePriester Photo provided

With a can-do attitude and an indomitable spirit, Margaret DePriester could easily have been given the title "Moraga's Ambassador of Good Works."

DePriester passed away on Aug. 19 at the age of 98, but not before making her mark on the town she and her husband, Coral, called home since 1968.

"She wanted to contribute to the community, and her goal was to make it an even better place to live," stated her daughter Susan Freeman. "She really loved Moraga."

DePriester played an integral role in the incorporation of the town of Moraga in 1974; was the first woman appointed to the planning commission in 1975; was elected to the town council in 1980 and served for eight years, including two terms as mayor in 1983 and 1987; was voted Moraga Citizen of the Year in 1986; served as president of the Moraga Historical Society in 1993 and 2004 (she chaired the committee that raised funds to build the Moraga History Center and worked as an archivist there); was the founding president of The Hacienda Foundation of Moraga, Inc. in 2006; and was elected president of Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club during 2005-06.

Her friends Sam and Susan Sperry and Dave and Debby Trotter would often take DePriester and her close friend Elsie Mastick (both of whom had moved into Moraga Royale) out to dinner locally. "I met her when I joined the Kiwanis in 2002," recalled Sam Sperry. "She immediately impressed me as a person of strong values and a firm resolve."

Susan Sperry praised DePriester's work for the Historical Society: "She worked tirelessly and was a valuable asset for many years, especially doing computer and email work."

Dave Trotter added, "Margaret was a very dear friend. An influential and widely respected town leader, Margaret was a force to be reckoned with, and also admired, at the same time. Margaret loved Moraga and its history. I learned a lot about both over the past three decades by listening very carefully, and heeding what she had to say."

During a recent Kiwanis Club meeting, members paid tribute to DePriester with recollections and praise: "You never could really say 'no' to Margaret;" "She was very persuasive in convincing people to serve on boards and committees within town;" "She didn't put up with any shenanigans;" "Daffodil planting started with Margaret;" "She always had time to have a conversation with you. She was always interested in what you had to say;" "She was a legend and a hero to people;" "When she passed away I thought how is that - she was not mortal;" and "She was instrumental in passing a safe roof ordinance while on the town council."

One Kiwanis member described DePriester's imprint on Moraga succinctly: "She was a mighty politician and friend to everyone. What an incredible lady."

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