

Peggy Stevens

Fredericksburg, VA – Margaret Ann Hiller Stevens (“Peggy”), beloved wife of Jonathan Stevens, died on June 24 after a long illness. Peggy was born on January 11, 1949, in Nyack, New York, the daughter of John Stockwell Hiller and Dorothy Strong Hiller.

During her long career, Peggy was responsible for significant change in several non-profit organizations, and was often credited by rising executives as a guide and mentor. Peggy was also known as thoughtful and caring in her dealings with everyone. Her husband Jonathan called her his “North Star.”

For her college’s 50th reunion yearbook this year Peggy wrote an essay about her life since her Connecticut College days. It reveals her fully:

I surely have had a fate-filled journey since graduating from Conn. My personal life and my volunteer life have been steady: I have been married to my college sweetheart for the last 49 years and counting! And I have had an active volunteer life over the decades. My professional life has been more surprising. I thought I wanted to be a Dean of Students as I set off for graduate school at UNC-Chapel Hill. But my internship in the Dean of Student’s office there led me in another direction and ultimately to a decades-long career in Managed Health Care. Imagine, back in the mid-’70s saying yes to an operations management position in a staff model HMO in Chicago, but that is what I did. Later I worked for several state, regional and national managed healthcare companies in various executive positions.

Twelve years ago, I left that lengthy career to do something different. “Different” turned out to be the land conservation movement, a totally new world for me that has encompassed some lifelong interests and passions. After a stint as Executive Director of a land trust in southeastern Massachusetts, I moved to Virginia to become the Executive Director of a regional land trust in northern Virginia. I retired in 2017.

As I noted above, I have and have had an active volunteer leadership life including board and officer positions with three different Girl Scout Councils, several performing arts organizations and with women leadership initiatives. I am a founding board member and officer of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition. I served most recently as Board Chair for Virginia’s United Land Trusts, and Vice President of the World Foundation for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. I currently serve as Board Chair of Hostelling International USA. These non-profit governance leadership opportunities have kept me connected to my longtime interests and involvement in youth leadership development, conservation, and travel, while providing leadership experiences and opportunities to others.

Oh yes, and for many years, I’ve kept singing! Sometimes with church choirs, sometimes with community theater or a Gilbert and Sullivan Society, and sometimes with Chorus pro Musica in Boston. I moved on from performer to appreciator/promoter a while ago, but still enjoy humming along and remembering fondly my four years with the Conn Chords,

and a year or so each with the college chorus and the chapel choir. Most recently, I became a volunteer for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions group here in the mid-Atlantic. But acapella is still my first love.

Peggy is survived by her husband Jonathan Buell Stevens, her brother John Folsom Hiller and life partner Barbara Ann Locke, her sister Janet Millgrove Hiller and husband Herbert Mossop Soule III, John's daughters Sara Hiller Fry and Kristina C. Hiller, Janet and Herbert's sons Matthew Willis Soule and Justin Herbert Soule, Matthew's wife Kellie Jane Lim, Justin's wife Courtney Elizabeth Soule, Matthew and Kellie's children Owen John Lim Soule and Vivienne Nellie Lim Soule; Justin and Courtney's children Marine Shirley Soule and John Herbert Soule; and Sara's children Kevin Charles Fry, Leah Grace Fry, and Shelby Lynne Fry.

According to Peggy's instructions, receptions have already been conducted in Fredericksburg for friends and neighbors. Her second instruction was that a program in celebration of her life be held in the late spring of 2022 at a Girl Scout conference facility in eastern Massachusetts. This event is in the planning stages; ample notice with details will be provided as they evolve. Peggy's third and final instruction was for a family-only gathering, held after her cremation at the mouth of a river flowing into Long Island Sound.

The Girl Scouts was Peggy's great passion from an early age when her troop leader became almost a second mother to her. Peggy's greatest influence on Girl Scouts was undoubtedly during and after the merger of three local Girl Scout Councils into one Council, Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts.

Remembrances in Peggy's name may be made to Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts, 265 Beaver Street, Waltham, MA 02452, website: www.gsema.org, (select: Donate; Designation: Peggy Stevens Memorial Fund).

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