



## Patricia Ann Sanderson

January 30, 1935 - December 24, 2019

Patricia Ann Sanderson, a spirited, principled force in Michigan politics, passed away at home, in the care of her husband, Richard, on December 24, 2019. For years, she helped create the spirit of good government at the State and local level.

Pat was born in Chicago on January 30, 1935, to Charles Donaldson and Vera Hartley. Early in life she worked toward a degree in health care from Valparaiso University, and her studies were interrupted, as so often happened in that era, by family responsibilities. She and her first husband, Russell Bell, had children Steven and Gregory.

In 1975, she met and married the love of her life, automotive engineer Richard Sanderson, and together they lived a life of deep involvement in advocacy and involvement in state and local politics. Pat lived her last decades with Richard in the family home on the beautiful shoreline of Lake Michigan near Elk Rapids.

During an especially formative period of Michigan politics, when environmental law, women's rights laws, and civil rights laws were blossoming, Pat was deeply involved in policy and legislative action. She was a leader in the Michigan Republican Party during the years when the Milliken concept of government was active. She was a Congressional District Vice-Chair for the Republican Party in Oakland County. She also served on the Republican State Committee in Lansing.

Richard remembers Pat as "steadfast and determined", one of a capable corps of post-war women who not only raised close-knit families but devoted their intellect and education to furthering all woman's rights. She worked for 13 years on the Oakland County Canvassing Board ensuring voter access and accountability. She served on the Birmingham Housing Commission, advocating for senior housing. In 1982, she was appointed to the Michigan Women's Commission by Governor William G. Milliken and continued to serve on the Commission under Governors Blanchard and Engler. As a commissioner, she helped create legislation supporting improved health care for women and children.

In 1989, after moving to the Elk Rapids area, she was enlisted to serve on the board of Northern Michigan Planned Parenthood (NMPP), serving for 13 years. During her tenure she helped to plan the merger of NMPP and Upper Peninsula Planned Parenthood. During the same time, she served on the Antrim County Jury Commission. In 2017,

Planned Parenthood recognized Pat's contribution by bestowing her the "Katie Award." To the end, she remained an articulate, informed, engaged citizen of Michigan and Antrim County, both of which she loved. When she spoke, she looked you in the eye with sincere interest and the expectation you were similarly engaged in issues that matter.

Pat is survived by husband Richard, sons Steven and Gregory (Kelly), and grand-children Andrew, Allison, Matthew, and Nathan. Pat took special delight in Allison's participation in the 2018 Women's March in Austin, Texas.

In accordance with Pat's bequest, her body has been donated to Michigan State University College of Medicine. A celebration of Pat's life may be planned for a later date, on a beautiful day when the Lake Michigan waters drift under the brilliant, clear air of Northern Michigan.

# Comments

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“ Oh Pat, you will be missed! What a fine example of an outstanding person who gave so much of herself to others. You were so kind hearted and dedicated to supporting everyone. Never once did I not see a smile on your face, even while dealing with challenging issues. You gave yourself unselfishly so that others could be heard and treated fairly. Your husband Richard was so loving and supportive of you too. Your life together was a model for us all. You have always been close to my heart and someone I've looked up to in good and bad times. You will be greatly missed by so many. Love to you and your family always. Pat Sanderson, you are and always will be remembered as a beautiful person. Thank you for being you. I love you so. Jim Carruthers

**jim carruthers** - January 05 at 09:49 AM



“ Thank you Jim. I know how fond she was of you and how much she cherished your friendship

**Richard Sanderson** - February 04 at 04:49 PM