

Jeanne Lynch



We were sad to learn of the passing of MCBP's founder Jeanne Lynch December 19, 2021.

As we reported in our newsletter:

We would be remiss if we did not feature the most influential hero of the Maryland Coastal Bays Program, Jeanne Lynch.

In 1990, Jeanne was the first woman elected as a Worcester County Commissioner. She was fearless in her efforts to protect our environment. Continually out voted on environmental issues, including most notably a shoreline buffer requirement that was a precursor to today's Critical Area Program, she persevered with her vision and worked tirelessly to get the attention of the National Estuary Program. She had to convince the four other commissioners, who historically voted against pro-active environmental issues, to apply to become part

of the National Estuary Program.

The strong-willed environmental champion was the original voice to call for setting up a National Estuary Program to help protect the coastal bays. She had to convince the EPA that our small estuary was worthy of being included with the larger estuaries like the San Francisco Bay, Tampa Bay and Long Island Sound. Her persistence helped marshal a groundswell of public support and local, state, and federal backing that ultimately created the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

Throughout the process of CCMP development, Ms. Lynch continued in a leadership role, serving as the chair of the Management Committee of the Maryland Coastal Bays Program Management Conference, as well as a member of the first Policy Committee, and multiple other committees.

She convinced her colleagues to support Worcester 2000, a community visioning initiative, that presented to the public various scenarios for future land use and identified the needs and desires of residents. This collective vision was important to the development of the Comprehensive Plan that followed in 2006. She also convinced her skeptical county colleagues to support the Rural Legacy Program and agree to a Coastal Bays Rural Legacy Area which now encompasses the entire Chincoteague Bay watershed and protects nearly 10,000 acres of farmland, woodland and wetlands. In unison with this, the tireless conservation champion pushed to establish the Worcester County Department of Comprehensive Planning with Sandy Coyman as director and Keota Silaphone and Katherine Munson, among others as staff. This gave the county an

opportunity for unprecedented focus on long term planning and restoration and conservation implementation.

Jeanne served as a lone but effective voice for conservation on the board of county commissioners for her entire tenure. Her vision, her strong will and work ethic and ability to mobilize others, brought about significant and lasting change in Worcester County government and for the coastal bay

Her Obituary:

Jeanne Lynch, 81, departed this life on December 19th. She was born the second day of December, 1940. The oldest daughter of Melvin and Louise Sklar Rabstein. She was raised and attended school in Frederick, Maryland.

She is survived by her husband, Nelson Lynch of Taylorville, Maryland. Her son, Mark Nevin, friend Ceallaigh Reddy of Somerville, Mass. Two stepdaughters, Cassandra and Heather Lynch. Two sisters, Susan Kaplan, husband Andy of Chicago, Linda Hoffman, husband Milton of Sarasota. Two Grandchildren, Aaron Nevin of Brooklyn, New York and Zacadia Nevin of Burlington, Vermont.

She worked for Caine Real Estate and later as an independent insurance agent of Afliac Insurance.

Jeanne entered local politics when the State of Maryland, Department of Natural Resources, decided to build a music pavilion on Wights Island.

She ran for county commissioner as a republican against Jim Barrett in 1990. Jeanne, along with fellow republicans, Reggie Hancock, Sonny Bloxom, Floyd Bassett and George Hurley swept the election.

Jeanne was the first woman ever elected in Worcester County as a commissioner. Later she became the first woman president of the Worcester County Commissioners.

Jeanne ran again in 1994 and 1998, winning both times. In 2002, she decided twelve years was enough as a county commissioner. She ran for the Maryland House of Delegate's seat for Wicomico and Worcester Counties, losing to the incumbents, Bennett Bozman and Norman Conway.

Jeanne was the second recipient of the Golden Osprey Award presented by the Coastal Bays Program. It was given to her by Maryland Governor Robert Ehrlich for her decades long struggle to protect the coastal bays.

In 2011, Jeanne and Nelson settled in Silver City, New Mexico for three years. Then three years in Jensen Beach, Florida. In 2021 they returned home to Taylorville.

Many thanks to Anna Smith and the gang at Coastal Hospice.

A Celebration of Jeanne's Life will be held at a later date.

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