

RSF TO HONOR BARBARA WALKER WITH SCHOLARSHIP

The trustees of the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation have voted to create a scholarship in memory of Barbara Walker, who died unexpectedly on June 17. The loss to RSF (and, of course, to her husband, Dwight, and to the rest of her family and close friends) is unimaginable. In her three years as an RSF trustee, the last of which she spent in the vital position of co-chair of the RSF scholarship committee, Barb Walker had displayed unflagging energy as well as a generous spirit; she had become the organization's beating heart.

"Barb loved RSF," said president Bob Miller at a July 5 Celebration of Life at the Events Center. "She was inspired by the students and their stories. Over the past three years since Barb joined, we've more than doubled in size, this year awarding more than \$600,000 to 141 recipients from eight local schools. That kind of growth brings real challenges for an all-volunteer organization. Through it all, Barb was always there for us."

Shirley Wiegand, Miller's predecessor as president, recalled Walker's willingness to tackle any task with a smile. "She told me she enjoyed learning new things on a computer," said Wiegand. "Hooray! I asked her about trying to help with that fall's Newsletter, using a difficult software program. She took over with enthusiasm. Then she took on producing the awards ceremony brochure, bringing it in-house and improving it. Then she created posters of the award recipients for each of our schools. Always with a smile and 'can-do' attitude. What a joy to work with her! I once asked her if she'd consider becoming President, because she was so energetic and competent. She declined. She preferred working behind the curtain and always shied away from public acclaim."

At a June 22nd board meeting, Walker's fellow trustees testified to her competence and, just as important, her spirit and collegiality. "She fell heavy for this organization," said close friend Carol Caputo. "You guys were always asking her to do more. I would always tell her to say no." But she never did.

Sherrie Hansen, Walker's co-chair on the scholarship committee, spoke of her unflappability, particularly at crunch time. "We laughed a lot, even during times that were really overwhelming," recalled Hansen.

In describing Barb, "welcoming" is a frequently used word. Newcomers were her specialty as I could attest after she walked me, a befuddled rookie, through our recent awards ceremony; I wouldn't have made it without her.

Walker "had an exquisite way of interviewing kids," said trustee Judy Leckonby. "She would take things they said in their essays and then extend it to a really tender, compassionate question. And then one time someone said something that she saw kind of stunned me. Under the table, she squeezed my arm. She had an amazing intuition."

For those wishing to make a donation to RSF in Barb's memory, contributions can be mailed to Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation, P.O. Box 2056, Walnut Creek, CA 94595, or made online at <https://tinyurl.com/RossmoorRSF> by clicking DONATE.

It will be a while before RSF can process the loss of Barb Walker. Someone will do her job. But no one will replace her.

Submitted by: Dick Friedman RSF Trustee