

Women's Rights Activist

Passed away in her Cambridge home of 60 years, on February 24, 2019. Born in 1925, she was educated at the Shady Hill School '40, The Winsor School '43, Vassar College '46/ BA Mathematics, and Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government '81/ MPA.

While raising a family of three, she worked at Harvard & MIT, combining her ability in mathematics with her interest in the social sciences. Throughout the 60's & 70's she worked at Harvard in various capacities at the Center for International Affairs, the Office of the President, the Medical School, the Radcliffe Institute, and School of Education.

At Harvard in the early 60's she provided statistical and data analysis for the Game Theory Project and Study in Bargaining and Negotiation Theory under Nobel prize recipient Dr. Tom Schelling. Subsequently, under the direction of renowned sociologist Dr. Alex Inkeles at Harvard and later Stanford, she was research administrator for ten years on a cross-cultural study on aspects of modernization in six developing countries.

She became a political activist in the 70's, devoting her energies to breaking down barriers that circumscribe women's autonomy: she was passionate about women's economic parity, participation in the political process, and control over their fertility and reproductive lives.

In 1972 she provided the statistical analysis for the EEOC in the first class action lawsuit filed on behalf of women against an institution of higher education. A pattern of systemic discriminatory practice with respect to pay scale, tenure & promotion, and pension benefits of female faculty was established in the EEOC's landmark case vs Tufts University.

She was active in the Democratic Party at city, state, and national levels. As an ardent advocate for women's reproductive rights, she was instrumental to the addition of the pro-choice plank to the State and National Democratic Party Platforms. For 25

years she served as the Massachusetts League of Women Voters' Women's Issues Specialist at the State House. In this capacity she promoted women's education about their sexuality and advanced women's access to health care on par with men's: this was accomplished through riders specifying women's body parts, by which coverage was gained for contraception, pregnancy services, PAP smears, mammograms, and hormone replacement therapy.

For the National Organization for Women she served as Massachusetts Legislative Coordinator, and then President in the late 70's. During the campaign for the federal Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) she was political and research analyst in D.C. and lobbied in the legislatures of the swing states of Oklahoma and Florida. During this time, she coined the term "gender gap" to describe voting pattern differences between male and female legislators. She took special notice that the insurance industry was funding the primary opposition to federal and state ERAs. She subsequently worked on the successful passage of the state ERAs in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

In Massachusetts she played a strategic role championing equality in all insurance products sold in the state. Over a 35-year period she was integral to passage of legislation securing gender neutrality in insurance contracts for healthcare, annuities, and disability; life insurance has yet to be brought into compliance with the state ERA. In January 2019, before her death, in recognition of her longstanding dedication to this issue, Governor Baker gifted her the pen with which he signed the most recent bill on disability insurance into law.

In 1973, she organized a women's ice hockey team alternatively called the Ms Sticks and Mother Puckers. The average age of the team's roster was 50+. As colleges at this time did not yet field women's ice hockey clubs, let alone varsity teams, the Ms Sticks/Mother Puckers nonetheless took on the college-aged women of Harvard, Brown, Boston University, and Boston



College.

She is survived by her three children: Mark R. Dunn and wife Joan Gilmore of Concord, NH, Randolph A. Dunn and wife Gretchen Dunn of Wilton, NH, & Elizabeth K. Dunn and John Loudon of Oakland, CA; five grandchildren: Abby Regan and husband Matt Regan of Melbourne, FL, Cindy Dunn and her partner, Patrick Luckow, of Somerville, MA, Andrew Dunn and wife Emily Cochrane of Winchester, MA, Kathryn Dunn and husband Joe Patton of Wilton, NH, Matthew Dunn and wife Caroline Craig of Seattle, WA; five great-grandchildren: Kelton, Cohen, and Kyle Regan, and Vivienne and Charlie Dunn.

In the end she lived a very full and complete life dedicated to empowering women. Her accomplishments have improved the lives of our mothers, sisters, daughters, nieces, and granddaughters throughout Cambridge, throughout Massachusetts, and the nation as a whole. The ultimate testament to her life work has been the number of women who have been elected to Cambridge City Hall and Cambridge School Board, to the MA Legislature, and to the U.S. Congress over the years, most particularly this past November. She took great comfort from the number of women elected to Congress and the Legislature in 2018, which brought a smile to her face.

Funeral arrangements are through Michaud Funeral Home of WILTON, NH. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Emily's List, NOW, NARAL, ACLUM, The League of Women Voters, and Planed Parenthood. A joyful celebration of Betsy's life is being planned for late summer, 2019.