

Butler Eagle

Community efforts are remembered

Architect Forsythe dies

Article published June 24, 2014

By Kim Paskorz and David Means



Community leader, dedicated volunteer and local architect Jessica M. Forsythe, 65, died Sunday.

Forsythe of Butler began her career in architecture in 1975 at Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann. She left in 1997 to start her own business with her husband, Richard Forsythe: 4-Most Group Architects in Penn Township.

The firm, which manages commercial and residential projects, has designed a number of prominent buildings in the Butler County community, including the corporate offices of Hunter Truck Sales on Route 8, Family Bowlaway, the Eagle Production Center for the Butler Eagle, several NextTier buildings and a number of car dealerships.

She was presently working on Butler County's new District Judge office in Cranberry Township, Lutheran SeniorLife — Armstrong Adult Day Care and Evolution Grille.

Forsythe earned her Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Cincinnati, and was a member of American Institute of Architects, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and the National Association of Home Builders — Certified Green Professional.

A Knoch High School graduate, Forsythe first earned an Associate in Applied Sciences from Butler County Community College in 1969. She was named a distinguished graduate as well as a distinguished alumni in 2004.

In 2004, she joined the board at the college — a position she held at the time of her death.

“She was a wonderful person,” said Joan Chew, a fellow **Butler County Community College** board member. “She was so interested, and she had a lot to offer because of her training and ability.”

Susan Changnon, a BC3 spokesman, said Forsythe brought to the board her expertise in architecture, serving on the facilities committee and giving valuable input to projects like the

John A. Beck Library and the student success center. But Forsythe also brought a joy to the board that will be equally missed.

“She had a wonderful laugh and a wonderful smile,” Chagnon said. “She was much beloved by the BC3 community.”

Additionally, Forsythe sponsored the SEEDS for Tomorrow Scholarship through Butler County Vocational-Technical School, where she served as a general advisory committee member.

“She was a true advocate for career and technical education,” said Joe Cunningham, director at the Butler Vo-Tech School.

Her death also hit home at the Butler County Chamber of Commerce.

“I was very heartbroken to hear that she passed away,” said Stan Kosciuszko, president of the Butler County chamber.

Kosciuszko said when he was hired to lead the chamber in 2002, he worked closely with Forsythe, who served on the organization’s board of directors from January 2001 to December 2005.

“She was an exceptional chamber member,” he said.

Kosciuszko said in addition to participating in many functions, Forsythe also designed the Chamber Champion and Community Champion awards, which the organization bestows annually to a business and a community group.

“She’ll be sadly missed,” he said.

Sherry Kyne, owner of The Atrium and president of Eisler Nurseries, both in Franklin Township, got to know Forsythe personally and professionally.

They met through their involvement with the chamber of commerce, and their relationship grew as they confided in each other about business, family and hobbies through the Butler Women Presidents Group.

They also worked together on the annual Spring for a Cure cancer fundraiser and during the construction of a new inpatient building for the Gaiser Addiction Center.

Kyne said Forsythe always was gracious with her time, very detail oriented, and dedicated to her family and business.

Rob Pillar, principal architect at the Stantec office in Butler, recalled Forsythe’s contributions to his career, which started in 1987 when the firm was still Burt Hill Architects.

He said Forsythe not only was a good designer who excelled at the technical aspects of the job, but she also was a patient and willing mentor.

“She was an excellent professional mentor to me personally and to a lot of our staff,” he said.

“Jessica was one of those people, who when she spoke to you, you had her undivided attention,” he said.

He said she was a big part of the firm’s success when she was there and would be missed by those who worked with her.

During the past several years, Forsythe taught local high school students about the construction industry through a program run by Learning for Life, which is a subsidiary of the Boy Scouts of America.

Forsythe also is a former member of the Butler YMCA board, Butler Chamber of Commerce, Community Champions as well as Community Care Connections. She also active with the scouts and served on the board of director and treasurer of the Community Health Clinic of Butler County for two terms, beginning in 2008.

“She was a driving force in getting this clinic up and running. And she was one of the original community leaders who recommended the need for a volunteer and medical clinic,” said Cece Foster, executive director. “She will be horribly missed. She was a true giver and exemplified volunteerism.”

Obituary: Jessica Marie Forsythe

Jessica Marie Forsythe, 65, of Butler passed away at 2:09 a.m. Sunday at the Butler Memorial Hospital.

She was born on Jan. 18, 1949, in Millersburg, to Ruth E. (Lehman) Romberger and the late John S. Romberger.

Jessica was a graduate of Knoch High School, then went on to earn an Associate of Applied Science degree from Butler County Community College and a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Cincinnati.

She worked for Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann from 1975 to 1997. In 1997, she and her husband, Richard Forsythe, founded 4-Most Group Inc. Architects, where Jessica served as president and co-owner. She was a member of the board of trustees at Butler County Community College and the Community Care Connections Inc. Jessica was a former board member of the Community Health Clinic of Butler County, YMCA of Butler and Butler Chamber of Commerce Community Champions. She also sponsored the SEEDS for Tomorrow Scholarship through Butler Vo-Tech.

Jessica was a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and the National Association of Home Builders Certified Green Professionals. In 2004, Jessica was among the first to be recognized by Butler County Community College as a distinguished graduate.

She enjoyed gardening, reading, studying the Bible and spending time with her family.

Mrs. Forsythe is survived by her husband, Richard H. Forsythe, who she married on Sept. 22, 1973; her son, Jason R.A. Forsythe of Baton Rouge, La.; her daughter, Bonnie E. Forsythe of Butler; her two sisters, Theresa Bartlett of Saxonburg and Carolyn Romberger of Butler; her mother, Ruth E. (Lehman) Romberger of Butler; her mother-in-law, Frances E. Forsythe of Butler; her niece, Jennifer Byers of Spring, Texas; and her five nephews, Matthew, John and Timothy Romberger, all of Sayre, James Bartlett II of Cary, N.C., and Andrew Byers of Cypress, Texas.

In addition to her father, she was preceded in death by her father-in-law, Alfred G. Forsythe; her brother, Theodore Romberger; and her sister, Sara Stewart.

Forsythe - The friends of Jessica Marie Forsythe, who passed away Sunday, June 22, 2014, will be received from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday at the Thompson-Miller Funeral Home, 124 E. North St., Butler.

Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Friday at the funeral home with Pastor Jeff MacKay officiating. Burial will take place in the Butler County Memorial Park.

Memorial donations should be made to With Humble Hearts, c/o 4-Most Group Inc., 267 Pittsburgh Road, Suite 4, Butler, PA 16002, or at their website www.withhumblehearts.org.

Online condolences can be given at www.thompson-miller.com.