

Seattle



empowering women since 1881

WHAT'S NEW  
([HTTPS://AAUW-SEATTLE.ORG/WHATS-NEW](https://AAUW-SEATTLE.ORG/WHATS-NEW))

# Marian Spath, Long Time Member, Dies in February 2023

**Judy Waring**

March 26, 2023

Marian Spath, our Seattle Branch member who moved to Eugene, OR, in 2003, died in February at the age of 94. Marian was a Seattle native, taught 4th grade at EC Hughes elementary in West Seattle, volunteered as a docent at the Woodland Park Zoo, was a church organist, and was active in water aerobics classes at the Y. She received BA's in Elementary Education and Personnel Management in 1949 and 1950, both from the UW. Then she received an MA from Seattle University in Educational Administration in 1975 and later enjoyed auditing classes there.



Marian had joined AAUW in 1954 and had paid life membership dues at some time after that. She served our branch in offices including Secretary and Treasurer before moving to Eugene, OR, in 2003 to be near her son who was undergoing cancer treatment—he died in 2004. Marian remained in Eugene and continued to be active in AAUW, serving as president of the Eugene-Lane Branch while continuing as a dual member of Seattle Branch. She was also active in the Y there, enjoyed reading with primary school students, and spoke out at city council meetings.

We extend our sympathy to Marian's son Terry. A few of our longtime members shared their memories of Marian:

Barbara remembers that: "Marian was very active when I first joined and she attended numerous EYH Planning meetings at my home in the early 1990s. I was impressed with Marian's tenacity. Last year, when the majority of members shied away from the new (and unfriendly) Community Hub, Marian persisted in getting help setting up her account and successfully renewed her primary and dual memberships in a single online transaction. She was a nice person and a very strong woman."

Judy's memories include carpooling to board meetings at a church in Ballard and Marian taking her to the West Seattle Y for her very first water aerobics class, starting Judy's 20 years of participation. The Y water aerobics community enjoyed Friday coffee at a nearby coffee house, holiday cookie exchanges, and summer potluck picnics. Marian was an important member of the group and returned for a few visits after her move to Eugene.

When Ann Dennis joined the Y, Judy invited Ann to an AAUW event and Ann soon joined AAUW. Ann Dennis shares: "aside from remembering our days at the West Seattle Y, my fondest memory was of spending a day with her in Eugene while John was giving a talk at U of OR. We had a lovely lunch together, and then she drove me around Eugene before going back to her apartment for tea and to visit her cat. She was a fine lady."

Helen, a water aerobics teacher remembers "Marian being so positive and very funny. She had some of the best jokes. I did visit her once in Eugene many years ago and she gave me a tour of the new library. I think of her as a "Renaissance Woman" having such rich and diverse interests and experiences. She was a good friend to many."

Clara Sasaki Hattori was a Y swimmer and she and Marian attended Mariner's Baseball games together. Clara's parents were Japanese immigrants and she grew up on the family citrus farm in the Sacramento area. Her family was sent to the Tule Lake internment camp in 1942. Marian had hoped for a visit with Clara about her experiences which she hadn't shared earlier. Judy's last e-mail from Marian was last fall when she replied to news that Clara had died at 103 years of age.

Health problems caused Marian to move to an assisted living facility in November 2020. She found the pool too cold but enjoyed the exercise classes, pedaling around in her mobile chair, and "went to appointments and shopping with help of a young driver (son of a friend) who is a joy to be with. He drives my car, which is good for both the car and me."

Ann, Barbara, and Judy saw Marian for the last time when all attended the April 2014 WA/OR State AAUW Convention in Portland—and Marian had short curly bright red hair! Judy recalls Marian being a small plane pilot and doing flight instructing at Boeing Field.

Marian's brief Seattle Times obituary included that she was a direct descendant of two pioneer women: Catherine Sager, survivor of the Whitman Massacre and Tabitha Brown, mother figure of Pacific University of Forest Grove. Searching the two names yields interesting information about Marian's heritage.

Eugene-Lane OR AAUW Branch President Sheila Ramerman was contacted and wrote: "Marian was a past president, and also put out what we call 'ReaderBoard' email notices periodically, when there was a notice that members needed to see before the next newsletter. She was a stalwart supporter until the end; she attended branch meetings virtually for the last 3 years. She notified me in early February that she was going into hospice but didn't want to 'cast a pall of gloom around' by telling the entire branch. I'd thought of her often since then and wish that we'd known earlier that she'd passed away so quickly after that. Thank you again for reaching out about Marian. She was a truly wonderful person."

<https://aauw-seattle.org/whats-new/whats-new/marian-spath-long-time-member-died-in-february-2023/155>

Printed 4/18/23 - 6:49:16

© 2023 American Association of University Women - Seattle Branch