

Joseph & Patricia Shaughnessy

Community Activists

Joseph (1934-1978); Patricia (1936-1996)

by Susan Jezak Ford

"If Joe was the godfather of the neighborhood movement, then Pat was the godmother," stated a neighbor at Pat Shaughnessy's funeral. Joe and Pat were lifelong residents that worked tirelessly to improve Kansas City and its historic neighborhoods.

Joseph Shaughnessy, Jr., an architect with degrees from Rockhurst High School, the University of Notre Dame and the University of Illinois, mounted a 1971 campaign for an at-large seat on the Kansas City city council. As a newcomer to the local political arena, he relied on contacts he had made through his activism in the Westport and Roanoke neighborhoods. His support rapidly grew as he focused on the needs of urban neighborhoods.

Winning by a landslide, the new councilman became an advocate of consumer rights and a champion of neighborhoods. Friends and colleagues affectionately knew him as the "West Side Irishman." He was credited with having an architect's view of the city, showing neighborhood organizations how to deal with city hall in the pursuit of revitalization and preservation. During his four years on the city council, he fought hard for the funding to enforce city codes that would maintain our historic neighborhoods.

Shaughnessy ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 1974, losing to Charles Wheeler. He accepted the surprising loss and focused on spending more time at his architectural practice. When he discovered that he had terminal cancer in 1977, he decided to spend more time at home with his family and take up painting.

Pat Shaughnessy, a graduate of Duschene College, was also a fervent booster of preservation and building stronger neighborhoods. She served on boards of directors for the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance, Westport Tomorrow, the Union Station Assistance Corporation and many other community organizations. She ran unsuccessfully for city council in 1987 and her business, Olde Theatre Architectural Salvage, was a fixture on Southwest Boulevard. She enthusiastically spoke at many gatherings in support of the successful bistate cultural tax, which raised enough



money to rehabilitate Union Station and install Science City in the building.

Joe and Pat Shaughnessy were both recognized for their contributions to Kansas City in proclamations from the City Council.

Sources

"Civic Booster Shaughnessy Dies at Age 60." *The Kansas City Star*, 21 Nov. 1996, C1.

"Councilman's Wit, Warmth Recalled." *The Kansas City Star*, 30 Oct. 1978, 3.

"Former City Councilman Dies of Cancer at 43." *The Kansas City Star*, 30 Oct. 1978, 3.

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