

**Remarks at the Funeral for The Honorable Patsy Ticer**  
**by The Honorable Allison Silberberg**  
**Mayor of Alexandria, Virginia**  
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Let there be no doubt. Patsy Ticer lived a full life. And her life was a blessing.

One could argue effectively that she lived the equivalence of five or more lives. Devoted daughter to her cherished parents; a great wife to her extraordinary husband Jack Ticer; a loving mother to their four children, John, Margaret, Catherine and Virginia; a doting grandmother to Park, Zack, Sandrine, Marcel, and Rand. She was devoted as well to her daughter-in-law Haley and son-in-law Laurent and looked forward to welcoming her new granddaughter-in-law, Lindsey, to the family. On behalf of a grateful city, I thank all the Ticer family for sharing Patsy with all of us for so many years.

She was a friend to countless, a community activist, a three-term member of the Alexandria City Council from 1982 until 1990, a two-term Mayor and the first female Mayor at that, a four-term State Senator and the first female in that seat, as well as a trailblazer in regional and national organizations. Patsy served as Chair of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors, received COG's prestigious Scull Award, and served as Chair of the Transportation Planning Board, as President of the National Association of Regional Councils, a prominent national organization, and served as Chair of the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission. For five years, she served on the board of the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. Her contributions to the life of our city and region help make us who we are today.

And this is only a partial list of her accomplishments, which is astounding and inspiring. And on top of it all, she played boatloads of tennis!

She often said that we are a city of great neighborhoods. She believed in creating community. She cared deeply about all the people. As Mayor, she fought for the causes we hold dear: supporting programs for women and children and families, including the establishment of the city's Early Childhood Program for at-risk children, programs for our low-income residents, including affordable housing, historic

preservation, open space, the Torpedo Factory, the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, and helped form the city's Commission for the Arts. She stood up to Jack Kent Cooke and won. She established our city's massive annual birthday celebration along the waterfront. She also showed great leadership during the re-drafting of the Master Plan in the early 1990s. Then as State Senator, she championed similar issues, including our environment. As Mayor and then State Senator, she got things done.

Even in this last year, she was one of the most forceful and helpful voices behind our saving the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House, and she insisted on attending the official dedication event at 8 am on a cold, rainy morning only a few months ago in May.

Patsy was exuberant, joyful, captivating, embracing, brilliant, and bold. I often introduced Patsy as the most beloved person in our city. She was that and so much more. People gravitated toward her and she to them. She had friendships that lasted a lifetime and some friendships like mine, were relatively new, a mere five years. She treasured her childhood friendships and those with college chums as well. She kept up with so many. She never really knew a stranger. She just had not met you yet.

In the days since her death, I have received moving tributes about Patsy from many of her colleagues and friends from here and around the country. The head of the U.S. Conference of Mayors expressed his heartfelt sympathies, as did the Council of Governments and so many leading elected leaders, past and present, as well as journalists and advocates who knew her in our city or in Richmond. Longtime female city employees expressed to me that she was a role model to many of them.

How can one person touch so many lives? Patsy lit up a room when she walked into it. She was a rock star. Everybody loved Patsy. And she loved them. Going to a restaurant with Patsy, especially at the Warehouse, meant that numerous people would stop by and give her a hug. Eating could take awhile. She was grace personified. She gave each person all of her attention.

She knew a treasure trove of information about an endless number of issues and policies. Some of the stories were hilarious, including the time that she and Vola Lawson, our beloved longtime City Manager, told me how one night, they removed all the ashtrays that hung from the back of the pews in the City Council Chambers. No discussion. They just got it done. To this day, on the back of the pews where the ashtrays had once hung, one can see tiny brass plates that thank you for not smoking.

All of us are blessed to have spent time with the unstoppable Patsy Ticer. I often sat with Patsy right over there in one of the pews, sometimes surprising her for Sunday morning services. During those times, I saw how much St. Paul's meant to her and

how her strong sense of faith helped shape her mission in life to serve the public good.

She was a master at effective listening and abundant compassion. She understood. It is a gift.

At times, I would call as I was leaving City Hall to see if I could swing by her home on Prince Street. One time around 6 pm, we sat talking in the den. She was in her big chair and I in my usual spot on the end of the couch, and I said that I needed to take a quick nap. Patsy agreed that was a good idea. So we were both fast asleep looking like the dead when Virginia came walking in from work. She gasped and wondered what had happened to us and was quite relieved when we both opened our eyes.

Other times, I would call and say in an impromptu way, “Can I kidnap you and go for a drive?” Once, we drove down to Mount Vernon. Along the way, we discussed the history of the road and all of its protections. After all, it was part of her district when she was State Senator. She knew all of it but would not elaborate unless I asked. She was never one to brag. But if I asked, she explained the history. And if I asked again, she would mention any role she had played. I drove around the circle at Mount Vernon and headed back along the Parkway, and we stopped along the way at a pull off where I like to go sometimes to think and look at the river. We marveled that we were seeing the same view that George Washington saw countless times so long ago, and then we sat there quietly and just stared at the beautiful water and then eventually headed back to Old Town. I would give anything to have another drive to Mount Vernon with Patsy.

Just two summers ago, she called to see what I was going to do for July 4<sup>th</sup>, and I said I was invited to a big party at a home on the Eastern Shore. I said that I was told I could bring a guest and said to Patsy, “Would you like to go?” Without hesitation, she exclaimed, “Yes!” I said, “Well, don’t you want to run this by your children and ask them if you can go?” “No, I don’t need to ask my children!” she responded. And so we went and had a fantastic trip.

In life, there is a covenant to which we are all bound. It is a covenant that reminds us that we cannot be with our loved ones forever, that our time is limited. It is a tough agreement.

So how do we say goodbye when there were other times yet to enjoy? How can we be grateful for a life well-lived and yet at the same time find that this covenant is so hard to accept? We do not live forever, but I believe that people live on through the

memories of those who loved them and through the good they leave behind for generations to come.

I loved Patsy. I miss her terribly, and I will remember her all the days of my life. I will always be grateful for the deep bond we had. She was my touchstone, my mentor, my North Star.

Patsy will live on through the good she has left behind. Her legacy is clear, remarkable, and lasting. We can honor her life by inspiring and helping others to follow in her footsteps: those who will step up and speak out for women and children, those who will help the most vulnerable with a hand up and will do more for our elderly, those who will advocate for inclusiveness, those who will fight for our environment, those who will protect and preserve our beloved historic districts, and those who will support our arts community. She would want us to carry on and do all that we can for the causes she lived for. She was courageous, and her dedication and commitment to civility can inspire us all to come together and do good.

Slightly adjusting the words of William Shakespeare:

When she shall die,  
Take her and cut her out in little stars.  
And she will make the face of heaven so fine  
That all the world will be in love with night  
And pay no worship to the garish sun.

Patsy's life was a blessing to Alexandria, to the Commonwealth of Virginia, and to us all. Our gratitude is overflowing. May her memory be for a blessing.