March 2, 1940-April 17, 2020

Margaret Gill was a legendary and groundbreaking lawyer in San Francisco and Silicon Valley, as well as a beloved wife and mother. She died at her home on Friday, April 17, 2020. She was a longtime summer resident of Deer Isle, having inherited a property on Goose Cove Road from her cousins Margaret and Carol Olmsted that was originally purchased in 1890 by Frederick Law Olmsted, the noted landscape architect.

Margaret was born in 1940, and attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts, during which time she met her husband Stephen. After following Stephen to his native California, she attended Berkeley Law, and was one of a handful of women graduating in her class of 1965. She immediately joined San Francisco's oldest and largest law firm, Pillsbury Madison and Sutro (now Pillsbury Winthrop) as an associate attorney. She was promoted to partner six years later in 1973—the first woman to be promoted to partner within the firm.

Margaret was recognized as a special talent from the moment she arrived at Pillsbury. In 1975, when only 35 years old, she was asked by the firm's client Utah International to be their lead lawyer in the merger of Utah International with General Electric, a $2.2 Billion transaction which at the time was the largest merger in history. Margaret was widely regarded as one the top Merger & Acquisitions defense experts in the U.S., and was a principle architect of what became known as the "poison pill"—a tactic used by companies threatened with an unwelcome takeover bid to make themselves unattractive to the bidder.

After 30 years at Pillsbury, Margaret become the Senior Vice President for Legal and External Affairs of AirTouch, the spin off the Cellular business of Pacific Telesis, where she served until 1999. At AirTouch, Margaret worked to grow the nascent cellular business into a global powerhouse. She orchestrated the regulatory and business strategy that shaped the developing cellular marketplace, and was recognized as one of the most influential general counsels in the country.

Margaret was generous to her community: she served for many years as a Vice Chair of the San Francisco Ballet Board of Trustees, as well as leading roles on the boards of the United Way Bay Area, the Episcopal Diocese of California, and the United Religions Initiative. Outside of her professional roles, Margaret loved travel, and she and Stephen traveled to almost every continent. She also loved cultivating gardens, particularly camelias, and one variety of camelia is named after her.

Margaret is survived by her husband Stephen, daughter Elizabeth, son Richard and three grandchildren. At some time in the future, after the coronavirus shutdown is lifted, Margaret's ashes will be interred in Hillside Cemetery, Sunset, alongside Carol and Margaret Olmsted, with a memorial service at St. Brendan's Episcopal Church.