

Barbara W. Bigelow: A Legacy of Leadership and Philanthropy

Professional Career and Achievements

Barbara W. Bigelow made a significant move in 1990 from Barrow, Alaska to the Lehigh Valley to take on the role of Finance Director for the City of Allentown. Notably, she was the first woman to hold this position and served diligently for two consecutive four-year terms before retiring from active employment in 2006. During this time, Barbara also became the first female Finance Director for the County of Northampton, demonstrating her trailblazing spirit and commitment to public service. Her expertise extended into healthcare as well, where she served as Vice President of Support Services and Medicare Compliance Officer for Easton Hospital.

Service to the Arts and Community Organizations

Upon settling in Allentown, Barbara quickly became involved with the Pennsylvania Sinfonia Orchestra, initially joining its board and later volunteering as Chief Financial Officer after 15 years of board service. Her dedication to community organizations is further evidenced by her leadership roles: she chaired the finance committee of the Girl Scouts board, served as Treasurer and audit committee chair for the Red Cross for five years, and held the position of Board Treasurer for the YWCA of Bethlehem.

Philanthropy and Volunteerism

Barbara's commitment to philanthropy is reflected in her broad involvement with various organizations. She served as Treasurer for the United Way's Women's Leadership Initiative for five years, earning the Betsy Torrance Philanthropist of the Year award in 2014. Her active participation in Women's Leadership Council committees and events underscored her dedication to supporting women in the community. That same year, the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Eastern Division, named her Philanthropist of the Year.

Her leadership extended to the Second Harvest Food Bank, where she was recognized as the Food Bank's Hunger Hero in 2011 while chairing its Advisory Board, later serving as board secretary. Barbara also contributed to fundraising efforts for both the Allentown Art Museum and Second Harvest Food Bank. Demonstrating her hands-on approach, she spent a year assisting second-graders at Allentown's Central Elementary with the "Imagination Station" after-school project, earning the affectionate nickname "Kleenex Lady" from teachers for her thoughtful donations.

Dedication to Rotary and Community Service

Barbara is distinguished as a ten-time Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow and an Iobst Fellow with the Allentown Rotary Club. She served as Foundation President for five years, is a current board member and treasurer, and has volunteered as Club Secretary for twelve years and as secretary of the Club's Foundation for nine years. Her

service to the community continues through monthly deliveries for Meals on Wheels to clients in east Allentown.

Leadership in Education

In 2014, Barbara was elected as a Trustee to the Board of Directors at Cedar Crest College. She serves as vice-chair of the Board of Trustees, chair of the Finance and Investment Committee, and is a member of both the Audit Committee and the Facilities and Property Committee, demonstrating her ongoing commitment to educational excellence and sound governance.

Personal Life and Philosophy

Barbara was married to Leon Peters prior to his passing. She enjoys walking her German Shepherd Dog, Ziva David, in Cedar Creek Park twice daily, gardening, and preparing creative meals for family and friends. Her approach to philanthropy centers on identifying needs, being useful, and contributing whenever asked, reflecting her lifelong dedication to service and generosity.