

Patricia Lynch Heffron

July 13, 1926 - December 6, 2006



*1946
20 years old*



*1966
40 years old*



*1986
60 years old*



*2006
80 years old*

Patricia Lynch Heffron | 1926 ~ 2006

Sleepy Hollow planning veteran sought beneficial, orderly growth

By Graydon Megan
Special to the Tribune

Patricia Lynch Heffron was a founding member of the Carpentersville/Dundee Area League of Women Voters and spent 23 years on the Sleepy Hollow Plan Commission.

"She wanted to have planned development that benefited her community and the entire area," her husband, Walter, said.

Mrs. Heffron, 80, died of cancer Wednesday, Dec. 6, in her home in Sleepy Hollow, where she had lived with her husband since 1961.

Mrs. Heffron grew up in Elmhurst and graduated from York High School. She attended classes at the University of Wisconsin at Madison before transferring to the University of Chicago, where she met her husband, a fellow student, in 1946.

The couple married in 1947 and moved to Colorado for three years while Mr. Heffron completed graduate studies in metallurgical engineering. Mrs. Heffron completed a degree in education from Northern Illinois University in 1967.

Her community involvement began after a 1953 move to Park Forest, where she helped form a co-op nursery school and joined the League of Women Voters,

family members said. They moved to Sleepy Hollow in 1961.

In the early 1970s, Mrs. Heffron helped found the Carpentersville/Dundee Area League of Women Voters and chaired a league study on land use and growth.

"She worked on that comprehensive plan early on," said Carol Schoengart, a former Sleepy Hollow village president. "She always was a big part of the village, and she was fun to work with."

Mrs. Heffron was on the planning panel from the early 1970s until the mid-1990s.

Theresa Peterson, another former president, said Mrs. Heffron invited her to join the Plan Commission. "That's how I got involved in village politics," said Peterson, who was village president for 13 years.

"We had an awful lot of things to contend with," Peterson said. "One of the first things [the commission] did was to see that the streets were repaired."

Peterson laughed recalling one commission member's run-in with a pothole. "He pulled up to a stop sign and saw his wheel going across the intersection ahead of him."

"She was concerned with orderly development," Mrs. Heffron's husband said, "and the preservation of some green and



Patricia Heffron was among the founding members of the Carpentersville/Dundee Area League of Women Voters.

open space." He chaired the village's Zoning Board at about the same time Mrs. Heffron was on the Plan Commission.

Mrs. Heffron's interest in politics never waned.

"She knew more about current events than anyone I know," her husband said. "She was a great reader, she had a very active inquiring mind."

Survivors also include a son, Walter Jr.; three daughters, Ann, Ellen and Elizabeth Romano; a brother, John Lynch; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Services are private.

PATRICIA LYNCH HEFFRON

July 13, 1926 — December 6, 2006

Patricia Lynch Heffron, 80, a resident of Sleepy Hollow, Illinois, for the past 45 years, died in her home December 6, 2006, shortly after being diagnosed with metastatic cancer. She was born July 13, 1926, in Chicago, Illinois, and was preceded in death by her parents, Patrick C. and Mary Catherine Casey Lynch, and her brother, Francis J. Lynch (the late Susan A. Lynch). Survivors include her husband, Walter S. Heffron, son Walter Jr. (Jane), daughters Ann Heffron, Ellen Heffron, Elizabeth Romano (Robert); grandchildren Jennifer Heffron (Troy Turner), Corrina Cain (Joshua), Walter III (Ashley), Sarah Romano, Emily Romano, Natalie Romano; great grandchildren Walter Heffron IV, Martha Chloé Heffron, Jayden Heffron, Annabel Cain; brother John G. Lynch (Lorraine McSherry); and many nieces and nephews.

Reared in Elmhurst, Illinois, Patricia moved with her parents to Chicago, where she married her husband August 30, 1947. They had an especially close relationship and shared their lives through 59 years of marriage.

Patricia was an active lifetime member of the League of Women Voters beginning in Park Forest, Illinois, and continuing as she became a charter member of the Carpentersville-Dundee Area League when it was organized in 1970. She chaired a 1974 League study on local land use and growth in Dundee Township that received wide circulation. Her community service also included 23 years of work on the Sleepy Hollow Plan Commission, participation in the Volunteers in Probation of Kane County, and membership in the Dundee Women's Club.

Patricia attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison, the University of Chicago, and Northern Illinois University, from which she graduated in 1967 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. She later was employed for 10 years as a Teacher's Assistant in School District 220, Barrington, Illinois.

Patricia was an avid reader and a lively conversationalist, with a keen interest in politics and current events. She was particularly fond of her extended family and their large gatherings, as well as being devoted to her immediate family, and they to her.

There will be no visitation, and interment will be private. A memorial service will be held later. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society.

Patricia's Memorial Luncheon
Remarks by Walter

6/07

Good afternoon. We are pleased you could join us at this memorial luncheon for Patricia. Arranging to be here was not exactly easy for many of you, and we appreciate your coming. I am going to read my remarks about Patricia because I have difficulty speaking from memory.

When Patricia was declared terminally ill late in November last year, she did not want her death to be associated with, nor cast a shadow over, the approaching happy holiday season, and she hoped to live until February for that reason. In the first days of December as it became apparent death was near, Patricia requested a minimum of ceremony at her funeral and burial, and a memorial luncheon later, when winter was over and spring was in full bloom. She also asked there be no eulogies, and certainly nothing smarmy or sentimental. That was not her style.

Better than sixty years ago, Patricia and I started a wonderful journey together that ended too soon. I was privileged to have her company all of the way, and would not have foregone a moment of it. She was the love of my life and essential to it. We were married for over fifty-nine years and had four children, who have been extremely supportive and comforting during this difficult period.

I met Patricia in 1946, possibly by chance, and our first date was an unlikely beginning for any kind of relationship. She was crossing the University of Chicago campus with two Mortarboard Club sisters I had known in high school, and was looking for someone to invite to the club's big autumn dance. I never learned whether they were trying to find me or whether I was lucky and came along at the right time. In any case, Patricia's roommate Susan Alling, later to become her brother Frank's wife, was on the punch bowl committee and chose French 75s, consisting of champagne laced with cognac or brandy and named after the devastating 75-millimeter gun used by the French. That punch jump-started the party, which became a mite boisterous. In the course of the evening I saw little of Patricia, who was busy socializing with friends. Sorry to say, I must have made too many visits to the punch bowl. When we stopped for a bite to eat on the way back to her dormitory, I sang risqué, off-color songs to her. Patricia had led a much more active social life than I, and this was the first time an escort had behaved so badly. Nonetheless, she accepted my apology, or maybe my conduct piqued her interest. Whatever the reason, she continued seeing me and before long we were inseparable. In spite of that, she did delay introducing me to her parents until Frank forced her hand by asking what was wrong with me that kept her from taking me home. Regrettably, I don't believe I thanked Susan for selecting the French 75s.

I was struck immediately by Patricia's straightforwardness. She was not at all coy or coquettish; there were no games or wiles. She was completely forthright. Not only was I captivated by Patricia, I was very much taken by her family as well. They were warm, interesting, stimulating, and exceedingly tolerant. Consider this: their daughter brought home a rather unsophisticated primitive who shared neither their political views nor their

religious faith and who seldom refused a drink, and yet they accepted him. We are honored to have with us today the remaining member of that original Lynch family: Patricia's brother John.

Patricia was not one to do anything half-heartedly. It was always "in for a penny, in for a pound." She met life head on and engaged it fully and happily, not shrinking from its troubles. Her courage and indomitable inner strength carried her through three primary cancers and five major surgeries. Since she preferred to deal with these privately, few people ever knew, and she remained her usual self, upbeat and full of life. She did not want to be characterized or defined by her illnesses, which were separate and apart from the person she was. They did not in the least affect the image she projected.

Within our extended family there was some kidding that Patricia was opinionated, bossy, and feisty. I admit she did have very definite views on matters, but these were arrived at through careful thought and consideration and were not in any way the result of bias, bigotry, or knee-jerk reactions. The bossy joke may have stemmed from a story, perhaps apocryphal, that as a child she organized a club among her little friends. The club had two rules: 1. Always obey the boss. 2. Patsy is the boss. In addition, this bossy idea might have gained some credence because of Patricia's innate sense of what was right and appropriate, which she occasionally made known. Patricia understood how things should be and may have offered guidance to others, but only to the extent of promoting their best interests or encouraging self-improvement. She was not feisty according to the dictionary definition of quick tempered or quarrelsome, although she may have been quick to express contrary opinions. The term spunky suited her better. She really stood up for herself and her ideas, not hesitating to speak her mind.

Patricia had a great deal of self-confidence. This allowed her to be herself unreservedly. Her bright and lively disposition did not obscure the fact that she had an inquiring mind and was intelligent and thoughtful. She had a sharp intellect, and once in a while a sharp tongue to enliven things. Patricia was known as an attentive listener and a great talker. She also was introspective and believed the unexamined life is not worth living. I was a disappointment to her in that regard because I was reluctant to examine mine – probably for good reason. I joked that it seemed a bit narcissistic to dwell on oneself that way. Secretly, I suspected she might be right but could not tell her so, of course, and I had not the foggiest notion of how to go about self-analysis.

Because Patricia and I got along well with each other, some supposed we were soul mates, but that connotes a similarity of natures. Actually, we were quite different. Patricia was imaginative, creative, intuitive, scintillating, effervescent, vibrant, gregarious. We just happened to be particularly compatible and thoroughly enjoyed being together. She was endlessly interesting and a pleasure to be with.

Knowing her spirited character, one might imagine that Patricia could have been a handful at times. On one occasion she did ask whether I thought I could handle her. I took it as a rhetorical question and didn't answer. No one could or needed to manage Patricia. She was her own person, strong, independent, firm-minded, almost totally

inner-directed, a self-starter, and she managed herself. She knew what she should do and did it, sparing no effort. Patricia was who she was without apology, and never sought approval or favor.

My comments have been about Patricia during her adult years, after we met when she was twenty years old. One of her friends from childhood wrote the following about Patricia's younger days:

"I always think of her as 'Patsy,' since our first acquaintance in Grade 5 at Washington School, Elmhurst. In our high school class she was the belle of the ball, and I suspect half the boys had a crush on her and half the girls wished they could be like her.

"But as you well know Patricia was far more than a social butterfly. She had serious interests in this world and the drive and energy to pursue them – much to the benefit of her family, friends and community."

In closing my remarks about Patricia, I have to say she was indeed a special and remarkable woman, whom I miss grievously. Thank you for being with us today to remember her.