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Elizabeth "Betty" (Frazier) Karplus



March 22, 1925 - Sept. 22, 2021

Elizabeth "Betty" (Frazier) Karplus passed away at home on Sept. 22, aged 96. Born on March 22, 1925 in Burlington, Vermont, Betty and her family moved to Connecticut where she grew up. She worked as a welder for Yale & Towne during WWII to fund her bachelor's degree in physics from Oberlin College, continuing into graduate studies in physics at Wellesley College. While there she met Robert "Bob" Karplus, a Harvard graduate student. They married in 1948, moved to Princeton University, then Harvard, and came to California in 1954 when Bob accepted a physics faculty position at UC Berkeley.

The mother of seven children, Betty was always ready for adventure, and a passion for education and service infused her life. She did research on reasoning and math education and was a pioneer in protecting rights for students with disabilities. She earned a master's in special education at Saint Mary's College, spending the last 18 years of her teaching career as a resource specialist at Campolindo. She also served on the Orinda School Board and was honored as Orinda's 1982 Citizen of the Year. Betty retired from Campolindo in 1986,

launching a 30-year "volunteer career:" leading a program at Mills College to train scientists and engineers as teachers, serving in the Peace Corps in Jamaica, teaching English in China, becoming an Americorps leader, bringing weekly hands-on science lessons to El Sobrante Elementary, and helping in many ways at the Orinda Community Church. For her exceptional contributions to science education, Betty was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in 2019.

Betty is survived by her seven children - Beverly Hartline (Fred), Peggy Hellweg (Horst Rademacher), Richard Karplus (Michelle Delore), Barbara Karplus (Rod Womer), Andy Karplus (Karen), David Karplus (Catie), and Peter Karplus - 16 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, brother-in-law Martin Karplus (Marci), 10 nieces and nephews, and many, many dear friends. She was pre-deceased by her husband, Bob, her parents, and her four brothers. Her legacy of caring, curiosity, and commitment to action will live on in all those she touched.

A memorial service is pending. Donations in her memory can be sent to the 'Robert and Elizabeth Karplus Outdoor Nature Lab' under construction at the Lawrence Hall of Science (<https://capitalstrategies.berkeley.edu/karplus-outdoor-nature-lab>), or to the Orinda Community Church.

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