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**Eileen S. Kraus**, of West Hartford, CT and Chatham, MA was born to Janet Maines Shanley and John Shanley and was raised in Maplewood and Short Hills, New Jersey. She died Saturday, July 1, 2017.

Always bound for breaking glass ceilings, Eileen began her life with a batting average better than most of the boys in her school and the dream of becoming the first woman to be a New York Yankee. Once her mother made it clear that this was an unlikely outcome, Eileen set her sights on other trails to blaze.

Eileen graduated *magna cum laude* from Mount Holyoke College in 1960 and then moved to Connecticut following her marriage to Harold Christian Kraus. Eileen and Hal settled down in West Hartford, where she quickly made friends and found herself putting down deep roots into a community that she really loved, and that grew to love her dearly. Among other things, Eileen began her love of gardening, starting her first garden behind her apartment on South Quaker Lane. She also pursued her love of music, by teaching herself guitar and assembling a four-women, semi-professional singing group, The Valley Four, and they sang at many venues.

While pursuing personal passions in her early years in West Hartford, Eileen still yearned to make an impact professionally. Before long, she received a call from then Secretary of the State, Ella Grasso, a fellow Mount Holyoke alumna, and was invited to become her assistant. Her next step was to take a job in the development office at Trinity College and while there she also pursued and completed a Master's Degree in political science and economics at Trinity College. With the birth of her daughter, Janet Janson Kraus, Eileen shifted her focus and put her professional skills to work for the benefit of her community through a wide range of volunteer efforts often conducted through the Junior League of Hartford.

As the feminist movement swept the nation in the 1970s, Eileen was out in front. Always a believer that talent is gender neutral (thus her belief she could play for the Yankees), Eileen started her own consulting firm, Career Search Resources, dedicated to helping women package their not-for-profit and/or non-corporate work into resumes that would position them for paid careers in the corporate, for-profit world. As she became known in Greater Hartford for her talent in identifying and helping talented people succeed, Eileen's career took a giant, although slightly un-intended, shift into high gear. In 1979, while at a dinner party, she was asked by Joel Alvord, then President of Hartford National Bank, to join him at the bank as Vice President of Human Resources. No superficial dinner party chit chat for Eileen Kraus! Eileen officially began her banking career when her daughter Janet was 13 and her young son, Stephen Harold Christian Kraus was 3 years old.

From day 1, she was not only breaking barriers for women by entering the corporate banking world as an executive, but also by setting up social infrastructure to help women (and men) by spearheading the creation of extended day child

care options - which she needed for her own son! By 1990, just a little over a decade, Eileen rose to become Vice Chairman of Shawmut National Corporation and President of Connecticut National Bank, the largest subsidiary of Shawmut, with responsibility for all consumer banking and marketing. Eileen's meteoric rise to the highest ranks of executive leadership was widely hailed as a milestone in the history of America's professional women.

And even after her retirement from banking in 2004, Kraus continued to make an impact. In the nearly 15 years that followed her banking career, Eileen continued to break new ground by serving on Public Company Boards of Directors as the public markets slowly began to recognize that diversity in the Board room impacted corporate performance. In her career, she served on the Board of Directors of Best Foods, Yankee Energy, Yale New Haven Hospital, Stanley Works, Kaman Corporation, Rogers Corporation and ConnectiCare, Inc. Equally as important to her were the Community Boards she served on including the Capitol City Economic Development Authority, the Bushnell Memorial, Aurora Foundation, and the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame. In her life, she was bestowed many honors just a few of which include Business Leader of the Year by the Hartford Courant (1990), Woman of Merit by the Connecticut Valley Girl Scout Council (1994), Laura A. Johnson Woman of the Year by Hartford College for Women (1998), and inductee to the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame (2002).

But while it is important for legacy to record her life's accomplishments, what Eileen Kraus will be most remembered for is much more personal. For Eileen Kraus, family was always first. Eileen was a dedicated wife and mother, supporting, nurturing, loving them all deeply. Eileen and Hal were 56-year life sports, and home projects, not the least of which were their beautiful gardens. Eileen and Steve shared many things as well but a highlight was a love of sports - especially baseball and basketball. They were both avid fans of the UCONN Huskies. Eileen and Janet were also inexorably connected with their love of music, business, family celebrations, and art. But her generosity of spirit extended far beyond her immediate family. She was vastly inclusive . . . and almost everyone who ever met her would say that she touched them in unforgettable ways. She was an thoughtful and active listener who would start every conversation with questions that would create connection as this was her way of showing how deeply she cared. . . plus she was insatiably curious to see if she might be able to help .. even if helping meant helping others answer their own questions.

Eileen always set the bar for performance very high . . . but only high enough to be motivating, not defeating. And she always made sure you knew she believed you could reach the goal, whatever it was. Eileen was inspired by the pride and joy that came from working with others to create something that mattered. Eileen lived life fully engaged . . . and her love for life and for the people in her life was completely unmistakable in her wholehearted and full-bodied laugh. Besides her beloved husband Hal; she leaves her daughter Janet Kraus and her husband Jim Giebutowski of Weston, MA,

and her son Stephen Kraus and his wife Sarah of Wellesley, MA; and her beloved grandchildren Allison and Cecilia Giebutowski and Charles and Theodore Kraus and her sister Madelyn Kligora and her husband John Kligora as well as her niece Kathryn Kligora and nephew Chris Kligora. Her family will receive friends Sunday, July 16, 2017 from 4-7 pm at the Carmon Funeral Home & Family Center, 301 Country Club Road, Avon, CT. Family and Friends are invited to a Memorial Service to celebrate her life, Monday, July 17, 2017, at 11am at First Church of Christ Congregational, 12 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT. The Rev. Dr. Geordie Campbell, Pastor will officiate. The family has asked that in lieu of flowers a memorial gift be made to the Eileen Kraus Scholarship. Please [visitwww.cwhf.org/eileen](http://www.cwhf.org/eileen) to honor her legacy on line or send a check or credit card number to: The Eileen Kraus Scholarship c/o The Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame at Southern Connecticut State University, 320 Fitch Street, New Haven, CT 06515 If individuals have questions or would prefer to make a gift over the phone, please call [\(203\) 392-9007](tel:2033929007). For directions or condolences please [visitwww.carmonfuneralhome.com](http://www.carmonfuneralhome.com)