



Mary Pat Clarke

June 22, 1941 - November 10, 2024

Mary Pat Clarke, 83, a former president of the Baltimore City Council, died peacefully surrounded by family on November 10, 2024, following a brief illness. She died nine months to the day after the death of her husband of sixty years, Joe.

To the people of Baltimore, Mary Pat was a tireless advocate, problem solver, mentor, and pathbreaker. For thirty-two of the past fifty years, she served as a member of the Baltimore City Council, including two terms as its president from 1987 to 1995. She is recognized as the first woman elected to Baltimore citywide office, but her public service was driven not by that type of recognition but instead by her connection to the people of Baltimore and her ability to help solve the challenges they faced.

She was a regular presence in the city's neighborhoods, where calls of "Mary Pat" were met with an energetic greeting, by name, to the person who called out to her. She never was found without a stack of note cards and a reliable ball-point pen for taking notes about problems that needed to be addressed - and always were. Decades before the internet made phone lists obsolete, she published a list of numbers throughout City government, labelled "Where to Call for Help," that could be found on the bulletin boards or kitchen walls of many Baltimore homes.

In 1995, Mary Pat was unsuccessful in her campaign to unseat Baltimore's incumbent mayor Kurt Schmoke. A ten-year break from elected office allowed her to return to teaching, which had been her original career. She taught writing, government, and everything Baltimore to students at UMBC, Johns Hopkins, and the Maryland Institute College of Art, and she loved it.

But in 2004, when the City Council was restructured into separately represented districts, Mary Pat jumped back into public life as the representative for District 14, around her Tuscany-Canterbury neighborhood. Over the next 16 years, she shared her experience and leadership advice to a new generation of elected officials before retiring in 2020 to make way for her successor Odette Ramos.

While Baltimoreans knew her as Mary Pat, she was "Bubby" to her large family of four children and ten grandchildren. Her desk and hallways were covered with photographs of her kids, their families, and her many grandchildren, and with their artwork, essays, poems, academic and sports achievements, college logos, and memorable notes. She was the hub of yearly family trips to Rehoboth Beach, where she was quick to recount tales from her own childhood in Providence, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, and Huntington, West Virginia, between trips to the bookstore, ice cream stand, or Fun Land, or a family evening in front of an Orioles game.

Mary Pat was born in Providence in June 1941, the eldest of three children of Jim and Mary (Irish) Hines. Her early years in Providence were the source of vivid, life-long memories of her large extended family, many living within the same few blocks around the parish church. She was a precocious kid who demonstrated her determination at an early age. Unable to see her teacher's writing in third grade because of a desk at the back of the class, Mary Pat finally learned that she was nearsighted. She was surprised when with eyeglasses she saw that the green blur of treetops was individual leaves. The

new clarity of vision was an epiphany.

Several family moves followed, ultimately leading to the suburbs of Philadelphia, which is where Mary Pat met J. Joseph Clarke, her future husband, at a St. Patrick's Day mixer. She received her bachelor's degree from Immaculata College in 1963, and she and Joe married later that year and began their careers as high school teachers. In 1967, Mary Pat earned a masters degree in English Literature from the University of Pennsylvania, where years later she also started work toward a Ph.D.

In 1967, the couple moved to Baltimore, Joe's hometown, and it was there that they would raise their four children, John, Erin, Susan, and Jennifer, in a rowhouse across the street from Joe's mother Rose Ellen.

Mary Pat and Joe were energized by Democratic politics in the late 1960's and early 1970's and in efforts to bring Baltimore together in a period of racial tension after the assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. They were members of the New Democratic Club, which sought to take on Baltimore's ensconced political clubs while working in coalition with reform-minded political organizations from Baltimore's Black communities. Both Joe and Mary Pat were candidates on some of Baltimore's earliest racially integrated political tickets.

Although best known for her unflagging energy, those closest to Mary Pat will also miss her laughter, compassion, integrity, and fearlessness. She was a role model and inspiration to her friends and family as much as she was to the people of Baltimore. She was loved and will be missed.

In addition to her husband Joe, Mary Pat was preceded in death by her parents and many dear friends. She is survived by her sister Susan Palombi

and husband Angelo, of Apex, NC, her brother Jim Hines and wife Sandy of Holt, MI; her children: John and Susan Clarke of New Canaan, CT; Erin and David Gorden of Dover, MA; Susan and Jay Chandrasekhar of Los Angeles, CA; and Jennifer Clarke of Baltimore; and her ten grandchildren: Paull, Lucy, and Amy Hubbard; Tom and Claire Gorden; Will, Ella, and Janie Chandrasekhar; and Eleanor and Steele Clarke.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Mary Pat can be made to a community-based charity of your choice.

Previous Events

Mass

NOV **23**. 10:30 AM (ET)

Cathedral Of Mary Our Queen
5200 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21210

Tribute Wall

LC

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Lou Curran - April 23, 2025 at 11:10 AM

LC

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Lou Curran - April 23, 2025 at 11:06 AM

LC

“ *First memory: 1971-72 / I was a JHU sophomore sitting on my stoop in Charles Village when along came MPC campaigning for election. She stopped & asked if I was a registered voter (I was) and a Democrat (I was "undeclared") - she sat down & explained City politics & I was shortly re-registered Dem in advance of the primary and even joined NDC-2... friends ever since...*

Later memories... MPC was anti-war, a matter of faith and common sense for her. She was a force behind the City Council passing City Code "Sec. 33: Nuclear Free Zone" in 1982 [barring all nuclear weapon-related activity in City limits, with signs posted at all City "gateway" roads]... and the "Back From The Brink" [anti-nukes call for US leadership to better control nukes, end new arms race, and negotiate new multilateral treaties to reduce and abolish nukes worldwide] resolution in 2018... both first in the nation among major cities.

Last memory ... 9/28/2024: MPC was one of our five "War Is Not The Answer" teammates in the 16th Annual Marian House 5km "Race To Embrace Independence". We were the top fundraising team (\$5,581.69!). She wasn't feeling strong enough to tackle the 5km but we did about 1/2 of the 1 mile walk, repeatedly interrupted by people saying heyhey, chatting & taking selfies!

May her lihht be an inspiration to all of us never to quit working for a better world !!

Lou Curran - April 23, 2025 at 11:00 AM

JB

“ *Mary Pat Clarke supported my great grand-mother's non profit and was such a kind woman! I had the pleasure of meeting her at City Hall in 2015 and she instantly embraced me! I am so sorry for your loss and will be keeping your family in my prayers ❤️.*



Jenae Burrell - February 26, 2025 at 11:58 AM

VB

I'm the grandmother to Jenae and my mom, Elsie, had the nonprofit small community center that supported the inner center through a food bank, youth works, summer camp, and GED courses; Mary Pat Clarke supported her through it all. The both of them together were a hoot. I absolutely loved her. They were two great women who influenced my life. Their life of service was impeccable. True lovers of people!!

Valerie Burrell - February 26, 2025 at 01:50 PM

SH

“ *Mrs. Clark was one of the best and one of a kind. True leader. Down to earth, loving and very hard working. Will never be someone close to her. Love and prayers to the family and close friends.*

Shantell - December 13, 2024 at 02:38 PM

GG

“ *Thank you, Mary Pat!!!*

Gabriel Goodenough - November 23, 2024 at 11:03 PM

CM

“ I didn't know Councilwoman Clarke for very long and I know she would have corrected me, as she always did, to call her Mary Pat. But she deserves the utmost respect and love for all that she did for women in Baltimore and Baltimore City as a whole. No matter what was going on she brought a smile and a get it done attitude, both things I greatly admire. I wish I had gotten to spend more time with her.

Rest in Power, Mary Pat, Baltimore's Councilwoman.

Carissa Mattern - November 23, 2024 at 10:14 AM

BG

“ RIP Mary Pat Clarke, Thank you for your service. To the city of Baltimore.
Brent Grove
Westminster, Maryland

brent grove - November 23, 2024 at 06:45 AM

RB

“ Mary Pat Clark was a committed and effective public servant, qualities that are all too rare these days. She has earned both her rest and her reward!

Robert m. Bell

robert m. bell - November 22, 2024 at 02:32 PM

RM

“ Robert M. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Pat Clarke.

Robert M. - November 22, 2024 at 02:23 PM

SH

“ Thank You Ms. Clarke for serving the citizens of Baltimore so dynamically. I pray your journey to be peaceful and full of love as you travel to the great beyond. God blessed me to know your name and all the wonderful things attached. Bless up your family and watch over our city Ms. Pat!!!

Shannon - November 18, 2024 at 03:46 PM

RO

“ for all you done .THANK YOU THANK YOU
THANK YOU !!



RONNELL - November 17, 2024 at 12:55 PM

TB

“ Prayers and thoughts are with the family. Baltimore has lost one of the BEST! Rest in Peace, Mary Pat. You will be missed but never forgotten. You stood as a Giant among many.

Toni Byrd

Toni Byrd - November 16, 2024 at 09:27 AM

GH

“ I remember Mary coming to the 901 Arts community center and celebrating the annual fish fry. She loved celebrating the kids and encouraging the talent they showcased. She was a great asset to Baltimore, and I will surely miss her beautiful smile.

GWENDOLYN HENSON - November 16, 2024 at 09:15 AM

KE

“ *My sincere prayers and condolences ...is still have my MPC95 collar pin you gave me years ago...RIP*

Kevin - November 15, 2024 at 01:54 PM

WH

“ *Baltimore lost a GREAT leader who showed compassion in all she did.*

W T Hill - November 14, 2024 at 08:10 PM

EM

“ *I have known Mary Pat for 30 years or more. Her devotion to Baltimore is legendary. From her teaching to her legislating, her determination to improve the quality of life for all the citizens was proof of her selfless desire to make Baltimore a home town we could love and work to improve. May she rest in peace in her Heavenly home.*

Erich March - November 14, 2024 at 04:45 PM



“ *We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

March Funeral Homes - November 14, 2024 at 01:13 PM

DS

In the years of 1970 thru 1979 I was the executive director of Runaway House a shelter and treatment center for children many of whom were abused. It was in the time of the runaway youth epidemic that saw thousands of very young people on the run and in danger. Our program was in direct opposition to the belief that children are the property of the parents. We were constantly under attack by religious groups in conservative Memphis. Mary Pat Clark came to our rescue numerous times over the years. Without her help the program would not have survived. May her memory always be a blessing to all who knew and loved her. She was truly a hero .

Dr. Donald Strauss - June 01, 2025 at 01:36 PM