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The Inquirer
DAILY NEWS philly.com

MARCIENE MATTLEMAN, 89, A FEisty AND UNRELENTING ADVOCATE FOR PHILADELPHIA’S CHILDREN
Andrew Maykuth | March 30, 2019

Marciene Mattleman, 89, a feisty advocate for Philadelphia’s children who created a legacy of programs to promote literacy and after-school activities, died Friday, March 29, after a four-year battle with Parkinson’s disease.

“No one in this city has done more for the schoolchildren of Philadelphia and our region than Marciene Mattleman,” former Gov. Ed Rendell said in 2015 when she retired as board chair of After School Activities Partnerships (ASAP), one of the organizations she created.

Mrs. Mattleman began her career as a sixth-grade teacher in Philadelphia, then earned a Ph.D. in education, writing her dissertation at night when her three children were sleeping. She worked as an education professor at Temple University.

When she was in her 50s, her career went in a new direction when she launched the Mayor’s Commission for Literacy under Mayor W. Wilson Goode. Later she founded organizations called Youth Education for Tomorrow, Philadelphia Reads, Philadelphia Futures, and finally ASAP, a nonprofit aimed at facilitating after-school programs that help keep kids safe.
She grew up on Woodcrest Avenue in Wynnewfield, where her father, a businessman, served as president of his synagogue. She was 16 years old when she met Herman Mattleman, four years her senior, who later became the Philadelphia school board president. They were married for more than 68 years.

Their three children all followed their parents into public service.

She was a tireless fund-raiser and recruited thousands of volunteers to lead chess clubs and debate teams and teach hip-hop and yoga in after-school programs. The programs she created touched the lives of tens of thousands of students.

“A lot of kids in this city learned to read because of my mother,” said daughter Ellen Mattleman Kaplan, the city’s chief integrity officer. “It’s really quite amazing.”

She was the education reporter on KYW Newsradio, and often appeared in the media discussing education issues.

She served on numerous boards, including the Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation, the American Red Cross of Southeastern PA, Philadelphia Futures, City Year, the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Audrey Miller Poritzky Fund for Education. She was elected a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania and had served as a member of the Pennsylvania Commission for Women before her death.

In 2008, she received the Philadelphia Award, the city’s highest civic honor, in recognition of her contributions to Philadelphia’s underprivileged youth (her husband also won the award, in 1991).
“I've had a huge amount of support, both emotional and financial, that enabled me to follow my instincts and act with independence,” Mrs. Mattleman said in 2008. “There is an enormous satisfaction to help other people get what they want from life.”

In addition to her husband and daughters, she is survived by a son, Jon; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Shiva will be observed at the family residence on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday at 7 p.m. Burial will be private. A memorial service will be at a later date.

Donations can be made to the Marciene Mattleman Founder's Fund at After School Activities Partnerships at 1520 Locust St., Suite 1140, Philadelphia 19102, or to a charity of the donor’s choice.

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