



Barbara Mooney

LIFE STORIES

November 4, 1932 to May 8, 2018

BARBARA MOONEY PASSED AWAY PEACEFULLY with her family by her side on Tuesday, May 8, in Greenbrae, California at the age of 85.

A fourth-generation Californian and a 60-year resident of Marin County, she was born Barbara Jean Stewart on November 4, 1932 in Marysville, California to Alice and Willis Stewart, and was raised with two younger siblings—Lewis and Charlotte. Her family were fruit ranchers, cultivating orchards of peaches, prune plums, and almonds (which locals pronounce as “ahh-munds,” much like the “a” in “apricot,” another local crop).

A graduate of Yuba City High School in 1950, Barbara belonged to her school’s Honor Society, Latin Club, and Drama Club, served successive posts as cub reporter, features editor, and managing editor of the school paper, and was elected president of her senior class.



BARBARA JEAN STEWART
Honor Society; Latin Club, reporter; Pep Club;
Junior Class reporter; Senior Class president;
F.H.A., historian; Horizon Club; Drill team; Hi
Lights, feature editor, managing editor, editor,
cub reporter; Van Guards; Big Sisters; Chico
Conference; Quill & Scroll, secretary; Drama
Club; G.A.A.; D.A.R. Contest; Presidents Club.

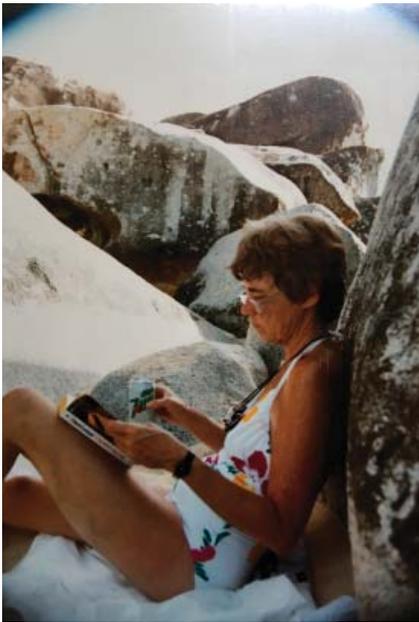


Attending the University of California at Berkeley, Barbara pledged for Delta Delta Delta and became a Tri Delt sorority sister during her student years, from 1951 to 1953. She was initially interested in studying criminology, and eventually focused on political science, English, and journalism, and served on the staff of the daily Cal paper. College women at the time, and especially sorority sisters, were expected to wear white blouses, and they were usually worn under a sweater. Barbara remembered that she used to be a bit lazy about her ironing. She found she could iron the collar and leave the parts concealed by the sweater wrinkled, a brilliant bit of time management. She was known to her sorority sisters as “Stewie.”

She met her first husband, Barney Whitehill, on a double-blind date in Pennsylvania, where she was visiting the family of one of her sorority sisters. She and Barney were each paired with different partners on that date, but he made a point to call and invite her out afterward. They were married in 1953 and spent the first year of their marriage in New York City. It was in New York that Barbara first learned to bake bread after attending a baking demonstration in the basement of Bloomingdale’s. They moved to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, while Barney completed his

military service and eventually moved to Barbara’s home state of California, where they raised seven children. Barbara’s creative and organizational skills were devoted to keeping six half gallons of milk in stock, baking eight loaves of fresh bread a week, and managing household finances and logistics. Her early adoption of whole grain nutrition lead to her oldest son George often peering under the hamburger bun or into the casserole and wondering “where do you think she put the wheat germ this time?”

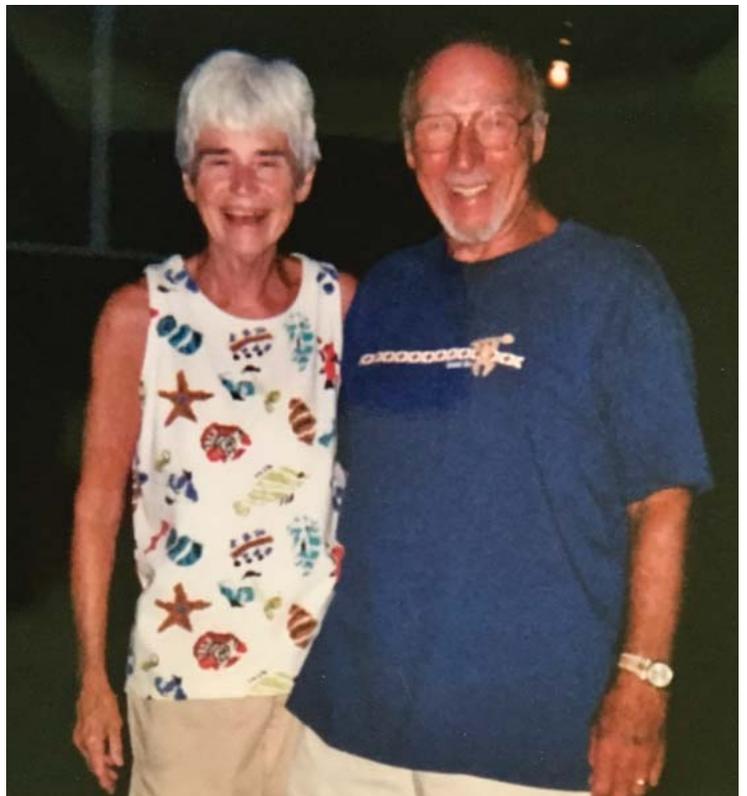




Her domestic experience and managerial skill served her well when she began working for then-Congressman John Burton in 1981 as part of his Marin congressional administration staff. When Burton left the office to pursue other political roles, Barbara continued to work for his successor, Barbara Boxer, during Boxer's service as Congresswoman between 1983 and 1993. Part of Barbara's duties included acting as a constituent advocate, expediting requests for assistance and redress of issues from Boxer's constituents in California's sixth district.

Additional responsibilities included managing Boxer's congressional nominations to the military academies by working with prospective candidates in the district who applied to be nominated for appointments to Annapolis, West Point, the Coast Guard, and the Maritime and Air Force Academies. As part of this, Barbara tracked the progress of each potential nominee through the application and testing process and organized the celebratory receptions where the Congresswoman would congratulate and honor each appointee. Boxer valued her assistance and support above and beyond her official duties, saying, "Barbara was always a strong supporter of mine when I needed it most, and I will always be grateful to her as her voice brought so many to my side."

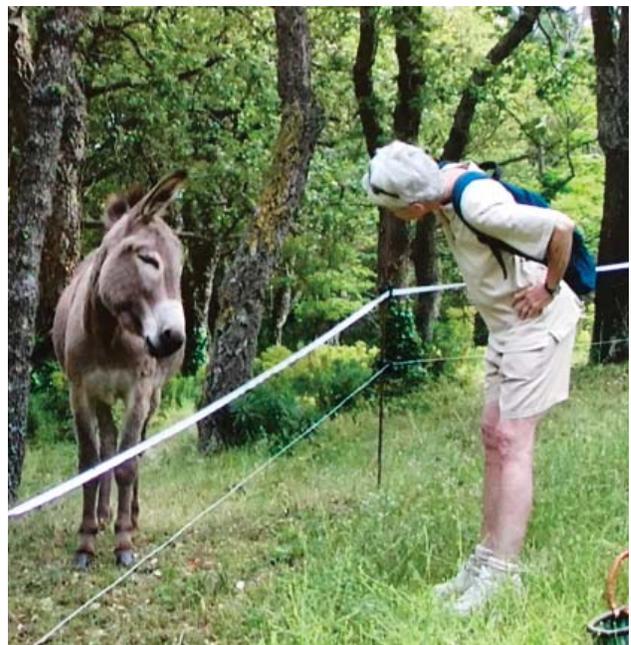
Barbara and her husband, Herb Mooney, became life partners in 1987 and they were married in 1988. Together, they enjoyed sailing, often taking their sailboat, which they christened Tralfamador, out on the San Francisco Bay with family and friends. Their home in Woodacre, California, was devoted to the pleasures of home gardening and the enjoyment of the natural beauty and bounty of west Marin. When Boxer went on to become U.S. Senator in 1993, Barbara Mooney retired from her congressional work and joined Herb at Mooney Industrials.





Barbara's editorial savvy and communications skills, honed by her experience of getting things done in a congressional arena, were invaluable. Building on her experience with computers, she developed considerable skill in database programming, and wrote her own programs for tracking inventory and sales commissions in addition to managing the annual business meetings for the international company.

Barbara and Herb enjoyed vacationing in the Hawaiian Islands and southern France, and spending time with their friends, children, and grandchildren. Barbara was a voracious reader. She had a much-worn Marin County library card, and kept up with political and local news, insisting that her family exercise their right to vote. She would always say that she didn't care what or who they voted for (though she did not beat about the bush as to whom and what she would be voting for); she just wanted her family to get out and exercise what she always considered an enormous privilege.





Barbara was also a prodigious knitter. For thirty years, she was known as the person who would be knitting through the many meetings she attended. Nearly 100 knitted watch caps were produced during that time. Some went to family members; many more were delivered to various charities for the homeless. During an extended state-wide drought that orphaned many bird chicks, she knitted bird nests that a local wildlife rescue group used in caring for and feeding the baby birds.

Between baking bread and cookies and making pizzas and putting up blackberries, apples, chutneys, and mustards, she also took great pleasure in patchwork quilt-making, interpreting the concept of “watercolor quilts” in which patterns and colors of fabric are used to paint lights and darks in simple or complex geometric patterns. After making a quilt for each of her seven children and six step-children, she began working her way through quilts for her twenty-one grandchildren. Smaller sewing projects included potholders, clever fabric “bowls,” and bags. Gifts were often tucked into a handmade patchwork fabric bag that could be repurposed as a shopping bag and often long outlasted the original gift.



Together, Barbara and Herb made four trips to the British Virgin Islands during which they toured on chartered sailboats. Herb remembers that on their first trip as they were getting out of the harbor and underway he was being very careful getting started with an unfamiliar boat, making sure that he understood the charts for the local waters and where the hazards were, and finally Barbara turned to him and said, “Could you please just shut the motor off and *sail*?” She definitely didn’t have patience for the motoring along part and all the safety precautions. She much preferred to get to the point.



Barbara was proud to be a thirty-year friend of Mr. Bill Wilson of New York City and Dr. Robert Smith of Akron, Ohio. She is remembered for her generous and kind personality, with a wit that never dulled. With her compassion and support, she touched many lives. She will be missed by all who knew her.



She is preceded in death by her parents, Alice Woodworth Stewart and Willis Everett Stewart of Yuba City, California; Barney Whitehill, her first husband and father of her children; and her youngest daughter, Charlotte “Schatzi” Whitehill. Her brother, Lewis Stewart, passed away on June 1, 2018.





Barbara is survived by her husband of thirty years, Herb Mooney of Woodacre, California; her sister, Charlotte Stewart of Napa, California; her surviving children and their partners: George Whitehill and wife Jay, Mary Whitehill, DVM, and partner Steve Cunningham, Theresa Whitehill Ferreira and husband Paulo; Paul Whitehill; her daughter, Schatzi's, partner, Kevin Rosa; Charlie Whitehill, MD, and wife Liza; and Andrew Whitehill and fiancé Lisa Marie Gerhard; her step-children and their partners—Monica Mooney Ertel and partner Tom Greenfield, Vicki Justice, Paul Mooney and wife Berit, Charlie Mooney, Claire Payne and husband Dirk, Sheila Groves-Tracey and husband Greg; twenty-one grandchildren— Simon, Rhett, Taylor, Ross, Kristy, Daniel, Lewis, Nolan, Oliver, Zephyr, Tisa, Scot, Kelin, Matalie, Sean, Steve, Ron, Ruthie, Caley, Reilly, and Laura; seven great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews; her beloved dog, Cooper (frequently riding as co-pilot in the back of her Jetta) and cat, Sadie.

A public celebration of Barbara's life will be held at the Marin Art and Garden Center in Kentfield, California, on Friday, June 29, 2018 from noon to 3 pm. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial donations be made to the charity of the giver's choice.

For more of Barbara's life stories please visit <http://barbara-mooney.forevermissed.com>