



Diane Louise Traxler

June 16, 1940 - March 3, 2021

Diane Traxler, a successful Minneapolis entrepreneur, shrewd political operative and outspoken champion for many causes in which she passionately believed, died in her sleep March 3 at her home in Minneapolis. She was 80.

During a remarkable life in which she advised people at the highest levels of politics but stood up for people without power, Traxler demonstrated a flair for bringing people together while ensuring that no one she met had any doubts about where she stood on issues, regardless of what they might think. In other words, she had strong opinions and no reservations about expressing them. She had an auspicious career as a campaign organizer and pollster. But Traxler was at her best engaging acquaintances in private settings, especially when hosting coffees, lunches or dinners for friends and business clients. She probed her friends for their personal stories, political views and willingness to engage in social causes. She constantly advocated for racial and gender equity and equality. And she never passed up an opportunity to talk about her beloved children and grandchildren.

"It was a joy to have her as a friend," said long-time pal Gene Pleasant of Bloomington.

Traxler was born and raised in Minneapolis. She graduated from Holy Angels Academy in Richfield in 1958, earned a bachelor's degree summa cum laud from the University of Minnesota in American studies and English and subsequently pursued graduate studies in political science at the U.

In the 1960s she and her family lived in Bloomington, where she jumped into Republican Party politics and organized several Bloomington City Council and school board campaigns. Among them were the races by Mrs. Pleasant's husband, Ray Pleasant, the first African American elected to the city council and the second Black person to win a seat in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

"She was not only my campaign manager in all my campaigns, but also my mentor and my personal friend," said Mr. Pleasant, who served on the city council from 1965 through 1972 and in the state House from 1973 through 1980.

Pleasant said he decided to become active in Bloomington civic life in 1964, and since city offices were then dominated by Republicans, he went to a GOP meeting to get acquainted. When he arrived and sat down at the back of the room, Traxler introduced herself and invited him to join her and her husband at the front of the room. They and their spouses became fast friends for more than 50 years.

When he ran for the city council the following year, he recruited her to manage his campaign. She recruited and organized volunteers, and her standing order to him, he said, was "Shut up, Ray, and go block work." She had a biting wit. Later Traxler dove into charitable work, volunteering and raising contributions mainly to help parents and children in need through such organizations as the Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery, Doctors without Borders, Oxfam and Operation Smile.

"She always wanted to know what she could do to help," said Mary Pat Lee, executive director of the crisis nursery.

Back on the political stage, Traxler became research director at the Minnesota Independent-Republican Party in 1981. Two years later, she and her husband, former state I-R Party Chairman William Morris, formed a market and opinion research firm, Decision Resources, Ltd. She was the owner-manager of its successor business, the Morris Leatherman Company.

Many of their clients are Minnesota school districts. "Their firm's reputation is

exemplary," said Orono School Superintendent Karen Orcutt. "They have been one of the greatest advocates for public education ever in this state." As for Traxler, Orcutt said, "I considered her a warrior for public education. She believed so deeply in it...

"Diane was extremely political for the sake of what politics could do for us and mostly for children. She loved children."

Traxler also was an outspoken advocate for the rights of women and members of the LGBTQ community. She was a member of St. Francis Cabrini Catholic church in Minneapolis and a staunch ally of reformers who often bucked the church hierarchy.

In her spare time, she loved reading British murder mysteries and watching old British movies and West End and Times Square theater productions.

In addition to her loving husband and soul mate, Dr. Morris, she is survived by three children: Stephen Traxler and his wife Debbie, Timothy Traxler, and Kathryn "Katie" Hosley; five grandchildren: Tessa Hosley, Jayson Hosley, Justyn Hosley, Thomas "Trey" Hosley III, and Johnathan Drakeford; and, and one great-grandchild: Niylah Hosley.

Private family services will be held on Friday, March 11, 2021.

Tribute Wall

BC

“ *Barbara Quincer Coulter lit a candle in memory of Diane Louise Traxler*



Barbara Quincer Coulter - March 10, 2021 at 05:50 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Diane Louise Traxler.*



March 10, 2021 at 02:09 PM

YD

“ *Your friends at the Ass of Metro School Districts purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Diane Louise Traxler.*



Your friends at the Ass of Metro School Districts - March 10, 2021 at 11:28 AM