



Pauline "Paula" Terry

August 6, 1934 - December 14, 2022

Pauline ("Paula") Terry, 88, passed away December 14th, at home in Arlington, Virginia, with her family and loving friend Gladys, by her side. Paula was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, August 6, 1934, the daughter of the late George and Aline Terry.

She is preceded in death by her beloved sister, JoAnn Moore and her parents George and Aline Terry. She is survived by nephew, Terry Moore and his wife Dawn Moore along with their children Paige, Connor and Austin Moore and wife, Sarah Moore, along with many cousins and friends. She was a member of the National Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C.

In her youth, Paula traveled the east coast with her family attending many schools, before graduating from Waverly, Tennessee High School as a basketball star! She graduated with a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Tennessee. Her family home base became Kingston, Tennessee, where her parents retired and hosted many holiday events! A brush with Hollywood stardom came when she lived in Daytona Beach and was an extra in a scene with the famous baseball great, Mickey Mantle, in "Safe at Home". Soon after, she began her favorite professional experience in Germany supporting families of the U.S. Armed Forces. Paula then began a forty-year career with the National Endowment for the Arts, retiring in 2010. She was recognized as a pioneer for people with disabilities and arts accessibility with an unwavering advocacy for the disabled and accessibility throughout the arts community. She concluded her career as the Endowment's Accessibility Director. She was recognized for her works supporting the fields of universal design, creative aging, arts in healthcare, and arts in correctional facilities.

Paula was an avid swimmer that never missed the opportunity to take a few laps in the pool, river or ocean. Some of Paula's greatest joys were reading, traveling, dinners and celebrations with friends, attending plays and musicals, painting, and returning home during the holidays.

Paula spent time serving and supporting various non-profits with an unwavering dedication to The Carter Center and their various missions. Paula will be missed as a friend, aunt, and citizen of the world.

A private grave side service will be held at Kingston Memorial Gardens. A celebration of life will be held in the spring of 2023, in Arlington, Virginia.

In memory of Paula, and in lieu of flowers, please consider her wishes by making a donation to the Bethel Presbyterian Church. You may send a check or money order in remembrance of Paula, to: Bethel Presbyterian Church, 203 S. Kentucky St., Kingston, TN 37763 or via website bethelpcusa.org/give/

Tribute Wall



“ *Your Aunt changed the course of my life. I am sure you have heard that from many, the force of nature that she was. But it has been very hard for me to find the right words even to begin to encapsulate the profound influence she had on who I am. I have finally realized I will never get it right, but it needs to be done.*

I consider my life as having two phases: BP (before Paula) and AP (after Paula) lol Susie BP was an actress supplementing her Social Security payments and small theatre jobs by being a Nanny. AP I started my own professional theatre company that showcases artists with disabilities in an integrated setting, promotes the authentic voice of the disability community and works to make society more inclusive. See? Told you she changed my life.

Suzanne Richard - February 26, 2023 at 05:32 PM

SS

“ *All of us who worked in the field of arts and disabilities at the national level will forever remember Paula with a great deal of fondness and awe at her tenacity, inspiration, and generosity as a champion of quality of life for all. Paula brought a positive aura to all she encountered - a "can do" and "will do" attitude to make a difference on behalf of people with disabilities - which she accomplished throughout her tenure at the NEA. Her spirit continues on through those fortunate enough to have been friends and colleagues.*

Scott Stoner - January 19, 2023 at 03:06 PM

EK

“ *Paula's leadership and stalwart advocacy were always evident at the many convenings I attended in fields she helped build, and in which I worked, during her NEA tenure. As one of the arts in healthcare consultants through the national consultancy project in this domain that she supported, I was (and am) grateful for her commitment to this far-reaching effort. It was also a joy to see Paula, as a lifelong learner, partaking with delight in Chautauqua Institution's offerings when she visited this beloved, historic, and arts-rich southwestern New York community. I'm thankful for and will remember Paula and her enduring contributions to equity, inclusion, accessibility, health and well-being, and enhanced quality of life for all.*

Ermyn King - December 23, 2022 at 02:09 PM

BB

“ As Paula's successor in her position at the National Endowment for the Arts, I knew going in that I had big shoes to fill, as she was a powerhouse in the field of arts accessibility. The following is from the email that I sent to NEA staff upon notice of her passing, since so many didn't know her due to staff turnover in the 12 years since her retirement, so they would know the true impact of her work. I used the word "unwavering" to describe her, and her obituary used the word as well. I think that word exemplifies Paula in so many ways. ~Beth Bienvenu

Paula Terry retired in 2010 after working for the NEA for over 30 years and is remembered as a pioneer for people with disabilities and arts accessibility and unwavering in her advocacy for disability and accessibility both inside the agency and throughout the arts community.

After taking the reins of the accessibility office in the late 1970's she made the NEA the leading voice in cultural accessibility. She educated arts organizations, state arts agencies, and regional arts organizations on the new requirements under Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation act, and she helped pave the way for the arts sector to adopt the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act when it was passed in 1990. She led the charge in supporting careers in the arts for people with disabilities and organized national convenings in 1998 and 2009 and a series of statewide forums on careers in the arts. She also helped build and support the fields of universal design, creative aging, arts in healthcare, and arts in corrections. Over her years at the NEA she led several mini-conferences in conjunction with White House conferences on aging, launched a pivotal study with Dr. Gene Cohen at George Washington University that provided the first data on the benefits of arts programs for older adults, built leadership throughout the field of arts in healthcare through a consultancy project, and supported artists in residence in federal prisons through a partnership with the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Beth Bienvenu - December 23, 2022 at 09:20 AM

EO

“ Paula was an extraordinary leader, during her years with the National Endowment for the Arts. She created both opportunities as well as network. I was very fortunate to have worked with her, initially as a “recipient” and then on many committees. May her memory be a blessing.

Elaine Ostroff - December 20, 2022 at 06:32 PM