

OBITUARY OF MICHELE LONGO EDER

Michele Longo Eder was born on the Fourth of July, 1954 in Albany, NY to Joseph and Betty Longo. She died at 68 in her oceanfront home at Agate Beach. Michele was taken by lung cancer, with metastasis to the brain.

Forty-seven years an Oregonian, she loved this coast and its community. She came west after graduating with honors in political science from Johns Hopkins University. Took a law degree from Lewis & Clark School of Law and began practicing in Lincoln City. With her intelligence, tenacity, uncommon grace, and generosity of spirit, it is no wonder that she has left such a positive legacy.

In 1988 she married Bob Eder, a commercial fisherman, and moved her practice to Newport, joining the firm of MacPherson, Gintner, & Diaz. The final phase of her law career was as a sole practitioner.

Michele worked in a variety of legal areas, including criminal defense, domestic relations, small business, and commercial fishing matters. Though she thrived on investigative work and preparation, what really got her juices going was the courtroom—being in the moment—a true trial lawyer.

Two of her cases were particularly renowned. As court-appointed attorney for Sandy Jones, who was accused of murder, she was joined by nationally known trial lawyer Gerry Spence. Ms. Jones was found not guilty and Spence wrote a book, “The Smoking Gun” about the injustices committed by the prosecution against Ms. Jones and her family. The book is dedicated to Michele.

She worked again with Mr. Spence on the case of Brandon Mayfield. Brandon, a Newport lawyer, was wrongfully surveilled and arrested in connection with the 2004 Madrid train bombing which killed 180 people. Michele was co-counsel with civil rights lawyer Elden Rosenthal and Spence, and obtained civil damages for wrongful acts against the Mayfields by the Federal Government.

Marriage to Bob enriched an already full life for Michele. She was now a mother to two sons, Ben, aged 7, and Dylan, aged 5. Helping them grow into the young men they became made every day challenging and worthwhile. Ben’s tragic death in 2001 in an accident at sea led to the publication of Michele’s book “Salt In Our Blood: The Memoir of A Fisherman’s Wife”.

To say Michele embraced the role of a fisherman’s wife does not begin to cover it. Aside from assuming administrative duties in the family business, she became actively involved in matters relating to fisheries management, research, and safety at sea. She was appointed by the Secretary of Homeland Security to serve on the National Fishing Vessel Safety Advisory Committee. She played a pivotal role in retaining Coast Guard helicopter coverage on the central Oregon coast.

Michele was also appointed by the Secretary of Commerce to serve on MAFAC, the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, advising the Secretary on matters pertaining to management of federal fisheries. She served two terms on the North Pacific Research Board, a group which awards millions of dollars annually for fisheries research in the Bering Sea, the Arctic Ocean, and the Gulf of Alaska.

Michele was twice appointed by President George W. Bush as a member of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, which advises Congress on priorities for Arctic Research matters. She traveled widely in this role, to Arctic nations and universities throughout the world. More recently, Michele served the Pacific Fishery Management Council as a member of the Groundfish Advisory Panel, where she represented fishermen using hook and trap gear.

As involved as she was in fisheries management and supporting scientific research, Michele also had a passion for education. She was honored to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees at Oregon State University. She said that the work she did on behalf of the students, staff, and faculty of OSU was one of her most fun and stimulating experiences. Go BEAVS!

Michele's volunteer activities are too many to list. They include president of Yaquina Bay YMCA, chair of Newport Library Foundation, president of Olalla Center for Emotionally Handicapped Children, board member Newport Fishermen's Wives, etc. Perhaps most telling is that she was still screening cases for the Oregon Innocence Project until a month before she passed!

This woman was a voracious reader, averaging 45 books a year. She was privileged to travel to two dozen countries. Michele loved to feed people, cooking both for friends and her fishing crews. She enjoyed duplicate bridge and competitive tennis. She loved competition, period. But her greatest joys were her husband Bob, son Dylan, and her grandchildren, August Benjamin and Lark Michele.

One more thing Michele would want to share – so as to encourage others: she was a recovering alcoholic, 38 years sober.

Michele is survived additionally by her beloved brother Marc and his wife Linda Longo; niece Marcel Longo; nephews Marley and Moses Eder; brothers-in-law Harvey and Alan Eder.

A celebration of life will be held on April 22 at 1:00 P.M. in Newport at the Gladys Valley Marine Studies Building, Hatfield Marine Science Center.

In Lieu of flowers, Michele would appreciate a donation to Newport Fisherman's Wives, The Newport Food Pantry, or The Newport Library Foundation.

