

Kincey Potter, leading advocate of Anne Arundel stormwater fee, dies at 75



Kincey Potter of Annapolis was awarded the Ellen Fraites Wagner Award for Chesapeake Bay Stewardship. She died Saturday at her home. (By Paul W. Gillespie / Capital Gazette)



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Kincey Potter, an Annapolis-area resident who became a leading environmentalist after surviving the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, died Saturday at her home following a long illness. She was 75.

An early leader of the South River Federation and other groups, she became a role model for environmentalists around the county as well as an influential voice among elected officials.

Robert Gallagher, who worked beside Potter on a number of projects, said her greatest achievement might have been the passage of a stormwater remediation fee in 2013. It was designed to address \$11 billion in fixes needed to address stormwater runoff pollutions, and today is funding scores of

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The vision for change came on Sept. 11, 2001. She was in her office in the World Trade Center when an airliner crashed into each of the two buildings.

“Lucky for me I was on the 64th floor, below the impact, and was able to walk out down the stairs unlike those up above who could not,” she said. “I knew it was time to do something else.”

She thought about working on local environmental issues and looked no further than her home above Church Creek just outside Annapolis.

Potter called to volunteer at the South River Federation, which had been starting work around its watershed. By 2003, she was asked to serve on the federation board and in 2004 was named the president.

She was widely seen as making the federation one of the premier watershed groups in the county, creating a vision that would accomplish millions of dollars of restoration work. She would work with dozens of other like-minded area residents, including John Flood, Anne Pearson and the longtime head of county public works, Ron Bowen.

Among those who have called her a mentor was County Councilman Chris Trumbauer. He was a Department of Natural Resources employee and a frequent volunteer when she approached him about joining the federation board.

“When you think about someone like Kincey passing, you tend to think about their legacy,” Trumbauer said. “And her legacy is going to be there for a long time in those organizations. She was a special person and she will be missed.”

He eventually became the riverkeeper of the West and Rhode rivers, just south of the South River.

Erik Michelsen, now head of the county's Watershed Protection and Restoration Program served as Executive Director of the South River Federation when Potter was at her peak of involvement there.

"Kincey was instrumental in transitioning the South River Federation from an all volunteer group to an organization led by an Executive Director with several paid, professional staff charged with carrying out the Federation's mission," Michelsen said. "As a result of her leadership, the Federation has developed regionally-recognized scientific programs and secured millions of dollars for the restoration of the South River."

He also said one of Potter's prime legacies will be the generation of individuals dedicated to protecting and preserving our waterways and quality of life.

Potter helped form the Watershed Stewards Academy, which trained volunteers to spread awareness of stormwater runoff issues. More than 200 people have graduated from the program, working on projects from Brooklyn Park to Deale.

She also was a leader of String of Pearls, an organization that recognizes the contributions of landowners who commit their properties to preservation.

In 2009, Potter and Gallagher established an Anne Arundel Chapter of the Maryland League of Conservation Voters. They served as co-chairs for almost a decade, endorsing a first slate of county candidates on environmental issues in 2010.

In later years, she remained an active participant on issues of environmental protection while undergoing treatment for [breast cancer](#), including long periods of chemotherapy. She had been in hospice care for several weeks.

She is survived by her husband Bruce Potter. At her request, no funeral services will be held, but a celebration of her life and accomplishments is being planned.

Staff Writer Chase Cook contributed to this story.

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