

## OBITUARIES

# Patricia Walkup – shepherded Octavia Boulevard project

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Patricia Walkup, a tireless neighborhood advocate and founder of the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association, died Tuesday at age 59.

Ms. Walkup had been in and out of the hospital for about two months before her death, friends said. Diabetes and related conditions had kept her from working for about 15 years.

Born in Kilgore, Texas, Ms. Walkup had lived for about 30 years in San Francisco, where she made her mark advocating the creation of Octavia Boulevard, more affordable housing, sustain-

able transportation and more open space.

Architect Robin Levitt said he met her in the early 1990s, when crime was a big issue in the neighborhood and Ms. Walkup was organizing neighborhood walks with police officers.

Soon, the two were working to ensure that the Central Freeway, damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, was replaced by a six-lane, tree-lined boulevard on Octavia Street. The battle played out in three ballot measures in 1997, 1998 and 1999.

Ms. Walkup and Levitt organized signature campaigns for the ballot measures, and she closely followed the project as the plan

was implemented.

José Luis Moscovich, executive director of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, worked with Ms. Walkup for a decade on the Octavia Boulevard project, which earned the “Freeway Project of the Year” award Wednesday from the California Transportation Foundation.

Moscovich dedicated the award to Ms. Walkup, saying, “She never gave up. She saw it through.”

“It was kind of a long political fight, and she was there every step of the way,” said Tom Radulovich, executive director of Livable City and a BART director. “In many ways, she really held the neighborhood together.”

Port Commissioner and former Supervisor Sue Bierman remembered Ms. Walkup as “a real fighter — and a pleasant, pleasant person, but a real fighter.”

Ms. Walkup graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas in the late 1960s and taught school for a year in Victoria, Texas, according to her brother, Lee Walkup of Cheshire, Conn. She then headed to California, where the family had vacationed once.

Growing up in small-town Texas, where she saw inequities along race and class lines, probably influenced Ms. Walkup’s dedication to neighborhood causes, Radulovich said.

Her brother said she was just a committed person.

“Once she got something in her mind, she followed through with it, no matter what,” Lee Walkup said.

Recently, Ms. Walkup had lobbied for more retail and indoor recreational space to be included in plans for the redevelopment of a UC Berkeley Extension campus in Hayes Valley.

“She was tireless,” her friend Levitt said. “She was on her computer, writing letters, up until 2 in the morning, every morning. Patricia was the most selfless person.”

At Tuesday’s meeting of the San Francisco Board of Supervi-



**Patricia Walkup** was admired as a relentless activist and “the most selfless person.”

sors, several supervisors took time to remember Ms. Walkup.

“If you knew Patricia, you knew what a community activist really was — from the tip of her head to the bottom of her toes, and what a great heart she had,” Supervisor Tom Ammiano said. “She was the genuine article, and one of a kind.”

In addition to her brother, she is survived by several cousins.

A public memorial is being planned.