



## Patricia Ducey Kelly

November 11, 1923 - October 30, 2020

Patricia Ducey Kelly passed peacefully on October 30. She was a visionary leader of the Pueblo community. All her life, she worked tirelessly for the betterment of Pueblo and the state. Patricia was born in Pueblo, on November 11, 1923, the daughter of Damian Patrick and Ruth Taylor Ducey. She graduated from Centennial High School and earned a degree from the University of Colorado. Patricia is best-remembered for two notable additions to Pueblo: The Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center and the launch of the Historic Arkansas River Project, now known as Riverwalk. The Sangre de Cristo Arts Center was a major effort led by Kelly, her friend and fellow community leader Kathy Farley, and County Commissioner John Hill. In the mid-1960s, the women saw that Pueblo would benefit from a center for the arts that could also function as an attractive location for community events; John's son, Dale was an art collector and sometimes-dealer and he was part of the effort from its earliest days. With a hard-earned grant from the Federal Economic Development Administration and support from the city and county, the three of them made the Arts Center a reality, with Pueblo County continuing to play an important role in its support and operation. The center now houses traveling exhibits such as the current art glass exhibit featuring work by Dale Chihuly, James Mongrain, and an exhibit of Venetian glass that inspired the artists. The Arts Center is also the home of an extraordinary Southwestern art collection donated by Francis King. The extraordinarily popular Buell Children's Museum runs children's programs to supplement the

school schedule when possible, and several times each year it is open at no charge to the community. Pat Kelly served for many years as a commissioner of the Pueblo Conservancy District, which was responsible for the levees through Pueblo and other flood control. This position led to her work leading a public campaign for voters to approve a \$20 million bond issue to make Phase I of the Historic Arkansas River Project and the Riverwalk possible. Today, the community has supported several more expansions to Riverwalk, and it is the heartbeat of the community. In October 2020, the community celebrated Riverwalk's 20th anniversary, and a commemorative stone was placed. It reads: "In commemoration of the Pueblo citizens, whose strength and determination to bring forth a dream, a vision, a reality, equals the force and ever-present flow of the Arkansas River: Oct. 6, 2020." Pat Kelly served two terms on the Pueblo City Council. In this position, she brought additional national resources to Pueblo---among them the Neighborhood Housing Authority program that helped many become first-time homeowners. After her time on the City Council, she was appointed by the governor to be on the State Board of Agriculture, the governing body for Colorado State University, CSU Pueblo (then the University of Southern Colorado), and at that time, Fort Lewis College. She also served on the Colorado Board of Parks and Outdoor Recreation as well as the Colorado Commission on the Arts, the Colorado Municipal League Executive Board, the National League of Cities Environmental Steering Committee, and the Colorado Land Use Commission. She was also part of the Pueblo Hispanic Education Foundation and the Greenway and Nature Center. For several years she was on the Pueblo Advisory Board of the David and Lucille Packard Foundation to help select organizations deserving of Packard donations. The Kelly-Ducy Foundation was another important way for her to give back to the community. She was a founding member of the Women's Forum of Colorado. Her focus there was on strengthening educational opportunities for women at both Pueblo Community College and at Colorado State University-Pueblo. Later in life she sought a more hands-on type of volunteer work, and she became a CASA volunteer

(Court Appointed Special Advocate) working directly to represent families in need. Though her eventual husband lived down the street from her growing up, Pat and Bret Kelly did not date seriously until they both attended college at Colorado University in Boulder. Bret volunteered for the service when the U.S. entered World War II. They were married in 1944, just before he shipped out for Europe. Bret served as president and later chairman of Steel City Agencies also held many community positions. The two were jointly honored several times. In 1992, they were jointly honored with the University of Colorado at Boulder's distinguished service award to commemorate their many years of public services to Southern Colorado and the state. He was badly wounded in World War II, fighting in France and succumbed in part to those injuries in 2002. During her later years, Pat became a close friend of Joe Gagliano, another widowed community leader. They had many meals together and attended many events; both families supported this happy relationship, which ended with Joe's death in 2017. In 1995, Pat Kelly was designated Citizen of the Year and inducted into the Pueblo Hall of Fame. She is also a Trustee of Distinction of the Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center. One of her most prestigious awards was the Bonfils-Stanton Community Service Award which she was awarded in 2001. The recognition came with a cash award, and she immediately shared it with the local charities she felt were in most need at the time: the Buell Children's Museum, the Pueblo Neighborhood Housing Authority, and El Pueblo Boys and Girls Ranch. When she was interviewed by a reporter after one of her many honors, she said, "Pueblo has been my hobby. I don't really have another." She is survived by two children, Eric Damian (Sandra) Kelly, of Muncie, Indiana, and Kate (George Schweitzer) Kelly, of Los Angeles; grandchildren, Damian Charles Kelly, Eliza Kelly (John) Taylor, Douglas (Chris) Heeren, Valissitie (Gavin Brown) Heeren, Amanda Schweitzer (Steve) Palley, Elizabeth Schweitzer (Joshua) Miller, and Caroline Taylor (Joshua Backer) Schweitzer; and 12 great-grandchildren. Services will be held at the Cathedral of the

Sacred Heart in Pueblo. Evening Vigil Service (featuring music, prayer and the family's eulogies) will be on Thursday, November 5, at 6:30 p.m. A funeral mass will be held Friday, November 6 at 9:30 a.m. State Covid guidelines will be in effect (masks required) and for those who prefer, the services will be livestreamed. The web address for the evening Vespers service on November 5 at 6:30 p.m.: [vimeo.com/event/429486](https://vimeo.com/event/429486); and Friday's Funeral Mass : [vimeo.com/event/474738739](https://vimeo.com/event/474738739) The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center, 210 N. Santa Fe, Pueblo 81003, or the HARP (Historic Arkansas River Project) Foundation, 125 Riverwalk, Pueblo 81003, or Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, 414 W. 11th, Pueblo, 81003. For those who cannot come in person because of the pandemic, cards and messages may be sent to the family via Roselawn Funeral Home, 1706 Roselawn Rd., Pueblo, 81006.

# Cemetery Details

## Rosealwn Cemetery

1706 Roselawn Rd  
Pueblo, CO 81006

# Previous Events

## Vigil

NOV 5. 6:30 PM (MT)

Cathedral of the Sacred Heart  
414 W 11th Street  
Pueblo, CO

## Funeral Mass

NOV 6. 9:30 AM (MT)

Cathedral of the Sacred Heart  
414 W 11th Street  
Pueblo, CO

# Tribute Wall

JT

“ *To the Kelly Family  
It has been a privilege to know Pat and her wonderful family for most of our lives.  
Pueblo has lost a true champion but her legacy will remain with us all in the form of the  
Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center and the Historic Arkansas River Project.  
We are sorry not to be able to attend the services but she will remain in our hearts forever  
God Bless you all  
Jerry & Janice Thomas*

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**Jerry & Janice Thomas** - November 05, 2020 at 04:11 PM