



Marilyn Loden

July 12, 2022 - August 6, 2022

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Marilyn [Teresa] Loden, a passionate advocate for diversity in the workplace, and the originator of the phrase “the glass ceiling” – which she was saddened to know would outlive her – died Saturday, August 6th in St. Helena, California. She was 76 years old. Her nephew announced her death, which followed a year-long battle with cancer.

Ms. Loden was born on July 12, 1946 to Patrick and Mary Downey in New Hyde Park, New York. She graduated from Syracuse University in [1968]. While working in the HR Department for AT&T in 1978, Ms. Loden appeared on a panel at the Women's Action Alliance Conference in New York City. It was during this panel that Ms. Loden coined the term “the glass ceiling,” to describe the invisible barriers to advancement that women managers face. After leaving AT&T, Ms. Loden became a leading authority on managing change to support and leverage diversity in the workplace, consulting to a wide range of entities, including blue chip organizations such as Citibank, NASA, Procter & Gamble, Shell Oil, and the University of California. Her engagement for the U.S. Navy is emblematic of her effectiveness; her efforts led to policy changes increasing leader accountability for sexual harassment, and the lifting of the ban prohibiting women sailors from serving on

submarines. In 2016, she was awarded the civilian Superior Service Medal by the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations for her “insightful leadership in refining policy and strategy to support an absolute commitment to nondiscrimination and uncompromising standards of performance related to matters of diversity and gender equity.”

Ms. Loden was also a prolific author and sought-after speaker. She wrote three books about employee diversity. *Feminine Leadership or How to Succeed in Business Without Being One of the Boys* (Times Books, 1985) was the first business book to define the unique management style of many women and the glass-ceiling issues they face moving up the career ladder into visible leadership roles. Selected as one of the 50 best business books of the year by *The Library Journal*, *Feminine Leadership* has been published in six languages. She followed that up with *Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity As A Vital Resource* (Irwin Publishing, 1991), the first comprehensive text about diversity management written for executives and human resources specialists, and *Implementing Diversity* (McGraw-Hill Publishing, 1996), which outlined the practical steps for leading a culture change to increase and leverage global diversity.

In 1972, Ms. Loden met her future husband, John Loden, while attending a "singles" event on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Together, they forged a loving and devoted relationship that lasted a lifetime. Their mutual love of dogs – particularly Yorkshire Terriers – travel and the Napa Valley influenced many of their life choices, beginning in 1986 when they moved from New York City to San Francisco. Mr. Loden passed away in 2021 from complications of Parkinson's Disease.

Ms. Loden was a benefactor for many causes including global health, animal rights and organizations supportive of democracy, and in recent years she and her husband were involved in fundraising for Napa County hospitals. At nearly

six-feet tall she cut an imposing figure, both physically and intellectually, which served her well as she navigated male-dominated industries to advocate for change. She was passionate and beautiful, and a fierce proponent for the causes she believed in, even – in her final months – speaking with the employees at St. Helena Hospital about forming a union. Friends and family often described her as “the smartest person I know,” and she could be wickedly funny. Throughout her many years as a consultant, speaker, and author, she attracted many women who were inspired and motivated by her own story and passion.

In addition to her husband, Ms. Loden was predeceased by her parents. She is survived by her sister, Patricia Pollok, two nephews, Jeffrey and Christopher Ferro, and two grand nieces. And she leaves behind a number of close friends who loved her dearly.

Of her tireless work fighting for diversity, Ms. Loden had this to say when interviewed by the Washington Post in 2018: “I thought I would be finished with this by the end of my lifetime, but I won’t be.” And she understood that her most famous utterance will remain needed for a while longer, saying, “I’m hoping if it outlives me, it will [become] an antiquated phrase. People will say, ‘There was a time when there was a glass ceiling.’”

Donations in her memory can be made to [Democracy Now! – an independent global news organization that is listener supported].