



Special Olympics

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Special Olympics Mourns the Loss of Eunice Kennedy Shriver

HYANNIS, MA (August 11, 2009) - Eunice Kennedy Shriver died early this morning at Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis, Massachusetts, surrounded by her family. She was 88 years old. Near her at the time of her death were her husband, R. Sargent Shriver; her five children: Robert "Bobby" Sargent Shriver III, Maria Owings Shriver, Timothy Perry Shriver, Mark Kennedy Shriver and Anthony Paul Kennedy Shriver, as well as their spouses and all of her nineteen grandchildren.

The younger sister of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Shriver was the founder and honorary chairperson of Special Olympics, and executive vice president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation. She has been a leader in the worldwide movement to improve and to enhance the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities for more than six decades. Born in Brookline, Massachusetts on July 10th, 1921, she was the fifth of nine children of Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Stanford University along with numerous other honors and awards. In 2006, Pope Benedict XVI bestowed upon her the title of Dame of the papal Order of St. Gregory the Great.

"We are tremendously grateful for the extreme outpouring of support and prayer from the public as we honor our beloved founder," said Special Olympics President and COO Brady Lum. "Today we celebrate the life of a woman who had the vision to create our movement. It is an enormous loss, but I know we can rest assured that her legacy will live on through her family, friends, and the millions of people around the world who she touched and transformed. In her memory, we will continue to work to bring her powerful vision to life to change the lives of those with intellectual disabilities, their families and communities, using sports as the catalyst for respect, acceptance and inclusion."

Shriver is survived by her husband of 56 years, R. Sargent Shriver Jr.; her five children; and her nineteen grandchildren who range in age from two months to twenty-two years.

Out of respect for the privacy of the family, no interviews are being granted at this time.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that donations be made to Special Olympics www.specialolympics.org and Best Buddies www.bestbuddies.org. Condolence cards may be sent to Special Olympics headquarters: 1133 19th Street NW, Washington DC, 20036. Please visit www.eunicekennedyshriver.org to share a tribute online.

Tribute areas are also being set up at Special Olympics Headquarters in Washington D.C., The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum in Boston and the JFK Museum in Hyannis.

Funeral details and other memorial information will be posted at www.eunicekennedyshriver.org as they become available.

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, promoting acceptance for all, and fostering communities of understanding and respect worldwide. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to nearly 3.1 million athletes in 228 Programs in all regions of the world, providing year-round sports training, athletic competition and other related programs. Special Olympics now takes place every day, changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in places like China and from regions like the Middle East to the community playgrounds and ball fields in every small neighborhood. Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship. Visit Special Olympics at www.specialolympics.org.

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