

Last month the church lost a dear and faithful member, Dr. Kay Reynolds. Though few of us knew her well, she was regular in her attendance, even in her declining years. We asked two of her UCSD friends, Sherrie Laver and Nancy Hatch, to write a brief memorial of Kay's life.

Kay Bissell Reynolds

September 24, 1939 -- February 2, 2021

Born and raised in New England, Kay earned a B.A. degree from Simmons College in 1961 and, shortly thereafter, a Doctorate in Modern Languages from Middlebury College.

For several years she taught Spanish at a Connecticut high school and in 1969 married Edward Reynolds at Yale where Ed was doing graduate work in African history. Their son, Joel Ohene Reynolds, was born in 1973.

In 1971 the family moved to San Diego where Ed joined the History Department faculty at the University of California, San Diego, and Kay became involved in undergraduate advising at John Muir College, then one of the five undergraduate colleges. Soon Kay was appointed Dean of Academic Advising at Muir.

For almost 40 years, Kay was a brilliant and compassionate leader of the college's dedicated Academic Advising staff. She was a key member of numerous college committees targeted specifically for Muir students such as Muir General Education and Graduation Requirements, New Student Orientations, Muir College Admissions, Honors Programs, Caledonia Honor Society, Dartmouth College Exchange Program, Education and Opportunities Abroad Programs, Muir Student Graduation, as well as counseling and programming for Students in Academic Difficulty.

Kay could be blunt and direct while advising students with academic problems, and if they showed effort and promise, she would be their champion and advocate while guiding them back to good academic standing. Over her time at Muir College, Kay made a profound difference in the lives of many students.

Kay was a member and frequent Chair of the UCSD Deans of Academic Advising Committee. This unique group, representing the 6 UCSD colleges, met weekly to discuss current academic advising issues, innovative academic programming, and action recommendations for student petitions. While considering an undergraduate's petition, Kay always looked deeper to see if the "spirit" of the academic requirement or rule had been met.

She was also frequently tapped to serve on university-wide, departmental, and college search committees for provost, faculty, or staff positions.

During summer vacations Kay loved to visit a good friend who had a lake house in New Hampshire. Together they would hike, kayak, swim, read books during the day and discuss their thoughts together in the evenings. Kay was always happy and rejuvenated after these visits.

Kay retired from UCSD in July of 2010 and, her marriage having ended, moved to Thailand to be with her son, Joel. Sadly, Joel died unexpectedly a few years later.

Shortly thereafter Kay returned to San Diego. Her mental and physical health were in decline, and, with the help of some members of her church, she was placed in a memory care facility where she resided, peacefully, until her death on February 2nd, 2021.