

Nancy Gray

Her Legacy: An outstanding activist in government and politics with an extensive list of service in women's issues and mentoring young women.

Despite not being born in the city, Nancy Gray made such an impression on Fort Collins during her time there that after her death, Nancy Gray Ave was born. Born in 1932 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Nancy Gray moved to Fort Collins in 1961 with her husband and three children and became very active in the community.

Nancy served in city government and boards for 24 years, including a term as mayor, on the Northern Colorado Conservancy Commission, and the Poudre Valley Hospital Board. She was most proud of her work in securing funds for the Crossroads Safehouse and encouraging the development of the Fort Collins Trail System. Nancy won the Susan B. Anthony award for her work in Fort Collins, furthering the cause of equal opportunity for women and girls.

In 2001, Nancy received a diagnosis of terminal illness. Her indomitable attitude afterwards reflected not only her personal character, but her mission in life: to inspire the women around her. According to her friend and hospice volunteer Elizabeth Elliott, her response to the diagnosis was to say with a toast, "OK, Elizabeth, we're going to show them how it's done." Many women in the community have since followed in her career footsteps.

Her husband Bill Gray, a professor at Colorado State University who has earned the nickname "Mr. Hurricane" for his work in meteorology, has said "In Fort Collins I am still known as "Mr. Nancy Gray."

Written by Melissa Allbrandt, Archivist, Editor, and Writer