

Marjorie Holt honored as loyal public servant and loving mother and grandmother



Governor Larry Hogan remembers Marjorie Holt during a funeral service for the former U.S. Representative at the Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church in Severna Park Saturday. Holt was 97 years-old and the first Republican woman elected to Congress from Maryland.



By **Chase Cook**

JANUARY 27, 2018, 4:15 PM

With flags flown at half-staff across the state, hundreds of people gathered Saturday to remember Marjorie Holt, the state's first Republican congresswoman, a mother and a friend.

They also remembered her culinary skills at making fried chicken fingers, mashed potatoes and pecan pie.

"It was the small stuff that defined our love, it was our conversations," said Marjorie E. Tschantre, Holt's granddaughter. "When you were in a conversation with our grandmother, it was always a safe place, you could talk about anything."

A somber crowd of several hundred people gathered at Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church in Severna Park to honor Holt, who died earlier this month. Her memory was honored with anecdotes about her tenacity and her love for her family. She was called a shatterer of glass ceilings who found a way to be intensely loyal to a busy political career and a growing family.

Gov. Larry Hogan, Tschantre and Holt's friend the Rev. Dr. Terry W. Schoener spoke at the event. Several notable Anne Arundel County officials attended the event, including County Executive Steve Schuh, former Annapolis mayor Mike Pantelides, Del. Tony McConkey, R-Severna Park, Senator Ed Reilly, R-Crofton, and former U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski among others.

Holt, 97, died earlier this month after complications from old age. Hogan ordered flags flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset on Saturday. Her ashes were placed center stage during Saturday's memorial service. Her husband Duncan Holt died in 2014.

Maryland has long been a blue state. Democrats have held the majority in the state legislature for years and it isn't often that a Republican representative is sent to Washington, D.C. Only 1 of the state's eight current U.S. representatives is Republican.

This can make Republican legislators loom large over their Democratic counterparts. As the state's first Republican congresswoman, Holt cast a long shadow.

Hogan recognized Holt's accomplishments while offering praise and thanks on behalf of the state.

"She was a trailblazer and pioneer who paved the way for the next generation for women leaders," Hogan said. "Marjorie Holt will be deeply missed, but she will not ever be forgotten. Her legacy will live on through the countless lives she touched."

Holt's legislative career began with a defeat.

In 1966 she ran for the Maryland House of Delegates but lost. That loss didn't deter her though. She ran for the Anne Arundel Circuit Court Clerk and won, defeating Louis Phipps, a tough political opponent. Holt served as clerk for six years. She previously had served on the county's Board of Elections.

During her time as court clerk, the U.S. Census created the then new U.S. Congressional 4th District. With no incumbent in the way, Holt's political career charged forward. In 1972 she defeated Werner Fornos to become the state's first Republican congresswoman.

She served until 1987, leaving office to resume practicing law. But Holt's public service streak didn't end there. She volunteered at the Light Street Soup Kitchen and Meals on Wheels. She also attended the 1988 Republican National Convention in New Orleans.

Holt's friend Schoener used his speaking time to remember Holt as a kind woman who "won his affection" after their first lunch together. The two stayed in touch and Holt introduced him to prominent leaders such as Tip O'Neill, Schoener said.

But what stuck out to Schoener the most when reflecting on Holt's life and work, was her ability to compromise and work with people who had different views than her.

The reverend contrasted that to today's political debates — which he called "democracy-killing polarization" — and called on the audience of Democrats and Republicans to work together as Holt had done before.

“There was a time not very long ago when opinion and part affiliation didn’t keep people apart,” Schoener said. “It was a time when the good of the nation drove people together, not apart. I’ll speak for all of you, Majorie we will miss you.”

The Baltimore Sun contributed to this report.

Copyright © 2018, Capital Gazette, a Baltimore Sun Media Group publication | [Privacy Policy](#)

This article is related to: [Democratic Party](#), [Maryland General Assembly](#)