

Betty Bratcher 1949–2018

By Ken Monzingo

Betty Bratcher, the beloved matriarch of bridge in Southern California, passed from this world of respiratory problems on Oct. 27.

There was not, and may never be, a more universally loved person in our bridge midst. Most all of us involved in unit, district and national management, or thousands of regular tournament-goers, were always greeted with her loving smile and positive attitude. Betty truly loved the players, she loved her job and she loved bridge.

To me and to all who knew her well, Betty was the little sister we never had, the aunt we always wanted to visit and the mom we wanted to hear us cry. Her personality and empathy were infectious – you always wanted to talk to her, just watching the way she listened to you. I was blessed to be one of her closest friends for the past 40 years as we worked together in regional and national tournaments. Betty was the head director of virtually all regionals in SoCal, and she also reached the highest level of national director as she was in charge of the Fall NABCs. But knowing Betty the person was far more important than working with her as a colleague.

Betty fought physical disabilities for the last half of her life. Her diabetes was so severe it eventually cost her both of her legs and confined her to home, never to travel again. But in her incapacitation, her closest friends – Nancy Boyd, Warren Cederborg, Scott Campbell, Arleen Harvey, Patty Holmes, Ken Horwedel, Gary Zeiger and other directors – kept her close at heart and always well informed.

I tried to do the same during my terms on the ACBL board. We never let her out of the loop, and she was so happy to remain a part and partner of bridge. Her last public bridge appearance was at her dear friend Jean Molnar's celebration of life at a Los Angeles club.

There will never be another Betty Bratcher. A once-in-a-lifetime friend who passed through our community and left so early. If there was a better friend on earth, I would love to know that person.



photo by Jonathan Steinberg