

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Katz shattered gender norms in Oregon politics

Oregonians always knew where Vera Katz stood.

There was nothing wishy-washy about her. That was part of the appeal of this outgoing, opinionated politician who shattered gender norms to become the first female speaker of the Oregon House and later served three terms as Portland mayor. In both roles, Katz had profound influence throughout Oregon.

She died Monday at age 84.

Sometimes it's difficult to realize how far Oregon has come since the 1970s, when men received preference over women at lunchtime restaurants — because men worked, their time was valuable and, after all, they had to get back to work! Vera Katz came of political age in that era.

But it's heartbreaking to recognize how far we have to go, as sexism endures in the 21st century. We long ago should have recognized, as was demonstrated by Katz and such legislative contemporaries as fellow Democrat Betty Roberts and Republican Norma Paulus, that women are just as competent and capable as men in political life and public leadership.

The tough-minded leadership of those women stands in sharp contrast to Kate Brown, who has yet to establish her *raison d'être* for being Oregon's governor, and to Portland's one-term mayors — Tom Potter, Sam Adams and Charlie Hales — who followed Katz.

Katz was a bold leader but also a deft politician. In the Legislature, she found common ground with Denny Jones, a conservative retired rancher from Eastern Oregon. She and Senate President John Kitzhaber were aligned so closely that "Kitz and Katz" determined years of public policy in Oregon.

Not everything Katz did was successful, or even a good idea. She pushed education reforms that included the much-maligned CIM and CAM for students — certificates of initial and advanced mastery. Depending on your point of view,



Former Portland Mayor Vera Katz died this week after a life of notable achievements, including the popular Vera Katz Eastbank Esplanade, where this bronze sculpture is located.

Stasia Honnold

they were either an ineffective, time-wasting requirement or a decent reform that was poorly implemented.

The backlash over CIM and CAM

stands today as a warning against mandating onerous, top-down regulations that lack statewide understanding, let alone grassroots support. The governor and leg-

islative leaders should remember that history before shoving one-sided environmental or tax bills through the 2018 Legislature.

Leadership is a mix of failures and successes — and the ability to understand both. Katz had the courage to lead, the boldness to act and the confidence to stay in the public eye, even when things did not go her way.

That is leadership. Which makes us wonder: What will be the legacy of today's leaders?

AP Photo/Greg Wahl-Stephens
Portland Mayor Vera Katz, right, and County Chairwoman Diane Linn celebrate a solid lead in early returns for the 2003 Multnomah County \$128 million income tax levy at the headquarters of 'Yes on 26-48' in Portland.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for generous support of chorale singers, food bank

The North Coast Chorale and the Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank extend their thanks for the generous support for the Messiah Sing and Play-Along held on Nov. 26 at the Performing Arts Center in Astoria. The gifts to the CCA Regional Food Bank topped \$2,000 plus over 150 pounds of food.

The chorale singers are so grateful to have a music-loving audience like our friends in Clatsop County. We all experienced the joy of giving, to the CCA Regional Food Bank. Through efforts like this we know that we are part of a community that helps those in need.

Being part of this longstanding tradition is an honor for us at CCA Regional Food Bank. As we do our work, we are reminded of another longstanding tradition — the commitment to always remember the poor. The gifts received the evening of the North Coast Chorale's Sing and Play-Along will allow us to acquire over 10,000 pounds of food. And during this holiday season it will be especially helpful to many people across our county. Our sincere thanks go out to all who assisted and participated in this wonderful evening. Listening to the music and joyful voices that evening reinforced the purpose of my work during this very busy time.

DENISE REED
North Coast Chorale
MARLIN MARTIN
CCA Regional Food Bank
Astoria

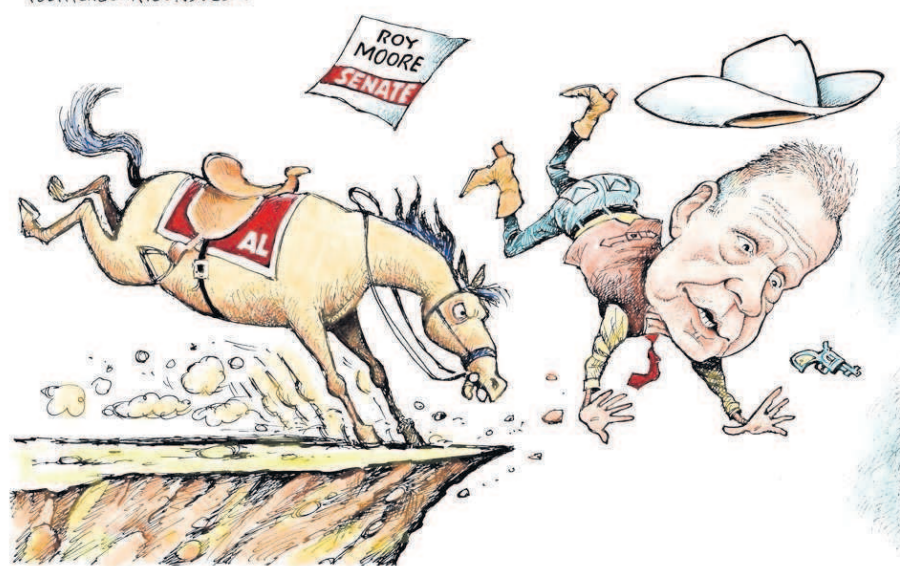
Thanks for turnout at animal assistance fundraiser

I want to express an appreciation for the outstanding turnout and support for the Clatsop Animal Assistance (CAA) Dec. 9 at the annual fundraiser and bake sale. So many folks volunteered their time, money, and effort, and in some cases, all of those at the same time.

Having been a part of a successful small community volunteer effort decades ago in North Central Washington to build a big community center called "the Barn," this annual effort here to support animals in need is outstanding.

Rumor has it that it's the second-largest fundraiser bake sale in America. Coupled with items to silent bid on, everyone should feel

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great about the final total raised for the animals that need help. Sure, I could name Linda Perkins and Crissy Christian and all the others, but with so many volunteers everyone should be proud to be a part of this ... great job to all who helped.

Small towns are really good at this because of that sense of community and ownership. Count us in for next year.

PAT WILSON
Astoria

Vote 'yes' on Measure 101

A 'yes' vote on Measure 101 on Jan. 23 will ensure access to health care to 95 percent of Oregonians and create a state reinsurance program that reduces premiums for people who buy their own coverage.

The Oregon Legislature worked out this referral with a large group of stakeholders, including hospitals, and passed it in both houses with a 3/5th vote. A budgetary measure it will temporarily assess hospitals, insurance companies, and the Public Employees' Benefits Board. Rural hospitals will be charged at a lower rate.

A no vote will cut funding for the Oregon Health Plan, and trigger the loss of up to \$5 billion in matching federal funding.

Vote 'yes' for health care in Oregon on Jan. 23
JUANITA PRICE
Astoria

Support the arts and get a tax deduction from the state

As we celebrate the season of giving, we at the Oregon Cultural Trust hope you will support a cultural organization that makes a difference in your world. Oregon's famous quality of life is due, in large part, to the 1,400-plus arts, heritage and humanities organizations that call our great state home.

That's why the Oregon Legislature established the cultural tax credit to reward Oregonians who donate to cultural nonprofit organizations. Just donate to one or more of the libraries, arts organizations or museums you care about, then make a matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust at culturaltrust.org by Dec. 31. When you file your 2017 state taxes, the donation you made to the Cultural Trust will come back to you via the cultural tax credit. That's right, you double the impact of your donation for free.

This year generous donors lifted Oregon Cultural Trust fundraising to a new high, resulting in a record \$2.94 million in awards to 136 cultural nonprofits last fiscal year. The awards include a total of \$735,887 to the Cultural Trust's five statewide partners (Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Heritage Commission, Oregon Humanities, Oregon Historical Society and the State Historic Preservation Office); \$735,887 to 45 county and tribal cultural coalitions — for regranteeing in their communities;

and \$1,471,774 in competitive Cultural Development Grants to 86 cultural organizations across the state.

In the North Coast area, the Cultural Trust awarded \$7,741 to Astoria Visual Arts, \$10,543 to the Clatsop County Cultural Coalition, \$9,171 to the Tillamook County Cultural Coalition, \$70,307 to the Cultural Coalition of Washington County and \$11,878 to the Columbia County Cultural Coalition. The grants to the cultural coalitions will be used to award more local grants for projects that matter to the community.

The Cultural Trust envisions an Oregon that champions and invests in creative expression and cultural exchange, driving innovation and opportunity for all. Our mission is to lead Oregon in cultivating, growing and valuing culture as an integral part of communities.

Please help us double the love for Oregon culture by taking advantage of the cultural tax credit this year. We are deeply grateful for your support.

BERENIECE JONES-CENTENO
Board member, Oregon Cultural Trust
Salem

The other day at a book signing in Long Beach, Washington, I heard two whiskered old musicians performing. The lyrics in the song they were singing struck a sad note within me. They were: "You don't matter to me any more."

How sad that anyone doesn't matter any more. Everyone should matter. To Jesus, everyone mattered. The little children, the tax collectors, even the prostitutes. So, if everyone mattered to him, surely they should matter to each one of us.

Each time we meet any person, friend or stranger, and we ignore them, and "pass on the other side of the street," as the priest in Leviticus did in the account of the good Samaritan, by our actions were saying "you don't matter."

So many of our social problems are the result of so many thinking they don't matter. So what's the solution? I guess, to start with, each one of us must recognize that we do matter, and by our actions, show that others we meet that they, too, really matter.

At this Christmas time, I'm sure there are many lonely souls, so take the time to make a call, send a greeting. Let them know that they matter.

JIM BERNARD
Warrenton