

# Hanne Maria Sonquist (1931-2009)

**H**anne Sonquist, extraordinary wife, mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, friend, mentor, and active advocate for enhancing the lives of young children, died peacefully surrounded by her loving family on May 31, 2009 following a ten-year struggle with lymphoma.

Hanne was born in Vienna, Austria to Doctors Ella and Joseph Deutsch on September 28, 1931. Her family immigrated to Chicago in the summer of 1938. Hanne and John Sonquist met through the Chicago Circle Pines Co-op Youth Programs. Both attended the University of Chicago and were married in 1950.

In 1959 they moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan as John began working at the University of Michigan. Between 1954 and 1961, Hanne and John added three children (Eric, Catherine and Kristin) and in the mid-1960's, she returned to school completing a Masters Degree in Education with a focus in her graduate work on Early Childhood Development.

In 1970 they moved to Santa Barbara with Hanne joining UCSB's Graduate School of Education, where she helped develop the Early Childhood Education curriculum and helped found Santa Barbara's Centro Familiar while serving as an instructor for both UCSB and SBCC. In 1974 she joined the faculty at SBCC and began a 23-year tenure as Director of the Starr King Parent-Child Workshop.

With more than 25 years experience working with pre-school children and parents, she became certified as a Marriage and Family Therapist in 1980 and continued her private practice until this year.

Hanne loved music, art, dancing and skating. She sang alto in the Santa Barbara Choral Society for many years. She enjoyed sharing her musical interests, and hosted an annual Christmas "Family Sing" at her house every year. She had many long-time close friends, and shared her life with her women's group for over 35 years.

She was a dedicated member of the Society of Friends (Quakers) for over 60 years and an active member of the Santa Barbara Society of Friends for over 25 years, serving as Chair of the Ministry and Counsel Committee, and once as Co-Clerk. Her concern for peace and justice

lasted over her entire life, including her participation in Women Strike for Peace, back in the 1960's, and attendance at several of the large peace and civil rights marches in Washington and New York at that time.

Children were Hanne's favorites, and the nurturing environment she sought to create at the Starr King Parent-Child Workshop was one of her greatest achievements. It wasn't just an environment for children, but a place where people with young children could learn how to be good parents. Over the past three decades many of those parents have gone on themselves to become advocates for children. This is another one of her legacies to the Santa Barbara community.

An active member of our community, Hanne has served as a volunteer for many organizations including New Beginnings, Storyteller Program, CALM, PEP and children centers across the county. She has served on the Governing Boards of the National, California and Tri-Counties Associations for the Education of Young Children. She has also served as Chair of the SB County Human Services Commission and as a member of SB County's First-5 Commission.

Honors include receiving the first SB Children's Commission "Child Friendly" award, 1994 SB Independent "Local Hero" award, 1997 SB-AEYC "Stand for Children" award, 1999 SB County Human Services Commission "Volunteer of the Year" award, 2000 Santa Barbara Rotary Club "Paul Harris Fellow award, 2000 2nd Supervisorial District's "Women of the Year" award, 2006 Santa Barbara Democratic Women's Club "Woman of the Year" award and the 2007 New Beginnings "Recognition of Outstanding Contribution".

Hanne is survived by her husband of 58 years, John Sonquist, her son Eric Sonquist of Santa Barbara (Anita), daughters Catherine Sonquist Forest of Santa Cruz (Will), Kristin Sonquist Firrell of Woodland Hills (Graham) and grandchildren Zoe, Jessica, Kelsey, Scarlett and Owen, her brother, Steven Deutsch of Eugene, Oregon (Beth) and many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the American Friends Service Committee, SBCC's Starr King Parent-Child Workshop, and Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care of Santa Barbara.



Her feelings about life are illustrated by Poet Mary Oliver, whom she loved;

*"...When it's over,  
I don't want to wonder  
if I have made of my life  
something particular,  
and real.*

*I don't want to find  
myself sighing and  
frightened, or full of  
argument.*

*I don't want to end up  
simply having visited  
this world."*

She was, indeed, an active participant, not a visitor.

Please join us at 2:00 PM on Sunday, June 21, 2009 at the UCSB Faculty Club Lawn for a Community Celebration of the Life of Hanne Sonquist.

Celebratory Summer Solstice attire is welcomed, along with blankets, hats and folding lawn chairs.

Reception to follow.