

Stephanie Dorey – In Memoriam

Stephanie Dorey, a popular former San Clemente city councilwoman who resigned her post to fight malignant melanoma in 2005, died the morning of Friday, April 6, at her beachfront home in San Clemente. She was 64.

The melanoma had appeared on her neck in 1992, but doctors removed it and Stephanie thought she had beaten it. But it resurfaced in 2003, her year as San Clemente's mayor.

She was doing so well in 2004 that she ran for re-election and won, only to see the melanoma take hold again, forcing her to step down in 2005. The day she resigned, an overflow crowd at City Hall gave her an ovation and showered her with accolades.

Stephanie was beloved as a champion of the coast and a battler for the environment.

After moving to San Clemente in 1996 from Irvine, Stephanie and her husband John became troubled when they learned that the city was designing a paved coastal trail they saw as a threat to the rustic, small-town ambience of the local beaches.

The Doreys' grass-roots group, DeRail the Trail, knocked heads with City Hall, finally convincing the City Council to scrap the plan in 1999 and appoint a citizen-based panel to design a much more benign trail.

The Doreys became leaders in that movement and in a movement the city launched to protect and preserve the beaches. That led Stephanie Dorey, an ex-teacher, to run for City Council in 2000 on an environmental platform.

On the council, she earned a region-wide reputation as a coastal advocate. She was instrumental in San Clemente's defeat of a state-sponsored plan to double-track the coastal rail corridor through town and in creating a San Clemente Watershed Task Force. She helped persuade local voters to assess themselves a "clean ocean fee" to abate urban runoff and championed several coast-related measures, from banning smoking at the beach to restricting the use of Styrofoam.

Stephanie is survived by John and their children, Peter and Lindsay. In lieu of flowers, John Dorey has asked that donations be made to the San Clemente Watershed Task Force. For more information, please visit their website at www.SCWatersheds.com.