MARY PAT WEBER SWAMY
by Mary Pat Swamy

Mary Pat Weber was the oldest daughter of Bette and Don Weber. As a young woman she made the choice to attend Caroline Academy for high school, with the goal of joining the Catholic order of School Sisters of Notre Dame. Her experiences as a nun involved working with Father Groppi and followers, at a time of racial tensions. She taught in the inner city of Milwaukee. At the age of 21 she chose to leave the religious life, and enrolled at the University of Wisconsin campus in Stevens Point to finish her degree.

She married Dr. P.G. Swamy, a physician at the Marshfield clinic. He had experienced injustice and discrimination as a member of the lowest caste, and he supported Mary's volunteer efforts through their 44 years of marriage.

When Eileen Kelz left Personal Development Center, Inc, and moved toward women's reproductive health care, Mary joined her mom, Bette Weber, to deliver a response to domestic violence. Mary worked to identify services with other County providers including the Police and Sheriff departments, the medical community, social workers and churches, and the Community Assistance Program. Brochures were distributed, and services evaluated on a regular basis. They became part of a state effort to promote help for victims of violence, which moved to education and required classes for batterers. A second Peer counselor, Mary James, joined the team. She and a new Board energized the direction of PDC over the next decades.

While raising two children, Mary accepted other opportunities. At the age of 35 she was named one of the five outstanding women in the state, by the Wisconsin Jaycees, for her work with PDC and the Ronald McDonald House. She completed a master's degree program in management and later she was asked to join efforts to incorporate the Marshfield Community Foundation. She served on the Fire and Police Commission for 6 years, a step encouraged by her fellow members of the League of Women Voters.

She and her husband moved to the family home on Anna Maria Island in Florida in 2000 due to her husband's medical needs. Dr. Swamy died in 2014. While caring for him, Mary joined a nondenominational church. As a deacon, Mary Pat fought for inclusivity and progressive action. She stayed involved with volunteer efforts for the library and continued with her PEO work in Florida. She coordinated the group that represented 14 chapters in Sarasota and Bradenton. She has worked on loans and grants for 40 years, helping women who could not afford an education. She appreciated the funds provided to help women from around the world, who return to help their own people.



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In 2021, Mary moved back to Wisconsin to the Tomahawk Crystal Lake Area, and shares a home with a sister. She is now a volunteer driver for those who lack transportation for medical care. The daily routes provide a social opportunity for these people who have outlived their friends and family.

Now age 75, the following are some of my reflections: I love the opportunities that have been given to me. I have been in the right place at the right time.

1) Convent life offered me the unique experience of women power as well as a culture of male dominance. The friends from those years continue to meet and offer support.

2) Marriage to a Hindu Dalit, and frequent visits to his village resulted in a new school built for girls. My youngest sister-in-law had stated "My destiny is to be poor." We acted, and her sons are now engineers, and have married outside their caste.

3) PDC showed me the needs of many families and the service providers became good friends. It was a force for change.

4) In my new locations, I found a group of strong women meeting the needs within my adopted community. These co-workers became friends. I was part of a strong band of powerful doers.

That is what one person can do. My family and friends gave me the courage to reach out and say, "Take my hand and we will walk together."