



## Wendy Diane Puriefoy

May 6, 1949 - July 12, 2024

Ms. Puriefoy was the president of Public Education Network (PEN), the nation's largest network of community-based school reform organizations, from 1991 to 2012. Under her visionary leadership, PEN grew into a national network of local education funds reaching more than 11 million children in 1,220 school districts and 18,000 schools nationwide.

In the 1970's she served as a special monitor of the court-ordered desegregation plan for Boston's public schools. As president of PEN, Ms. Puriefoy was the leading force behind systemic reform initiatives in school finance and governance, curriculum and assessment, parent involvement, school libraries and school health. With support Ms. Puriefoy raised from national foundations, PEN launched multi-million dollar public engagement initiatives focused on teacher quality, standards and accountability, and schools and community services.

Ms. Puriefoy was also a noted leader in the philanthropic world. Prior to her role as president of PEN, Ms. Puriefoy was executive vice president and chief operating officer of The Boston Foundation, a community foundation with an endowment of over \$750 million. Subsequent to PEN, Ms. Puriefoy served as a Senior Fellow at the Ford Foundation.

Ms. Puriefoy served on the boards of numerous national organizations

including DEMOS, Hasbro Children's Foundation, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the National Center for Family Philanthropy, FairTest, Jobs for the Future, Milton Hershey School, Ms. Foundation for Women, the PEW Forum on Standards-Based Reform, Women and Philanthropy, the National Charities Information Bureau, the Council on Foundations, Teach for America, Children's Express, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, the Boston Annenberg Challenge, and the Children's Defense Fund.

Outside of her professional pursuits, Ms. Puriefoy was an adventurous traveler, having journeyed around the world. Her travel highlights included two ascents of Mt. Everest, visits to Ashrams where she engaged in lengthy silent retreats, and an invited trip to South Africa upon the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. She also regularly spent September on Martha's Vineyard.

During her illness, one of her greatest joys was visiting the Nile Swim Club, which was founded in 1957 by her father and others to provide a place for Black children to swim because the local community pool was segregated.

Ms. Puriefoy is survived by her sister and devoted caretaker of several years, Jacquelyn Puriefoy Brinkley, sister-in-law Barbara Miller Puriefoy, her nephews Noel Alencon Puriefoy Brinkley, wife Juliana, and Carson Calvert Puriefoy Jr., wife Vanessa, her niece Kia Puriefoy, grand nieces and nephews Dakota and Sydney Puriefoy, Christian Scherwitzl, Naomi and Harper Brinkley, Carson Calvert Puriefoy III, wife Sabrina, and great grand niece Amaya Puriefoy, all of whom she loved dearly.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be given in Ms. Puriefoy's memory to local education funds that were part of Public Education Network, which can be found here: <https://publiceducation.issuelab.org/resource/public-education-network-pen-members-directory.html>

and/or to the Nile Swim Club in Yeadon <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/nile-swim-club-of-yeaddon>.

Later this year, family and friends will announce a memorial celebration of Ms. Puriefoy's life, and establish the Wendy D. Puriefoy Fund to support education and other causes near to Ms. Puriefoy's heart.

## Cemetery Details

**PRIVATE**

## Events

**Details are pending.**

# Tribute Wall

LW

“ I met Wendy in graduate school at BU when we were both so young. She became a good friend - so kind and funny plus a great cook. We stayed in touch over the years and got together in Chicago and DC - she visited the university where I worked to give the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Distinguished Lecture one year, with a wonderful presentation on public education. We will miss her.  
*Lynn Weiner and Tom Moher*

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**Lynn Weiner** - August 23, 2024 at 05:08 PM

WF

“ I had the good fortune of working with Wendy in the 90s on a national project supporting community conversations on race and education. Later, I was honored that she served on Public Agenda's Board during much of my presidency. What a wise, dynamic, and loving colleague! My condolences to all her loved ones. – Will Friedman

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**Will Friedman** - August 16, 2024 at 03:15 PM

MM

“ Wendy was a very dear sincere friend for over 50 years and although we had a 'pond' between us she remained a dear friend and part of our family - she will be greatly missed but will always be in our hearts. May she rest in peace and watch over us. Michael & Family

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**Michael Mittelman** - August 01, 2024 at 05:00 AM

KK

“ Outside of my parents, Wendy was one of a handful of people in my life who had an outsize influence on my thinking, my perspective, my career and my sense of self. She gave me enormous responsibility at a young age and the authority to create my own vision for my work and my life. After leaving PEN, she continued to give me inspiring work and mentorship. Later, she gave me one of the most important friendships of my life. She cooked dinner for me at her townhouse most every Friday for nearly a decade. I can still taste her spring risotto. She will be missed, dearly. I only hope she knows how much she gave and how much she meant.

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**Kris Kurtenbach** - July 30, 2024 at 04:59 PM