

Remembering Anne M. Celebrezze

Anne M. Celebrezze, widow of the Hon. Anthony J. Celebrezze '36 L'63 Hon., died of congestive heart failure, May 26, 2001, at the age of 91, in Cleveland, the city for which she was a beloved "First Lady."

Mrs. Celebrezze carved her own niche in civic affairs while her husband held public office.

Anthony J. Celebrezze Sr. was mayor of Cleveland from 1953 to 1962. He was secretary of health, education and welfare during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. In 1965, he was appointed to the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mrs. Celebrezze was a two-term member of the Ohio Arts Council and received the 1990 Governor's Award for the Arts. She was a past president of the Women's City Club Foundation and received the club's Margaret Allen Ireland Award in 1977. She also handled leadership roles with the Cleveland Museum of Art's Women's Committee, the March of Dimes, Camp Fire Girls, Nephritis Association, Ikebana International Society, Gallery Group of Lakewood and several parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland.

She was honorary chairwoman of the Italian Women's Club and American Committee on Italian Migration. She was a past trustee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

While living in Washington, D.C., Celebrezze worked with Lady Bird Johnson on beautification efforts and evaluation of the Head Start Program. She served on the National Committee for Education of the Handicapped, National Advisory Council on Ethnic Studies and the board of Goodwill Industries.

"She was every inch a lady, but she was tough," said her son, Anthony J. Jr., former Ohio attorney general, secretary of state and state senator, who lives in Columbus. "She was a very thoughtful person. She tried to live the Golden Rule. She believed in helping people to help themselves."

The Cleveland native, whose maiden name was Marco, was valedictorian at Central High School in 1928. She graduated from Western Reserve University's School of Education and taught in the Cleveland schools for six years before getting married. She continued working as a substitute teacher and later was president of the Valley View Parent-Teacher Association.

Her husband died in 1998. They had been married 60 years.

In addition to her son, survivors include daughters, Jean Anne Porto of Washington, D.C., and Susan Marie Sullivan of Boston; 10 grandchildren; and a great-grandson.

Portions of the above piece are reprinted courtesy of The Plain Dealer.

