



Marjorie Rogatz

May 10, 2025

MARJORIE PLAUT ROGATZ

Marge Rogatz of Port Washington, NY died peacefully at her home at the age of 97 on May 10.

The poet, e. e. cummings dedicated a poem to his fellow-poet, Marianne Moore. It sums up Marge in a nutshell:

In a vicious world – to love virtue
In a craven world – to have courage
In a treacherous world – to prove loyal
In a wavering world – to stand firm.

In a cruel world – to show mercy
In a biased world – to act justly
In a shameless world – to live nobly
In a hateful world – to forgive.

In a venal world – to be honest
In a heartless world – to be human
In a killing world – to create
In a sick world – to be whole.

In an epoch of unself – to be oneself.

If there was an underdog any place around, Marge would sniff him out and fight on his side. She fought for Blacks, for Hispanics, for the poor, for the homeless, for children, for labor.

She was proof that one person with moral courage and integrity can make a difference in the lives of countless others.

Marge became the full-time unpaid President and CEO of Community Advocates, Inc. in 1986. A non profit organization, CA led efforts to address homelessness, the need for affordable and equitable housing, and the struggle to end structural and institutional racism on Long Island. Under her leadership, CA established a variety of precedent-setting initiatives, including the development in 1990 of the first permanent rental apartments for homeless families in Nassau County. CA also provided closing-cost grants to dozens of first-time homebuyers; employer assistance grants to nonprofits to help lower income employees become homeowners; and bridge loans to nonprofit providers of housing and services to families and individuals who were homeless.

She co-founded the Nassau Suffolk Coalition for the Homeless in 1988 and served as an officer and a member of its executive committee until 2004. In this capacity, she helped bring more than \$80 million in HUD Homeless Assistance grants and other federal and state funding to non-profit housing and service providers in Nassau County. She was a founder and an officer of Sustainable Long Island for 10 years; a founder and executive committee member of the Long Island Campaign for Affordable Rental Housing; and a long-time board member of the Health & Welfare Council of Long Island.

A co-founder of ERASE Racism in 2001, Marge served as secretary and co-chair of its board and, since 2008, she devoted the largest portion of her time

to helping ERASE Racism fight discriminatory policies and practices on Long Island, across New York State and beyond. In 2013 Community Advocates became an informal partner of ERASE Racism, providing significant person-power and financial support.

Marge was a member of the Long Island Community Foundation Board, serving for many years on its Grants Committee and on the Advisory Group for its Affordable and Equitable Rental Housing Initiative.

She was appointed to the Nassau County Task Force on Homelessness and the Nassau County Panel on Next Generation Housing. In 2007, she was appointed by then County Executive Thomas Suozzi to chair the Nassau County 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. In January 2008, she was appointed by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli to the Board of Directors of the State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA). She served on its Mortgage Insurance Fund Committee and on the Governance and other committees of New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), participating in key statewide housing finance, development and preservation decisions until her 2017 retirement from SONYMA.

Prior to joining Community Advocates, Marge had carried out consulting assignments in fields related to community development and human services for New York City Mayor John Lindsay, Nassau County Executive Eugene Nickerson and Suffolk County Executives H. Lee Dennison and John Klein. She also consulted for New York City Head Start and for community hospitals and organizations in East Harlem and the South Bronx.

During the civil rights movement, Marge served as Special Assistant to James Farmer, National Director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

Marge attended Smith College, graduated from Barnard College and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. She is survived by her husband, Dr. Peter Rogatz, to whom she was married for 76 years, by her daughter, Peggy Rogatz Cash; son, Dr. William Rogatz; grandson, Aiden Rogatz; brother, Roy Plaut and sister-in-law, Olga Gomez Plaut; and many nieces and nephews.

Private cremation by Roslyn Heights Funeral Home. A virtual memorial service will be planned for a later date.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Marge's memory may be made to ERASE Racism www.eraseracismny.org

Tribute Wall

LH

“ I am honored to have known Marge. My words cannot convey my love and gratitude for Marge, nor capture the essence of who she was! Marge was a true exemplar of what a civil and human rights activist aspires to be. She willingly used her own privilege to ensure that others were protected and gained access to their rights. For a short time, I was blessed to have learned from her and what an opportunity it was to get a historical and modern day perspective. Her sense of humor was bar none! My condolences to Peter, her husband of 75 years and her family. Thank you for sharing her with us! I hope that her, Hazel, and James Farmer reconnect to get into some good trouble and good times in the beyond!

L. Harding - May 20, 2025 at 05:27 PM

VP

“ Marge was a force of nature. She was both champion and ally. She was an encourager capable of a good strong rebuke in response to wrong. I first met her as a high school student and then again in the nonprofit/advocacy sector. She lived a life of service and good trouble. Well done good and faithful servant. My deepest condolences and thanks to the family for sharing her with the rest of us. May her memory be a blessing. Peace of God be with you. With deep gratitude and affection, Vanessa Pugh



Vanessa Pugh - May 14, 2025 at 06:14 AM

RP

“ Marge was absolutely one of a kind. She was a caring and compassionate person who always was willing to lend a helping hand wherever it was needed. She was my friend and I loved her dearly. I know she will be missed by everyone she knew her. Rest in Peace Marge, I love you.
Robin Pellegrini

Robin Pellegrini - May 12, 2025 at 03:15 PM

PD

As the founding Executive Director of Sustainable Long Island I was grateful to have Marge as a key leader on the SLI board of directors. She was a relentless advocate for justice; a beautiful person. Rest in peace and power Marge. We love you.

Patrick G Duggan - May 13, 2025 at 01:55 PM

AA

This comment is in memory of Marge Plaut Rogatz and the Plaut family who in 1942 befriended my husband, Dr. Fredrick Ralph Abrams, when his mother suddenly passed away. It was a pivotal moment in his teenage life. He always remembered their kindness.

Alice Marilyn Abrams May 16, 2025

Alice Marilyn Abrams - May 16, 2025 at 09:48 PM