

Welcome

The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell

Good afternoon and welcome. We have come together today to mark the passing of Betty Roberts, an icon in this community and in this state. Those of us who knew her well loved her simply as a warm and compassionate human being – and all of us gathered here today recognize that the civic body has lost a significant pioneer in Oregon history. Betty Roberts was a complex person, and she took on many roles and wore them well. She was mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She was friend. She was teacher. She was politician. She was judge. She was mediator. This afternoon you will hear from people representing the various aspects of Betty's rich life.

Whenever anyone of significance is lost to us, we are led to think of our own lives – what are we doing with the years that have been given us? Are we using our gifts well? Is the world a bit better place because we have lived in it? Betty Roberts has left us with a formidable challenge – she always asked herself, what is the good that I can do – what is possible here? And then she moved forward. Her life was about saying yes in the face of old cultural patterns, of voices telling her no over and over again. She calls us to face our own obstacles, to find a way to the best in our own lives. And so today we come to grieve-- because one we have loved, we have lost – but we have gathered here chiefly to celebrate a life well lived. Let us begin.

To open the service, our musicians will sing “Spirit of Life,” a hymn which Betty loved and requested for this occasion.

"The Spirit of Life" (Carolyn McDade, Composer)

Spirit of Life, come unto me.

Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.

Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;

Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.

Roots hold me close; wings set me free;

Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.