

Connie Wright

Pendleton

May 20, 1941-April 21, 2014

Connie Violet Wright, former Pendleton councilwoman and union leader, died early Monday, April 21, 2014, at St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton. She was 72. Her husband, Joe Wright, was by her side.

She was born May 20, 1941, in Salem, Ore., to Philip and Ethel Gregg. She graduated from North Salem High School, and soon took a job creating sign information for the Oregon Highway Division (later, Oregon Department of Transportation).

She met Joseph Wright and they married Nov. 11, 1959, when he left U.S. Naval service.

The couple adopted their elder son, Philip, in early 1968 in Pendleton, and in 1969 in Salem she bore her other son, Tom. The family moved to Pendleton in 1972 and Joe and Connie never left.

Though she sure considered it. She hated Pendleton's constant dust and missed the green Willamette Valley, where most of her family resided. But Pendleton grew to be her home.

And this was where she found her career calling. She took a job as office staff in 1986 for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. Connie studied U.S. Labor history and law, and moved up to become a union representative and manager of the Pendleton AFSCME office. She negotiated labor contracts throughout Eastern Oregon, and her

legacy remains in state prison contract language she helped develop. She retired from AFSCME in 2003.

Connie earned a reputation as a tough union negotiator, and she took her working-class attitudes with her for two consecutive terms on the Pendleton City Council, 1996-2004.

Connie, though, believed family came first. She opened her home to relatives who needed a place for a night or to get back on their feet. She delighted in watching her children and grandchildren playing youth sports.

She also had a sense of humor. She told her sons before Pendleton High School football games, "Don't embarrass me out there."

She was a stay-at-home grandma in retirement. In her later years, she suffered from leukemia and succumbed to a pulmonary disease. Even as her health declined, she remained the mortar of her family.

Survivors include her husband, Joe, her sons and their families, her brother, Ron Gregg and his wife, Kay, of Keizer, Ore., and grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews, nieces and cousins.

Her funeral services are Monday, April 28, at 11 a.m. at Burns Mortuary, 336 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. There also will be a short graveside service at Olney Cemetery, Pendleton.



Wright

MORROW: Port, county

Continued from 1A

ty. I will work hard to represent each and every one of you," Grieb told the audience. "I'm very proud of the work I've done the past seven years."

The biggest challenge ahead facing the county is budgeting in the face of ongoing cutbacks, Grieb said. Commissioners are also engaged in long-term planning for hurdles such as when the Boardman Coal Plant closes in 2020.

"We have to prioritize what our communities want in terms of services, and come up with the resources to provide those services," Grieb said.

Russell vowed his first item of business would be to meet with all city managers and mayors to gauge whether they feel their communities are being served by county government.

One question specifically aimed at Russell was whether he would remain unbiased at the county courthouse, com-

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