

New Bedford's Mayor Jon Mitchell and UMass Dartmouth's statements on the passing of MarDee Xifaras

New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell released the following statement on the passing of Margaret D. "MarDee" Xifaras:

"I was saddened to learn this morning of the passing of my friend, MarDee Xifaras, who endured her illness for many years with remarkable grace. For decades, MarDee was a singularly effective Democratic operative at the local, state and federal levels, where she commanded the confidence of school board candidates and Presidential candidates alike.

She had a rare combination of infectious energy, organizational skill and tough-mindedness that made her better than anyone at grassroots campaigning. She inspired countless young people, especially women, to get involved in causes they believed in, while maintaining a busy law practice in New Bedford, serving on numerous nonprofit boards, and raising her children. I will be forever grateful for her support of me, and the City and region will sorely miss her myriad contributions.

I extend my heartfelt sympathy to her husband John, and their children and grandchildren during this difficult time."—Mayor Jon Mitchell.

UMass statements on the passing of MarDee Xifaras:

UMass Dartmouth Chancellor Robert E. Johnson:

"I am saddened by the loss of our alumna, former Trustee, and UMass Dartmouth champion MarDee Xifaras ('78 MBA). Her love

for UMass Dartmouth and this region, most notably displayed in her unyielding support for the creation of UMass Law, will leave a legacy that endures for generations. As a distinguished attorney, a grassroots organizer for candidates and causes at the national, statewide and local level, and benefactor of our university, MarDee lived a life in full pursuit of justice.

Her life of service has been an example for all of us to follow. On a personal note, I will cherish my conversations with MarDee. She was always ready and willing to listen, and then offer sound counsel rooted in her vast experience and enduring belief in the better angels of people. I will miss her. On behalf of the students, staff, and faculty of UMass Dartmouth, I offer condolences to MarDee's husband, Judge John Xifaras, her children, grandchildren, and countless friends and colleagues across the Commonwealth and nation."

UMass President Marty Meehan:

"The UMass community is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of former UMass Trustee Margaret "MarDee" Xifaras. MarDee X was a phenomenal person who lived life with vigor, passion and perseverance. A pioneer for women in politics, she never wavered from her progressive values over the 40 years I knew her. As a UMass Trustee for five years, she advocated tirelessly on behalf of UMass and played a key role in establishing the UMass School of Law in Dartmouth.

Simply put, we would not have a public law school in Massachusetts without MarDee X, and we owe her a debt of gratitude for her long-standing commitment to world-class public education in the Commonwealth. On behalf of the entire UMass community, I offer our condolences to John, her daughters, grandchildren, friends, colleagues and other loved ones."