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## Peggie Dunklin always helped others, even in the face of adversity

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Margaret “Peggie” Miller Dunklin, 55 — a 33-year Pitt employee, including the last nine years as director of budget and human resources for the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (OAFA) — died Dec. 7, 2021.

“She brought the Pitt to it,” Marc Harding said of Dunklin’s work here. Harding, head of OAFA, recalled that “Peggie’s love of Pitt really shone through. She was one of the foundational workers for the work she did.”



That’s why her office was next to his, he said. “It’s important for a person in that position to hear everything that is going on. It was a very, very large job,” since Dunklin was responsible for the administration of OAFA work toward new undergraduate enrollment for the Pittsburgh campus and financial aid for all students, as well as oversight of OAFA’s 107 employees, including a direct supervisory role over several.

“She handled all new hire processes and staff development for the office” as well as the 200 Pathfinder student tour guides overseen by OAFA. “She also knew how to balance a budget to the dime ... If staff traveled and needed reimbursements, or the department needed to pay for muffins for guests, or purchasing for the office,” Dunklin handled it expertly, he said.

“Peggie knew how to juggle all this responsibility,” he added. However, “she was first and foremost known as a compassionate staff member. It was her ability to connect with people, her caring, her kindness. ... I witnessed her dealing with every human resources issue. If someone fainted, she was there. ... She would make sure staff felt connected and engaged and she was part of creating as welcoming and inviting a culture as any unit of the University.

“It was so much more than just a job for her,” Harding said. “Pitt was her life.” Her office was decorated with Pitt sports memorabilia and she could often be seen at Pitt games and in Pitt gear.

Peggie Dunklin was one of 11 children, all of whom attended Pitt. Her father, John Miller, worked as a superintendent of maintenance in Tower A, and her sister Katie is now a dental hygienist working at Pitt, meaning that the Miller family has worked a total of 75 years here.

Dunklin's brothers Jack and Mike were lettermen in Pitt baseball, and her daughter Maura graduated from Pitt and now conducts research at Magee-Womens Hospital.

Peggie Dunklin served as chair or co-chair of her office's United Way campaign for every year of her employment there, and made fresh waffles in the office each year as her personal fundraiser. "It's just something we couldn't wait to do every year," Harding said.

OFA in turn has created a permanent endowed scholarship fund in her name — the Peggie Miller Memorial Fund — to raise at least \$25,000 before Feb. 21, 2022. It will support at least two undergraduate students with financial need from the Pittsburgh area with \$500 book awards each year. The fund has raised nearly \$17,000 so far.

Dunklin was a lifelong Pittsburgher, growing up in Cranberry and moving to Oakdale to raise her own family. Born June 9, 1966 to the late John F. Miller Jr. and Ruth Rodgers Miller, she graduated from Seneca Valley High School (1984) and then earned her bachelor's degree in communications at Pitt (1988) and a Master of Law Studies degree here just last year. Her Pitt career included work in the Office of University Communications and Marketing before joining OFA.

"One of Peggie's greatest legacies," recalled Harding, "is her affinity to help others, even in the face of adversity. Two weeks before Peggie's death, she asked me to visit her. ... She looked at me and made me promise that after she passes, I would remind the entire staff of two important things: to bank their sick time because you never know when you're going to need it, and to make sure you put as much money as possible away toward retirement. She told me this as she was trying to manage through great pain, and sadness. This was Peggie. Putting others before self and channeling her favorite quote," which has been attributed to Maya Angelou: 'I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.'

"This was a Pitt person through and through," he added. "This was her home. This was her place. This was her love. This was her passion."

She is survived by her husband, Marvin; her two children, Michael Hohn (Ashley) and Maura Hohn; her grandson William Flynn; her 10 brothers and sisters, John F. Miller III (Page), Michael Miller (Carla), Dennis Miller (Leslie), Susan DeFrancesco (Gary), Michelle Miller, Colleen Mahoney (Peter), Mary Lococo (Sam), William Rodgers Miller (Cindy), Timothy Miller (Jennifer), and Kathleen McKay (Gary); and all of her nieces and nephews.

— *Marty Levine*

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