



For Immediate Release

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Special Olympics Pennsylvania Mourns the Loss of Eunice Kennedy Shriver

Norristown, PA (August 11, 2009) - Eunice Kennedy Shriver died early this morning at Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis, Massachusetts, surrounded by her family. She was 88 years old. Near her at the time of her death were her husband, R. Sargent Shriver; her five children: Robert "Bobby" Sargent Shriver III, Maria Owings Shriver, Timothy Perry Shriver, Mark Kennedy Shriver and Anthony Paul Kennedy Shriver, as well as their spouses and all of her nineteen grandchildren.

The younger sister of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Shriver was the founder and honorary chairperson of Special Olympics, and executive vice president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation. She has been a leader in the worldwide movement to improve and to enhance the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities for more than six decades. Born in Brookline, Massachusetts on July 10th, 1921, she was the fifth of nine children of Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Stanford University along with numerous other honors and awards. In 2006, Pope Benedict XVI bestowed upon her the title of Dame of the papal Order of St. Gregory the Great.

"The 20,000 athletes and tens of thousands of family members, coaches, volunteers, staff and board members from the Special Olympics Pennsylvania family mourn the loss of our founder," said Matthew Aaron, Special Olympics Pennsylvania President and CEO. "Mrs. Shriver touched the lives of millions around the world and her legacy will endure forever. Among her many honors include the recent unveiling of her portrait at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC – the first and only portrait at the Gallery of an individual who has not served as President or First Lady. Special Olympics Pennsylvania is deeply honored that two of our athletes are forever memorialized along with Mrs. Shriver in that unique portrait. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her entire family as we reflect on the tremendous impact her life's work had in fostering respect, dignity, and acceptance around the world."

Shriver is survived by her husband of 56 years Robert Sargent Shriver Jr.; her children and her grandchildren, ranging in age from two months to twenty-two years. Out of respect for the privacy of the family, no interviews are being granted at this time.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that donations be made to Special Olympics www.specialolympics.org and Best Buddies www.bestbuddies.org. Condolence cards may be sent to Special Olympics headquarters: 1133 19th Street NW, Washington DC, 20036. Please visit www.eunicekennedyshriver.org to share a tribute online.

Tribute areas are also being set up at Special Olympics Headquarters in Washington D.C., The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum in Boston and the JFK Museum in Hyannis, Massachusetts. Funeral details and other memorial information will be posted at www.eunicekennedyshriver.org as they become available.

About Special Olympics Pennsylvania

Special Olympics Pennsylvania provides year-round training and competition in 23 Olympic-type sports to more than 20,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or closely related developmental disabilities. For more information about how SOPA inspires greatness, visit www.specialolympicspa.org.

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