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Thomas O'Rourke. Obituary (2008) - Chicago. IL - Chicago Tribune

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Thomas J. "Cowboy" O'Rourke, 62 years, suddenly, July 31, 2008, beloved husband of Margaret "Peggy" Barber; loving father of Betsy (Dan) Spillane, Haley (fiance, Keith Morey) O'Rourke and Uddvicic; dearest grandpa of Francie, Shea and Beau Thomas; fond brother of Patrick

(Marilyn); dear uncle of Courtney (Dale) Gorder and Darby (Tim) Douglas. Memorial celebration will be held on Saturday, Aug. 2, 2008, 4 p.m. at St James Lutheran Church, 2046 N. Fremont St., Chicago. In lieu of flowers, kindly make donations in Tom's name to Hartsel Library Friends, P.O. Box 10, Hartsel, CO, 80449. Funeral info, Ewald-Barlbck Funeral Home, 773-549-0098.

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Margaret 'Peggy' Barber, promotional mastermind behind National Library Week, celebrity 'Read' posters, dies r Chicago Tribune

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OBITUARIES *SEWS

Margaret 'Peggy Barber, promotional mastermind behind National Library Week celebrity 'Read' posters, dies

By BOB GOLDSBOROUGH
CHICAGO TRIBUNE | SEP 20, 2019

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Margaret 'Peggy' Barber, promotional mastermind behind National Library Week, celebrity 'Read' posters, dies. Chicago Tribune

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dedicated to promoting libraries

"She was a true believer in the importance of libraries to the health and soul of a community and their transformative powers for the individual users," said Art Plotnik, the former editor of American Libraries magazine.

Barber, 75, died of complications from lung cancer Aug. 25 at her Lincoln Park home, said her stepdaughter, Betsy O'Rourke.

Barber, the daughter of Ellen Barber, she grew up in Alhambra, California. She received a degree in English from the University of California at Riverside in 1965

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and a master's degree in library and information science from Rutgers University in 1966.

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Margaret "Peggy" Barber transformed how libraries and librarians promote their services to the public through two initiatives: National Library Week and annual communications audits, Wedgeworth said. National Library Week wound up providing funding that allowed the association to develop a robust public relations function, Wedgeworth said, while the communications' advice that helped the association develop a wide-ranging set of public programs.

San Francisco Public Library.

Early in her career, Barber worked as coordinator for the Orange County Cooperative Library System and as a reference librarian for the Bay Area Reference Center at the

In 1970, Barber joined the American Library Association as its official title was associate executive director for communication. Instantly, she began to put her stamp on the organization, recalled Robert Wedgeworth, who was the American Library Association's CEO from 1972 until 1985.

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'■ Peggy Barber was the guiding hand behind these two developments that became major financial and organizational success," Wedgeworth said. "Peggy was a participant in the National Library Week poster campaign."

Barber started the practice of annual posters featuring a major celebrity with a book, along with the headline "Read." The subjects of such posters included Sting, David Bowie, Mel Gibson, Julia Stiles, Maya Angelou, Stephen Hawking; and the rock band The Grateful Dead, among others; The posters also featured beloved characters such as Mickey Mouse and Miss Piggy of "Muppets" fame.

"How she managed to persuade the owners of Mickey Mouse and Miss Piggy images to authorize their use still "said.

Patricia Glass Schuman, a librarian who was president of the American Library Association from 1991 until 1992, called Barber "a consummate innovator and a pioneer."

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Margaret 'Peggy' Barber, promotional mastermind behind National Library Week, celebrity 'Read' posters, dies - Chicago Tribune

"Peggy's efforts changed the way librarians and library supporters think about communication and advocacy - and she pushed us all with determination, style and grace," Schuman said. "Her advocacy for public communication and support for libraries and literacy profoundly influenced the American Library Association

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Plotnik worked in the early 1970s for a national magazine for librarians before Barber helped recruit him to join the American Library Association as the editor of American Libraries magazine. The two wound up being colleagues for more than two decades.

"Having walked the walk in her library work, she was a true believer in the importance of libraries to the health and soul of a (community and their transformative powers for the individual users," Plotnik said. "One might have called her a zealot, cheerleader or even missionary for libraries, but she wouldn't have fit the stereotype. Her style was from the heart - never false or overbearing - and her career was one of action, not just words, in bringing the library message, of both traditional and modern services, to the public, to the media (and) to funders."

In 2000, Barber left the American Library Association and formed her own consulting firm, Library Communication Strategies. She shuttered the firm in 2015:

With Linda Crowe, Barber co-authored the 1993 book "Getting Your Grant: A How to Do It Manual for Librarians."

Barber chaired the National Coalition for Literacy and the Community Advisory Board of WT3EZ-FM. In retirement she enjoyed travel, playing the cello, and walking her golden retriever, Lucy, her stepdaughter said.

her husband, Haig Depoian, died in 1994. Her second husband, Tom, died in 2008. In addition to her stepdaughter, she is survived by a

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brother, Gary Barber; a stepson, Mike Depoian; four other stepdaughters, Haley Morey, Kate O'Rourke, Rose White and

Donna Szpytek; and 13 stepgrandchildren.

Services-were held.

Bob Goldsborough is a freelance reporter.

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