



Peg Elliott Mayo

March 31, 1929 - December 19, 2018

Peg Elliott Mayo (1929 - 2018)

Born Juanita Margaret Elliott on March 31, 1929, in Point Loma, California, Peg Elliott Mayo died of natural causes on her beloved land overlooking the Yaquina River in Nashville, Oregon, on December 19, 2018. She is survived by her husband, Don Pauls, a daughter, two sons, and three grandchildren. Peg and Don left Point Loma for Summit, Oregon, in 1980 and moved about three miles down the road to their 77 pristine acres in Nashville in 1990, which they converted into a Land Trust with a determination to forever protect and preserve its natural splendor.

Peg enjoyed an unusual range of interests and talents. Best known as a gifted psychotherapist and captivating writer, she was also an accomplished basket weaver, potter, photographer, and designer of elaborate buttons. She earned a Master's degree in Social Work from San Diego State University. Her first position as a therapist was at the Salvation Army's Door of Hope, where she helped dozens of single women build productive lives after giving birth in an era where the stigma for unwed mothers was stifling. Some of the girls she counseled went on to build distinguished careers and continued to turn to her for years. She subsequently, during her long career, served as a Social Worker for a number of other innovative programs as well as in conventional settings, including the San Diego County Department of Mental Health, and

also in private practice.

Perhaps her most notable contribution to the mental health field was when she established in 1969 Lifeline, one of the country's first free youth-oriented hotline and drop-in counseling centers, hosted by the San Diego Downtown YMCA. The program gained national recognition for its creativity in competently addressing the serious social challenges of youthful drug abuse, depression, and suicide, was the subject of formal academic studies, and led to an invitation for Peg to address a major national psychiatric conference in New York City, which she did with wit and grace.

After moving to Oregon, Peg established a private psychotherapy practice, taught at the local college, and for 15 years wrote a weekly newspaper column for the Corvallis Gazette-Times which captured the hearts of the community

Peg's literary career included fiction and non-fiction books, essays, stories, and even the occasional poem. Her co-authored *Rituals for Living and Dying* (Harper Collins) was praised by Ram Dass, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, and Stephen Levine, three renowned leaders in helping people face death and grief. She also wrote more than a dozen novels, many with the theme of Celtic life and spirituality, harkening back to her Irish roots. One of her favorites, *Blind Rafferty: Seven Nights of a Wake*, was turned into a play.

Tribute Wall

BV

“ I thought of Peg today and discovered she had left this earthly plane. Watching the video reminded me of her laughter, aliveness, insight, wit, fun, caring, magical storytelling, and intuitive knowing. I participated in her grief workshop, camping retreat on her precious land, women's support group, individual counselling 30 years ago. She was prolific, creative, insightful and a healing presence for several years in my life. Her impact lives on and ripples out creating a legacy of grateful people.

Barb Vandepas - January 09, 2021 at 12:00 AM

PJ

“ I just found out you were gone today Peg. I have been thinking about you lately and went to look you up, finding this. I know you are out there still somewhere and we will meet up again. I really enjoyed coming down to visit you, sitting in your kitchen or along the river. Listening to your stories. Helping edit a couple of your books. I am glad that person put the video of you on here, it was good to see your face and hear your voice again.

Pjm - October 19, 2020 at 12:00 AM

MH

“ Oh, dear Peg! I had lost touch with you after moving away from Oregon in 2013, yet always cherished our occasional lunches over the years we lived in the same region. Our shared San Diego roots and your generous writings about me will always be dear to my heart. Aloha, my friend!

Mark Hixon - November 29, 2019 at 12:00 AM

JO

“ *Joanne lit a candle in memory of Peg Elliott Mayo*



Joanne - January 31, 2019 at 12:00 AM

RH

“ *15 years ago I made this video about Peg Mayo. The video was shown at the Luna Film Festival at OSU.*

Roan Hogg - January 23, 2019 at 12:00 AM

“Peg Elliott Mayo (1929 - 2018) By David Feinstein, Ph.D. Peg Elliott Mayo was one of the most colorful and quick-witted individuals I've ever known. These qualities - combined with her absolute brilliance and deep compassion - made her an incredible psychotherapist, story-teller, and author of engaging books that take you on enlightening journeys into the challenges, foibles, and triumphs of the human spirit. Born Juanita Margaret Elliott on March 31, 1929, in Point Loma, California, Peg died of natural causes on her beloved land overlooking the Yaquina River in Nashville, Oregon, on December 19, 2018. She is survived by her husband, Don Pauls, a daughter, two sons, and three grandchildren. Peg and Don left Point Loma for Summit, Oregon, in 1980 and moved about three miles down the road to their 77 pristine acres in Nashville in 1990, which they converted into a Land Trust with a determination to forever protect and preserve its natural splendor. Peg enjoyed an unusual range of interests and talents. Best known as a gifted psychotherapist and captivating writer, she was also an accomplished basket weaver, potter, photographer, and designer of elaborate buttons. She was prone toward dramatic gestures, though she also had the dedication to turn them into constructive action. When she felt the public schools weren't serving the needs of young people, she started Paideia, an innovative private school whose name is based on the principle from ancient Greece of training the physical and mental faculties in such a manner as to produce a broad informed outlook that harmoniously blends with enlightened cultural development. Peg earned a Master's degree in Social Work from San Diego State University. Her first position as a therapist was at the Salvation Army's Door of Hope, where she helped dozens of single women build productive lives after giving birth in an era where the stigma for unwed mothers was stifling. Some of the girls she counseled went on to build distinguished careers and continued to turn to her for years. She subsequently, during her long career, served as a Social Worker for a number of other innovative programs as well as in conventional settings, including the San Diego County Department of Mental Health, and also in private practice. Perhaps her most notable contribution to the mental health

field was when she established, in 1969, Lifeline, one of the country's first free youth-oriented hotline and drop-in counseling centers, hosted by the San Diego Downtown YMCA. More than a hundred professional therapists, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and mental health counselors, or graduate students in those fields, were volunteers in that program. The magnet for this impressive team was Peg herself and the lively training and supervision groups she offered them. The program gained national recognition for its creativity in competently addressing the serious social challenges of youthful drug abuse, depression, and suicide, was the subject of formal academic studies, and led to an invitation for Peg to address a major national psychiatric conference in New York City, which she did with wit and grace. After moving to Oregon, Peg established a private psychotherapy practice, taught at the local college, and for 15 years wrote a weekly newspaper column that captured the hearts of the community. When the illustrious psychiatrist, Jean Shinoda Bolen (author of the bestselling *Goddesses in Everywoman*) came to Corvallis to address a large crowd, Peg was asked to introduce her. When Peg got up to the podium, before saying a word, she was given a thunderous standing ovation that went on and on and on. While many in the audience had never before laid eyes on her, they knew her from her writings and from the contributions she had made to the community in so many ways. Impressed by the audience's enthusiastic response to Peg, Dr. Bolen told the crowd that while she didn't know Peg at all, whatever Peg had done to earn such love and admiration was worth emulating. Peg's literary career included fiction and non-fiction books, essays, stories, and even the occasional poem. Her co-authored *Rituals for Living and Dying* (Harper Collins) was praised by Ram Dass, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, and Stephen Levine, three renowned leaders in helping people face death and grief. Having survived the untimely death of her husband, with their four children still living at home, and then the death of her eldest son shortly after he graduated with honors from Yale, Peg learned about grief and its unfathomable agonies and disorientation. Her subsequent books and other teachings on the topic have helped many through the darkest period of their lives. She has also

come daily to the bedsides of many people in her community in their final weeks, providing at no charge whatever counsel and guidance her wisdom fashioned. Peg also wrote more than a dozen novels, many with the theme of Celtic life and spirituality, harkening back to her Irish roots. These works take you into other dimensions, other cultures, other times, other mindsets, and you re-emerge wiser, with the after-traces of laughter still sitting happily on your face, your mind having been stretched by unusual twists on common ideas and events, and your heart thoroughly entertained. Some of the best authors in our culture, however, go virtually unnoticed. Peg is a case in point. She had little business sense, and most of her works were self-published and barely distributed. Some were, nonetheless, noticed. One of her most beloved stories, *Blind Rafferty: Seven Nights of a Wake*, was turned into a play. Among Peg's favorite themes in her hundreds of published essays and newspaper columns was to provide those of us who enjoy the comforts of city life a vicarious glimpse into what it is like to live on 77 remote acres of river and woods. She doesn't preach, nor does she necessarily choose the topics that a rural Chamber of Commerce would select to glorify life in the country. Her essay titled "Mice" is a good example: "Mice, were they rare, would be admired for their delicacy, beautiful markings and bright eyes. They are not rare . . ." Still, she writes with empathy for both mice and men, noting that during the rainy season, the "commonality between humans, dawgs, cats and rodents is vividly focused. Warm quarters are nice; dry are luxurious. Ample food delights, and cozy bedding is undeniable pleasure. Whatever the species, all agree." She goes on, however, to observe that "like many relationships, those between rodents and Our Kind tend to break down over issues of hygiene and aesthetics." Such empathy and insight do not, however, cross the line into becoming overly sentimental: "Opening a drawer reserved for kitchen linens and finding a whole family [of mice] nestled in the dishtowels unhinges me. I am not nice about the eviction, only making sure the cardboard box to which I transfer the darlings is removed to the woods a goodly distance away. Those not captured and transported are left to deal with the traps I unrepentantly set." To get a sense of the range of Peg's writings, or

to curl up with one of the novels or essays, many of the manuscripts to her books and essays are available as free downloads here. David Feinstein is a psychologist who has been one of Peg's closest friends for five decades. Peg was his first clinical supervisor.

David - December 30, 2018 at 12:00 AM