



Terese T. Hershey

January 19, 1923 - January 19, 2017

Terese T. (Terry) Hershey, one of America's most influential conservationists, passed away peacefully on her 94th birthday at her home in Houston.

Called a "Force of Nature" by former President and friend, George H.W. Bush, Hershey's impact on the landscape of the United States stretched from the banks of Buffalo Bayou in Houston to every state in the Union.

Terry Hershey was born in Fort Worth Texas on January 19th, 1923, one of two children of John and Elizabeth Tarlton. She was preceded in death by her brother and a niece.

Terry attended Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri and graduated from the University of Texas with a degree in philosophy in 1943. She returned to Fort Worth and established the city's very first art gallery on the family property which, following her parents' deaths, she donated to the City of Fort Worth. Today it is known as Wright-Tarlton Park in their names.

In 1958, Terry married Jacob W. Hershey, CEO of American Commercial Barge Lines. For more than a decade they sailed the Atlantic and Caribbean from Maine to Tobago, ultimately leaving their life on the Sea for two beautiful ranches in Southwestern Colorado and The Texas Hill Country.

Jake and Terry made their home in Houston along Buffalo Bayou and it was there that her life's work in defense of the environment began. Shortly after their marriage, the U.S. Congress approved funding for the Army Corps of Engineers to clear all natural vegetation from the banks of the Bayou, straighten its meanders, and line it with cement.

Incensed at the prospect of the destruction of its natural beauty, with help from oilman George Mitchell, Hershey convinced then Freshman Congressman George H.W. Bush to ask that funding be withdrawn. From this now legendary conservation victory, Terry Hershey founded numerous organizations dedicated to environmental protection, including the Bayou Preservation Association, Citizens Who Care, The Citizen's Environmental Coalition, The Park People and Urban Harvest.

Additionally, she and Jake founded the Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation which is largely dedicated to conservation. Terry Hershey's dedication and skill was recognized by many elected officials including Houston Mayors Kathy Whitmire, Bob Lanier, Lee Brown, and Bill White, all of whom appointed her to successive terms on the Houston Parks Board.

Governor Dolph Briscoe appointed Hershey to the Texas Conservation Foundation and Governor Ann Richards named her the second woman ever to be appointed to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, considered to be among the most prestigious appointments in state government. She was a founder of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, along with her friend and ally Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson.

Not content to confine her great passion and energy to Texas, Terry Hershey was a leader in many national organizations dedicated to parks and the environment, serving as a Trustee of The National Recreation and Park Association, The Trust for Public Land, The National Audubon Society, The

National Association of Flood Plain Managers and The National Recreation Foundation.

For her lifetime of service to the environment, Hershey received many awards including the prestigious Chevron Conservation Award, the Frances K. Hutchison Award from The Garden Clubs of America, the Cornelius Amory Pugsley Medal from The National Recreation Foundation and many more.

She was the first person to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from Houston Wilderness and she was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in 1991. In 2015, Audubon Texas established the Terry Hershey Women in Conservation Awards which recognizes the outstanding contributions to the environment made by women in Texas and supports the development of the next generation of women in conservation.

Surely, Terry Hershey's principal impact was on the landscape as she literally launched the modern conservation easement movement in Texas which allows private landowners to remain on the land while protecting their property in perpetuity. Thanks largely to her leadership, there are to nearly 40 land trusts in Texas preserving private lands across the State and hundreds of thousands of acres protected by conservation easements.

Terry Hershey was preceded in death by her husband Jake in 2000. She is survived by cousins Amie Rodnick and Sissy Farenthold, by several generations of Jake's descendants, her cat Maggie and loving caregivers Janet Spencer and Veronica Garcia.

Donations in Terry's name may be made to The Bayou Preservation Association, Planned Parenthood, The Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation, the Houston SPCA or the charity of your choice.