

Karen Stecher

Karen was born and raised in Alhamaker County, Iowa. She then attended Jefferson High School of Cedar Rapids. As a student, Karen deserves great praise having achieved the status of Valedictorian of her class and as such, delivered the farewell commencement speech. She then went on to earn a four year scholarship to the prestigious Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana. The sponsor of the scholarship, AAL Insurance Company required Karen to maintain a very high academic standard throughout her four years. She also received financial assistance from the G.I. Bill of Rights, as a result of her father's years of service.



By the time Karen graduated in 1963, there was a rather unique program in place for graduates to explore. Both Ford Motor Company and the City of Detroit, Karen decided to accept an offer from the City of Detroit.

As she embarked on her professional career, she was the first female employee to be placed within the Budget Bureau for the City. She remained with the City until 1970; at which time she left to join the Blue Cross team.

Here again, she was the first female to be placed in the Compensation Department, within Human Resources. She remained within the BCBSM organization until retirement in 1996. Karen dedicated 26 years to her

distinguished career.

During the year 1991 Karen married her husband Walter. They had known each other since working together at the City of Detroit. Walter retired as Budget Director of the city in 1991. After marriage and retirement, they both enjoyed the extensive traveling they did together. At first they made short trips and played a lot of golf also. By 1996, they were partaking in at least one extensive trip a year, and still playing a lot of golf! To this day, golf still remains one of Karen's favorite pastimes.

One special travel destination was the Panama Canal. Walter's father was on the first ship to travel through the canal, and Walter was anxious to follow in his father's footsteps. Karen and Walter completed this trip in September of 1999. Unfortunately, shortly following this trip, Walter was diagnosed with dementia, and passed away very soon afterwards.

Karen has weathered the aftermath of his death with the comfort of her mother. Her mother is in very good health and resides in Cedar Rapids. Karen and her mother enjoy traveling together. Karen also has the blessing of a daughter, who is a large part of her life. Her daughter incidentally worked at Blue Cross one summer. She is a registered nurse and now works as the Admissions Coordinator at Lincoln Park Hospital in Chicago.

Karen is a member of the Nomads and even though she has racked up many flying miles ... traveling by car is still her favorite. She also belongs to three golf leagues and is a member of the Michigan Women's Golf Association. She also is active in her church choir and attends every week.