

Katherine Bogdanovich Loker, a major Harvard benefactor and one of the nation's most active and generous supporters of higher education, died Thursday, June 26, in Oceanside, California. She had suffered a massive stroke earlier in the week.

Mrs. Loker, who would have been 93 in August, maintained a level of activity that outpaced many people half her age. She was particularly involved at Harvard, at her alma mater, the University of Southern California (USC), and at California State University (CSU), Dominguez Hills. Close to Harvard presidents Derek Bok, Neil Rudenstine, Larry Summers, and Drew Faust, and deans of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Jeremy Knowles and William Kirby, she was an unwavering participant in the University's gatherings of alumni and friends.

"Katherine was an exceptional person and a wonderfully loyal and generous friend to this university and to higher education. Whether it was in support of the library, athletics, or renovations of historic Memorial Hall, her philanthropy was always undertaken with the students uppermost in her mind. Her generosity will affect many generations to come," said President Faust.

Mrs. Loker did indeed demonstrate a special interest in the welfare of students. At Harvard in the early 1990s, she funded the creation of a new gathering space for undergraduates, the Katherine Bogdanovich Loker Commons, on the lower level of Memorial Hall. Later, she stepped forward with another major gift to help renovate the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library, and Widener's main reading room is named for her. She also led the way in the rebuilding of the Memorial Hall tower and in supporting women's athletics at Harvard. Her gifts to Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences totaled more than \$27 million.

Introduced to the Harvard community by her husband, Donald P. Loker, a member of the Class of 1925, she joined with him in endowing a professorship of English in 1983. The Lokers were consistent in their support of Harvard and USC, and Katherine carried on their philanthropy for many years after Donald's death in 1989.

At Harvard, Mrs. Loker served as a national chair of *The University Campaign* from 1997 to 1999, as a member of the Committee to Visit the College from 1986 to 1993, and was a member of the Overseers' Committee on University Resources Executive Committee. The University honored her longtime service and commitment by awarding

her the Harvard Alumni Association Medal in 1996; and, in 2000, Harvard bestowed on her an honorary doctorate of humane letters.

The University of Southern California (USC) also benefitted from the Lokers' generosity. They established the Loker Hydrocarbon Research Institute there, provided resources to endow research activities, and endowed a professorship in organic chemistry. Another gift funded the Katherine B. Loker Track and Field Stadium at USC. Mrs. Loker had been an accomplished sprinter in her youth, and competed for a spot on the 1936 U.S. Olympic team, missing out by fractions of a second.

In 1999, Mrs. Loker was awarded an honorary degree by California State University, Dominguez Hills. That institution recognized her for helping to shape its vision since its founding in the 1960s. Further, CSU Dominguez Hills celebrated the Lokers for making possible a new student union, and for Mrs. Loker's leading the construction of a building to house a unique magnet school, the California Academy of Mathematics and Science. She served CSU Dominguez Hills as a member of the President's Advisory Board and the University Foundation Board of Directors.

A native of Southern California, Mrs. Loker supported numerous other area institutions, including the Donald P. Loker Cancer Treatment Center at California Hospital, the California Museum of Science and Industry, the California Medical Center of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles Music Center. She was a board member of the Richard M. Nixon Memorial Library and Birthplace in Whittier, CA.. She had been a longtime friend of the Nixons and of President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan. In 1993, Mrs. Loker was saluted by the Senate Rules Committee of the California Legislature for her philanthropy and work on behalf of public and private organizations throughout the state. In 1999, the *New York Times* highlighted her as one of Southern California's leading philanthropists.

Mrs. Loker's parents were immigrants from Croatia, who settled in San Pedro, CA. Her father, Martin Bogdanovich, a fisherman, founded the French Sardine Company in 1917, which later became Star-Kist Foods. Her husband was a movie and stage actor for 15 years, served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, and then joined the Star-Kist management team before retiring in 1975 and pursuing a career in private investment. Mrs. Loker is survived by her two daughters, Katherine Pinard of Mashpee, Mass., and Deborah Hicks of San Francisco, and six grandchildren.