

Beat: News

UPDATE 2 -- Joan Mondale, wife of former U.S. vice president, dead at 83

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USPA News - Joan Mondale, the wife of former U.S. Vice President Walter F. Mondale and known for her passion for the arts, died in Minnesota on Monday afternoon, less than a week after entering hospice care, her church and family said. She was 83 years old.

The Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis said Joan Mondale died on Monday afternoon while surrounded by her husband, their sons Ted and William, and other family members. "We are grateful for the expressions of love and support we have received. Joan was greatly loved by many. We will miss her dearly," the former vice president said. Church spokesman Timothy Rose had previously said that Joan Mondale went into hospice care on Friday, but he provided no details about the former second lady's illness. "She is surrounded by her family and loved ones as her life on this Earth moves peacefully to its close," Rose had said on Sunday. The Westminster Presbyterian Church, where members of the Mondale family have long been members, said it would hold a service honoring Joan Mondale at its church in Minneapolis on Saturday. "A Service in Celebration of the Life of Joan Adams Mondale will be held Saturday ... The time of the service is pending," the church said in Monday's statement. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who chose Walter Mondale as his vice president during his presidency from 1977 to 1981, said he and his wife Rosalynn were saddened to hear of Joan Mondale's death. "A devoted wife and effective campaigner, Joan was a close partner with her husband Fritz throughout his career and in every aspect of his life," the former president said. Carter added: "[Joan] was exemplary in using the opportunities public service provided to advance the arts and other issues important to her and many Americans. ... She was a source of stalwart strength and inspiration to her family and to all who knew and loved her, and will be sorely missed. We extend our deepest sympathies to her husband, their children, and the extended Mondale family." U.S. President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle also praised Joan Mondale for passionately advocating for the role of art in the lives of Americans and promoting understanding worldwide. "A lifelong patron of the arts, Joan filled the Vice Presidential mansion with works by dozens of artists, including many unknowns, and later did the same at the U.S. embassy in Japan during her husband's tenure as ambassador," the Obamas said in a statement. U.S. Vice President Joe Biden and his wife Jill also expressed their sadness over Monday's news. "The Mondales remained our lifelong friends, from our Senate days to their journey to the White House, as well as our own," the couple said. "When President Obama asked me to join the ticket in 2008, Joan and Fritz reached out right away and gave us valuable guidance." The Bidens added: "During this last campaign, Jill had the opportunity to visit with Joan in Minnesota. Even though she was ill, she and Jill had the opportunity to share stories from the past and talk of their hope for our future. That's what made Joan so special -- always taking the time to meet a friend with a deep belief in what makes our country so exceptional. We will always treasure our time with her and will miss her smile, friendship and counsel."

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