

## Obituary

Motivational educator Tommye Boyd

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### Family photo

Tommye Boyd suffered from ovarian cancer.

Tommye Boyd, a charismatic educator who led middle schools in the La Marque, Spring Branch and Katy districts, died this month from ovarian cancer. She was 66.

Rosemary Swindell recalled her sister's determination to motivate students and how that drive culminated in one famous physical challenge.

As La Marque Middle School's principal in the 1990s, Boyd made her struggling students a deal: If they reached an educational goal, she — a novice runner — would finish the Houston marathon.

"She left on one cold, early January morning and she completed those 26 miles," Swindell said. "It took her until 5 o'clock that afternoon. ... She wanted to show her students what you could accomplish if you stuck with it. That's the sort of educator she was."

The youngest of three sisters, Tommye Pyland Boyd was born on Aug. 24, 1943, in Kilgore to Tommy G. and Corrinne Parker Pyland.

She met Wayne Boyd when they were fourth-graders in Alvin.

"I loved her from afar even then," he said.

It was years before they reunited. The little girl's family followed her father's oil drilling job back to Kilgore. After her father's death, Boyd's family returned to Alvin.

"We happened to run into each other while we were both in college and one thing led to another," said Wayne Boyd, her husband for 44 years.

Tommye Boyd earned a bachelor's degree in English and speech from the University of Houston. She received a master's degree in educational administration from the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

### Longtime principal

She hopscotched across the Houston area during a career that began as a high school English teacher in Alvin. She later taught math in Pearland.

After serving as an assistant principal in Spring Branch ISD, Boyd landed the principalship of La Marque Middle following its conversion from a junior high. She later led Spring Oaks Middle School and became the first principal of Katy's McMeans Junior High School when it opened in 2000.

Boyd's career was cut short by her 2004 cancer diagnosis.

Still, her dedication to education and teachable moments endured until her last days.

While in hospice, she agreed to speak to a physician's students.

"She went into her total principal and educator's mode," colleague Pat Chisolm said. "She told them exactly what had transpired throughout her illness and what she wanted to pass

on to medical students — and that was for doctors to be more aware of the characteristics of ovarian cancer."

Boyd died Jan. 10.

She is survived by sons Bob and John as well as four grandsons and another sister.

A memorial service is scheduled for 3 p.m., today at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 5501 Main, in Houston.