

OBITUARIES

Sarah Brady, longtime gun control advocate, dies at 73

BY JON THURBER
THE WASHINGTON POST

On a late summer's evening in 1985, she phoned the National Rifle Association headquarters and left a blunt message: "My name is Sarah Brady, and you've never heard of me, but I am going to make it my life's ambition to try to put you all out of business."

With that call, Brady started down a road that would make her the public face of gun-control activism for a generation. Her husband, James Brady, was Ronald Reagan's press secretary and was left paralyzed during an assassination attempt on the president in 1981. She was left to care for her husband through his long, at times excruciating, convalescence. He died Aug. 4, 2014, at age 73.

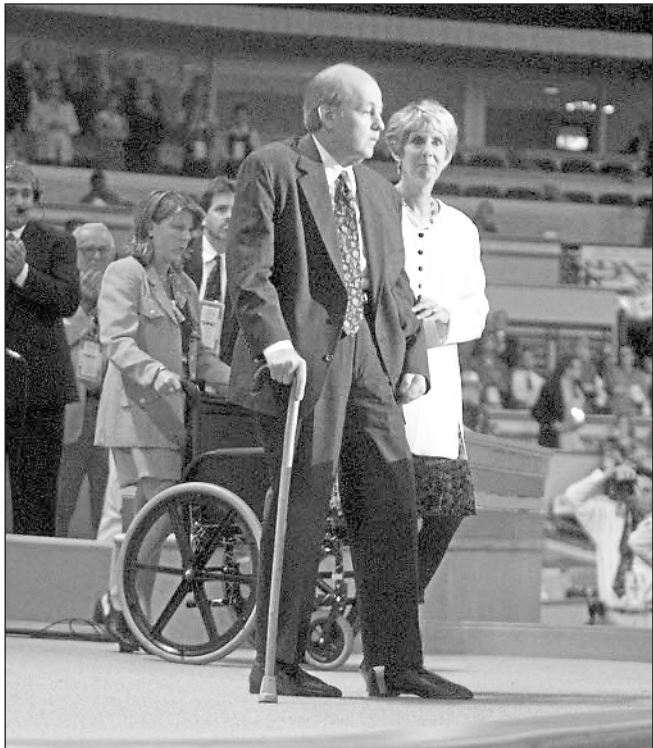
But it wasn't her husband's shooting that led Brady to call the NRA. The turning point for her activism came four years later, when their 6-year-old son, Scott, found what he thought was a toy gun and pointed it at his mother. She told him never to point a gun at anyone and, when he handed it to her, she found to her horror that it wasn't a toy but a fully loaded .22 similar to the one used to shoot her husband.

"The maddest I've ever been in my life," she told The Washington Post of the gun incident with her son that occurred during a visit to her husband's home town in Centralia, Illinois. "I was livid."

Brady grew into a determined foe of the NRA, one of most powerful lobbying organizations in the country. She died April 3 at a retirement community in Alexandria, Virginia. She had pneumonia, a family spokeswoman, Gail Hoffman, said.

A lifelong Republican, Brady reached out to a small organization, Handgun Control Inc., now the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, and joined its efforts by writing letters to members of Congress as well as lobbying them in person on Capitol Hill. She was the driving force behind the gun-control legislation known as the Brady Bill, signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1993, and her pointed language and GOP background lent greater credibility to the cause.

To gain support for the Brady Bill, which required a waiting period and background check on all handgun purchases through federally li-



MCT FILE PHOTO BY AL SEIB/LOS ANGELES TIMES
James Brady walks a few steps before his wife, Sarah, speaks at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1996. Sarah Brady, wife of the former White House press secretary, died on Friday in Alexandria, Virginia, at 73.

censed dealers, Brady lobbied politicians, appeared on TV talk shows, wrote op-ed pieces and made speeches often to audiences packed with hostile NRA supporters.

During a 1992 appearance by Brady and her husband at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, for instance, the audience in the packed gymnasium was filled with NRA supporters, many bused in from California. The heckling started early and, at nearly every point, Brady's remarks were refuted with shouts of "liar, liar."

In her 2002 memoir, "A Good Fight," written with Merrill McLoughlin, Brady noted that at the end of her speech, the curtain came down and she and her husband were escorted off the stage by police officers — some armed with semi-automatic weapons.

The NRA tried to discredit her by claiming that the gun-control lobby was using her to create an emotional campaign.

"I think it's hysterical," she told The Post in 1986, "that they talk about me being emotional and their members around the country use scare tactics saying, 'The liberals are taking our guns away. Do something!'"

With the continued strength of the NRA and the failure to advance gun-control legislation in the past 20 years, it is

somewhat difficult to assess Brady's lasting impact. But it is clear that her efforts helped galvanize support for the Brady Bill, the first gun-control measure passed in a generation.

She was also effective in bringing new support into the battle for handgun control, including from several leading law enforcement organizations throughout the country. To that degree, she was a serious threat to the NRA and its rigid hands-off policy on gun legislation.

After joining Handgun Control, Brady's first order of business was trying to stop the NRA-backed McClure-Volkmer bill in Congress. It aimed to repeal key provisions of the 1968 federal gun-control act, which set age limits on gun purchases and banned the importation of handguns known as Saturday night specials.

While the Senate ultimately enacted McClure-Volkmer — sometimes called the Firearm Owners Protection Act of 1986 — lobbying by Brady, other gun-control advocates and some law-enforcement groups led to the adoption by the U.S. House of a watered-down version that did little to weaken the 1968 law.

In a 1990 New York Times profile of Brady, the NRA chief lobbyist James Jay Baker conceded that she "had been very

effective." He qualified his comments, noting that her influence in the gun-control debate was also "based on emotion."

The Brady Bill was first proposed in 1987. Its key provisions were a background check and a seven-day waiting period before a gun purchase transaction could be completed. The NRA's opposition was swift and firm.

The bill had a tortured time in Congress, with NRA-allied lawmakers from both sides of the aisle imposing roadblocks to its discussion, much less an up-or-down vote.

During the years the Brady Bill was stalled in Congress, Brady took her gun-control message around the country. Her high profile lent strong support in several states — including California, New Jersey and Virginia — that adopted gun-control statutes. The measures often contained provisions mandating a waiting period and background checks for buying of assault weapons and handguns.

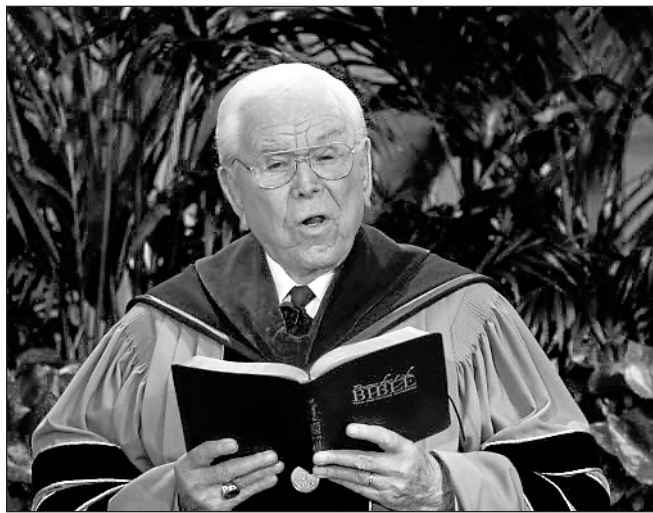
Brady became a political independent as her involvement in the gun-control campaign evolved. She backed Democrats such as former U.S. Senator and 2004 presidential candidate John Kerry of Massachusetts, now the secretary of state, who supported gun control. In 1992, she supported Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton after President George H.W. Bush, a lifetime NRA member, refused to commit to supporting the Brady Bill.

The NRA's legal efforts to overturn the Brady Bill led to a 1997 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that declared that under the 10th Amendment, state and local law enforcement officials could not be forced to handle the background checks required by the law.

The overall Brady statute, however, was upheld. A year later, the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System came online and sped the process of checking prospective gun buyers.

Sarah Jane Kemp was born Feb. 6, 1942, in Kirksville, Missouri. Her father worked for the FBI and moved the family to Alexandria, where she graduated in 1959 from Francis C. Hammond High School.

After earning a bachelor's degree in 1964 from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, she got a job teaching fourth grade in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



TNS FILE PHOTO BY ALLEN J. SCHABEN/LOS ANGELES TIMES
Robert H. Schuller reads scripture in 2010 during Sunday services at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California. Schuller died on April 2. He was 88.

Robert Schuller, 'Hour of Power' televangelist, dies

BY EMILY LANGER
THE WASHINGTON POST

The Rev. Robert H. Schuller, the televangelist who drew millions of followers with his "Hour of Power" broadcasts from the Crystal Cathedral, died April 2 at a care facility in Artesia, California. He was 88.

Schuller was diagnosed in 2013 with esophageal cancer. His death was announced on the website of "Hour of Power," now hosted by his grandson Bobby Schuller.

By the time of Schuller's death, his ministry, based in Garden Grove, California, had filed for bankruptcy and largely crumbled. It was the victim, by most accounts, of overexpansion, declining popular interest and internal strife precipitated by his retirement in 2006.

At his height, he had been one of the most influential preachers in the United States, a feel-good outlier among the televangelists who, at times controversially, harnessed modern media technology to spread their messages and solicit donations.

"Hour of Power," Schuller's internationally syndicated program, began in 1970 and aired for decades, becoming one of the most widely watched television broadcasts of its kind. By design, it aired on Sunday mornings, reaching tens of millions of viewers in their homes at a time when, perhaps earlier in their lives, they might have dressed up in their best and gone to church.

Many nonbelievers, and believers who preferred a more reserved form of worship, regarded his exploding fountains and "Glory of Christmas" pageants as show-biz theatrics. Some questioned the necessity of his \$18 million cathedral, a prototype of the modern megachurch, which was erected from 10,000 panels of glass. But to his faithful, Schuller was an omnipresent source of comfort.

Unlike Oral Roberts, a predecessor in mass-media ministry, he adopted no fiery Pentecostal theology. He distinguished himself from evangelists Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson by sidestepping politics, and he avoided personal scandals such as those that tarnished the preacher Jimmy Swaggart.

Early in his ministry, Schuller was influenced by Norman Vincent Peale, the minister known for his motivational preaching. Peale had revealed to him the guilt that "unchurched" people harbor in their hearts and that keeps them away from church, Schuller said, "the same way an overweight man avoids stepping on a bathroom scale."

While other preachers fulminated about damnation, Schuller offered his congregation a theology that he described as "possibility thinking." In sermons and books, he invited his followers to "turn your scars into stars," "turn your hurt into a halo" and to know that "God plus me equals a majority."

"The mainline has totally and completely failed to use television, and has abandoned it to the independent fundamentalists," Schuller once told The Washington Post. "That's why we're successful — we're the only al-

ternative. I can't say that I'm the official voice of the mainline, because that's not true. But I have become that de facto."

After growing up on an Iowa farm, he was ordained in 1950 in the Reformed Church in America, a mainline Protestant denomination, and ministered in Illinois before moving to Orange County, California, to found a new congregation in 1955. By his account, he arrived with \$500 and a mission statement: "Find a need and fill it, find a hurt and heal it."

Schuller found the greatest suffering among agnostics who had migrated westward seeking fulfillment and failed to find it, he told Time magazine. To keep within his tight budget, he rented a drive-in movie theater and opened there the Garden Grove Community Church.

"There was no stained-glass window, no gold cross, no choir, no props, just a microphone and Bob standing alone on a sticky tar paper roof," his wife and onetime organist, the former Arvella De Haan, once told the Los Angeles Times. "He had to dip into his own imagination and become an entertainer, an inspirer. Call it theatrical presence and you won't be far wrong."

Schuller made door-to-door cold calls to attract parishioners and installed parking facilities near the freeway for 1,400 cars. His formula, he said, was "accessibility, service, visibility, possibility thinking and excess parking."

In the early 1960s, the architect Richard Neutra designed for Schuller a walk-in, drive-in church that would accommodate congregants in a traditional sanctuary as well as in the parking lot, where motorists could listen to the service on their car radios. Neutra also designed the Tower of Hope, a multi-story office and counseling facility topped by a cross.

In 1980, Schuller opened the Crystal Cathedral, a star-shaped structure designed by architects Philip Johnson and John Burgee. The sanctuary held 2,890 and allowed thousands more to follow the services from the parking lot, continuing the pastor's drive-in tradition. His congregation was estimated to have had a population of 10,000.

Estimates of the church's annual income ranged from \$30 million to \$50 million — a sum that, however massive, trailed the results of some other televangelists. In 1986, when Schuller raised \$35 million, Swaggart's ministry collected \$142 million, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Robert Harold Schuller was born Sept. 16, 1926, in Alton, Iowa, and grew up in a Dutch farming community. By age 4, it was said, he had decided to become a minister.

He received a bachelor's degree in psychology and history from Hope College in Holland, Michigan, in 1947 and a bachelor of divinity degree from Western Theological Seminary, also in Holland, in 1950.

His ministry employed numerous family members, including his wife, who was executive program director of "Hour of Power," and several of his children and their spouses.

Eddie LeBaron, diminutive 'Little General' of 1950s Redskins, dies at 85

BY MATT SCHUDEL
THE WASHINGTON POST

Eddie LeBaron, the Washington Redskins' "Little General" of the 1950s who, despite his diminutive size, won over skeptics and became one of the top quarterbacks in the National Football League, died April 1 at an assisted-living facility in Stockton, California. He was 85.

His death was confirmed by a son, Wayne LeBaron, who said the cause had not been determined.

In his 11 years in the NFL, LeBaron never won a championship — in fact, he played on only two winning teams — but he remains one of the most remarkable players in football history. At 5-foot-7, he was tiny for a quarterback even in 1950, when he was drafted by the Redskins.

Before he stepped on the field for a regular-season game, LeBaron was called up for active duty in the Marines. As a combat officer in the Korean War, he received two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star before returning to Washington to put on his uniform for the Redskins. He briefly wore No. 40 before switching to 14.

The team's owner, George Preston Marshall, insisted on exaggerating LeBaron's height at first, but one look at the 160-pound quarterback wearing No. 14 told the story.

"Oh, I was 5-foot-7," LeBaron told ESPN in 2009. "When I got to the NFL,

Marshall thought 5-7 sounded too small, so they listed me at 5-9."

LeBaron tied with Davey O'Brien, who played with the Philadelphia Eagles in 1939 and 1940, as the shortest quarterbacks in NFL history.

LeBaron took over the starting job in 1952 from the Redskins' aging Hall of Famer, Sammy Baugh. Facing players who outweighed him by more than 100 pounds and who were sometimes a foot taller, LeBaron became one of football's most unlikely stars.

After a disappointing season in 1953, LeBaron headed to the Canadian Football League for a year. He returned to the Redskins and staked his claim to the quarterback job in the season's first game, on Sept. 25, 1955, against the defending NFL champions, the Cleveland Browns. The Redskins had never beaten the Browns, and Cleveland had won their previous encounter by a score of 62-3.

In what LeBaron called the greatest game of his career, he threw for two touchdowns and set up another with a 70-yard pass.

With the Redskins holding 20-17 lead in the fourth quarter, LeBaron guided his team to the Cleveland 13-yard-line. He dropped back to pass but could not find an open receiver. Scrambling, he headed to the right sideline, then cut back through the entire Browns defense and raced into the left corner of the end zone.

"It was the little Baron," Washington Post sportswriter Jack Walsh wrote, "who scampered an unbelievable 13 yards for the clinching touchdown in the last six minutes. Eddie ran to the right, forward, backward and, finally, to the left before going all the way."

"There was a great discussion in the press box. The argument was whether 10 or 11 Browns had a shot at LeBaron."

After the Redskins won, 27-17, Cleveland coach Paul Brown said, "The little man beat us personally."

LeBaron led the 1955 team to an 8-4 record, the Redskins' first winning season since 1948 and their last until 1969. In 1958, he led the league in passing efficiency, or yards per attempt, besting such future Hall of Famers as Johnny Unitas, Bart Starr, Norm Van Brocklin, Y.A. Tittle and Bobby Layne.

Known as one of the gamer's greatest ball handlers, LeBaron "was a magician with the ball," former teammate Jim Ricca said in an interview with football historian Michael Richman for "The Redskins Encyclopedia."

LeBaron's final season with the Redskins was in 1959, the same year he graduated from law school at George Washington University, sixth in his class. He planned to retire from football and take a job with a law firm in Texas.

But when the NFL expand-

ed, the coach of the newly formed Dallas Cowboys, Tom Landry, coaxed LeBaron back on the field. He was the Cowboys' first quarterback and played four more years before retiring in 1963.

LeBaron threw 104 touchdown passes and ran for nine touchdowns in his NFL career and was named to four Pro Bowl teams. He was even the Redskins' punter for three years and had a 41-yard average.

Opposing players marveled at his toughness and all-around skill. Chuck Bednarik, the Philadelphia Eagles linebacker who died March 21, once told NFL Films, "The greatest little football player that ever lived was Eddie LeBaron."

Edward Wayne LeBaron Jr. was born Jan. 7, 1930, in San Rafael, Calif. His father was a farmer and rancher.

LeBaron entered the College of the Pacific in Stockton (now the University of the Pacific) in 1946, when he was 16. His coach in his freshman year was 84-year-old Amos Alonzo Stagg, who had helped develop football in the 19th century.

In his final three seasons at Pacific, LeBaron was a first-team "Little All American" — a designation for small colleges, not a player's size. He led his team to a perfect 11-0 season as a senior. With LeBaron playing both offense and defense, the Tigers scored a then-NCAA record 575 points and gave up only 66.