

PEGGY O'NEILL

Peggy O'Neill died unexpectedly from cardiovascular problems on March 3, 2018 at age 58. She was the long-time conference coordinator and financial administrator for the biennial Bacterial Locomotion And Signal Transduction (BLAST) meetings, and helped organize 13 BLAST meetings from 1995 to 2019. Although the location of BLAST meetings moved around between Texas, Mexico, Florida, Nevada, Louisiana, and Arizona, attendees could always count on being greeted by Peggy and a smoothly run meeting.

Peggy earned her B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1982 and worked for a decade in Human Resources in the retail industry. She then joined our scientific community and served as Assistant to Department Head Phil Matsumura in the Department of Microbiology & Immunology at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine from 1990-2001.



In 2001, Peggy became the Business Administrator for the Molecular Biology Consortium, a non-profit collection of universities that built and operates a beamline for X-ray crystallography studies at the Advanced Light Source at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Peggy simultaneously served as Editorial Assistant during Phil's 10-year term as Editor-In-Chief of the *Journal of Bacteriology*. Peggy then turned her attention to the ASM journal *Genome Announcements*, founded in 2013, where she was the sole Editorial Assistant. Peggy deferred to Phil on scientific matters, but essentially ran *Genome Announcements*, literally reading every manuscript for compliance with formatting and technical accuracy standards.

Everyone who came in contact with Peggy was aware of the exceptional competence with which she carried out her many tasks, and her constant search for ways to do things better. Peggy applied the same standards to herself. While working full-time, she earned an M.S. in Organization and Management from Capella University in 1999, and a Juris Doctorate from Taft Law School in 2011. Peggy also pursued various continuing education and certification opportunities relevant to her career, including achieving Certified Research Administrator status in 2012. Peggy's many skills benefited BLAST, for example when negotiating favorable hotel contracts for BLAST meetings.

Administration of the BLAST meetings was in a planned gradual transition from Chicago to Chapel Hill in anticipation of Peggy's eventual retirement. Peggy was passionate about the BLAST meetings and hoped to continue to contribute in a reduced role. Our intention was to continue Peggy's involvement as appropriate, which now unfortunately will not happen.

If you knew Peggy, please write your thoughts in the memory book located at the BLAST XV registration table. The book will be given to Peggy's family. A celebration of Peggy's life and our shared appreciation of Peggy will be held at 5:00 pm, Tuesday, January 22nd in the International Ballroom. Credit card donations to support the Peggy O'Neill Memorial Travel Fund for future meetings may be made by at the BLAST XV registration site (<http://www.cvent.com/d/rbq9wj>). See Sarah Van Heusen for details about donations by cash, check, or wire transfer.