

**Garden Pathways, Inc.**

*2007 "Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield"*

**Peggy Darling**



**Peggy Darling** has a vibrant heart for Bakersfield. Her infectious vitality brings to life the best in people and the best in her community. To be in Peggy's presence, one cannot help but be captured by her passion for her local community and the arts. Peggy translates that dynamic passion into unflinching commitment to affect positive change in Bakersfield's art community.

Since her move to Bakersfield in 1990, Peggy has embraced the community and has provided vision and support for the arts through her assiduous efforts, including her involvement with Spotlight Theatre and the restoration of the Fox Theater. An avid supporter of diverse art forms, Peggy delights in the tremendous talent of local artists and seeks to increase community support for the arts. Peggy's vision for the arts community includes forming a theater league – a consortium that would work together as a catalyst to energize and build support for the local art community. That consortium Peggy envisions would be “a rising tide that raises all boats.”

Peggy actively practices her credo, “Find the best people you can and bring them into your life.” Since she became involved in the life of the arts community, Peggy has “met so many wonderful people.” She fervently encourages others within the community to support local artists by attending drama and music productions and purchasing painting and photography of local artists. Peggy's heart for the arts is reflected in the renovation of the Hayden Building where the halls are lined with paintings and photographs by local artists. With pride and great enthusiasm, she points to these works as “all Kern County.”

Founding members of the Kern Community Foundation, Peggy and her late-husband, Curtis, recognized the need for assisting those who serve to meet the needs of the community. The philanthropic support provided by the foundation has enabled charitable organizations to provide a myriad of essential services to meet our community's health, education, and human needs. Peggy actively invests in the local community as a major underwriter of many local programs and events. A hands-on person who is indeed generous with her time, Peggy is the Chairman of the Volunteer Guild and the Bakersfield Museum of Art. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Fox Foundation, Spotlight Theatre, and Kern County Museum.

Peggy was born in Los Angeles to the family of Eugene Stern, a local real estate magnate. She attended law school at Stanford University, along with classmates Curtis and Jane Darling, and John Cole. Peggy married John Cole, who became an attorney in the Los Angeles area, and later a judge. Over the years the couples kept in touch at Stanford class reunions. In 1989, both Peggy and Curtis attended the reunion as widow and widower. Shortly after, romance flourished and the next year Peggy and Curtis were married. Soon the newlyweds were making their home in Bakersfield.

Peggy is the proud mother of five children from her first marriage and three stepchildren from her marriage to Curtis. Even with her extensive travel schedule while raising a family, Peggy always found time for PTA, Little League, Girl Scouts, and local politics. Today she treasures her eleven grandchildren and one great grandchild.