

Kathleen Stewart Handy

APRIL 30, 1970 — MAY 31, 2016



Tonya Kibby photo



Sarah Beal photo

ABOVE: Kathleen “Kat” Handy stands on the Old Iron Bridge spanning the Colorado River in Bastrop after she was elected to Bluebonnet’s Board of Directors in 2013. She died May 31 at age 46. **RIGHT:** Kat and her husband, Dr. James Handy, opened Bastrop Regional Foot & Ankle Center. **LEFT:** Kat was a mother of four beloved boys ages 5-12. Clockwise: Kat, Maximus, Alexander, Phillip and Nicholas.



Family photo

Bluebonnet mourns loss of co-op director and longtime Bastrop community volunteer

Kathleen Handy, a member of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative’s Board of Directors, beloved wife, mother of four, businesswoman, community activist and volunteer, unexpectedly died May 31 at her home in Bastrop. She was 46.

Handy, one of 11 Bluebonnet directors, was first elected in 2013 and was re-elected to a second term in May. She represented Bastrop County. She had served on the co-op’s Member Experience, Technology and Energy Services committees and earned her National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s Credential Cooperative Director certification in October 2013.

“Our first thoughts and prayers are for Kat’s family, especially her boys,” said Mark Rose, Bluebonnet’s general manager. “She loved those boys. They centered her every thought.

“On a personal note, I’ll leave the ‘why’ to God and focus my thoughts on honoring her memory and her dedication to Bluebonnet. She

was thrilled to have been so overwhelmingly re-elected and we will miss her very much.”

Handy grew up in Atlanta, a small Texas town not far from the Louisiana border. She was a fifth-generation resident of Cass County on both sides of her family. Her love of electric cooperatives was a family affair. Handy’s late grandfather, Mack Stewart, a cattle rancher and cotton farmer, was a director on the Bowie-Cass Electric Cooperative Board of Directors for 35 years.

She even had an unusual childhood pastime: climbing utility poles in East Texas.

Her friend’s father worked for the Bowie-Cass cooperative and had a weekend cabin near a small lake deep in the woods. To entertain the elementary school-aged girls, he taught them to put on a lineman’s belt and gaffs and hitch their way skyward.

Handy earned a degree in dental hygiene from Wharton County Junior College. In 2003, she and her husband, James Handy, opened Bastrop Regional Foot & Ankle Center, where Dr. Handy is a podiatric medical surgeon. Kathleen Handy managed the family podiatric medical business while working part-time as a dental hygienist and continued to play a managing role.

She was a community volunteer and

organizing member of Bastrop’s newly formed National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution chapter. She held a leadership position on the Bastrop County Long Term Recovery Team and had volunteered for the Bastrop County Historical Society, Bastrop County Emergency Food Pantry, Rotary Club and Calvary Episcopal School. She was a former board member of the Bastrop Education Foundation and the Children’s Advocacy Center, where she served as fundraising chair.

Handy loved her family life in Bastrop and her work with Bluebonnet’s members and employees.

“I never dreamed I’d have this opportunity,” Handy once said of serving on the co-op Board.

“We are all deeply saddened by Kat’s death,” said Ben Flencher, Bluebonnet’s Board chairman. “This is a tremendous loss for her husband and four sons, and also for our Bluebonnet family. Our thoughts and prayers are with them. Kat was an important voice on our board and her knowledge and perspective will be greatly missed.”

She is survived by her husband, James, and their four sons: Alexander, Nicholas, Phillip, and Maximus. ■