



SENATOR KAY HAGAN

Senator Kay Hagan did not begin her professional career as a politician but rather worked for a decade in the banking industry. She was inspired to run for public office as she had a desire to help and serve others. Hagan grew up understanding the importance of public service from her father, who served as a mayor, and her uncle, who served as a U.S. senator and governor of Florida, and she went on to serve in the North Carolina State Senate from 1999 to 2008 and in the United States Senate from 2009 to 2015.

The Great Recession was one of the catalysts that prompted her run for the U.S. Senate. According to her husband Chip Hagan, she concluded that the federal government could be doing more to strengthen the economy and to help people in their everyday lives.

When she decided to run, all three of her children took temporary hiatuses from their various college and doctorate degrees to work on her Senate campaign.

“Kay was a caring, listening, and doing person,” her husband said when asked to describe his late wife. She was well known for her strong work ethic, with her U.S. Senate campaign team noting that she was “the hardest working person they’d ever seen,” he said.

During her public service career, she fought hard for issues that she believed were important to the state, including advocating for military families, financial reforms, quality education, and health. Senator Hagan, who came from and married into a military family, was particularly proud of her work related to Camp Lejeune’s longstanding water contamination issue, which led to the passing of a 2012 bill that offered extended care to affected servicemembers and their families.

She also believed that having an educated and engaged populous was of the utmost importance for North Carolina. At the intersection of education and military, she added a significant amount of money into

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the budget on a recurring basis for enhancing STEM education at middle and high schools on or adjacent to military bases. Because those who enter the military are most likely to be from military families, she believed that giving them a strong education would help create an even stronger military in the future.

As a state senator she was particularly proud of ensuring financial literacy was incorporated into the public-school curriculum, her involvement in the state's renewable energy portfolio standards, and helping clear the backlog of rape kits.

"Bipartisanship was also incredibly important to her, and therefore she never proposed a bill that didn't have a Republican co-sponsor," her husband said. "She recognized that if she couldn't get a Republican to sign onto it, it wasn't going to go anywhere."

Her daughter Carrie Hagan Stewart said her mother was of course proud of the bills she helped support and pass, but also found fulfillment from what she helped accomplish behind the scenes with her constituent services, such as assisting with overseas adoptions and casework. She also enjoyed supporting her staff.

She said Senator Hagan's decision to go into politics was "never about power; it was always about service and ways that she could help others, have an impact, and make connections." With a smile she recalled that her mom's staff always had to ensure she ate on heavily scheduled days, as she was known for getting caught up in conversation with people. Carrie commented that many considered her mom to be extremely approachable and had a way of making everyone around her, including her constituents, feel special.

Known for mentoring the many women she worked with and encouraging them and others to run for political office, Senator Hagan often said, "If you want a woman to run for office, you have to ask her five times before she'll say yes," her family recalled. "She believed that women in

politics needed an advocate, and she wanted to be that woman for the next generation of women coming behind her," her daughter said.

Carrie said her mother was "an advocate for anything North Carolina and Greensboro related," stating she's enjoyed seeing her mother's continued impact even after her passing. She noted Boom Supersonic's recent decision to build its first manufacturing facility on airport

property in Greensboro and other projects coming to the city's Piedmont Triad International Airport as prime examples. She explained that the economic growth the city will see as a result would not have been feasible without her mother's instrumental role in bringing a new airport traffic control tower to Greensboro's airport, which will be built this year.

In 2020, the Senate unanimously passed legislation to honor her memory and her work to bring the tower to Greensboro by naming it the "Senator Kay Hagan Airport Traffic Control Tower."

Beyond politics, Senator Hagan was also a very active and outdoorsy person who enjoyed hiking and camping, often taking family trips to Pisgah National Forest when her children were younger. She liked

going on daily walks, dance, traveling, spending time with her husband and children, and being an involved grandmother, known as "KK," to her grandchildren. "She brought joy everywhere she went," said Carrie.

"She was a remarkable woman," said her husband. "She just got a lot done [in her political career] and we were all very proud of her for that."

We thank you, Senator Kay Hagan for your many years of public service to our state.

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