

Dear Chairman Fisette,

The signers of this letter, and many others in Arlington and throughout the region, urge the County Board to recognize the civic leadership and legacy of the late Ellen M. Bozman by naming the Arlington County Office Building in her honor.

Mrs. Bozman (1925-2009) was elected to the County Board six times and served for 24 years (1973-1997), including six years as Chair. During her record-setting tenure and with her wise leadership, Arlington shaped and began to implement the visionary principles of “smart growth,” expanded social services, and maintained high standards of open government and fiscal prudence.

The attached two documents sum up Mrs. Bozman’s long record of achievements and awards. As they show, her civic activities and impact began years before she first ran for elected office, and continued well after she retired from the County Board.

By naming the County Office Building for Ellen M. Bozman, the County Board will be honoring a great community leader, and affirming the values she epitomized -- values of community involvement and high-quality public service – as examples for new generations of civic leaders.

We appreciate your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Andres Tobar	John Andelin	David Bell
Dr. Alfred and Delores S. Taylor	Richard and Jean Barton	Liza Hodskins
Amy Appelbaum	John and Christine T. Milliken	Pat Carroll
Arlene Spinelli	Joan McDermott	Patricia Hunter
Barbara Favola	Eloise C. and Joseph N. Pelton	Peg Hogan
Carrie Johnson	Joe Wholey	Paul Ferguson
Charlene Bickford	Dottie and Fred Clarke	Pat McGrady
Dave Leibson	Kip Malinosky	Bob Brink
Jennifer Lawson	Kathryn Scruggs	Sharon Davis
Lucy Denney	Karen Darner	Susan Lechner
Donna and Jack Cornman	Erica Wood	Todd and Paula Endo
Edd & Anita Nolen	Lawrence Roberts	Vivian Kallen
Elaine Furlow	Madi Green	Bill Dolan
Frank & Linda O’Leary	Margo Horner	Terri Lynch
Herschel Kanter	Marjorie Hobart	Virginia Geoffrey
Tom and Judy Connally	Mary Hynes	Mary Rouleau
Jim and Cindy Almand	Mary Margaret Whipple	Margaret Lorenz

Ellen Bozman's Legacy
(According to Bill Bozman)
April 5, 2009

1. As part of the leadership of the Arlington League of Voters in the 1950s, Ellen worked to defeat Virginia's policy of massive resistance to desegregation of the public schools, and offered encouragement and support to the families of the first black children to enter a desegregated school in Arlington.
2. In the 1960s Ellen led a United Way study of the after-school problem of children with working mothers and developed the pioneering extended day program for Arlington elementary schools.
3. In the 1970s, as a member of the Planning Commission and later as a member of the Arlington County Board Ellen helped define the long-range policy framework for redevelopment of Arlington's Metro corridors.
4. During her 24 years as a County Board member (1974-1997), Ellen identified gaps in social services and promoted action to build nursing homes and establish day care programs for the frail elderly.
5. Ellen believed in government as an agent of progress and she valued public service and public servants. She believed that a primary responsibility of government is to protect and care for the most vulnerable in the community.
6. After leaving the County Board, Ellen continued her public service and helped found the Alliance for Housing Solutions in 2003, and served as a trustee and as president of the Arlington Community Foundation (1998-2009).

Ellen M. Bozman – An Appreciation

Ellen's 83 years of life brimmed with warmth, energy, and unflagging alertness to the needs and interests of her family, friends, and community. Widely praised as a visionary leader, she will also be remembered as a loving wife, mother and grandmother; a wise counselor and mentor; a deft facilitator; a fine dinner and traveling companion, and a sterling example of how much one can get done without raising one's voice.

Ellen Marie McConnell was born on April 21, 1925, and grew up in Springfield, Illinois. Intrigued with public policy, she studied political science at Northwestern University and graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1946. A National Institute of Public Affairs internship brought her to Washington, where she worked at the Bureau of the Budget until 1952.

In the capital's swirl of young professionals, Ellen soon met another aspiring federal manager, Bill Bozman. They married in December 1949 and settled in the fast-growing suburb of Arlington, where they raised three children – Mac, Martha, and Bruce.

During the next half-century, Arlington evolved from a bedroom suburb, still legally segregated and politically turbulent, to a prosperous, diverse urban county recognized for its progressive government and “smart growth”. Ellen was deeply engaged at every stage.

In the mid-1950s she joined the local League of Women Voters and worked with other liberals to defeat massive resistance by building coalitions and promoting rational debate in that confrontational time. As president of the local League (1963-65) and the Metropolitan Washington League Council (1965-67), she refined her analytical and consensus-building skills on issues such as water quality and D.C. home rule.

As chair of the Arlington Health and Welfare Council (1967-69), Ellen led a study of the growing problems for school children with mothers at work, and developed the pioneering extended day program for Arlington elementary schools. On the Planning Commission (1971-73), she helped build the long-range policy framework for redevelopment of Arlington's Metro corridors. She also found time to represent Arlington on the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (1963-67), chair the Arlington Committee of 100 (1970-71), and serve as President of the Church Council of Rock Spring United Church of Christ (1971-73).

When she ran for the County Board in 1973, Ellen was elected as an informed generalist, ready to tackle a broad range of community problems. She burnished that reputation during her record 24 years on the Board (1974-97), including six years as Chair. Early on, she filled gaps in social services by planning for nursing homes and starting day-care programs for the frail elderly. She preached sound fiscal management; worked to improve transit services; sought to preserve affordable housing; and promoted the performing arts, farmers' markets, and Neighborhood Day. As a steward of Arlington's growth, she invested much effort in encouraging high-quality redevelopment in accord with adopted plans.

Ellen also advocated regional action to address large problems such as transportation planning and air quality. She served on the Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for 14 years, including two as Chairman (1988-89); did two stints on the Metro Board of Directors, and held influential posts in other regional and state organizations.

Yet no list of achievements, however impressive, fully explains Ellen's influence or the community respect and popularity that enabled her to win re-election five times. Her stature was also a product of her engaging personality, hard work, encyclopedic knowledge, and strong integrity.

As a champion of serious research, open discussion, and astute decision-making, Ellen became indelibly identified with the meeting-heavy community process called "the Arlington Way". A participant in one regional effort wrote, "You have a rare ability to bring disparate interests together and move us forward effectively while making it all seem relatively painless." She was a great collaborator, refining her own ideas and others' through phone calls, quiet lunches, and meetings in her office or living room. She could stitch together a complex policy with the same patience and competence that she used to needlepoint a gift.

Besides being a keen student of issues, processes, and people, Ellen was a deft teacher. When concerns about development bubbled up in the 1980s, she assembled a slide show to explain county policy to local groups. She created the "short course" of planning ABCs for activists. She mentored an array of younger leaders in government and non-profit groups.

Asked what had spurred her public service, Ellen said in 2001, "You did the first thing because that was the right thing to do. And that led to something else... You just kept doing what needed to be done." She called this step-by-step approach "pedestrian," suggesting it was both incremental and down-to-earth.

Yet beyond that modest comment were sturdy convictions that shined through her work. Ellen believed in human rights, in human dignity, and in a community's obligation to care for those who need help. She believed in government – open, inclusive, capable government -- as an agent of progress. She valued public service and public servants; county staff in turn prized "Mrs. B." She had faith in people's best instincts and in their ability to recognize shared interests and ultimately reach common ground.

Ellen received many awards, including COG's Elizabeth and David Scull Public Service Award (1982), Washingtonian of the Year (1986), the Virginia Association of Counties' Jefferson Cup (1997), and an honorary doctorate of humane letters from Marymount University (1998). Yet when she stepped down from the County Board, she told a reporter that beyond any one project or prize, she wanted to be remembered "for pushing Arlington along the best path to the future."

She continued to promote creative civic efforts for another decade, most notably as a founder of the Alliance for Housing Solutions and as a member of the Arlington Community Foundation's Board of Trustees (1998-2009) and its President (2002-04). When illness overtook her, she responded with patience and inner serenity.

Ellen died peacefully on January 8, 2009, surrounded by loving family and friends.

– by Carrie Johnson for Ellen's family