

# 2018 Outstanding Contributor to Women in Transportation

## Judy Griffin

By Bridget Ann Peery

**A**mong fleet operators, Judy Griffin was among the most well-known in the transportation industry, and beloved by numerous friends in the TLPA community. The news of her passing came as a shock and was felt as a tremendous loss by those who knew her vibrant presence, her generosity towards her family and friends, her southern charm, and her ever-present smile.

This year, Griffin is being posthumously named TLPA's Outstanding Contributor to Women in Transportation.

On social media, there was an outpouring of kind words for Griffin.

"So very sorry to hear that...Judy was such a lovely, friendly [and] gracious lady. She will be missed," said one.

"I am not ashamed to tell you that this made me cry. I loved Judy and know that she is an angel in heaven looking down on us all now!" said another.

"She was a very dear friend for many years and seeing her was always one of my favorite parts of any TLPA event," says TLPA member Shirley Allen, recalling a story of Griffin posing for a picture at the Oklahoma City conference earlier this year, when she climbed atop a statue of a buffalo. "She was going to have that put on her business cards. Who else but Judy would climb up on that silly bull wearing four inch heels laughing the whole time? She was a fun-loving, larger-than-life woman for sure."

Allen and Griffin lived far from each other, keeping in touch mostly through phone calls and email. But distance was not a detriment to feeling Griffin's kindness and warmth.

"She felt she had been blessed and wanted more than anything to share that with her friends and family at every opportunity," Allen says.

Joe Rubino, of J. M. Rubino Transit Consulting, experienced Griffin's southern hospitality firsthand.

"Whenever I visited her company to provide business consulting I was treated like a member of the family," Rubino says. Griffin made sure he never ate alone, bringing him to all the local, hidden gems only a few, lucky travelers ever get to see. "It was like I was Cousin Joe in town for a visit," Rubino says.

An owner of a taxi company, she brought her children and grandchildren into the fold, too.

Griffin and her husband, Phil, moved to Fort Myers, Florida, in 1993, purchasing a small taxi company called Blue Bird Taxi.

Together, they expanded their company to include Checker Cab, Yellow Cab and Bluebird Mobility. Griffin's family-centered influence reached every part of the business, inside and out, as she

made sure to get to know her workers both professionally and personally. Griffin held company cookouts and was known to attend drivers' weddings, birthday parties and their children's graduation ceremonies.

Her generosity extended well beyond her company to a love for her community. Griffin had been involved in the Chamber of Commerce in Lee County, the Better

Business Bureau, the Business-

people for Political Action Committee, business clubs supporting women, and her local church, sponsoring three children through Women of Faith.

Griffin had always looked to TLPA as a resource and guide that provided optimal service and friendships to support the growth of her company. And TLPA looked to Griffin too. "Judy was one of the first members I reached out to when filling TLPA leadership positions the month before I became president," says TLPA President Mike Pinckard. "She agreed to co-chair our Women in Transportation Committee and to help mentor new members. Judy gave freely of her time to the benefit of TLPA members and was a great friend to all who knew her. Judy is greatly missed and very fondly remembered."

In all areas of her life, she expressed compassion and positivity, making friends wherever she went. To treat others as one wished to be treated was a philosophy she embodied in every way.

During Rubino's trip to Fort Myers, Griffin insisted that he stay as a guest in her and her husband's home. Rubino remembers waking early up one morning and finding Griffin already in the kitchen, brewing a pot of coffee.

"Despite the house being still fairly dark, her face was as bright as day when she would greet me. In that Deep Southern drawl of hers, it would sound like, '...mornin' Joe. Getcha sim coffee an al bit chu gon lak sim this coffee cake,'" he wrote.

"I would rub my tired eyes and say to myself: Is that Dolly Parton talking to me?" he recalls. "Then I would sit down and pour a cup, and soon Phil would join us. Meanwhile, she would encourage me to take my coffee out to their deck and enjoy the cool morning air looking out at the lake behind their home that led into the Gulf. What a sight!!!"

Rubino continues: "We all have our memories of Judy. That is one of mine."



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