



Beth Palmer of Chevy Chase MD died Oct. 2.

She was 67. An ACBL Grand Life Master, Beth held 29 North American Bridge Championship titles. She is a Women's World Grand Master who won the Venice Cup (twice), the McConnell Cup, the World National Women's Pairs and the World National Women's Teams. Last fall, she was a member of the goldmedal-winning World Mixed Teams – a squad that she also captained. Beth earned a degree in history at Bryn Mawr before attending law school at the University of Maryland. In law school, she played hearts to earn spending money. In a 2015 interview, she recalled how she and a friend decided to drop into a Sunday afternoon game at the local duplicate club. They won. "This is easy," she thought. She started playing in tournaments in 1978 with Bill Cole. In 1980, Beth met Lynn Deas. For 35 years, their partnership defined Women's bridge. Together, they won every major Women's event at both

the North American and the international levels. Cole introduced Beth and Lynn. "Beth brought the most underappreciated but important skill to Bher bridge: the ability to make few unforced errors in the card play. She had the ability to keep her concentration and maximize her skills on each and every hand. She was nice to both her opponents and partners, whether she was winning or losing. Beth not only worked full time while raising her daughter, Julie, but she received awards for exemplary work in her government career." Beth was the chief administrative judge of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Baltimore Hearings Unit.

Lyle Poe, a Washington-area attorney and ACBL Platinum Life Master, hired Beth directly out of law school to work in his general law practice. "Aside from her great bridge accomplishments and the love and admiration of her skills and contributions by the Washington DC bridge community, Beth was universally liked and admired by those in my office, as well as those with whom she came in contact in the legal profession." Beth volunteered her services at every level of the game, including chairing the Washington Bridge League's Conduct and Ethics Committee for 15 years, chairing the Women's International Team Trials Committee for 25 years, serving as a member of the USBF Board of Directors and sitting on ACBL's Ethical Oversight Committee.

Sylvia Shi played with Beth on the 2016 gold medal World Women's team. Shi says, "I had the pleasure of playing with Beth in her last few years. She was the most focused bridge player I have ever seen. Beth never made an error of concentration. She was surely one of the best declarers in the world – as dummy, you could relax and trust that she would take every possible trick and then some (although very, very slowly). Beth was a great partner, always calm and pleasant. But apart from her bridge skill, she was just a generally wonderful person. She was kind, smart, hardworking, organized, responsible and always believed in doing the right thing. She was the whole package, and will be sorely missed by all." Bill Pettis, Beth's husband, calls his wife amazing. They were married for 27 years and together for 10 years before that, he says. They met playing bridge, and won four NABC titles playing together. "She was my favorite partner."