Old Trails Museum
WINSLOW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WOMEN OF WINSLOW

Betty Owens Patterson

(born 1924, died 2011)

"A community with no beauty is like an old shack in the desert." – Betty Patterson

One of Winslow's earliest historic preservationists, Patterson realized that protecting the town's history was critical to maintaining its sense of place and community.

Betty Eloise Owens was born October 22, 1924, in Leoti, Kansas. She attended the one-room elementary school where her mother taught and later graduated from high school in Penrose, Colorado.

Betty married Lieutenant Everett J. Patterson, also from Colorado, in 1943 while he was stationed in Pennsylvania . They returned to Colorado before they moved to Winslow in 1954 with their four young daughters: Diane, Janice, Helen, and Jonee.

Betty was active in the PTAs of her daughters' various schools and became known for her beauty, charm, and homemaking skills. These qualities led to her Mrs. Arizona title in 1957, when she wore Western dresses loaned by Whipples and Arizona Fashions of Tucson and Navajo jewelry loaned by Bruchman's Indian Curios.

Betty was named first runner-up to Mrs. America at the national pageant in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. After the pageant, Betty and Everett appeared on the Perry Como Show in New York City, when they presented Como with a kachina provided by the Winslow Chamber of Commerce. "Everyone in town with a television set had a houseful of company for the show when it was aired," Betty reminisced.

More than two hundred residents welcomed Betty home at the Winslow airport. She made forty public appearances during her year-long reign, including as co-Grand Marshall of the Winslow Christmas Parade.

A lifelong Republican, Betty served as a voter registrar, precinct committeewoman, and local campaign manager, including for her friend, Barry Goldwater. She served on the Board of Arizona Easter Seals and worked for the Census Bureau in northeastern Arizona. She was also involved in the Winslow Little Theater and Winslow Arts Association's Art Expo.

Betty and Everett cared deeply about preserving Winslow's history and were among the founding members of the Navajo County Historical Society in 1969. After the first elected president was unable to fulfill his duties, Betty was nominated to take his place.

This began a long and productive association with the county and Winslow historical societies and the Old Trails Museum, where Betty greeted visitors, recruited members, and catalogued collections for over a decade.. She also advocated for the preservation of the Homolovi State Park, Brigham City, Hubbell Trading Post-Winslow, and La Posada Hotel.

Betty faced long-term medical challenges with grace and humor. She died on January 11, 2011, and was buried with husband Everett in Desert View Cemetery in Winslow.

Above: Betty and Everett with Perry Como in 1957

Left: Betty with Judge Don T. Udall at the Navajo County Historical Society's Annual Meeting in 1975