

Former Legislator Ruth Samuelson Dies At Age 57

By Administrator

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Former Republican Legislator Ruth Samuelson from Mecklenburg County has died according to the Charlotte Observer. In June, Samuelson reveal that she has ovarian cancer.

Samuelson, who was expected to become the first woman Speaker of the House, walked away from her seat in 2014 saying she wanted to devote more time to her family and causes that were important to her. The Observer report Samuelson worked for Charlotte for Excellence in Giving, a philanthropy group that helps donors make charitable decisions.

Described as conservative, one of Samuelson's close legislative friends included Pricey Harrison, a Greensboro Democrat. She and Samuelson worked together on environmental legislation. S

“She was more of a mediator who tried to work out differences, and she was better at that than I. I think that was sort of her natural personality: She was very thoughtful and very smart about it, and seemed to read people’s thoughts,” Harrison told the Observer “I got the sense when she was considering leadership that it might have been held against her that she was close friends with a liberal Democrat.” Samuelson led the debate to override Governor Bev Perdue’s veto of legislation that required women to wait 24 hours and have an ultrasound before having an abortion. Democrats argued that the wait was potentially traumatizing to rape victims. Samuelson revealed during floor debate that she was a rape victim. “I’ll tell you what’s traumatic and victimizing,” she said.

The House overrode Perdue's veto by one vote.

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Prior to being elected to the General Assembly in 2006, Samuelson served four years as a Mecklenburg County Commissioner.