



The lawyers and staff of Shartsis Friese LLP are mourning the loss of our dear colleague, partner and friend **Mary Jo Christensen Shartsis**, who passed away on January 2, 2021 after a long battle with Alzheimer's.

Together with her husband and current Shartsis Managing Partner Art Shartsis and retired partner Bob Friese, Mary Jo co-founded the Firm in 1975 and served as a partner in the Litigation Department until her retirement in 2015.

Mary Jo came from very humble origins in Southern California. She worked her way through high school and community college and eventually found her way to Berkeley, where she worked as a secretary at the UC-Berkeley Law School while she earned her undergraduate degree. At a time when few women attended law school, a number of faculty members recognized her considerable ability and intelligence and encouraged her to attend Berkeley Law.

Mary Jo was a pioneer for women in the legal community. In addition to her legal work at the Firm, she served as the President of the Legal Aid Society of San Francisco (now Legal Aid at Work), of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers of Northern California, and of the Alumni Association of the Berkeley Law School. She also was on the Board of the California College for the Arts. Mary Jo received the Citation Award, Berkeley Law's highest alumni honor, and the American Jewish Committee recognized her with the prestigious Learned Hand Award. Mary Jo will be greatly missed by all those who knew and worked with her.

Donations in Mary Jo's memory may be made to Legal Aid at Work, to which Mary Jo was so committed. (<https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/legalaidatwork>)

Mary Jo's full obituary from the San Francisco Chronicle can be found [Here](#).