News
Social Justice



Dominican Sr. Patricia Daly in an undated photo (Courtesy of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility)



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Editor's note: *This obituary was updated at 8:30 Central time Dec. 14 to include details about the funeral services.*

Sr. Patricia Daly, a Dominican Sister of Caldwell, New Jersey, for 47 years and a pioneer of corporate responsibility and socially responsible investing, died Dec. 9, 2022. She was 66 years old.

In her decades of advocacy, she worked to hold corporations responsible for environmental degradation, human rights abuses and myriad other issues. Colleagues and friends describe her as fearless and tireless in her efforts, becoming a force in socially responsible investing and waging campaigns through shareholder resolutions, appearances at company annual meetings, and dialogues with corporate chieftains to hold them accountable for their companies' actions.

"She was an incredible bridge-builder, and she held the respect of many CEOs," said Sr. Patricia Siemen, North American coordinator for the Dominican Sisters International Confederation and former prioress of the Adrian Dominicans. "She never entered with an attitude of disrespect or trying to prove them wrong. The resolutions were crafted toward solutions, not diatribes. Even though they knew they would be called on the carpet by Pat, they were grateful it was her, and she raised a lot of consciousness among CEOs. She never had a vendetta against them. She just called them into accountability for their corporations."

Daly's "decades of work to hold companies accountable for their impacts on people and creation is the stuff of legends," the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility said in a Dec. 10 statement. Daly and Capuchin Fr. Michael Crosby received the center's 2017 Legacy Award, which honors those "whose work has provided a strong moral foundation and an enduring record of demonstrated influence on corporate policies," according to the organization.

The center's statement quoted Tom Fanning, president and CEO of utility company Southern Company, who called Daly "a dear friend and a powerful partner in helping

shape sound policy for the environment. Her intellect, her sharp wit, and caring demeanor served to quickly create an encouraging, common concern for the health of the earth for all her constituents."

Bill Ford, executive chair of Ford Motor Company, said Daly "was committed to making the world a better place, and she did just that."

"Sister Pat's pioneering work in environmental and social responsibility continues to inspire me," Ford said in a Dec. 13 statement sent to Global Sisters Report. "She was dedicated to keeping the well-being of our planet and the best interests of people at the forefront of issues that American companies and citizens are working to resolve. She was always positive but insistent upon progress and became a friend and advisor to me."

Daly served as executive director of the Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment, now known as Investor Advocates for Social Justice, for 24 years until December 2017 and remained active with the organization in an emeritus role and as a representative of her congregation.



Dominican Sr. Patricia Daly, right, with St. Elizabeth Sr. Barbara Aires at the 2017 Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility Annual General Meeting (Courtesy of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility)

"Pat was gifted with keen intellect, abundant graciousness, ever probing for solutions to the many complex issues of today," Sr. Barbara Aires, a member of the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth in New Jersey, wrote in an email to GSR. Aires was a friend of Daly's and worked alongside her on many shareholder resolutions and dialogues with top executives.

"Inspired by her deep faith commitment to social justice in her early days as a Dominican Sister, Mission Leader at St. Peter's College (University) and her years at the Tri State Coalition for Corporate Responsibility, she worked endlessly as an advocate to make life more human for so many, especially to protect Mother Earth," Aires wrote.

Daly was instrumental in the development of a collaborative partnership between Morgan Stanley and 16 Dominican congregations that culminated in the launch of the Climate Solutions Funds initiative.

Sr. Elise D. García, prioress of the Adrian Dominicans, called Daly "the creative driving force" behind the partnership, which began in 2018 and officially launched in June 2020. It now has more than $140 million invested in solutions to climate change in alignment with the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

"Pat was an extraordinary and inspiring leader whose incredible energy and creativity was exceeded only by the size of her heart," García wrote in an email to GSR. "Her loving care embraced the world — people and planet — and everyone she dealt with from CEOs on Wall Street to family, friends and community with magnetic Dominican joy."



Dominican Srs. Elise Garcia, left and Pat Daly, right, share a moment during the kick-off of the Climate Solutions Funds initiative at Morgan Stanley headquarters in New York City in June 2018. (Photo courtesy of Morgan Stanley)

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Daly credited her grade-school education from the Dominican Sisters of Amityville with awakening her sense of social justice. She entered the Dominicans of Caldwell in 1975 and was fully professed in 1984. She earned a bachelor's degree from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, and a master's degree in theology of justice from Maryknoll School of Theology in Maryknoll, New York. Both William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, and Duquesne University in Pittsburgh recognized her work with honorary doctorates in law and business leadership, respectively.

She taught religion and social justice at St. Mary High School in Rutherford, New Jersey, before joining the faculty at St. Dominic Academy in Jersey City. She then became an associate campus minister, a justice and preaching coordinator, and an adjunct professor at St. Peter's University in Jersey City.

She was introduced to socially responsible investing as a novice when some shareholders for textile maker J.P. Stevens campaigned to recognize employees' unionization efforts. While the issue wasn't resolved at that meeting, it sparked her interest in socially responsible investing as a way to effect change, Daly said in an interview with GSR in May 2021.

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One of her most notable encounters was with Jack Welch, then chief executive officer of General Electric Co., in April 1988.

At a shareholder meeting, Daly asked him about the record and responsibility of the company for its role in the contamination of the Hudson River. Welch countered, and the discussion escalated, though Daly remained calm. The exchange was recounted in Harper's Magazine, referred to in a "60 Minutes" interview with Daly, and reprinted partially in other publications, including the Chicago Tribune, and a book, *Green Sisters*. In 1999, Vanity Fair nominated Daly to its Hall of Fame, and the New York Times Magazine featured her in 2007.

Among her most difficult encounters, she said in the interview with GSR, were the annual shareholder meetings of Exxon Mobil that she attended, in which resolutions sought to hold the oil giant accountable for its role in climate change and what she and others described as "disinformation campaigns" regarding climate change.

The resolutions failed to garner enough support from shareholders to pass, but that didn't stop Daly from supporting repeated efforts to address the issue, including speaking at shareholder meetings.

"I don't get headaches, but I always had a headache leaving that meeting," she said in the May 2021 interview.



Dan Crosby and Dominican Sr. Patricia Daly pose for a photo after receiving the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility's 2017 Legacy Award. Crosby received the award on behalf of his brother, Fr. Michael Crosby, who died earlier in the year. (Courtesy of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility)

Daly told GSR she often drew her strength from particular prayers.

"There is not a time when I speak before an annual meeting that I don't pray to Dominic and Catherine of Siena, asking me to stand in my own truth and the charism of our order of speaking truth," she said. "I just ask for their presence really to be there. That's something I've always done."

Daly served on several boards, including the governing board of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility; the Archdiocese of Newark's Commission for Justice and Peace; and the Adrian Dominican Sisters' Portfolio Advisory Board.

She also worked to ensure that her legacy and that of others in the socially responsible investing arena continued: Daly "was valued not only for her wisdom

and leadership on so many issues of concern for the ICCR community but for the way she actively mentored many in our ranks, helping to cultivate the next generation of ICCR leaders," the statement from ICCR said.

On Thursday, Dec. 15, a wake and funeral mass will be held at St. Aloysius Church, 219 Bloomfield Avenue, Caldwell, NJ. The wake will be from 9:00–10:00 AM followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10:00 AM. After the Mass, graveside services will be held at Gethsemane Cemetery on the Motherhouse grounds. The Mass will be livestreamed **here** .