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Gregory Speeter, nonprofit founder

Author(s): THE DAILY HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE Staff Writer **Date:** February 15, 2012 **Section:** Local

HATFIELD - **Greg Speeter**, a resident of Hatfield since 1977, died Feb. 2, 2012, at the age of 68, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Born Oct. 12, 1943, in St. Louis, Mo., **Greg** was the son of Robert **Speeter** and Lucille Rekdahl **Speeter**. **Greg** attended grade school in Minneapolis and Hopkins, Minn., before entering St. John's Preparatory School and University in Colleagueville, Minn.

In 1966, driven by a strong commitment to peace and justice, **Greg** joined Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and moved to Springfield. He worked as a community organizer and earned a degree from the University of Massachusetts. He later became a policy analyst and authored several training manuals for the Citizen Involvement Training Project in Amherst.

In 1983, **Greg** founded the National Priorities Project (NPP), a nonprofit research group that explores the impact of federal tax dollars on local communities. Through NPP and its interactive website, **Greg** developed formulas to analyze and decipher the federal budget at the state and local level. Individuals, community organizations and legislators used this data to compare percentages of tax dollars going to military spending versus education, health care, energy initiatives or other human need areas. By making this information easily accessible and understandable, people became empowered, an important step in taking greater control of the well-being of each community.

NPP gained national prominence during the Iraq war by posting a cost-of-war counter on its website. The counter and NPP's data have been featured on CNN, the News Hour with Jim Lehrer, "Now" with Bill Moyers and many other media programs. NPP's localized approach has continued to be relied upon by legislators, advocacy groups, grass roots organizations, and individuals to promote peace and justice. **Greg** was one of 60 authors contributing to the recently published book "Dream of a Nation, Inspiring Ideas for a Better America."

Throughout his life, **Greg** had a vision and remained true to his ideals. From his early work as a community organizer and his many writings, to his tireless work as executive director of NPP, **Greg** left a legacy that continues to inspire and instruct.

Above all else, however, **Greg** was first, last and foremost a family man. He loved his wife, his children and grandchild, his parents and siblings and his close friends more than can be expressed in words. He

found tremendous pleasure in his family, friends and neighbors. Always an optimist, **Greg** possessed a dry sense of humor and an uncanny memory for people, events and dates.

Greg was preceded in death by his mother, Lucille Rekdahl **Speeter**.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 36 years, Betsy Klare **Speeter**; his stepdaughter, Barbara Elizabeth **Speeter** of Aiken, S.C.; his daughter, Abigail (Eric) Jordan **Speeter** Bielski and grandson Jordan **Greg** Bielski of South Deerfield; his siblings, Richard (Karen) **Speeter**, Cheryl (Alan) Margoles, LuAnne **Speeter** and Robert M. **Speeter** of Minnesota and Patrice (Brian) Beddor of Michigan. **Greg** leaves behind many nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and colleagues.

Greg's father, Robert **Speeter**, a prominent Minneapolis attorney, passed away Feb. 9, 2012.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 3, 2012, at 11 a.m. at the Congregational Church in Haydenville, the Rev. Andrea Ayvazian officiating. A reception in the church's Fellowship Hall will follow. Burial will be at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the National Priorities Project, 243 King St., Suite 109, Northampton, MA 01060.

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