

Beat: Miscellaneous

`Simpsons` and `Bob Newhart Show` actress Marcia Wallace dead at 70

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USPA News - American actress Marcia Wallace, best known as the voice of Bart Simpson's 4th grade teacher on `The Simpsons` and as the receptionist on the 1970s sitcom `The Bob Newhart Show`, died Friday at her home in California, her family said on Saturday. Wallace, 70, died at her home in Los Angeles on late Friday evening as a result of complications from pneumonia.

She had been diagnosed with breast cancer in 1985 but overcame the disease and went on to become a high-profile advocate for breast cancer awareness. Her family rejected news reports that claimed Wallace died of a recurrence of the disease. "I was tremendously saddened to learn this morning of the passing of the brilliant and gracious Marcia Wallace," said Al Jean, executive producer of `The Simpsons`, on behalf of the production team. "She was beloved by all at `The Simpsons` and we intend to retire her irreplaceable character." The actress was in recent years best known as the voice of Edna Krabappel, the teacher of Bart Simpson's 4th grade class at Springfield Elementary School and in later seasons the wife of character Ned Flanders. Her work on the animated show earned her an Emmy Award for Outstanding Voice-Over Performance in 1992. Last month, Jean had told reporters in a conference call that the production crew was working on a script for the season ahead in which a major character would pass away. But speaking on Saturday, Jean said Wallace's death is unrelated and that the potential storyline did not involve the death of Krabappel. Prior to her role on `The Simpsons`, Wallace was best known as receptionist Carol Kester on the CBS sitcom `The Bob Newhart Show` that centered around the professional and personal misadventures of a psychologist. She reprised that role in 1994 when she guest starred on the sitcom `Murphy Brown`, an appearance for which she received an Emmy nomination. "Marcia was a comedy legend and an inspiration to breast cancer patients everywhere with her tireless advocacy for women's self-esteem and women's health," her longtime friend Cathryn Michon said. "I was honored to direct her in her last film, `Muffin Top: A Love Story`, where she stars with her real life son Michael Hawley." Michon praised the actress for her optimistic life philosophy, which was also reflected in the title of a memoir Wallace published in 2004: `Don't Look Back, We're Not Going That Way!` "No matter what bad things happened to her, she made it funny," Michon said by e-mail, calling Wallace a "heartland gal."

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