An Appreciation:
Margaret Henderson Blair
Marketing Science Pioneer and
Founder of MASB

Margaret (Meg) Henderson Blair (1943–2018)
Meg’s career in marketing began in the 1960s at Schwerin Research in New York City, which assessed television advertising impact.

Meg took on the role of a human computer; tabulating thousands of test results by hand and later with a Resulta 7 mechanical calculator imported from Berlin.

Meg gained a fundamental understanding of how metrics worked and how best they could be used. She became known as the “Numbers Girl,” a nickname she often referenced in later years as a badge of honor.
When Schwerin sold his firm, the new owners asked how their measures could achieve greater adoption. Meg laid out a vision for their adoption as standards. She became leader of a new entity, the Advertising Research System (ARS) Group.

As the young president, Meg moved aggressively to advance the state-of-the-art in measurement science. She developed a secure, off-air related recall solution that accurately predicted on-air, day-after recall scores. The Proctor & Gamble Company quickly adopted this approach, making it an industry standard.

Meg was also an early devotee of system automation and the quality movement.
Championing “Research-on-Research”

Meg’s numerous findings were regularly published in industry journals (26 major pieces). Her discovery that “an ad’s effectiveness ‘wears out’ in a predictable manner as media weight is placed behind it” became a key underpinning of market mix modeling.

The Editorial Review Board of the Journal of Advertising Research selected Meg’s 1987 study on advertising wearout as one of only 18 to merit the title of “classic.”

In a field where patents are rare, Meg was granted two, one for the collection of behavioral brand-preference data online, and one for empirically-based ad planning.
Summary of Major Publications and Speeches

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In 2004, a group of marketing professionals and academics called The Boardroom Project saw a need to increase the contribution of the marketing function through the development of standards for marketing performance measurement and processes.

The Marketing Accountability Standards Board was founded, and the leader that emerged for this new movement was Meg Blair.
Meg worked to increase CMO effectiveness and make the marketing field better for all.

Serving as founding President and CEO, she led MASB through its first decade, creating awareness of the issues and helping establish the first of many game-changing projects, including Brand Investment & Valuation, Improving Financial Reporting, and the Common Language Marketing Dictionary.

Meg addressing Summer Summit 2016 in Atlanta
After relinquishing her leadership role in MASB a year ago, Meg continued to serve as Chair of the Marketing Accountability Foundation until her unexpected, untimely passing.
Industry Accolades

For her contributions to the advancement of marketing science, Meg received the 2005 Distinguished Practitioner Award from the Academy of Marketing Science and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Advertising Research Foundation in 2012.

She was recognized as a MASB Trailblazer in 2017 for embodying the spirit of marketing accountability and being instrumental in carrying out the MASB mission.

Winter Summit 2016 in Islamorada
Friend and Mentor

Meg had a keen eye for seeing the potential in people and served as a mentor to many marketing professionals and academics.

MASB members share anecdotes about Meg at her home in Islamorada, Florida, during Winter Summit 2016.

Former ARS employees gather in Evansville in 2018 to share stories and toast Meg’s life.
Please feel free to share your Meg stories
Thanks for the leadership, mentorship and friendship, Meg!