Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Speaker, almost three decades ago a 29-year-old woman set off on an adventure that would end in heartbreak—an adventure from which she would not return.

At the time of her death Pamela Faris Brown had already made her mark as a nationally recognized actress and entertainer. Years earlier, she had also appeared on Kentucky’s political stage—credited with helping to bring about the first-ever state-funded arts and culture agencies in Kentucky. Pamela was a bright, energetic and charismatic young woman whose love of life was only matched by her love of family and friends.

She was born in Lexington on August 26th, 1942, and attended the University of Kentucky and Stephens College before setting out on her performing career. Pamela’s skill as an actress took her from Shakespeare in the Park productions in Louisville to the pursuit of her career in New York City. Her mother, Dorothy, issued a warming to the young woman headed for the big city: “New York will change you,” she warned, to which Pam replied: “I’ll change New York.”

Pamela Brown did make an impact on New York. She worked her way into a regular role on the television daytime drama “Love is a Many Splendored Thing” and appeared on highly popular national television programs. She made guest appearances in the Ed Sullivan Show and the Lawrence Welk Show, and performed with Walter Abel in a summer stock production of “Take Her, She’s Mine”.

But Pam’s enthusiasm wasn’t just limited to the dramatic arts. In 1966, when an illness nearly forced her father to withdraw from his political campaign, Pamela volunteered to appear in his place at speaking engagements. Years later, her father would recall his opponent’s campaign manager as saying, “You didn’t beat us. Pamela did.” Her brother, John Y. Brown, Jr., would also serve as Kentucky’s governor.

A spirit like Pamela Brown’s is impossible to contain—so was her enthusiasm for the adventure that would eventually claim her life. On Sunday, September 20th, 1970, Pamela and her husband, Rod Anderson, along with their companion, Malcolm Brighton, set off from East Hampton, Long Island, aboard the balloon they called ‘The Free Life’. They set out to make history. The following day, the trio encountered a cold front and a driving rainstorm, which forced their craft into the sea.

The famous aviatrix Amelia Earhart perished attempting to set another aviation landmark 62 years ago. Earhart once eloquently explained the spirit that also led Pam to follow her balloonist’s dream: “I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail their failure must be but a challenge to others.”

Today, Pamela Brown’s memory lives on at the Actor’s Theater of Louisville, whose main stage was named the Pamela Brown Auditorium in her honor. Her memory and her spirit also live on in the hearts and minds of many of us—friends, family, and fellow Kentuckians, for whom Pamela Brown still is an inspiration.