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news
LETTER
Fall 2018

Remembering those who got us here

By Sally McLaughlin
EOLWA Executive Director

As I approach my fifth year of involvement with End of Life Washington (EOLWA), I remain both honored and humbled to lead an organization with such deep roots in the Washington end of life community.

I am well aware, as the saying goes, that I "stand on the shoulders of giants," and thus, I am especially excited about this year's Annual Meeting, where we will celebrate thirty years of the Hemlock Society of Washington, twenty-five years of Compassion in Dying - the organization that set the course for our present-day advocacy, and ten years of the Death with Dignity Act in Washington State.

Advocates and change agents involved in each of these momentous endeavors will gather to reminisce and remind us of the hard, *heart* work they tirelessly pursued and accomplished for our benefit. It promises to be a most memorable reunion.

After we commemorate our past, we will celebrate our future as EOLWA actively expands awareness and access throughout Washington State. Tri-Cities activist, Linda Estes, will share the many impressive inroads she has made in the past year with the help of the local group she founded, *End of Life Tri-Cities*. Motivated by her own father's



GUIDING LIGHTS: Former executive directors of End of Life Washington (and its predecessor organizations) Michael Bonacci and Robb Miller, with current ED, Sally McLaughlin. (Not pictured: Ralph Mero)

struggle to readily access Death with Dignity, Linda has made it her crusade to assure reliable access to the law in the Tri-Cities area. She represents the next generation of staunch advocates working to guarantee choice at end of life. I am sure you will find her story both compelling and inspiring. (You can read more about Linda by Googling *Linda Estes Tri-City Herald*, where you will also find an excellent video introduction to her efforts.)

I look forward to welcoming you to this particularly significant Annual Meeting, which will be held on Saturday, October 6, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Seattle's Japanese Baptist Church, our next-door neighbor at 160 Broadway. I look forward as well to personally thanking you for your ongoing support of End of Life Washington. It is because of your generous donations to EOLWA that we are able to continue our important work throughout the state. We appreciate it...*and you!*

You can help keep EOLWA working for everyone

Contributions from individual donors like you account for 93% of the income that makes End of Life Washington's services available to people in every corner of our state.

Included in that set of services - for which we never charge a fee - are educational seminars on end-of-life decisions; information and one-on-one help for people wishing to use Washington's Death with Dignity Act, and guidance for those who need to create their all-important advance medical directives.

Here are some ways you can help:

- Send a check (use the envelope in the newsletter).
- Click "Donate" on our website (www.endoflifewa.org).
- Call our office (206-256-1636) to make a credit card donation or set up a bank draft.
- Make an Appreciated Stock Donation, or a Qualified Charitable Distribution (Call Development Director, Kathy Sparkman, 206-274-9974).
- Attend the Annual Meeting on October 6 and bid high at the silent auction.

See you at the

Annual Meeting!

When: Saturday, Oct. 6 from 1-4 p.m.

(Hospitality time at 1, presentations starting at 1:30)

Where: Japanese Baptist Church, 160 Broadway, Seattle

(Limited Parking, public transportation advised)

Celebrate!

We will mark the most significant milestones of our great movement:

- 30th Anniversary of the Hemlock Society of Washington.
- 25th Anniversary of Compassion in Dying (which led us to where we are now).
- 10 Years of Washington's Death with Dignity Law.

Meet some of the "pioneers" who helped push the movement forward.

Success story!

Hear an overview of the important work we are accomplishing today. Tri-Cities advocate Linda Estes will speak to the good and hard work she and her group, End of Life Tri-Cities, are doing in their neighborhood to ensure that local residents have robust and reliable access to Death with Dignity.

Going to the highest bidder!

For the first time, the annual meeting will include a silent auction focused on unique experiences, rather than tangible goods. Bidding will take place during the event.

These may include a hike with Board President Terry Law, dinner and scintillating conversation with Executive Director Sally McLaughlin, or an overnight stay on Whidbey with a special mystery dinner donated by supporters of EOLWA.

To that end, if you have a service or experience you could offer for the silent auction, please call Development Director Kathy Sparkman, 206-274-9974, to discuss.

Two generations of devotion to Death with Dignity

By Chris Fruitrich
Volunteer Client Adviser

"I believe in the right of educated choice ... people should be allowed to decide when and where they want to die."

Those are the kind of words I grew up with, and that helped propel me into my involvement with End of Life Washington.

That wisdom came from Mary Watson, my mother. She describes herself as a liberal FDR Democrat and has long believed in end-of-life choices. As I grew up, that and other progressive ideas resonated with me.

Two specific events also helped make Death with Dignity work significant:

- (1) the memories of two close friends who suffered lingering and painful cancer deaths, and
- (2) being at Mom's house when she received an email from then-volunteer coordinator, Gretchen DeRoche, asking if anyone could recommend recruits who were willing to travel to the hinterlands outside Seattle.

"You should think about this," Mom told me in the tone that sounded like she expected a bit more than passing consideration.

My next stop was the annual meeting where I met with Gretchen and agreed to go through training and "see how it feels." Well, it felt as good as a professional back rub, and now I'm five years down the road with no end in sight. In July I joined EOLWA's board of directors, an honor and a new task adding to my EOLWA involvement which already includes: working with clients (130+ so far); speaking to groups; crafting presentations; and doing the design and pre-press work on the organization's newsletters, annual reports, etc.

While I am a well-entrenched foot soldier in the end-of-life camp, my mother is a legend. Now 92, she has been a part of the Northwest death with dignity movement since the early 1980s. She solicited signatures and was a member of the speakers' bureau for both the 1991 and 2008 initiatives. But perhaps her most enduring legacy is the EOLWA "Wonderfile" (see attached box).

"We talked a lot about what people should do to prepare for dying," mom said. "I flashed on the idea of color file folders containing all the appropriate documents. I spent a lot of time wandering through stationary stores." The result of that wandering was the most popular collection of publications in the organization's history.

I know I have some large shoes to fill and plan to continue working on the familial legacy with the same vigor I have pursued other activities in life.



Mary Watson and son, Chris Fruitrich

Now 71 and retired, I enjoyed 40 years as a journalist at intriguing stops like *USA Today* and *Congressional Quarterly*. The rest of my personal history includes officiating both football games and wedding ceremonies; speaking and training on topics from newspaper design to the dangers of methamphetamine; creating some dandy wood carvings; teaching journalism at the university level; seeing several of my short plays produced by amateur theater companies; and completing dozens of freelance gigs for employers across the planet.

At the end of my life I want my ashes scattered through a few select sand traps on golf courses that bedeviled me over the last half century. I do strongly believe that golf is not a game but a critical component of life...

... however, not quite as important as helping others as they contemplate the end of their days.

THE EOLWA WONDERFILE Plan now ... die later ... do a lot of living in between

The Wonderfile provides a central place to store all necessary paperwork and answers questions about what needs to be done to maintain control at the end-of-life, as well as what plans need to be made.

Besides providing a convenient way to store these important documents, the Wonderfile can be a way to begin the discussion of advance planning with family and friends who need to know your wishes.

This durable, portable file contains the following documents for your use:

- Resources for End-of-Life Issues
- After A Death Occurs – A Checklist
- Information about EOLWA client services
- End of Life Washington's Advance Directive
- Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Mental Health Advance Directive
- POLST (Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment)
- People's Memorial Application
- Designated Agent Form
- Obituary Guide
- Disposition Authorization
- Important Facts (location of wills, insurance policies, bank accounts, etc.)
- Notification List (people that you want notified of your death)



Board Member Midge Levy assembles Wonderfiles

- Putting My House In Order (including organ and tissue donation)
- Dear Family Letter

The Wonderfile is available for a suggested donation of \$20 at events and \$35 ordered online.

Go to www.endoflifewa.org/advance-directive/wonderfile



New Board President

Dr. Terry Law's three fundamental goals for End of Life Washington

By Therese Law
EOLWA Board President

This is not where I thought I would be when I became part of End of Life Washington in 2010. However, working closely with patients over the past eight years has made me realize how important our organization is to so many people around our state.

I usually serve as prescribing physician for those people whose own doctors either cannot or will not help them navigate the Death with Dignity Act. These patients are relieved to find a sympathetic physician who can help them with this option.

Even if patients aren't sure whether or not they want to take the life-ending medications, they invariably feel a great sense of relief knowing they have the control over how they spend whatever time remains to them.

I have been medical director at EOLWA for a year and have served on our board of directors as well. I have seen the incredible dedication of our board members, many of them founders of our organization. It is an honor to work with them.

So in spite of telling the executive director awhile ago, "I don't want to be the president," I eventually found myself wanting this position in the hopes of continuing and extending the president's role in furthering our cause.

I have no desire to make radical changes in the way we are doing things. I believe that EOLWA is doing an incredible job of raising awareness around the state on all issues associated with the end of life. We have a fantastic speakers' bureau that is willing to send representatives across the state. I would be happy to hear from you if you'd like to have them speak to your group.

My goals for End of Life Washington are threefold: AWARENESS, ACCESS, and SOLVENCY.

I want to make sure we continue to do our best to provide people of our state with accurate and complete information on end of life issues and to help steward those who want to use our Death with Dignity Act. Sounds easy, doesn't it?

Pressing lawmakers for DWD information access

By Nancy Sapiro
EOLWA Lobbyist

We are fortunate to have legalized medical aid-in-dying for qualifying patients, but our Death with Dignity (DWD) law is only a meaningful right if people in need have access to information about the law and the ability to exercise their right to a peaceful death.

What many may not know is that an ever-increasing number of health systems in Washington prohibit or limit the information, referrals, and services doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals are allowed to provide to their patients, including access to information about Washington's DWD law. Here at EOLWA we routinely hear of patients who have been denied timely information about the law, or their attempts to exercise their legal right to DWD are delayed or denied without referral to another health care provider who will honor their request.

That's why End of Life Washington, along with our allies from the ACLU, are working to pass the Protecting Patient Care Act. This bill, originally

introduced last session in the Washington State Legislature, would protect patients by ensuring they have access to information, referrals, and medically appropriate services including DWD.

Although the bill didn't pass last session, significant progress was made. There were two very successful hearings in the House and Senate Health Care Committees. EOLWA Board Member Arline Hinckley, Executive Director Sally McLaughlin, and doctors on behalf of American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists traveled to Olympia to provide expert testimony. The goal for 2018 was to introduce the bill and begin to educate legislators about why this legislation is important, setting the stage for more movement in 2019. According to legislators on key committees, we were successful in this endeavor.

When the 2019 legislative session begins in January, rest assured we will continue our efforts to advance this important piece of policy so patients are given accurate, timely information about DWD or are referred to another provider who will.