



Your life.  
Your death.  
Your choice.

# newsletter

## SUMMER 2016

### Progressive Individuals Keep Us Afloat

End of Life Washington is the only agency offering unbiased advocacy for terminally ill Washington residents and their loved ones for the full range of end-of-life choices. Our services are always given without charge.

All of this is available utilizing only a few paid staff and a large cadre of dedicated volunteers.

Because our mission is considered controversial, we receive no government or corporate grants, and limited foundation funding. We depend heavily on the many individuals who believe passionately that end of life choice is a right.

**Won't you support our work? Thank you!**

### Impact of End of Life Washington (EOLWA), 1/1/15 - to Date:

■ 42 Volunteer Support Advisors and Volunteer Medical Advisors gave 4,825 hours of support to clients.



■ 93% of Washington residents choosing Death with Dignity were assisted by an EOLWA volunteer.

■ 860 terminally ill clients were assisted by EOLWA volunteers .

■ 255 clients chose to hasten their death using the Death with Dignity Law.

■ 22 Advance Planning Seminars and 148 presentations were given statewide.

■ 5,100 EOLWA packets were distributed around the state.

■ 25 EOLWA Volunteer public speakers are available for education events.



■ 86% of EOLWA funding (\$495,381) in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, came from individual donors.

Message from the Executive Director, Sally McLaughlin

## Change and Progress Are the Key Words as EOLWA Moves Forward

We've been busy at End of Life Washington since our name change in October of 2015 as we continue to evolve in exciting directions. Allow me to highlight a few for you.

On December 1 of 2015, after ten months as Community Education Director, I assumed the Interim Executive Director position, which was made permanent in March. It is a privilege to lead End of Life Washington in our efforts to steward the Death with Dignity law and educate about end of life choice.

I am joined by three dedicated, talented staff members: Beth Glennon, our Director of Client Support, oversees forty Volunteer



Client Advisors who serve countless families throughout our state as they seek information on end of life choices and consider the Death with Dignity Act. Luke Volkmann, our Office Manager since December of 2015, is that friendly voice you'll hear at the other end of the line when you call our office for any number of services. Kathy Sparkman, our new Development Director, hit the pavement running on March 1 and has made impressive progress with fundraising and major gifts acquisition. Our speakers' bureau, comprised of six skilled presenters who travel Washington State, respond to the many requests we receive for education on end of life considerations.

Our Board of Directors is under new leadership as well. After three years as our inspired and inspiring president, Kay Longhi welcomed a new slate of board officers: Bob Free, Esq., was elected as our new president; Jordan Posamentier, Esq., serves as our vice-president, Rachel Schachter has taken on the duties of board secretary, Terry Barnett, Esq., former EOLWA board president, has assumed the role of treasurer, and longtime board member, Arline Hinckley, represents the Client Support Program. There seems to be no end to the energy and dedication of the EOLWA board.

After eight years as our effective advocate in Olympia, Kate White Tutor, Esq., handed the lobbyist reins to Nancy Sapiro, Esq. Under Kate's excellent mentorship, Nancy has made a seamless transition and is already up to speed on several significant initiatives. We are beyond grateful to Kate for her years of impressive diligence and are equally excited for Nancy's leadership in the lobbyist arena.

In February of 2016, after more than fifteen years in the shadow of the Space Needle at Fifth and Denny, End of Life Washington relocated to the King County Medical Society building, where we occupy the entire third floor, effectively tripling our square footage and improving our ability to serve our clients.

We continue to make strides in ensuring that residents in Eastern Washington have more reliable access to our Death with Dignity Law. To that end, we have established an EOLWA hub in Pullman and are making headway in the Tri-cities area as well.

Our five Volunteer Medical Advisors, ably led by Drs. Bob Wood and Terry Law, serve as a resource for physicians throughout Washington State as they support their patients who wish to pursue the Death with Dignity Law. They also work with anesthesiologists and pharmacists to improve the choices of medications and protocols available.

So, as you can readily see, we remain vitally engaged in end of life services as we continue to realize Margaret Mead's observation:

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

### Hear more about our organization at the Annual Meeting, Oct. 8

The End of Life Washington annual meeting is Saturday, October 8 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the University Unitarian Church, 6556 35th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98115.

We are planning a program that will focus on the critical work done by our Volunteer Client Advisors who have served more than 800 clients since the start of 2015.

Also on the program is keynote speaker George Eighmey, an attorney who helped make Death with Dignity a reality in Oregon. He will speak about the development of the Volunteer Client Advisors' system that EOLWA uses to steward the DWD law in our state.

## Court Ruling a Boost for State's Reproductive Rights

By Robb Miller

A recent ruling from Skagit County Superior Court Judge Raquel Montoya-Lewis – that public hospitals must provide abortions on site if they also offer maternity services – is especially significant in the shifting landscape of Washington's public hospitals. Many of those hospitals have recently come under control of religiously affiliated health care systems that have imposed restrictions on certain types of medical care, particularly those related to the beginning and end of life.

The stage for this important victory was set in 2013 when the Washington Coalition for Patients' Rights and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington received a favorable opinion which eventually led to an *amicus* (friend of the court) brief by Washington State Attorney General, Bob Ferguson, related to the Reproductive Privacy Act, passed by voter initiative in 1991.

The Reproductive Privacy Act protects the right of women to make their own reproductive decisions, including the right to choose or refuse to terminate their pregnancies, and to choose or refuse birth control.

*"This is a great victory for reproductive rights in Washington," Attorney General Bob Ferguson said. "Washington voters decided many years ago in adopting Initiative 120 that if public entities provide maternity care services, they also must provide substantially equivalent abortion services. Women in Washington deserve to have that law enforced, and I am proud of the amicus brief my office filed to support this ruling."*

The ACLU of Washington sued the state's third largest hospital district in 2015 on behalf of a Mount Vernon nurse practitioner who formerly worked at Skagit Valley Hospital.

End of Life Washington was one of the founders of the Washington Patients' Rights Coalition (WCPR), which includes pro-choice organizations and several community groups concerned about the takeover of their local hospitals by religiously affiliated hospital systems that impose their religious beliefs on their patient care.

The WCPR is committed to upholding patients' rights to receive evidence-based medical care; receive all the information necessary to make informed decisions; require referrals to alternate providers when institutional religious policies forbid the provision of needed services; and protect the rights and responsibilities of physicians and other caregivers to discuss all treatment options with their patients.

Special thanks are due to ACLU of Washington's Policy Counsel and WCPR facilitator, Leah Rutman, and staff attorney, Margaret Chin, as well as non-ACLU cooperating attorneys on behalf of their efforts to bring, and ultimately win, this important victory for patients' rights in Washington.

*Robb Miller is former executive director of End of Life Washington.*

## Volunteer Profile

### Meet Jessica Rivers

End of Life Washington is fortunate to have a host of highly competent, committed volunteers who help our clients navigate the intricacies of Washington State's Death with Dignity Act.

Jessica Rivers is one of those valued volunteers. Jessica joined us in January of 2015 as an intrepid Volunteer Client Advisor in Eastern Washington where many remain unaware of "Death with Dignity." At times, Jessica has been the sole volunteer covering the Spokane and Pullman areas, willing to drive 2-3 hours to meet with clients, listening compassionately to their stories, and helping them navigate the law when appropriate. Her impressive professional background working in Social Services also makes Jessica adept at helping people with advance directives.

When asked what brought her to this work, Jessica mentioned caring for her mother who died from pancreatic cancer. She also referred to her work training hospice volunteers. Jessica is convinced that people should be supported in seeking options that offer control and dignity. Knowing firsthand the stress people endure when facing a loved one's death, she challenged herself to "have the courage to volunteer in a capacity that not everyone can do."

## A Death with Dignity

By Judith Gordon

Perry called to say goodbye about ten days before his death. We hadn't seen each other for over twenty-five years, but I recognized his voice immediately, even though it was weak and strained. He'd been diagnosed with aggressive, inoperable, metastatic lung cancer. He was in great pain, he didn't like the effects of morphine, he felt tethered to oxygen, and so he had decided to use Washington State's Death with Dignity law.

More than two decades ago, Perry was referred to me for psychotherapy for chronic anxiety and depression. A highly



Jessica has had many memorable experiences since joining End of Life Washington. Assuming that her first planned death would be attended only by EOLWA volunteers, the client, and his wife, she was surprised to find that "there were friends, neighbors, cousins -- the client essentially gave his own eulogy then died peacefully." She was touched by the "incredible love, respect, connection, and opportunity for healing that occurred in the hour before his death." She believes that DWD's fixed time line allows families "to do what they need to do and say what they need to say for their healing." She finds the opportunity for spiritual growth in these situations to be profound, both for her and her clients, as they embrace the unknown and explore the mystery of the last chapter in life.

This work is not without challenges for Jessica. Not all people who want to use the law will qualify. Sometimes people start the process too late. She sometimes fears judgment from her small rural community due to her support of aid in dying. Luckily Jessica has also found allies for her work and has even recruited a second dynamic volunteer to help her.

When asked what would help her most, Jessica called for more volunteers and more education for residents and providers in her community, as well as more EOLWA staff to support and expand the organization's important work.

When she is not serving her community as a social service professional, you can usually find Jessica enjoying her 15 beautiful

intelligent, articulate man in his thirties, Perry tried many therapies and drugs but still decided to commit suicide. He intended to die while scuba diving in the Caribbean.

I went into grieving and soul searching but two weeks later Perry came back to Seattle. He'd been put on a dive boat with only two other people, a honeymoon couple, and couldn't bear to leave them with an anniversary that would always be associated with a suicide.

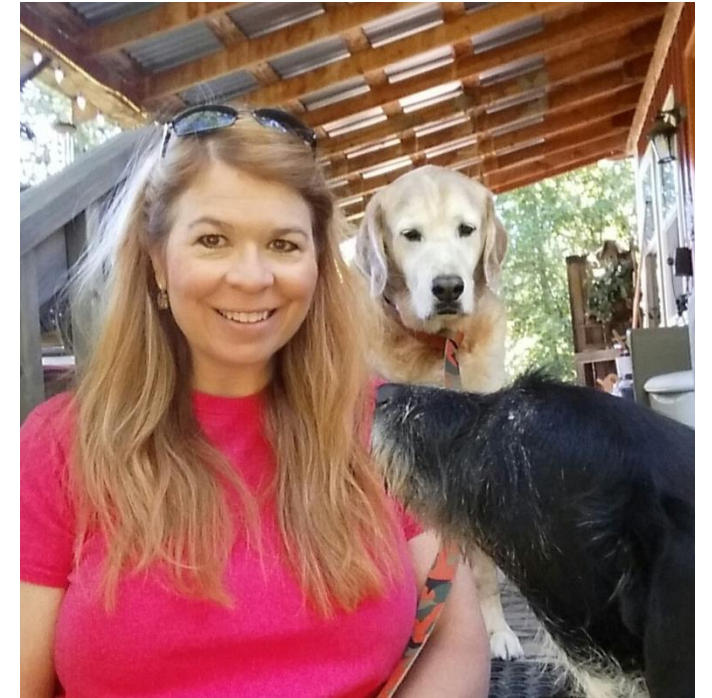
A move out of the city seemed to help right Perry's life but now an illness was about to take even that away.

We reminisced about our long relationship over several phone calls. He was happy that he could use the Death with Dignity law, which allowed him to retain his dignity and his autonomy, core values throughout his life. Perry died in the loving presence of his brother and the close friend he had stayed connected with through the years, both of whom actively supported his choice.

I used to tell Perry's story as an example of how clients who are suicidal are sometimes helped, not by a psychotherapy intervention, but by the intervention of life itself.

(Judith Gordon is member of the EOLWA Board of Directors.)

**Read the full story of Judith and Perry at [www.EndofLifeWA.com](http://www.EndofLifeWA.com).**



acres on the Palouse where she lives with her husband, 14 year-old-son, 4 dogs, and 2 cats. She likes "going to church" in nature where she can hike, camp, or raft. We are grateful for all that Jessica brings to EOLWA: her infectious laugh, her can-do spirit, and the unflinching compassion that she brings to her clients.



### You Can Support Our Work with a Memorial or Honorary Gift

Since early 2015, 242 memorial and honorary gifts totaling \$61,380 were made to EOLWA and used to support the 860 terminally ill state residents who needed our help.

End of Life Washington is the only agency offering Death with Dignity guidance for those who need it. Will you consider remembering or honoring someone dear to you with a gift?

A complete list of those remembered or honored with gifts to EOLWA is posted on our website: [www.EndofLifeWA.org](http://www.EndofLifeWA.org). Thank you!