



The Journey

Care and Support for Patients and Families Dealing with Terminal Illness Volume 15 Issue 1 • Winter 2022

"From the outset, it was so important to us to create a community hospice for the community and of the community."

-Johnny Cox, PhD

Reflecting on the Past 45 Years

This year, Hospice of Spokane will celebrate 45 years of service throughout our community. This is an opportunity to reflect on where we've been, recall the challenges and successes we've experienced, and reminisce on the many memories that have been created along the way.

How We Began

We pay tribute to our community founders – Johnny Cox, Barb Savage, Marj Humphrey, and the late Mary Fairhurst and Leonard Salladay – whose vision and perseverance brought hospice care to Spokane. Working alongside them was Barb Cox, who designed the clinical program and became the first paid staff for Hospice of Spokane.

Johnny recalls, "I had heard Dr. Florence Wald from Yale University (often referred to as the Mother of the American Hospice Movement) give a talk in Seattle, and that was my first knowledge about Hospice." Johnny brought the idea back, with a vision of trying it in Spokane. That was in 1974.



Pictured L-R are Barb Savage, Marj Humphrey, Barb Cox and Johnny Cox
Photo by Dan Pelle/The Spokesman-Review 2012

At the time, Johnny Cox was a theology professor at Gonzaga University. He came back and shared his vision with Barb Savage, who worked as a nurse at Holy Family Hospital at the time; Marj Humphrey, who was a teacher at Gonzaga Prep; Mary Fairhurst, who had been a community volunteer; and Leonard Salladay, who had been an insurance broker and had lost a daughter to cancer.

Hospice care was a new concept in the United States that was both "countercultural and revolutionary in American health care," Johnny

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Staying Flexible and Adaptable



Gina Drummond, RN, MSN
Chief Executive Officer

I often find myself telling new employees about our organization's history. We were founded by a small group of thoughtful, committed volunteers who wanted to improve the end-of-life experience for our community members. That was a long time ago, 45 years to be accurate. We were one of the first hospices in the nation to incorporate and serve patients. There was no reimbursement source at the time; it was just the right thing to do.

We have several team members who have been here for over half of our organization's lifespan. I, myself, have been here for 17 of those years. Employee retention is one of the things we've been proud of. I think there's value in that kind of longevity, and I also think that there's a potential risk for us.

I always say that being the oldest and the largest hospice in our community can't be what we stake our claim on. We need to always be willing to listen to what's needed now, what needs to change, to stay nimble. The needs of our community members will shift and morph, and we want always to be adept at identifying and meeting those needs. Adaptability is required of organisms and of organizations in being able to not only survive but to thrive, which is what we will always hope to do, for the sake of our community.

The past few years have challenged us in ways that we couldn't have anticipated. COVID-19 continues to take its toll on our workforce as it has for healthcare in general. Exhaustion is commonplace amongst healthcare workers. We continue to do everything we can to stay connected, despite the distance and isolation that has been a hallmark of the pandemic.

We thank you for your support. We appreciate your longstanding commitment to our mission and appreciate the fact that we keep learning each day. As long as we are committed to learning everything we can from every patient and family we serve and from one another, the years of experience we have will be a blessing, not a curse. Staying open and being willing to change is what's required of all of us to stay youthful and relevant – individually and organizationally.

THE JOURNEY is a publication of Hospice of Spokane, located in Spokane, Washington. Hospice of Spokane is northeast Washington's only nonprofit, community-based hospice, providing care and support to people nearing the end of life, their families and the grieving. Patient-centered care is provided by interdisciplinary teams comprised of physicians, nurses, social workers, nurse aides, volunteers, chaplains, bereavement counselors and other professionals.

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Seasons of Life

American Poet Joseph Anderson beautifully captured the stages of life in his poem, "Seasons of Life." Even more captivating are the four pieces of art created by members of the Spokane Chapter of American Needlepoint Guild (ANG) and the Inland Northwest Needlepointers (INN) that brilliantly portray the "Seasons of Life."

This beautiful artwork was presented to Hospice of Spokane last year and is displayed in the entryway of the North Hospice House. We appreciate Marty Johnston, former president of the INN, suggesting that Hospice of Spokane be the recipient of such an incredible gift.

In wanting to learn more about this remarkable donation, we visited with some of the needlework artists to better understand how this beautiful work came to fruition. Picture entering a room where more than 30 women are gathered for a holiday party, yet they gladly pause from their festivities to pose for a picture and share about their project.

The needlepoint members had divided themselves into four groups, with each group choosing a season. They were given an outline, which described "rolling hills with a river running through it." There was no picture, no pattern, only this very vague description. Each group had four or five members assigned to it.

Together, each group designed what they envisioned their season to look like. From there, each member chose which part of the design they would create. The blank needlework canvas was then handed off to



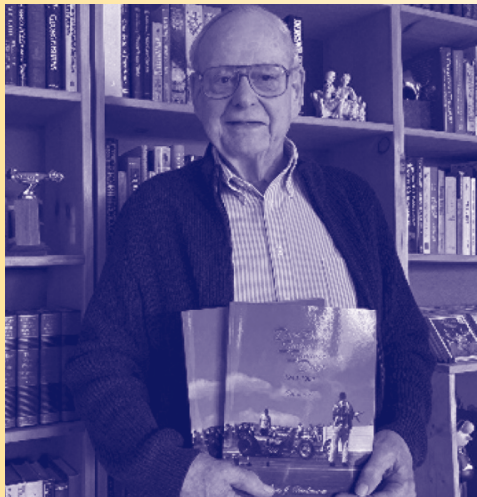
*Back Row (left to right): Susan Renz, Candy Shipley, Susan Sharp, Roberta Waines, Sharon Cortner.
Front Row (left to right): Juana Perley, Judy Hetland, Marianne Iwasa, Barbara Hain.*

the first member of the group to create their part of the design. Upon completion of their piece of the art, it was then passed to the next member to work on their portion. This continued over the course of a year, as each needlework artist brought her vision to life.

Their respective visions, talents and passion for this beautiful form of art led to the finished pieces, each bringing to life their specific season. There are no words that can adequately describe the amount of intricate work that went into the project. Each is perfection to the season it portrays and together, they are truly a masterpiece.

We are incredibly grateful for such a gift that is enjoyed by so many families during their stay at the North Hospice House. They have touched lives, awakened memories and brought a whole lot of joy to others.

The History of Drag Racing Leads to Donations for Hospice of Spokane



Gary Hordemann with his newly published book

Drag racing has a rich history in northeast Washington dating back to the Deer Park Airport built during WWII. Want to learn more about it? Just ask Gary Hordemann.

Gary is the author of a two-volume book titled, ***Deer Park Sunny Summer Days: 1944-1964.***

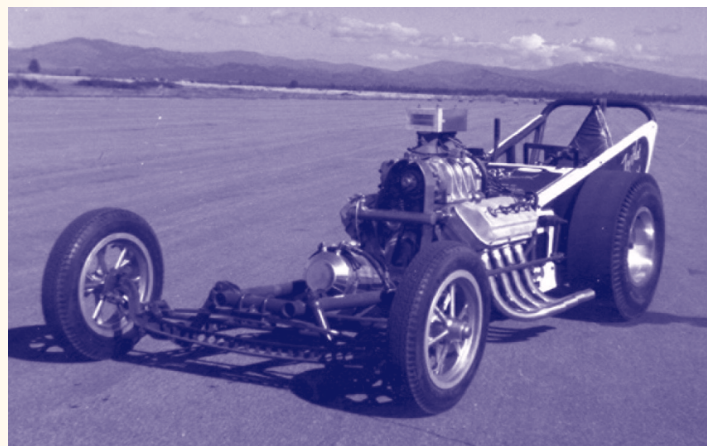
After a conversation with Gary, one can't help but have a deep respect for the sport and a better understanding of the amount of work and commitment that goes into it.

Gary's two older brothers, Jack and Jim, began racing in 1950, and Gary joined them soon after in 1956. Along with several of their buddies, they built cars in the family garage. "You had many owners for the same car," explained Gary. "When repairs needed to be made, everyone dug in their pockets and chipped in." Gary shared vivid memories of racing and traveling the circuit with many different cars over the years. They made quite a run of it until Gary retired from the sport in 1964.

After graduating from Gonzaga Prep., Gary continued his education, earning his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Gonzaga University and his master's degree at Notre Dame, where he met his wife, Barbara. He began his life-long career as a college professor, teaching mechanical engineering, while settling in to raise a family. Gary taught at Cal State in Northridge, California for 14 years and then returned to Spokane where he taught another 24 years at Gonzaga University. He retired in 2004 as a Professor Emeritus in Mechanical Engineering.

Gary's love for drag racing, combined with a penchant for research and sidelining as an historian, brought his idea for the book to life. Over the past several years, Gary has researched and scoured through every news clipping ever written from 1944-1964 having to do with Deer Park drag racing. His tenacity, perseverance and meticulous recordkeeping has led to the completion of a two-volume book collection of historical photos, stories and indexing of anyone who participated in the sport over a 20-year period. When asked why he would invest his time and efforts toward such a project, Gary replied, "because it's so damn much fun!" He added, "the biggest challenge in pulling together the material for the book was letting go of mysteries you can't solve."

Gary's passion for helping others runs as deep as his joy of drag racing. As such, he and Barbara decided to donate the entire proceeds from every book sold, back to Hospice of Spokane. They both value the service that Hospice of Spokane's staff and volunteers deliver in providing end-of-life care for those in our community. "It's a great cause and we wanted to support it," said Gary.



The Top Hat Special AA Fuel Dragster sits in the pits at the Deer Park drag strip in 1960. (Photo by Larry Taylor)

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of Gary's book, they are available at Giant Nerd Books, 607 W. Garland, Spokane, Washington. The two-volume book is \$60, all of which is donated to Hospice of Spokane.

explained. “We were educating the medical community, along with the broader Spokane community, about this alternate way of caring for people who were terminally ill.” He added, “It was so different than people going into a facility to die. Our desire was to help families reconnect with something that, for centuries, had been the normal way of dying – caring for your own loved ones in your own home.”

Talking about death with the patient and family were taboo. The patient didn’t want to hurt their loved ones by telling them they were dying, and the family didn’t want to tell their loved one they were dying.

Clinical staff were told not to talk about it. Barb Savage recalls, “I remember being told as a nurse not to tell the patient they have a disease that’s probably going to end their life. Yet, I had encounters with patients who were upset because no one was telling them they were dying.”

“Folks just didn’t have any sense of what the next step was (once a terminal diagnosis was given) and that’s what Hospice of Spokane brought to families and their loved ones. It was ‘how can we be together?’” Johnny explained, “Hospice care meant bringing caring for the person who is dying back into their own family with the necessary supports to assure their comfort, symptom management and accompaniment as they walk through those final days. For many, this can be very scary, but with help, with caring support, it could really be the fullness of living as a person dies.”

Barb Cox shared, “As a nurse, we had the work of teaching people not to say, ‘there’s nothing more we can do for you;’ but instead, ‘It’s time to really focus on making you comfortable and to live as well as you can with the time that you have. That was the focus.”

Hospice of Spokane was legally incorporated on December 8, 1976 and started providing care in August 1977. That same focus has been maintained for the past 45 years.

Challenges and Successes

From the beginning, it was important to our founders to create a community hospice for the community and of the community. Johnny explained, “We did not want to be aligned with any existing healthcare groups, but we wanted to collaborate with them. We’ve worked really hard to have a board of local citizens who would lead a standalone agency that would be the community’s agency.” This led to some really challenging financial times.

Early on, support was received from the religious sisters in the community, as well as organizations such as United Way and the Area Agency on Aging. “Folks in the community, especially the ones who had received hospice services, began forming an awesome donor base,” shared Johnny. “Our legacy is a standalone community hospice for the people of Eastern Washington, supported by the communities in Eastern Washington.”

In 1982, the Medicare hospice benefit was authorized by the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA). This federal funding provided the financial support that enabled Hospice of Spokane to continue to grow and meet the ever-changing needs of the community.

Barb Cox recalled, “I remember specifically designing the program to complement, not redo or compete with, what was already available. We found out as much as possible what was available and where the gaps were. That’s where we tried to build. It was amazing.”

This segues to one of our most memorable successes – the addition of two hospice houses.

In a recent conversation with four former Board Members – Carol Lawton, Toni Cooley, Dr. Glenn Kellogg and Dr. Jim Shaw – they recalled the extensive planning that went into the first hospice house. This was in response to a need in the community and a strong desire to bring it to fruition.



South Hospice House opened in 2007.

Not all of them were on the board during the planning stages and were quick to credit former board

members for their vision and Gina for her leadership. Glenn recalls, "There was quite a bit of work and investment prior to us being on the board; it was a huge accomplishment for the organization."

In further reflecting upon accomplishments, Toni said, "I really feel like it's the people that make Hospice of Spokane the organization that it is. I feel like the mission and values drive the organization. For the people that work there, it's not just a job, it's a career, but it's also a passion."



North Hospice House opened in 2014.

Carol, Toni, Glenn and Jim selflessly gave of their time and talents as board members and have gone on to serve as Hospice of Spokane volunteers.

Carol summarized it well, "It's the people that made me want to continue as a volunteer. You see dedicated staff doing things you really believe matter to people, and you want to be a part of it. You just want to be a part of helping families and clients."

Many Fond Memories

In preparing for this article, we reached out to some of our longstanding employees and volunteers, asking them to share some of their fondest memories. Many of the incredible stories that were shared and the passion in which they were told will be carried over to our August newsletter.

One such story came from Trina Poppens, who has served as a social worker with Hospice of Spokane for 30 years. Trina recalled one patient she served many years ago who was homeless. Due to life circumstances, he had alienated himself from family for over 20 years and wasn't even sure where his family was. The patient thought that his brother might work at a building store in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Trina did some investigating and made some calls. She found the brother, who was working at a lumber store in Arkansas. He was very excited to be contacted and shared that he and his family had been looking for this brother for many years. Trina was instrumental in getting this patient transportation home to be able to reunite with his family and spend his final days with them.

"The Hospice Houses continue to meet a unique need in our community by providing a home-like setting for inpatient hospice care."

-Gina Drummond

Terry Stott, who has served as Director of Nursing since 1995 shared, "Here, we are a team, and our focus is on each patient and their needs. To be able to treat all people with dignity and respect is the best gift."

And in closing, 26-year volunteer Connie Emry shared, "I have been able to be a long-term volunteer because I pace myself. Trying to live a balanced life is always a challenge. Being of service is important to me. Filling a need, fills a need. By giving, we receive. Perhaps the quote stuck on my refrigerator says it best, 'We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own.'"

Thank You!

This list includes contributions made to Hospice of Spokane from July 1 to December 31, 2021. We try hard to list each name correctly; if corrections are needed, please call our Development Team at 509-456-0438 or email info@hospiceofspokane.org.

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Esther Monserud	Sydney Osborne	Wayne Pomerleau	Nancy L. Richards	Carolyn Schmidtman
David Moore	Kathleen Ossello	Ann Porter	Lois Richardson	Joe & Maureen Schneider
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Greg & Sue Morgan	Nancy Othmer	Barbara R. Potts	Eileen Riemcke	Mary & Kelly Schulz
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