

Focus on. Compassion

Enhancing Access to Palliative Care Worldwide

A Lasting Legacy – in Memory of Kath Defilippi

We invite you to read a deeper reflection of the work and legacy of Kath Defilippi, coauthored by APCA and GPIC

We mourn with many in the global palliative care world at the death of legendary palliative care leader, Kath Defilippi. She passed away on 27 December 2022. As a South African, Kath had enormous influence in the development of palliative care in that country. She established [South Coast Hospice](#) in Port Shepstone, South Africa in 1983 to provide hospice and palliative care services to all in need. This included all races, religions, ages, and in all locations (including remote rural areas). It was one of the first hospices in all of Africa. Di Van Dyke, current CEO of South Coast Hospice writes:



"As one of the first hospices in all of Africa, South Coast Hospice became a pioneering and pace-setting program under Kath's skilled leadership, tireless efforts, and strategic savvy. South Coast Hospice partnered with existing hospitals and other providers to establish a network of care that has endured and grown over the last 40+ years. This includes the hallmark Hospice Inpatient Unit, currently the only hospice inpatient unit in Kwa-Zulu Natal."

On 6 January, South Coast Hospice hosted a celebration in tribute to Kath's life and legacy which was attended virtually by colleagues and friends from around the globe.



Phil Di Sorbo (pictured with Diane Van Dyke); photo courtesy of South Coast Hospice

Among them was Phil Di Sorbo who served as executive director (ED) of [The Community Hospice](#) and later served as the ED of the Foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa or FHSSA – now known as [Global Partners in Care](#). Under FHSSA, South Coast Hospice was partnered with The Community Hospice in upstate New York in 2001. "Our Hospice in New York had close to two dozen staff hosted by South Coast Hospice over a five-year period. Kath was instrumental in their mentorship, which made a significant impact on their personal and professional lives. We were also blessed to host Kath and some other South Coast Hospice staff to our service sites across upstate New York. Her expertise, teaching ability, and collegial personality have left lasting impressions on the American hospice experience, for which we are forever grateful," said Phil.

Kath remained president emeritus of South Coast Hospice and recently helped launch a visionary Renewable Energy Project to help the organization ensure sustainability of their services in the face of climate change. Electrical outages, adverse weather events and interruptions in the water supply have all impacted the services of South Coast Hospice. After severe flooding affected the water supply in April of 2022, Di Sorbo and The Community Hospice responded by helping purchase new water tanks for the organization. The Renewable Energy Project has only grown since then and promises to be a model for other hospices to follow. You can read more about the Renewable Energy Project and contribute to the Kath Defilippi Fund [here](#).



Photos courtesy of South Coast Hospice

Kath not only founded South Coast Hospice but also helped found the national [Hospice and Palliative Care Association in South Africa](#). She was a champion of palliative care nursing education – not only in South Africa, but across the continent – and served as the first board chair of the [African Palliative Care Association](#) (APCA), a role in which she supported the founding CEO of APCA with organizational development work to ensure the organisation had a full complement of policy and legal frameworks. In a memorial message, Dr. Emmanuel Luyirika, executive director of the African Palliative Care Association said; "We walked many journeys together with Kath, both as a dear friend and dedicated colleague in the development of palliative care in Africa and, indeed, the continent benefitted from her leadership and commitment to improve access to palliative care for all. She was a tireless advocate for a cause that she strongly believed in and did not hesitate to volunteer her time and expertise whenever the need arose. We continue to build on the foundations that she laid to ensure palliative care is understood and that it is accessible to all who need it in Africa."

Kath inspired many people, including a generous donor who helped GPIC and APCA launch our [African Palliative Care Education Scholarship](#) for nurses in her honor. Forming the next generation of palliative care practitioners and leaders is paramount to expanding access to hospice and palliative care in Africa. Our primary objective with the scholarships is for healthcare workers to gain knowledge and skills to provide compassionate care. Our secondary objective is to increase the awareness, clinical and research skills and knowledge of palliative care for scholarship recipients so they can become palliative care advocates and educators to diverse in-country stakeholders (e.g., policy makers, health care workers and the public). We believe our palliative care education scholarships are among our most important work and a meaningful way to honor and carry forward Kath's amazing legacy.



Applications Open Soon for the African Palliative Care Education Scholarship Fund

Applications will be available on [APCA's website](#) soon!

Health and social workers across Africa who are interested in palliative care and studying at any level are invited to apply. *To qualify for the scholarship, you must have already obtained admission to a palliative care course.* Nurses, social workers, clinical officers, physiotherapists and music therapists are encouraged to apply.

Please direct questions to: scholarships@africanpalliativecare.org.

Theme for World Hospice and Palliative Care Day Announced

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day (WHPCD) 2023 will be on the 14th of October. This year's theme is **Compassionate Communities: Together for Palliative Care**. WHPCD is an annual unified day of action to celebrate and support hospice and palliative care around the world. Read more about it in this [ehospice article](#).

The Economics of Palliative Care – EAPC Webinar

If you missed this outstanding webinar, please take the time to [watch the recording](#). Hear a panel of international experts talk about the importance of palliative care for Universal Health Coverage. The webinar was chaired by GPIC Advisory Council member, Dr. Liz Gwyther.

African Palliative Care Education Scholarship Fund

In partnership with the African Palliative Care Association, we offer a limited number of scholarships each year to health care workers to train in palliative care.

The demand for specialized palliative care training in Africa is high. Nurses, clinical officers and social workers, among others, play an important role in providing holistic palliative care services to those suffering from life-limiting conditions. A crucial component of making these services available is ensuring that appropriately trained providers are available and accessible to those in need.

The demand for training is high and we can only offer a limited number of scholarships each year. Some schools report that up to 50% of admitted palliative care students do not enroll because of financial difficulty. Make a donation below to help these future palliative care leaders study!



Donate to the African Palliative Care Education Scholarship Fund

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