

## Remembering Lee E. Mortenson, DPA, MPA, MS

ACCC and the Oncology State Society Network mourn the loss of founding Executive Director Lee E. Mortenson, DPA, MPA, MS. After a brief battle with non-small cell lung cancer, Dr. Mortenson passed away on December 3, 2018, at his home in Tucson, Ariz., surrounded by his family. He is survived by his wife Carol, daughter Leia, son Lars, and their families.

In 1974, Mortenson convened a small group of clinicians seeking to dispel the myth that community providers were uninterested in and incapable of participating in state-of-the-art cancer care. On the occasion of ACCC's 30th anniversary in 2004, Mortenson described the impetus behind the Association's founding: *In 1974, when we first came together, medical oncology was not yet a formalized medical specialty. Congress and President Nixon had declared a war on cancer in 1971 and provided funding for a group of university-based comprehensive cancer centers. Some graduates of those university-based programs went into research, and some went into private practice. Many who went into private practice immediately realized that cancer care was on the verge of a radical shift, a whole new paradigm. . . . The Association's initial purpose was to spread the gospel of multidisciplinary care and teach other hospitals how to establish an oncology unit.*

ACCC would go on to become the mechanism through which clinical protocols and other oncology standards of care were developed and disseminated to community cancer programs across the nation. Led by ACCC, the community oncology care provider would emerge as an equal partner in the war against cancer.

"Lee was the right leader at the right time," said ACCC Executive Director Christian G. Downs, JD, MHA. "He was tenacious in fighting to support ACCC's commitment to patient access to quality cancer care close to home, while also contributing to advancing cancer care for the future. He brought ACCC to where we are today."

Dr. Mortenson served as ACCC Executive Director from 1974 to 2004. He was a visionary leader for ACCC, supporting the creation of an association that involved the whole multidisciplinary cancer team: physicians, administrators, nurses, social workers, data managers, radiation therapists, pharmacists, social workers, and advocates. Under his guidance, the Association evolved as cancer care delivery evolved, continuing to meet the needs of its multidisciplinary membership through conferences and meetings, ACCC's journal *Oncology Issues*, and innovative education programs.

Over the course of his 45-year career, Dr. Mortenson provided personal facilitation, leadership, mentoring, project analysis, and corporate development and analysis projects. He published more than 165 articles and served as editor/author of 40 books and as a journal editor. He raised more than \$100 million for causes and organizations, some through grant and contract writing, some through project development and corporate financing. Legislation on off-label drug availability for cancer treatment developed by Dr. Mortenson was adopted by more than 38 states and the U.S. Congress.

