



In Loving Memory

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Diane Van Ostenberg, ACCC immediate past-president, led a crusade—both professional and personal—in the fight against cancer. For nearly fifteen years of her twenty-year career, Ms. Van Ostenberg served as administrative director of the Grand Rapids Oncology Program in Grand Rapids, Mich., where she played a key role in improving access to state-of-the-art cancer treatment for her community. As president of the Association of Community Cancer Centers, Ms. Van Ostenberg led efforts to introduce patient advocacy as a top priority for the Association. Her own struggle with lung cancer ended on Tuesday, November 26, 1996.

"When we learned of Diane's death, all of us on ACCC's Executive Committee felt her loss in a personal way," said John E. Feldmann, M.D., ACCC president, reflecting on his colleague and friend. "As President-elect during her administration, I was deeply impressed by her personal courage. Diane learned of her diagnosis just two months into her presidency, yet she was determined to make her term meaningful and productive, despite an illness that gradually worsened as the year progressed.

"Diane had a great interest in patient advocacy and was instrumental in starting the relationship between ACCC and the major advocacy groups. She was always focused on the patient and kept the rest of us focused there as well. In this era of managed care, it is easy to become distracted by economic problems. Now, more than ever, we must adhere to the values in our mission statement. Diane's memory will help to keep the Association on track in the years to come."

Albert B. Einstein, Jr., M.D., a former ACCC president, echoed Dr. Feldmann's thoughts: "Diane



Immediate Past-President Diane Van Ostenberg

was a loving, caring, concerned professional who dedicated her professional life and much of her personal life to the fight against cancer. I enjoyed knowing and working with Diane for more than ten years as active members of the Association.

"Diane often provided the human side of our discussions at board and committee tables regarding cancer care. She was a strong advocate for the cancer patient and ensured that any recommendations, policies, or actions taken by ACCC reflected concern for patients and their families. Members of the Association and myself personally will feel her loss for years to come. We can best honor her memory by keeping the cancer patient foremost in our minds as we deal with the complicated issues of providing and supporting cancer care."

Ms. Van Ostenberg often described her illness as an odyssey and invited ACCC members to share her journey, which she chronicled in the President's Corner in *Oncology Issues* ("The Road Less Traveled," Vol.10, No.5; "The Other Side of the Bedrail," Vol.11, No.1).

Characterized by friends and colleagues as a caring mentor, Ms. Van Ostenberg was deeply committed to ACCC and its members. "I met Diane at my first ACCC meeting in the fall of 1987," recalled Margaret Riley, M.N., R.N., C.N.A.A., director of oncology and ambulatory care services at St. Joseph's Hospital

of Atlanta in Atlanta, Ga. "As a new member of the Association, I was struggling to make sense of all the issues, concerns, and information about community cancer programs. Diane was my saving grace during that first meeting and continued to be throughout our years as colleagues. She always had time to listen and offer practical, common-sense solutions to making cancer access and delivery a possibility for those in need. Her focus was consistently on patient and family outcomes.

"Diane's perspective on many issues balanced and broadened my own and others. Her opinions were respected and valued, for they were honorably honed from a lifetime of professional integrity. We have lost a mentor and friend, but her spirit will live on in each of us who, by providence, were touched by her life," Riley said.

Robert T. Clarke, M.H.A., chief executive officer of Memorial Health System in Springfield, Ill., remembered Ms. Van Ostenberg as "a thoughtful and insightful manager..., a dedicated visionary who focused on how things could be better, not why they couldn't change. Diane participated in many decisions that will positively affect patients with cancer and their families in the future, both regionally and nationally. Her ideas will be carried on by those of us who learned from her. Diane was a person we all would like to have known better. We will miss her guidance and friendship."

Ms. Van Ostenberg is survived by her daughter, Jane Van Ostenberg; friend, Ken Wilhelm; mother, Ruth Vellenga; sister, Susan Logan; and nieces, Amy and Jill Logan. Memorials may be made to the Southwest Oncology Group Foundation or Christ Community Memorial Endowment Fund. ❧