



House Call

Mary Strikes Again: A Former Nurse Left a Mark on Many

Born to a family of eight in Trenton, New Jersey, Mary Breyer was always quietly helping others. She was a trusted caretaker and friend to many. When Mary passed away, she left behind a circle of friends and family who remember her markedly generous spirit. When a young family tragically lost a baby, she took care of the funeral expenses. When a former colleague was acutely ill, she took care of him after long shifts as a nurse. Stories of her kindness and compassion continue to be unearthed—so much so that, when Nancy, Mary's sister, hears of another act of kindness, she now says, "Mary strikes again."

Mary was no stranger to taking care of others. She devoted her career to it, serving honorably in the U.S. Navy and through her 40-year career as a nurse anesthetist.

Mary made Northampton her home, where she lived with her mother, and, after her younger sister's untimely death, raised her niece Kimberly. There were many causes that Mary supported during her lifetime. When Mary's mother, Irene, was dying, Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice took care of her. Her sister Nancy shared that, "Mary never forgot how well they took care of our mother." That level of compassion led Mary to include Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice in her will, ensuring that every patient, and their family, continued to receive the same warm, personalized care she so appreciated.



Mary makes a birthday wish while celebrating her day with loved ones.

To learn more about including Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice in your will and through your estate planning, please contact Jenny Papageorge, Director of Planned Giving.

jpapageorge@cooleydickinson.org | 413-582-2687

House Call

What's Happening at the VNA & Hospice

COVID-19 remains at the top of our minds – we see it in the news, when we connect with family and friends, and as we make our way through our community every day. Our dedicated VNA and Hospice staff remain committed to caring for our patients through it all.

Recently, we gathered as a team (virtually, of course) to check in as colleagues, as friends. I asked everyone to share a word or phrase that expresses what they love about working at VNA & Hospice. The list was long, varied, and also followed several themes: they loved seeing the impact of their one-to-one caregiving, Cooley's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and for some the scenery and unexpected interactions with wildlife – including a surprise visit from a bear while visiting a patient at home! Compiled together into a “wordle”, you can see above, at the heart of it all is their dedication to patients.



As a donor to the VNA and Hospice, you recognize the very same things our staff does. Their dedication, the continuity of care, and their compassion for you or your loved ones.

We are able to support every patient, regardless of their ability to pay, because of your generosity. Care that is given where the patient wants, in the warmth and comfort of their home, surrounded by their loved ones. You make this possible and for that, we are so incredibly grateful.

Priscilla M. Ross, RN
Executive Director

A Journey of Compassion and Care

The decision to contact Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice can be difficult, and so deeply important for every patient and their family in need of end-of-life care. For Christine Biegner, that moment came from a strong recommendation by a member of their care team.

“When it became clear that my husband Michael’s stage IV metastatic prostate cancer was no longer responding to chemo and his prognosis was only a few short months, an oncology physician assistant recommended that we contact Hospice,” she recalls.

“Although we did not know how much time he had left, we knew it was the right decision to begin addressing his comfort and quality of life – physically, emotionally and spiritually – for as long as possible.”

Michael's end-of-life journey was guided by an experienced, knowledgeable hospice team, providing comfort and care to both Michael and to his family.

“We had a wonderful hospice nurse, Andrée. She provided skilled and compassionate care to Michael, answered any and all our questions honestly and gracefully, and shared her years of experience and expertise. Andrée not only cared for Michael, but she was very kind to me and to our adult children, particularly in those difficult final days until Michael died,” Christine notes.

Andrée also connected the family with social worker Sarah, Chaplain Ben, and with bereavement services.

“They came to our home every few weeks. We appreciated that not only was Michael being treated medically, but that attention was being paid to his emotional and spiritual well-being.

When Andrée determined that Michael was nearing his death, both Sarah and Ben met with our whole family to provide support and comfort. Ben brought his guitar and played lovely songs and prayed together with all of us.”

Like so many patients, Christine also received care from the hospice bereavement team and benefited by participating in grief programs, support groups, and from the strength and support of a community that understands one another.

“The grief journey is not linear or quick, so don’t attempt to put a time frame on the process,” she adds, “I would encourage someone in this same situation to be kind and patient with themselves. Trust that you will reach a point where the love and the grief can co-exist in your heart.”

Christine's words ring true to the care that VNA and Hospice provides every day, to so many patients and families right here in our community. Care that is made possible because of the generosity of donors like you.

Hospice Shop

18 BRIDGE STREET
NORTHAMPTON, MA 01060
413.586.0193



HOSPICE SHOP HOURS

TUESDAY-SATURDAY | 10 AM - 4 PM

DONATION DROP-OFF HOURS

TUESDAY-SATURDAY | 10 AM - 3 PM

All proceeds from sales support our hospice services.

If you wish to donate to The Hospice Shop or would like more information, please call 413.586.0193.

When you donate your items to the Hospice Shop, your donation stays in the community, supporting family, friends, neighbors and co-workers who need the love and care of our Hospice Services.

The Hospice Shop sells donated, gently used quality clothing and household items at thrift store prices. Volunteers committed to the hospice mission donate more than 5,400 hours annually to ensure that quality end-of-life care is available in our community.

Donors like
you frequently say,
“I wish I could
do more.”

You can.

By including
Cooley Dickinson
VNA & Hospice
in your will.

With that simple act, you
can have an impact on our
patients for generations to come.

413.582.2255
cooleydickinson.org/plannedgiving



**COOLEY DICKINSON
VNA & HOSPICE**

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*Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice is part of the Cooley Dickinson Health
Care system which includes Cooley Dickinson Hospital and its affiliates.
For more information, please visit: www.cooleydickinson.org*

House Call

Document Shredding Day at Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice

SATURDAY, MAY 7

9 - 11 AM

Cooley Dickinson | VNA & Hospice
168 Industrial Drive, Northampton

Do you have sensitive personal documents
that you would like shredded? If so, bring
them to Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice
on Saturday, May 7, between 9 and 11 am.

The Wealth Transition Collective invites
the public to a document shredding day
which will benefit the VNA & Hospice.



FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED

Until the truck is full or until 11 am — whichever comes first.

\$5 donation per paper box will benefit the Cooley Dickinson VNA
& Hospice.

Visit cooleydickinson.org/vnaandhospice for more information

Sponsored by The Wealth Transition Collective