



ASSOCIATION OF PEDIATRIC
ONCOLOGY SOCIAL WORKERS



January 2018

Greetings from the President:

Now that 2017 is officially behind us, I sit in reflection of our many accomplishments and challenges faced collectively and individually. Many experienced firsthand the devastation of wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, and record snowfall. We also saw many changes within our local institutions, communities, the nation, and the world. During these events and times of change an unwavering hope emerged from the trenches of social work - lending a helping hand to those in need and making their collective voices heard - ultimately a sense of determination prevailed.

As we begin another year, I encourage each of you to consider how you will incorporate the goals of APOSW in your daily practice:

- To advocate and develop policies that will enhance the lives of children with cancer and their families
- To provide clinical interventions and develop programs that will enrich the lives of children with cancer and their families
- To collaborate with related organizations to achieve the purposes and goals of the Association and the psychosocial needs of patients and their families

- To promote the professional and ethical standards of pediatric oncology social work
- To advance the psychosocial well-being of patients and their families by conducting and developing research in pediatric oncology
- To conduct evidenced-based practice that will enhance the quality of life of children with cancer and their families
- To cultivate communication through education and networking with the childhood cancer community

I applaud each of you who work in the field of childhood cancer! Thank you for making a difference in the lives of children and young adults diagnosed with cancer and their families. I look forward to seeing many of you at our annual conference in April. The theme this year is *Finding Your Rhythm: Creating New Possibilities in Pediatric Oncology Social Work*. Come join us as we *Find our Rhythm* in 2018.

All the best moving forward in 2018,
Anita Graham, MSW, LCSW
APOSW President
WVU Medicine Children's Hospital

As a community, we grieve the loss of Dr. Jimmie Holland

Lori Wiener, PhD



The world has lost a true and irreplaceable leader, the field of psycho-oncology has lost our pioneer, and we have lost a great friend.

Dr. Jimmie Holland (known to most of us as “Jimmie”) was born and raised in a small community in rural Texas. She was one of only three women in her 1952 medical school class. She had planned to be a country doctor or a pediatrician, but gravitated to what would prove to be a groundbreaking psychiatric specialty – psycho-oncology. When you asked her why, Jimmie would mention how her husband, Dr. James F. Holland, a well-known and highly published oncologist and chemotherapy specialist and his colleagues seemed to focus solely on medical treatment and not on the state of mind of patients facing an unpredictable prognosis. She urged them, and for the next 40+ years, all of us, to answer the essential question — ‘How do people with cancer feel?’ and this question became the center of her work. She insisted that medical providers screen their patients for emotional distress as a vital sign, just as they do for temperature, pulse, respiration, blood pressure and pain. It is this work that led to the development of the Distress Thermometer. She maintained passion for innovative thinking, scientific rigor and compassionate clinical care of people touched by cancer (‘the psychological care of the medically ill’) and she

tirelessly worked to establish and expand a global movement in psychosocial oncology.

Jimmie’s accomplishments are far too numerous to describe here but a few are important to note. She served as the inaugural chief of the psychiatry service at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, one of the first of its kind in the field of oncology — and served as its Chief from then until 1996. She was the first woman to head a clinical department there! Jimmie then became Chair of the newly formed Department of Psychiatry and served in that role until 2003. Both programs trained generations of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers in the emotional needs of people with cancer. And she provided training opportunities to countless others. During my years at Memorial, I was very fortunate to be one of

those people to whom Jimmie provided such opportunities. In 1984, she founded the International Psycho-Oncology Society (IPOS) and in 1986, the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS). These remain the only interdisciplinary organizations for health care providers caring for the psychosocial needs of people with cancer.

In 2000, Jimmie published the landmark book, “The Human Side of Cancer,” written with Sheldon Lewis. She has edited each edition of the authoritative textbook *Psycho-Oncology*, and she founded and co-edited until her death, the leading journal for our field, *Psycho-Oncology*. You might remember seeing Jimmie featured on the 2015 PBS documentary “Cancer: The Emperor of All Maladies,” based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning book by Siddhartha Mukherjee. While Jimmie’s attention in her later years was with geriatric cancer, she held a tender heart and true commitment to the psychosocial care of children living with cancer. She herself had lost a grandchild to cancer.

Jimmie was a pioneer and innovator in the truest sense. She was warm, gracious, generous, and a monumental force. She continually took people under her wings, and into her home. She was a mother to all and a grandmother to many. And she was the greatest connector of people of anyone I ever knew. You needed something, Jimmie knew someone who can help – her connections crossed all continents.

Jimmie and I reconnected at an APOS meeting 13 years after I left NYC. When we met, it was as if nothing had changed. She remembered details of my life that I had not even remembered. She was a fervent believer of the important role social workers played in the care of persons with cancer. Jimmie was deeply passionate about making sure the psychosocial needs of children with cancer and their family members were met and charged me with growing the APOS Pediatric SIG and editing the 1st (and 2nd) Quick Reference

for Pediatric Oncology Clinicians: The Psychiatric and Psychological Dimension of Pediatric Cancer Symptom Management. Anyone who knew Jimmie would agree, saying “no” to her, was nearly impossible. The rest as they say, is history.

Dr. Jimmie Holland died on December 24th, at her home, surrounded by her family. She would have wanted it no other way. She will forever be missed. As an organization, APOSW will remain committed to honoring her legacy. ■

Celebrate Pediatric Oncology SW: *Nominate a colleague for SW Award*

Anne Kosem, LCSW, OSW-C, APOSW Immediate Past President

There is something very special about seeing an unsung hero honored for amazing work. It is even more special in the field of Pediatric Oncology Social work when it is one of our own. Each year at the APOSW annual conference’s Celebration Dinner we present the Social Worker of the Year Award. The winner has to be a member of APOSW for at least 2 years and has provided exemplary service in their institution, organization, or larger community. They have also made a contribution to APOSW. There are many ways to contribute to APOSW. One can be on a site committee, an abstract or HTR scholarship reviewer, a breakout session monitor, submit an article for the newsletter, or present a poster or breakout at the annual conference.

During these times when we are all so busy it can seem like a *nice idea* to nominate someone but, overwhelming to consider how to make it happen. Fortunately, the process is not very cumbersome; it only requires a letter of nomination, letters of support, and the nominee’s CV or resume.

I encourage you to take a moment to think about an APOSW member who inspires you. Perhaps you and your social work team can work together to

nominate them. Maybe that person is a solo practitioner at a nearby hospital or even one further away. It would not be that difficult to contact a physician, NP, or child life colleague of theirs for assistance. Chances are, if you are inspired by this person, they are as well and they would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on a nomination.

Our social work team worked together to nominate a beloved colleague some years back. While it did take some coordination, and nudging during a busy time to make it happen, her medical team members we asked to write letters of support came through with glowing letters. We had to do some detective work to get a copy of her CV from our boss (we didn’t want to ask her for one, so he got it from her employee file). Watching her receive the award and being honored for her amazing work was priceless!

We have many outstanding members who have contributed to our organization and to our field in so many ways. Please consider taking the time to honor one and let them have their moment of being celebrated.

The Call for Nominations will go out in early February. ■

Past Social Workers of the Year:

Helena Gutierrez-Richards, 2017
Alistair Robertson, 2016
Lisl Schweers, 2015
Paula McCarthy, 2014
Barbara Jones, 2013
Denise Cain-Jones, 2012
Constance Connor, 2011
Judy Hicks, 2010
Lynn Hardesty, 2009
Marion Kalbacher, 2008
Fran Greeson, 2007
Cindy Zehnder, 2006
Laura Scott Lane, 2005
June McAtee, 2004
Deborah King, 2003
Yolanda Vinajeras, 2002
Greg Adams, 2001
Wendy Pelletier, 2000
Greg Baiocchi, 1999
Beverly Bagwell, 1998
Regina Johnson, 1997
Dale Perkel, 1996
Karen Tilley, 1995