

Marjorie Anne Koblinsky Obituary



Marjorie ("Marge") Anne Koblinsky, a pioneering figure in the field of maternal and neonatal health, passed away at home in Washington, DC on July 1, 2024, after a courageous battle with cancer. She was 79 years old.

A public health scientist, world traveler, lifelong learner, and artist, Marge was born in Hartford Connecticut to Chester and Marjorie Koblinsky. She showed an early aptitude for leadership and teamwork as Senior Class President and head cheerleader at Manchester High School. Marge graduated from Simmons College and earned a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Columbia University, furthering her education with a Certificate of Community Medicine and Health.

Dr. Koblinsky dedicated her life to improving health outcomes for mothers and infants throughout the world. As Project Director of MotherCare at John Snow, Inc., she led initiatives to develop, implement, and evaluate community-based approaches to maternal and infant health in developing countries, including Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Guatemala. Marge connected and collaborated with local community members and public health professionals to understand women's experiences and develop best practices for improving their healthcare. Her work significantly reduced maternal and infant mortality and newborn illness in these regions.

Marge contributed her leadership, research, and mentoring skills in many other influential positions. As Senior Maternal Health Advisor at USAID, she led the agency's development of a global initiative to "End Preventable Maternal Mortality." As Director of the Public Health Sciences Division at the International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, she worked closely with Bangladeshi researchers and policy makers for almost a decade to improve the health of Bangladeshi women and children. Her extraordinary vision, passion, and expertise also enriched her work at Save the Children, the Ford Foundation, and the Canadian International Development Research Center.

A mentor to countless public health students and professionals, Marge's research, books, and publications have advanced knowledge of how to define and measure maternal mortality, achieve healthy pregnancies and safe deliveries, and implement effective reproductive health programs. These contributions have been recognized with prestigious awards, including the NCIH International Health Award (1993) and the World Health Day Award of the American Association for World Health (1998).

Beyond her professional achievements, Marge was a magnificent and caring mother, sister, and friend. She inspired others with her intellect, creativity, warmth, and generosity. Marge loved spending time with family and friends, walking her faithful dog Raffi at neighborhood parks and Rock Creek, attending Osher courses, practicing yoga, and tending her garden. She created beautiful watercolor paintings and unique beaded jewelry that are treasured gifts.

Marge leaves behind her son Evan Henrich and wife Paige; sister Sharon; brother Chet (Sally); nephew John (Rachel; sons Otto and Hugo); former husband Richard Henrich, and countless friends. The Koblinsky family especially appreciates Marge's wonderful friends and caregivers who lifted her spirits daily, attended medical appointments, and prepared delicious meals throughout her illness. Marge will forever be remembered for her keen wit, joyful spirit, and loving kindness, as well as her legacy as a trailblazer who brought hope and better health to women and children around the world.

Services are private but memorial donations can be made to BRAC, an international nonprofit that has established a public health scholarship for Bangladeshi women honoring Marge.

<https://bracusa.org/donation/?form=Marge> A Celebration of Life is planned for July 29.

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