

# NCIHC Founders' Overview



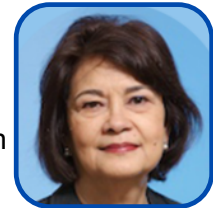
Virtual Event  
September 28-29, 2023



# NCIHC Founders

## **Dr. Maria Paz Beltrán Avery**

María Paz Beltrán Avery, PhD, began working on health care interpreting in the early 1990's directing a federally-funded project to develop a college level certificate program training bilingual adults as healthcare interpreters. Through this project, she collaborated with the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association creating the Medical Interpreting Standards of Practice (1995). She was involved in the development of NCIHC and as a member of its Standards, Training, and Certification Committee (STC) contributed to the National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care, the National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care and the National Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training Programs. In 2015, she received NCIHC's Language Access Champion Award.



## **Eduardo Berinstein**

Eduardo Berinstein is an English-Spanish translator and a medical, legal and conference interpreter. He is certified by the American Translators Association, and by the Administrative Office U.S. Federal Courts.



Mr. Berinstein was the founder and director of the first multilingual interpreter programs at two Massachusetts healthcare systems: Boston Children's Hospital Boston (1993-1999) and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (1999-2006). Prior to this (1985-1993), he served as interpreter for various Massachusetts hospitals and for the Massachusetts Court System.

Mr. Berinstein has interpreted at numerous international conferences and events, including John Kerry's nomination acceptance speech of at the Democratic Party National Convention (2004); the speech of Felipe Calderon, President of Mexico, at the Kennedy School of Government (February 2008); and the speech of Felipe Gonzalez, Prime Minister of Spain, as guest lecturer at Harvard University (1988).

Mr. Berinstein was part of the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association (now IMIA) Committee that developed the first Standards of Practice for Medical Interpreters, adopted by the MMIA in 1995. The MMIA Standards of Practice haven translated into four languages, are used in many parts of the world, and served at the basis for the SOP adopted by the NCIHC.

From 2006 until 2021, Mr. Berinstein taught at Boston University's Medical Legal and Conference Interpreter Program and prior to this at the National Center for Interpretation (University of Arizona), and at Cambridge College and Bentley College.

Since 2006, Mr. Berinstein works as a freelance translator in ebttranslations, a cooperative translation company he founded.

### **Shiva Bidar-Sielaff**

Shiva Bidar serves as UW Health's Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer leading the overall vision, coordination, and strategic leadership for the design and implementation initiatives related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. She has over twenty years of experience in community partnerships, diversity, equity and inclusion work. She has been instrumental in leveraging and developing policies in Dane County and nationally to ensure equal access to health care for underrepresented communities.



Shiva has worked extensively on issues of equal access to health care for limited English proficient (LEP) individuals. She is nationally recognized for her work in the area of medical interpretation and is a frequent speaker at national conferences on cultural competence and health care interpreting. She served on the Board member of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care for 15 years leading the work on the National Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Healthcare Interpreters. She serves as a founding commissioner of the Commission for Healthcare Interpreter Certification.

Shiva is the Co-chair of the Latino Health Council of Dane County, an executive committee member of the Latino Support Network, a Madison College Board Trustee, and a Madison Community Foundation board member.

Shiva completed her undergraduate studies at the Université du Hainaut, Mons, Belgium, her Master's degree from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, California. She obtained her Certificate in Diversity Management in Health Care (CDM) from Institute for Diversity in Healthcare & Georgetown University.

### **Dr. Cornelia Brown**

Cornelia E. Brown, Ph.D. is the former founder and Executive Director of the Multicultural Association of Medical Interpreters of Central New York 1998-2019. "MAMI" was an independent, non-profit organization, the first in Upstate NY to train and dispatch skilled community interpreters, Syracuse to Albany. Dr. Brown was a founding member of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care. The Council gave MAMI invaluable advice and a nationally respected partner. MAMI advocated for the civil rights of Limited English proficient refugees and immigrants at a time when using friends and family, often children, to interpret was the norm.



MAMI designed courses on interpreting for medical patients, legal clients, and survivors of Domestic Violence. In 2000, MAMI won the Oneida County Small Business of the Year Award. In 2008, the NYS DOH selected MAMI to establish state interpreting standards. Education: Dr. Brown received a B.A from Stanford University and an M.A and Ph.D. from U.C. Berkeley in Comparative Literature (1988). She served as a Russian translator at the NY City law firm Chadbourne & Parke during glasnost.

Before and after MAMI, Dr. Brown taught at Utica University and Hamilton College and is currently a Research Associate at Utica University. There, her research focuses on the intersection of ethics, journalism, and Judaism.

### **Dr. Bruce T. Downing**

Bruce T. Downing, Associate Professor Emeritus of linguistics at the University of Minnesota, grew up in Idaho and received a B.A. in English from the College of Idaho (1959), later earning the M.A. (1963) and Ph.D. (1970) in linguistics from the University of Texas. Before joining the U. of M. Department of Linguistics in 1974, he taught at Robert College (Istanbul, Turkey) and the University of Southern California. In 1980 Dr. Downing became director of the Southeast Asian Refugee Studies Project (SARS), conducting research in Hmong refugee communities and participating in the federally-funded Hmong Resettlement Study. As a member of the University's Refugee Mental Health Technical Assistance Center, 1985-89, he worked with other scholars to promote quality interpreting in refugee mental health services nationally. From 1990 until his retirement in 2008, he served as director of the University of Minnesota's Program in Translation and Interpreting. Dr. Downing was a founding member of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care and served for many years on its Standards, Training, and Certification Committee. He has published over the years in the areas of linguistics, refugee resettlement, and interpreting. Dr. Downing is a recipient of the Refugee Community Service Award of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (1991), the University of Minnesota's Outstanding Community Service Award (2000), and the Distinguished Teaching Award of the University's College of Continuing Education (2007); he was named a Language Access Champion by NCIHC in 2019.



### **Dr. Julia Puebla Fortier**

Julia Puebla Fortier, DrPH, is the research and professional learning lead for Arts & Health South West (UK). She conducts participatory action research on a variety of creative health topics including young people and wellbeing, end-of-life support, and cross-sectoral collaboration. She leads the Creative Health Learning Alliance's training activities and development work on core competencies for arts and health, especially in the context of social prescribing. Her doctoral research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine looked at the emotional labour of creative facilitators working with people with complex health and psychosocial conditions.



Over the last 30 years, Ms. Fortier has also worked to improve access to health services for migrant, minority and other culturally diverse populations. As the Executive Director of the NGO

DiversityRx, Ms. Fortier led the development of key policy, research and practice tools on language access and health equity, including the landmark U.S. Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health Care. With WHO and the International Organization for Migration, she was facilitator and rapporteur for two ministerial-level global consultations on migrant health. She also led policy development and oversight activities for the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Health and the Environment. She nurtures a creative life that includes vocal and instrumental music, dance, writing, mixed media, and raising two (now young adult) children.

### **Danyune Geertsen**

Danyune Geertsen, M.A., led the training, quality assurance and certification departments for over 18 years at Language Line Services. As the Director of Language Line Academy, the external training and testing arm of the company, Ms. Geertsen led the efforts that developed the performance testing for medical interpreter certification, which has been offered by the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters. Ms. Geertsen is retired and lives on the Monterey Peninsula, California.



### **Dr. Eric J. Hardt**

Dr. Eric Hardt is a former Associate Professor of Medicine at BUSM. His training included B.A. in psychology from Yale 1970, M.D. from Tufts Med 1974. After 10 years at Harlem Hospital and Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx, he came to Boston City Hospital/BMC, where he worked for 34 years until retirement. He has been board certified in Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology, Geriatrics, and Palliative Care Medicine and practiced clinical medicine full time for over 40 years.



His activities related to medical interpretation since 1985 are well known around the country. He produced educational materials in many forms for medical interpreters and for health care workers and trainees working across language differences.

He was a founding member of the IMIA and received its inaugural "Provider of the Year Award." He was a founding member of the NCIHC serving on its Executive Board. He worked with the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants and with the ABA's Health Law Section on issues of language access. He served on the Board of the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters. For 34 years he served as Medical Consultant to Interpreter Services at BCH/BMC. He now serves on the Board of Found in Translation [FIT], on the Education Committee of the IMIA, and on the STC Committee of the NCIHC. Most recently he received the 2021 UMass Med School Tony Winsor Award.

### **Dr. Carey Jackson**

Professor Jackson is trained in Internal Medicine, Epidemiology, and Medical Anthropology and has designed health services for the medical care of refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, and survivors of torture at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, a teaching hospital of the University of Washington's School of Medicine. His writing and research focused on health disparities from cervical cancer, liver cancer, hepatitis B, and tuberculosis among immigrant communities. Interventions designed to address language and cultural barriers to prevention have been the focus of large community based participatory research trials in Seattle, Vancouver BC, and a few multi-center national trials. His primary interest has been the design and operation of health services that facilitate the care of recent arrivals and limited English speaking patients in health care. Centered at Harborview Medical Center these efforts included the Northwest Health and Human Rights Coalition( together with with the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project and the International Rescue Committee), Refugee and Immigrant Health Promotion Program, the Community HouseCalls Program, and the International Medicine Clinic. He has also written on issues of language translation and the cultural construction of illness and was the Medical Director of the Interpreter Services Department at Harborview Medical Center for 28 years where he and colleagues developed the Ethnomed.org website to inform the care providers for refugees and immigrants about specialized issues in their care and cultural context. He has done field research and taught in Guam, Nepal, Uganda, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. He was an active clinician for refugee patients for over 30 years and taught Medicine on the wards of Harborview during those decades. He is an adjunct Professor of Global health and now an Emeritus faculty member in the Department of Medicine.



### **Dr. Joseph Kaufert**

Dr. Joseph Kaufert is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Community Health Sciences in the College of Medicine, University of Manitoba. He is a medical anthropologist and public health researcher, teacher/ curriculum developer, and studies scholar. His research has supported innovations fostering culturally- safe communication and reduction of cultural structural barriers to access to health care and community living for Canadians living with disabilities and indigenous peoples. He developed community-based, participatory frameworks for ethical research practice and examined issues in disability and consumer advocacy. He also developed and co-taught consumer-led course modules focusing on disability rights and the impact of the independent living and social models of disability.



### **Jane Crandall Kontrimas**

Jane Crandall Kontrimas CoreCHI™, M.S., Interpreter Training Coordinator, has been a Russian Interpreter at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center since 1979. In 1985 she and Raquel Cashman hosted the first interpreter meeting that became the MMIA (Massachusetts Medical Interpreter Association), now called the IMIA. She chaired the MMIA Standards of Practice while it developed and published the “Standards of Practice for Medical Interpreters”



<https://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/102.pdf>. She has served as an NCIHC Director, and CCHI SME. She continues contributing to the field and expressing her passion by training interpreters, and health care providers in many settings.

### **Priscilla Mendenhall**

Priscilla Mendenhall is a not quite retired advocate and non-profit professional whose career focused on access to health care for refugees and immigrants in metro Washington, DC. She co-produced a film on Lao traditional healing, coordinated health programs at the Indochinese Community Center and was the initial Director of Cultural Competence and Interpreter Services at the Northern Virginia Area Health Education Center. It was in this capacity that she became one of the founding members of NCIHC. Priscilla subsequently established Samsara Communications, a consulting business that offered cultural competence workshops and interpreter training. In 2011, she moved to Tucson and opened Dishes & Stories, a small refugee women-led catering enterprise.



Back east and living in Charlottesville, Virginia right after the 2016 election, Priscilla worked alongside longtime residents and directly impacted university students to establish the Cville Immigrant Freedom Fund. She continues on their advisory board, collaborating with national organizations and families to free migrants from ICE detention and pay their immigration attorneys. Priscilla has recently joined the Board of Legacies of War, a Lao-American organization which educates elected officials and the public on the issue of unexploded ordnance in Laos where more than two million bombs remain in the soil. Legacies also chairs the US Campaign to Ban Land Mines and Cluster Munitions Coalition. Priscilla's goal for the next decade is to support their mission and Lao coffee producers, especially women, who farm the land that the U.S. destroyed. She currently lives outside DC, across from her daughter and four cats.

### **Maria Michalczyk**

Maria Michalczyk, MA, RN has worked as a professional nurse and administrator for five decades. She developed and managed both the medical interpreter program at Oregon Health Sciences University and the health care interpreter training program at Portland Community College (nation's first community college offering).



Maria has been advocating for health care language access for over 30 years and contributed to the following seminal efforts: ASTM Workgroup; Oregon SB 790/law major contributor for credentialing of healthcare interpreters; National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (board member and founding member); Chair for the Governor's Council on Healthcare in Oregon; Certification Commission on Healthcare Interpreters (commissioner and founding member); Oregon Health Care Interpreter Association (board member and President) and is now President Emeritus.

Recognitions: Governor John Kitzhaber Public Health Leadership Award; NCIHC Language Access Award; Oregon Health Authority Language Access Champion and Oregon Health Care Interpreter's Association's Lifetime Achievement.

### **Thu-Van Nguyen**

Thu-Van Nguyen, came to the United States from Viet Nam in June 1975 as a refugee. She wasted little time in embracing her new home and attended and graduated from Gonzaga University in 1989. Thu-Van spent decades working in Seattle supporting the language access cause. She worked as a Healthcare Outreach Worker at the Indochinese Language Bank; she was the Medical Interpreter Service Coordinator at Pacific Medical Center and Cultural and Language Access Coordinator at Medalia Healthcare ( a consortium of Providence and Franciscan clinics that started in 1998 and went out of business in 1999). During the time at Pacific Medical Center, she worked as Interpreter Services Coordinator and helped develop the Interpreter Services from its infancy. She also assisted in the Medical Interpreter Forum in 1989, which laid the basis of the Cross-Cultural Health Care Program creation in 1992. Thu-Van's expertise also was important as she help develop The Medical Interpreter Forum of which became the Society of Medical Interpreters (SOMI). She served for two years term as President of SOMI. She also helped develop Pac Med's Translation Services in collaboration with the Health Education Department and set the guidelines for translation of health materials.

Ms. Nguyen, while now retired, continues to work as an interpreter and volunteers her time working with Seattle Central College in the ESL program and is an instructor of Vietnamese at the Vietnamese Catholic Church.



### **Martine Pierre-Louis**

Martine Pierre-Louis is the Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Harborview Medical Center. She holds a master's in public health with a focus on international health. A leader in language access for three decades, she was a founding member and past board member for both the Society of Medical Interpreters and the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care. She has collaborated on multiple community-based public health efforts focusing on health care access and quality outcomes for refugee and immigrant families. She has partnered with the Medical Center's Quality Improvement department to track and measure disparities by race, ethnicity and language and has collaborated with health care teams and community partners to develop innovative programs to decrease disparities in vulnerable communities.



### **Dr. Bob Putsch**

Bob Putsch retired as Clinical Professor Emeritus of Medicine from the University of Washington School of Medicine. A primary care internist from 1968 to 2002, he cross-covered the nephrology service for ten years. He continued to see patients at Asian Counseling and Referral Service through January 2008 where he'd seen psychiatric patients weekly for more than 25 years.





In 1985 he published *Cross-cultural Communications: The special case of interpreters in health care* in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*. The paper helped the old USPHS teaching hospital to seek Kellogg funding for Seattle's Cross-Cultural Health Care Program (CCHCP). Major projects at CCHCP included hosting and co-hosting meetings about interpretation in health care, efforts that eventuated in the development of the National Council on Interpretation in Health Care.

His writings cover a broad range of issues from Cross-cultural communications, ghost illness in three tribes (Navajo, Salish and Hmong), methodology and language in cross-cultural care, the meaning of death to adolescents in an American Indian community, to ethical dilemmas arising from differences in class, culture, language and power, and end-of-life decision making.

His ACRS panel consisted of patients who were entirely limited English proficient speaking Khmer, Vietnamese, Hmong, Lao, Mien, Samoan, Chinese and a variety of other SE Asian languages and dialects. His most recent article, *The Living Dead: Interactions between the living and the dead in clinical practice*, published in *The Pharos* is available on the web and describes a number of cases seen across boundaries of language and culture.

### **Cynthia Roat**

Cynthia E. Roat is a trainer of community interpreters and an international consultant on language access in health care. Certified as a medical and social-service English-Spanish interpreter, she provided interpreting services in a wide range of community settings in the early 1990s, before her interest in systems change led her into training interpreters, instructors, medical providers and healthcare administrators. Over the past three decades, Ms. Roat has made significant contributions, both in the U.S. and abroad, in many areas of language access. She is the author of a wide array of key resources in the field and the primary developer of a number of basic courses for healthcare interpreters. Her most recent book, *Healthcare Interpreting in Small Bites*, is being adopted as an ancillary text in many training programs. Ms. Roat has also consulted for a variety of large medical centers and healthcare systems. Always concerned about building grassroots capacity, Ms. Roat has been a mentor to interpreters, trainers and Language Access Coordinators around the U.S. She is a founding member of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC), where she currently serves on the Board, a founding member of the Washington State Coalition on Language Access (WASCLA), and a former board member of the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS) where she built a statewide network for providing high quality, low cost continuing education for community interpreters. She is known nationally as an engaging speaker, a knowledgeable resource, and an energetic advocate for language access in general.



## **Ira SenGupta**

Ira SenGupta served as a founding member of the Cross Cultural Health Care Program (CCHCP) and was one of the founders of the National Council in Health Care Interpreting (NCIHC). It is a joy and an honor to celebrate NCIHC's 25 year history of advocacy, establishing standards of practice and ensuring Medical Interpreting becomes a recognized profession.



Ira served as the Executive Director of CCHCP for 25 years. After her recent retirement, she continues to serve as Senior Advisor. Ira has actively contributed to the field of culturally and linguistically appropriate services as a national trainer, researcher, and facilitator of community conversations. An inspirational speaker, she brings to her work a genuine passion, energetic style, and applicable tools. Ira is multilingual and has deep roots in communities accessing health and social services. Ira conducted three significant pieces of qualitative research to understand the barriers to care. She also set up an organizational assessment program to examine and advise health care organizations on their progress towards health equity. She is a Fellow of the leadership program of the Disparities Solutions Center in Boston. During her time at CCHCP Ira was the co-creator and trainer of the different versions of Bridging the Gap (BTG) Medical Interpreter training program, Patient Guide Training, Trainings in Health Equity and Inclusion, and Training of Trainers to build organizational capacity. Now a full-time grandmother of four, she enjoys the fresh ideas of her grandchildren while sharing the eternal value of compassion, the bedrock of our profession.

# In Memoriam



## **Raquel Cashman**

Passed away 1995

Arriving in Boston from Argentina, Raquel understood the systemic barriers to achieving quality health care for all. As Director of Interpreter Services at Boston City Hospital, she knew the importance of transforming the role of the interpreter into one that could be viewed as another professional discipline. She founded the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association (MMIA, now known as the IMIA), and was its first President. She worked to create training and educational opportunities for interpreters, including the state's first academic curriculum at Northern Essex Community College. A true pioneer, Raquel carried on this work at a time when issues of race, class, culture, and language were not in the healthcare arena as they are today. In 1993 Health Care For All honored Raquel with a "For the People, Against the Tide" award stating, "Raquel Cashman . . . has been devoted to providing equal access to health care for non-English speaking patients since 1986. In a climate of budget cuts and little understanding of immigrants' needs, Cashman was able to establish the department of interpreter services as a permanent fixture at Boston City Hospital." And in 1995, the MMIA established the Raquel Cashman Scholarship Award in celebration of her many achievements and lasting legacy.

~by Joy Connell and Gaye Gentes (9/2023)

## **John Chavez**

1938-2017

In the first Back to the Future movie, we learn that the DeLorean time machine requires 1.21 gigawatts of power to operate. That's my memory of John Chavez, rather small sized, but full of a lot of power. After several years of volunteering to interpret in many different contexts, I decided to focus on medical interpreting, hoping to develop a course in healthcare interpreting at my university. Around 1985 when I saw John Chavez was offering a workshop on medical interpreting, I knew this would be my best bet to get professional training from a professional in the field. He did not disappoint. He kicked my rather newly minted PhD butt, kicked it right into the future. His dedication, knowledge and approach to teaching based on theory and in-the-trenches experience powered up my DeLorean to take me straight to my future in language access. Some 38 years later, and now a CCHI CHI-Spanish interpreter, I still remember vivid details of his interwoven best practices with specific knowledge that led me to where I needed to go. Thank you to John Chavez, forever grateful.

~by Enrica J Ardemagni, PhD, CHI-Spanish (9/2023)

## **Frank Martinez**

Passed away 2014

Obituary

Frank V. Martínez, our beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend, passed on to eternal life on May 9th 2014. Frank died peacefully at his home in Bothell, surrounded by his family and friends. Frank was born in Taos, New Mexico. He was preceded in death by his parents, Eloy and Onofre Martínez; sisters, Vangie Martínez and Tina Arguello. Frank is survived by Esther, his devoted wife of 45 years; daughter, Clarisa Becker and husband, Gary; and son, Frank D. Martínez; granddaughters, Olivia and Maya Roberts; sisters, Carlotta (Martín) Fischer, Carlyda Stribling, Cathy Wolfe; brother, Eloy (Martha) Martínez; many nephews, nieces, extended family and friends. He was the former Executive Director of the Valley Migrant League in Oregon, which served migrant and seasonal farm workers with education, health services, housing, and employment opportunities. Frank organized the first "Poor People's Conference" in the early 1970's and helped many people throughout his lifetime as an avid community organizer. Frank retired as a Deputy Director from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights in 1999. He felt his last year in government was especially gratifying, working on a Drug Prevention Program, lecturing at schools throughout the state. Frank enjoyed gardening, reading poetry, philosophy and Spanish literature. He was a good athlete and excelled at playing tennis. Frank loved spending time with his family and friends; especially sharing his prized book of poems written by his adoring granddaughters. Special Thanks to Tricia Reynolds, from Boise, Idaho, who came to help care for Frank during his last days. The family also wishes to acknowledge Stephanie & Matt Roberts, Bill & Leah Collins, Nan Stultz, Group Health Hospice staff, all family, friends and neighbors who have supported us in so many heartfelt and generous ways. Mass of Christian burial will be held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, May 31st 2014 at St. Brendan's Catholic Parish. (10100 NE 192nd St. Bothell, WA 98011)

## **Ly Sieng Ngo**


1943-2021

*"People don't appreciate what they have until they've lost it."*

*— Ly-Sieng Ngo*

Born in 1943 in Cambodia to a privileged Chinese-Cambodian family, Ly Sieng Ngo was already an adult when Pol Pot's brutal regime seized control of the country. She spent four years immersed in the horror of Pol Pot's killing fields, and she was one of only a few of her family to escape. In Seattle, Ly Sieng became an ardent defender of the Cambodian refugee community, working as a social worker, an advocate and an interpreter at a time when language services in health care were still a distant dream. She worked with Community Healthcare Interpreting Services (CHIS), the first organization providing interpreters to the Seattle's Community Clinic system, as well as for the Hospital Interpreting Program (HIP) that grew out of it. The Medical Director of one of these community clinics, Country Doctor Health Centers, wrote this of Ly Sieng:

*Nobody knows the suffering of the Cambodian people, nor recognizes the complex, long-term needs of the community, better than she. She has achieved a remarkable balance between*



*translator, social worker, and advocate. She has always been exquisitely effective as a cross-cultural broker and is extraordinarily respected by providers and patients alike. She is clearly qualified for many higher paying jobs but has made a commitment and stuck to it. She inspires all of us who are lucky enough to have worked with her.*

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*It is no surprise that Ly Sieng was chosen in 1995 to represent CHIS and HIP at the initial meeting of the National Working Group for Interpreting in Health Care. At that initial meeting, she challenged the view that an interpreter's job was only to render in one language what was said in another with no regard for understanding, insisting that interpreters in small communities had to maintain their credibility in the community as well as with their institutional employers. Her voice echoes through the decades in our organization, just as her commitment and compassion inspired all who knew her.*

~by Cindy Roat (9/2023)

### **John Nickrosz**

1938-2017

Medical interpreters in the state of Massachusetts, as well as the rest of the country, are indebted to John Nickrosz, a true pioneer in the promotion of language access in healthcare. A polyglot, John spoke 7 languages and actively interpreted in 4 of them in hospitals throughout the state. He continued to be an active practitioner even after becoming the Training Manager of Interpreter Services at New England Medical Center. John is perhaps best known as the former President of the Massachusetts Medical Association (MMIA, now known as IMIA), The MMIA developed the first set of standards of practice for medical interpreters which continue to be used today throughout the country and abroad. John was very much involved in the development of those standards, and under his presidency the standards were endorsed by the NCIHC.

In 2014, John was recognized not only by the NCIHC as one of the Language Access Champions but also by the IMIA with a Lighthouse Leader Award. What these awards only hint at is the true generosity of spirit, humility and deep belief in humanity John espoused. John was one of those rare individuals who lived to serve and was known to literally give the shirt off his back to someone in need, Lucky was the newly-arrived immigrant to Boston who ran into John -- not only would they be welcomed with open arms and genuine hospitality, the odds are that it would all happen in the person's native language as well! As John was known to often say, "God is good."

Sadly, John passed away in September 2017, but he is remembered by all those who knew him and by all those who he supported and nurtured in their careers in the interpreting field.

~by Joy Connell and Gayes Gentes (9/2023)

## **Shari Wilson**

1960-2004

Shari Wilson was a friend, a colleague and one of Seattle's true language access pioneers. Born and bred in Seattle, Shari had a life-long passion for working with and aiding those of other cultures, dedicating her entire career to serving refugees. In 1987 she accepted a position as the manager of Catholic Community Services' Seattle refugee resettlement program, moving in 1991 to the Seattle/King County Public Health Department as the Refugee Screening and Health Access Manager. As the need grew for ongoing language interpretation support across the department, she also became responsible for managing interpretation services. Shari was involved in the National Working Group on Interpreting in Health Care and later the National Council that grew out of it, serving on the Advisory Committee and attending many annual meetings. She was a mentor for many and an advocate for all.

*Her supervisor at Public Health, Willma Ellmore, put it this way. "Shari was a perfect example of the true spirit of Public Health. She combined knowledge in her field with an understanding and respect for the people her program served. Her kind, buoyant manner made her a pleasure to work beside, and her earnest caring was evident in everything she tackled. It was obvious to those of us fortunate enough to work with her that she truly enjoyed her work with people of varied ethnic and racial backgrounds – she was endlessly curious about other cultures. She was also unfailingly compassionate in her interactions with others. Whether she was presenting to new employees, having a conversation with a coworker, or instructing a new interpreter, she understood and demonstrated that true communication begins with respect. Her integrity was well known to her colleagues, and she represented the best that Public Health has to offer."*

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*We lost Shari to a very aggressive cancer in 1994, at the young age of 43. Before her death, her NCIHC friends organized for her a day-long celebration, and her home was filled with over a hundred interpreters and refugees who came to share with her their love and appreciation. We are poorer for her loss, but the fight for language access that she championed lives on in the people and organizations that she touched.*

~by Cindy Roat, (9/2023)



## **Remaining Founders Not listed**

Battle, Margarita

Bruce, Tom

Chang, Caroline J.

Chao, Chanchoy

Cheng, Francis

De Ridder, Ri

Do, Hoai

Durham, Maria

Gany, Francesca, MD

Haffner, Linda

Heng, James Hak

Kohn, Sally

LaVallée, Margaret

Okahara, Linda

Pascua, Andy

Riddick, Sherry

Rockwell, Carmen

Shapiro, Peggy

Shiu-Thornton, Sharyne

Silverburg, Lisa

Thomas, Lorraine

Whalawitza, Margaret