

“As we safely return to a more normal life, I encourage you to take some time to reflect on and honor the thousands of lives lost to COVID-19.”

- Di Findley, Executive Director



Dear Friend,

It has been a time of immense loss and sorrow. Whether the loss of a loved one was related directly to COVID-19 or not, it altered the ways in which we traditionally comfort grieving family members and friends and in how we've had to deal with our own grief. Perhaps we were unable to visit a dying loved one in a nursing



Di Findley & mom, Shirley

home or were robbed of a chance to say that final goodbye. Maybe we were unable to hold a public celebration of a life well lived. These were some of the things my family and I experienced when my mom died a year ago last March. I arrived at the funeral home ahead of the other seven immediate family members attending, sat alone, and played from my phone one of her favorite hymns, "In the Garden." The image of the empty chairs at the funeral home remains in my memory. The heartfelt condolences and memorials received in Mom's name meant so much to my family and me, and I still find comfort in them. We all deal with grief differently, of course, but to me, the memorials said, "She was a special person." For this reason, I wished to share with you just a few of the many individuals and families who directed memorials to Iowa CareGivers, for which we are most grateful.

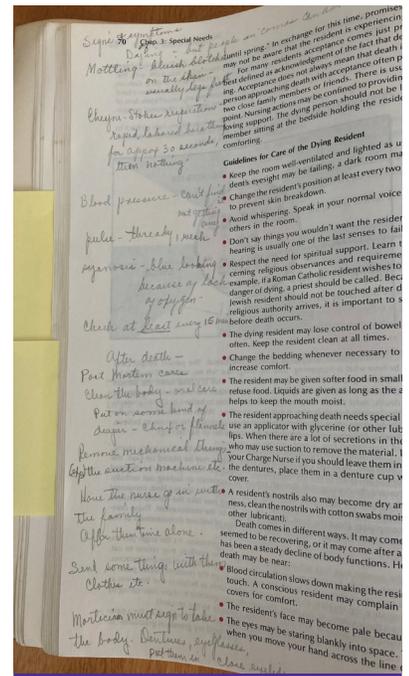


Helen Timp

I've known Mary Jean Timp, **Helen Timp's** daughter, for some time. Mary is passionate about older Iowans and people with disabilities receiving good care and fights for better wages and training for direct care workers. It wasn't until her mother died recently that I learned that her mother had been a Certified Nurse Aide for 23 years, which also fuels her passion.

Mary shared this about her mother: *"My mother viewed caregiving as her profession. She did it for 23 years. For her, it was not a job but a calling, one that she took seriously and that gave her deep satisfaction.*

In going through her belongings, I came across her training manual, with all the notes she'd written in the margins. Reading it reinforced for me that caregiving is skilled work with a high degree of responsibility. I'd like to see the state, employers, and our society recognize that these caregivers deserve better pay, benefits, and supports such as hiring enough staff and providing robust training. We would all benefit from these improvements. And they would make Mom happy."



Helen's original training manual and notes



Bruce Koeppl

Bruce Koeppl and I met when he was the state director for AARP Iowa. In that role and at his very compassionate core, Bruce was one of the best advocates I knew for older lowans, people with disabilities, direct care workers, and family caregivers. By directing memorials to Iowa CareGivers after Bruce's death this year, Bruce and his family gifted us the opportunity through his memory to amplify the need to place a priority on quality care, good jobs for direct care workers, and supports for family caregivers. As his sister Betty Schlievert said, *"It was important to Bruce to continue to help older lowans any way that he could, and hopefully these memorials will do just that."*

Carol Van Aernam was a friend and colleague of the entire Iowa CareGivers team. She was a dedicated registered dental hygienist and was doggedly passionate about good oral care. She was the heart and smile behind our Mouth Care Matters program. Her legacy will live on through that program and the many lives she touched. Susan Martin, Carol's daughter, said, *"During Mom's life she was a huge supporter of the Iowa Care Givers (IC) and Mouth Care Matters. She saw firsthand the difference IC makes in the lives of those who care for our most vulnerable lowans. Knowing how important IC's mission is and how much work there is left to do, she was determined to continue to support them even after she passed. Making IC one of her memorials was her last parting gift to the organization she was so dedicated to in her life. I have been impressed with how Di and the Iowa CareGivers diligently used her memorials to continue the good work that Mom supported for so many years."*



Carol Van Aernam



State Representative Marti Anderson

And State Representative Marti Anderson, Des Moines, wrote us to share the significance of the memorials for her mother, **Polly Anderson**: *"Mom was an R.N., but after a head injury in 1974, she became a caretaker for adults with disabilities. She did that work until she died in 1984."*

In gratitude,

Di Findley, Executive Director

As we safely return to a more normal life, I encourage you to take some time to reflect on and honor the thousands of lives lost during the pandemic, whether COVID-19 related or not. We can never get these loved ones back, but we can honor them and the direct care/support workers who were at the epicenter of the pandemic and stood strong in the wake of the devastating loss it caused, often holding the hands of sick or dying residents or patients when family could not. Please consider a gift to Iowa CareGivers in memory of a loved one, or to honor the actions of a particular caregiver who touched your life.

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You may make your gift in memory of your loved one or to honor a direct care worker using the enclosed donation card, or online at <https://bit.ly/3yATQuL>