



Florence S. Wald (1917-2008)

Florence S. Wald, RN, MN, MS, FAAN, Dean Emerita of Yale University School of Nursing (YSN) and founder of hospice in the United States, passed away November 8, 2008, at her home in Branford, Connecticut. She was 91 years old.

Dean Wald, a member of the National Women's Hall of Fame and an American Academy of Nursing Living Legend, served as the fourth dean of YSN from 1959–1966. She is credited with bringing the hospice movement to the United States from England and establishing the first American hospice unit in Branford in 1971. This hospice became a model for hospice care in the United States and abroad. Her role in reshaping nursing education to focus on patients and their families changed the perception of care for the dying.

"Hospice care for the terminally ill is the end piece of how to care for patients from birth on," Dean Wald wrote. "As more and more people—families of hospice patients and hospice volunteers—are exposed to this new model of how to approach end-of-life care, we are taking what was essentially a hidden scene—death, an unknown, and making it a reality. We are showing people that there are meaningful ways to cope with this very difficult situation."

A world-renowned leader in nursing research, Dean Wald held three degrees from Yale University: Master of Nursing, Master of Science, and Honorary Doctor of Medical Sciences. A 1938 graduate of Mt. Holyoke College, she was awarded the honorary Doctor of Law degree from the University of Bridgeport in 1967, and the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Mt. Holyoke College in 1978.

While serving as Dean of YSN, Wald initiated and implemented numerous reforms in educational programs, guiding the School to a new definition of nursing as a scholarly clinical discipline based in specialist nursing practice.

Her most recent work included bringing the hospice model

of compassion and dignity in death to the Connecticut Correctional Facilities. Since its implementation, over 150 inmates have been trained to be hospice volunteers within state correctional facilities. This model is now being translated to the state Veterans' Homes through a grant from the Beatrice Renfield Foundation.

In an interview with the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Dean Wald explained that the needs of dying prisoners are different because they face death knowing they have not had successful lives. She found that inmates serving as hospice volunteers gained confidence from the situation. "It shows that even in this terrible situation, something good can happen, a sense of possibility emerges," she added.

She received many awards and accolades, including membership in the National Women's Hall of Fame, the American Nurses' Association Hall of Fame, the Connecticut Hall of Fame, an American Academy of Nursing "Living Legend," the YSN Distinguished Alumna/us Award, the Founder's Award of the American Hospice Association, and the first Florence S. Wald Award for Contributions to Nursing Practice of the Connecticut Nurses Association. In November of 2007, the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs dedicated the Florence and Henry Wald House to provide a peaceful temporary home for families of hospice patients.

"We at Yale were privileged to have Florence Wald with us for over 50 years," said YSN Dean Margaret Grey. "In her passing we have lost a dear friend and an extraordinary leader and visionary who put the needs of the underserved as a primary life focus. Though relatively small and quiet in demeanor, her steely determination to change the way care is delivered made her voice strong. At YSN, we will miss her presence, but her legacy will live long in the faculty, staff, and students who learned from her."

Dean Wald was preceded in death by her husband, Henry. She is survived by their children, Joel and Shari, and grandchildren Peter, Adam, Richard, David, and Rachel.

A funeral service was held at Battell Chapel of Yale University. Memorial gifts may be made to Yale University School of Nursing, and directed to the Florence Schorske Wald Scholarship fund, which will aid students who wish to work with the underserved, or to the hospice of your choice.

Helen P. Bryant '33
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5/14/2008

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2/1/2009

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8/24/2008

Florence S. Wald '41
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Margaret M. Schoenknecht '42
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Grace H. Richardson '43
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Evelyn S. Barnes '44
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Selma B. Hardeman '46
11/8/2008

Penina Raquel Turner '47
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7/1/2008

Roxy B. Leiserson '52
7/6/2008

Louise M. Young '57
3/19/2006

Marjorie R. Wright '65
12/16/2008

Carol Garant '73
1/25/2009

Terri Murtland '85
8/17/2008

Kimberly Lee Adamson '95
01/23/2009

Marjorie May Tierney '98
6/24/2008

Louise Lindsay Read '06
11/21/2008