


Tribute

Vale Jill Konkin

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Professor Jill Konkin

Jill Konkin grew up in a small town in northern Saskatchewan, Canada, before undertaking a political science degree and then studying medicine. Destined to be a rural doctor, she was very proud of contributing 20 years as a full-time rural doctor with full scope of practice in Jasper, Alberta, and providing service to remote communities over many subsequent years. Her instrumental contribution to rural medical education helped establish the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) University and later rural medical programs for the University of Alberta for students and doctors. Dr Konkin's impact on medical education and rural health care has been felt across Canada and internationally. A trailblazer in rural academic medicine, she was instrumental in shaping distributed medical education and was

deeply committed to building programs that brought meaningful, high-quality learning experiences to rural and regional communities.

At NOSM University, Jill played a pivotal role in the early days. She championed NOSM's socially accountable admissions process and brought an unwavering commitment to rural medical education. As Associate Dean Admissions and Student Affairs and one of NOSM's foundational leaders, she was a mentor to many, and a role model to all. Her passion for rural medicine never wavered.

In Alberta, she worked with others to establish rural Longitudinal Integrated Clerkships (LICs) at both the University of Alberta (UofA) and the University of Calgary, and also established rural community rotations for UofA students while continuing their basic science studies.

Jill's contribution to academic medicine included leading the establishment of the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) Distributed Medical Education (DME) Network and serving on numerous national and international committees dedicated to the advancement of rural generalist practice and medical education. Her work with the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (President 2002–2004), the Alberta College of Family Physicians (Past President), the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Patan Academy of Health Sciences in Nepal speaks to her global impact and steadfast dedication to socially accountable health care.

I have known Jill well since we ran a research workshop together in Tromsø, Norway, in 2016. This was the beginning of the clinical courage collaborative. A group of us have met virtually at least monthly ever since. In research, Jill was curious, reflexive, thoughtful, wise and determined to honour participants' stories. She had the grace to explore the reasoning of each member of the team, often facilitating our collective interpretation. I learnt so much about research and enjoyed so much the discovery journey we undertook together.

Her well-thought through, strong opinions on medical politics and strategic direction demonstrated her clear thinking and often her feistiness. Mostly, I saw her determined interest in, and connection

with, other people – her students, other rural doctors and her family. I was privileged to visit her in 2023, to sit on her porch and talk of rural medicine, medical education, plants, family and travel.

Jill is and will always be an inspiration. She will shape rural medicine's understanding of service, leadership and clinical courage in perpetuity. Her legacy is immeasurable. She was known for her wisdom, warmth and unwavering belief in the power of rural medicine to transform lives and communities. Those of us who had the privilege of working with her will never forget her leadership and compassion and her belief in what is possible.

Professor Lucie Walters, Director, Adelaide Rural Clinical School, University of Adelaide

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