

March 9th, 2021
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Alicia, Michael, Jesse and family:

I knew Kathleen since I started working at USC in the 90s. I knew her back then for her research on antioxidants. She worked side by side with your father and beloved husband, Dr. Jim Dwyer. I would walk down the hallways in Alhambra where our offices were at the time and remember seeing her with her beautiful long hair going about her work and always with a smile. I wondered how she managed to look so impeccable no matter what was happening throughout the day. Back then we talked about her love for Mexico, and her passion for the children in disadvantaged situations and her work in the Sanctuary for Children's Council. But it was not until Kathleen became the Director of International and Domestic Practica in the Master of Public Health Program in 2010, that I got to know her better. I was the Director of the Global Health Tract in the program at the time, and we worked closely together for many years.

Kathleen was an incredible strong partner in all we did. If I could have chosen a sister by birth to accompany me on this earth, I would have chosen Kathleen. My family also loved her dearly. She and my husband Jim would often say in later years they were brother and sister. My parents would swap stories with her as they sat and ate tapas outside the museum Del Prado in Madrid. She encouraged our son with his Spanish so much, that he became the translator for a student who had trouble with the language.

We got into a lot of "good trouble" together. Kathleen was courageous, adventuresome and she was so much fun to be with. For many years we travelled together working closely in Spain where we worked on projects in Barcelona and Alicante, in Panama, and in Switzerland at the World Health Organization. We also supervised students' projects anywhere from Malawi to Uganda. On those trips, I looked forward to our quiet evenings together going through the activities of the day. We enjoyed sharing meals together and in Panama there is even a salad named after her

at one of the local restaurants where we ate. She went to the kitchen and taught the chef how to make it.

Kathleen was fearless. She gave me the strength and courage to do things I would have never dared to do. Kathleen didn't fear confronting peril, placing herself in harms' way, if needed, to protect others. She was also an incredible listener and very observant of human behavior. Kathleen was not only intellectually brilliant, but also savvy, witty, and had amazing street smarts. She had a look in her eyes that could disarm you. Her eyes would just sparkle when she talked about you her children, Alicia, Jesse, Michael, your significant others, and her grandchildren. She was incredibly talented and resourceful. She guided the students in their research in foreign countries, assisted in clinical placements and guided epidemiologic research and on the ground practice. In our trips, Kathleen helped to solidify critically important relationships for the University with health leaders in our host countries. She had the unique ability of on the same day meeting with ministers of health and heads of international organizations via work with W.H.O. or the United Nations, to helping spot mosquito infested waters in low-income areas with a Dengue prevention crew.

Kathleen was kind and gentle. She would sit with the children and mothers in a hospital in a low resourced, low-income country, explaining to them in Spanish what they could do after hearing a diagnostic they didn't fully understand, helping them understand medications and doses, to engaging children in physical activities using water bottles for weights.

My dear Comadre had the most amazing laugh that could easily be heard by all on our bus rides to distant places. She had a way of bonding with people that you couldn't figure out how it would happen. I remember Kathleen became close friends with the leader of the Embera indigenous tribe in Panama, a community that till 50 years before our visit -had been cannibals. When they invited us to lunch, you can imagine I was a little weary. Yet you could hear Kathleen's laugh, as she bonded with the tribal leader and they ate fish together. Later on I learned they exchanged ideas on natural remedies and fertility rituals. And although the tribal leader was only wearing a loin cloth when we visited; Kathleen managed to get his cell phone number so she could call him back in case the students wanted to return.

Kathleen was a truly exceptional and remarkable woman, colleague, and friend. She has left an important mark in the lives of others and will never be forgotten. I will miss her so much and cherish every moment we spent together. She helped to shape my life, and I know she transformed the lives of many others, especially her students and the new generations we had the privilege of mentoring together. She always use to tell me “ten fuerza” which means “have strength” in Spanish, and I wish to give these words back to you to remember Kathleen by today. “ten fuerza” (have strength). Kathleen will always be known for her strength, fortitude of character, as a beacon against discrimination; and a light for the most disadvantaged. I miss my brave, talented and dearest Comadre.

My heartfelt condolences to you and your loved ones. And know she will always be just a whisper away and will live forever in our hearts. With all my love, that of my husband Jim, and our son Alex, with broken hearts, but hopeful we will see her again one day, receive our deep condolence and warmest regards,

Lourdes

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