



# Choice and Dignity, Inc.

End-of-Life Training, Resource and Referral

P.O. Box 86886, Tucson, AZ 85754

800-811-4112 ~ [www.ChoiceAndDignity.org](http://www.ChoiceAndDignity.org)

APRIL 2024 Newsletter

## In The News

### International News:

**Duo euthanasia: former Dutch prime minister dies hand in hand with his wife. Dries and Eugenie van Agt, both 93, died as number of couples in Netherlands choosing joint end to life grows.**

[Senay Boztas](#) in Amsterdam via The Guardian and edited by C&D—Sat 10 Feb 2024 12.15 EST

A Catholic former Dutch prime minister, Dries van Agt, has died by euthanasia, hand in hand with his wife, Eugenie. They were both 93. Both were very ill but "couldn't go without one another". Van Agt had never fully recovered from a brain hemorrhage in 2019.

According to the Dutch media, Van Agt — prime minister between 1977 and 1982 and the first leader of the Christian Democratic Appeal party — may have been a Catholic but always chose his own path, along with his wife of 70 years, whom he always called "my girl".

The Rights Forum, a pro-Palestinian group that Van Agt set up in his later, more left-leaning years, announced the news of their deaths "together and hand in hand" last week.

Their deaths are seen as part of a growing trend in the Netherlands for "duo euthanasia". "Interest in this dual euthanasia is growing, but it is still rare. It is pure chance that two people are suffering unbearably with no prospect of relief at the same time ... and that they both wish for euthanasia."

Euthanasia and assisted suicide have been legal in the Netherlands since 2002 for six conditions, including unbearable suffering, no prospect of relief and a long-held, independent wish for death.

A second specialist must confirm the wish, and most cases are carried out by the family doctor at home.

### Explainer: A 'breakthrough moment' for assisted dying in Ireland

Right-to-die campaigners hailed a historic 'breakthrough' on Thursday after politicians backed legislating for assisted dying.

March 10, 2024 — [MSN.com](https://www.msn.com) - Edited for brevity

The cross-party Oireachtas Committee on Assisted Dying recommended, by a large majority, that Ireland should allow euthanasia and assisted suicide for those with terminal and neurological conditions who have months to live.

Advocate Tom Curran, whose wife, Marie Fleming, took a landmark case against the State before her death in 2013, said the development was 'a move in the right direction'.

The committee has recommended that people with a terminal prognosis, with less than six months to live, should be able to avail themselves of an assisted death.

For those with neuro-degenerative conditions, such as motor neurone disease, they will be able to avail of an assisted death if they have up to 12 months to live.

A doctor must say the person is more than likely, at least 51%, to die in these time frames to qualify. It's understood this was a 'contentious' point in the committee's debates as some members were concerned it was 'vague'. However, it was passed by a majority of the members.

Euthanasia is also recommended, in which a doctor would take the action to end life when the person wanting to die is incapable of physically administering the necessary medical substance themselves.

Dignity In Dying's Mr. Wall said this would be campaigner Ms. Phelan's 'legacy' but also praised other advocates such as Ms. Fleming. He said: 'It's because of Marie and Vicky that we need to keep this conversation alive, and we need to keep it moving in the right direction.'

Ms. Fleming was one of the country's leading campaigners on the issue, losing a Supreme Court battle in 2013 in a bid to travel to Switzerland to end her life as she chronically suffered from multiple sclerosis.

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## In The News — continued

Her widower Mr. Curran hailed the committee's recommendations as a 'breakthrough moment'. The director with end-of-life organization Exit International, also said it was a 'move in the right direction'.

However, he said his measure of any proposed legislation is 'would Marie qualify for this, and the answer is no'.

He said that doctors working with those with neurological conditions 'are not quite prepared to give a time scale' of how long their patient has left to live, with Ms. Fleming's doctor saying it was 'impossible' to give her a prognosis.

Mr. Curran said he is concerned that there could be legal challenges from those who feel they should qualify.

'Why not get it right the first time instead of having to change it after a decision in the courts?' he asked. On the other side of the debate, there is significant resistance to the proposals, particularly in the medical sector.

Hope Ireland, a coalition of medical professionals and disability rights advocates, said it finds the recommendations 'troubling'.

'We are concerned about the international evidence showing that countries which introduce euthanasia on supposedly "very restrictive grounds", that the eligibility is expanded based on equity.

We saw that happen in Canada,' said Dr. Miriam Colleran, coalition member and consultant in palliative medicine. 'The evidence shows that people seek assisted dying in particular because of feelings of burden ....'

The recommendations only allow for those who are Irish citizens or permanent residents to avail of assisted dying here.

## U.S. News:

### **National Healthcare Decisions Day...Because Your Decisions Matter** (Updated and Edited)

Please help us make history, again. April 16, 2024, will be the seventeenth annual National Healthcare Decisions Day.

(Continued in next column)

At every level, the goal of this nationwide initiative is to ensure that all adults with decision-making capacity in America have both the information and the opportunity to communicate and document their future healthcare decisions.

While making healthcare decisions is often difficult in the best of circumstances, making decisions for others is even more complicated. Each of us has the ability to guide our healthcare providers and our loved ones about what we want.

Advance directives give you the ability to document the types of healthcare you do and do not want, and to name an "agent" to speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself.

With the Patient Self-Determination Act of 1990, Congress affirmed the right of every citizen to set forth his or her future healthcare wishes in writing with an "advance directive." Yet, various estimates suggest that only about 25% of all Americans have done so. Because advance directives can be created without a lawyer, for free, and relatively easily, this figure is astonishingly low. In recognition of this, National Healthcare Decisions Day strives to provide much-needed information to the public, reduce the number of tragedies that occur when a person's wishes are unknown, and improve the ability of healthcare facilities and providers to offer informed and thoughtful guidance about advance healthcare planning to their patients.

Please visit [www.NHDD.org](http://www.NHDD.org) for a variety of free information (including free advance directives forms for every state) and tools to assist with thoughtful reflection on healthcare choices and ideas on how to get involved.

Finally, please share this information with your loved ones and medical team.

With healthcare, "your decisions matter"; however, others need to know your wishes to honor them. There are no wrong answers when thinking about healthcare choices and completing an advance directive.

Please use April 16, 2024, to decide, discuss, and document your wishes, whatever they may be.

*Nathan A. Kottkamp*

*Chair, National Healthcare Decisions Day*

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## In The News — continued

### **Former doctor accused of helping person die by suicide in New York motel is charged with manslaughter**

Stephen P. Miller, 85, who was on the advisory board of an end-of-life advocacy group, was charged with second-degree manslaughter, accused of aiding a person to die by suicide.

Feb. 6, 2024, 3:05 PM MST

By Marlene Lenthang

*Editor's Note: Many of our members saw the articles relating to Steve's arrest. Steve is a former Board Member and previously served on our Advisory Board. Since Steve's case is still going through the courts, we are limited in what we can say. Nonetheless, if you know Steve, or even if you don't, you can assume that Steve was only trying to provide comfort to someone who was ready to exit. We see his arrest as a travesty and are deeply saddened by the event.*

An 85-year-old former doctor from Arizona has been arrested and charged with manslaughter, accused of aiding a person to die by suicide in a New York motel in November, officials said.

Stephen P. Miller, of Tucson, Arizona, was arraigned Friday and pleaded not guilty to charges of second-degree manslaughter and first- and second-degree assault, court records show.

The investigation started shortly before noon on November 9, when police responded to a report about an unconscious and unresponsive person at a Super 8 on Washington Avenue in the city of Kingston, about 100 miles north of New York City, Kingston police said in a statement Friday.

First responders found a person who initially appeared to have died by suicide alone in the motel room, police said.

But further investigation led to evidence that a second person had been present who "contributed to or assisted in the suicide," the statement said.

An investigation by police and the Ulster County district attorney's office led to an arrest warrant

being issued for Miller, citing second-degree manslaughter under the state penal code regarding a person who "intentionally causes or aids another person" to die by suicide.

Lichtman (Miller's attorney) told The New York Times that it was a woman who died in the motel room that night and that she had contacted Miller through a national organization that advocates for the legalization of medical aid in dying. Lichtman said Miller traveled to New York from Arizona to witness the death of the woman, who had severe, chronic pain. He said his client had provided similar services before.

"This was done carefully, compassionately and with a lot of research and reflection," Lichtman told the Times. Speaking to The Times Herald-Record of Middletown, New York, Lichtman said, "Providing advice on ending one's life does not necessarily run afoul of the law."

Miller serves on the advisory board of Choice and Dignity — an end-of-life nonprofit group based in Arizona that believes "everyone has the right to have their individual end-of-life plans respected and honored," according to its website.

Medical aid in dying has long been controversial. It is legal in 10 states — including California and New Jersey — and Washington, D.C., according to Death with Dignity, an end-of-life advocacy and policy reform organization.

It is not legal in New York state, though it has been proposed — and has stalled — in the Legislature. Miller was remanded to the Ulster County Jail on \$500,000 cash bail or \$1 million bond, or \$3 million partially secured bond. Inmate records show he was bonded out the same day.

Miller is a former family practice doctor who graduated from Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Sciences in Chicago in 1964. He was issued a license to practice in Arizona in 1994, which expired in 2005, according to Arizona Medical Board records.

(In the News—Continued on the next page)



## In The News — continued

**Three top nitrogen gas manufacturers in US bar products from use in executions. This move follows Alabama's recent killing of death row inmate Kenneth Smith using previously untested method.**

*From The Guardian Sun 10 Mar 2024 11.00 EDT*

*Ed Pilkington @edpilkington*

Three of the largest manufacturers of medical-grade nitrogen gas in the US have barred their products from being used in executions, following Alabama's recent killing of the death row inmate, Kenneth Smith, using a previously untested method known as nitrogen hypoxia.

The three companies have confirmed to The Guardian that they have put in place mechanisms that will prevent their nitrogen cylinders falling into the hands of departments of correction in death penalty states. The move by the trio marks the first signs of corporate action to stop medical nitrogen, which is designed to preserve life, being used for the exact opposite — killing people.

The green shoots of a corporate blockade for nitrogen echoes the almost total boycott that is now in place for medical drugs used in lethal injections. That boycott has made it so difficult for death penalty states to procure drugs such as pentobarbital and midazolam that a growing number are turning to nitrogen as an alternative killing technique.

Now, nitrogen producers are engaging in their own efforts to prevent the abuse of their products. The march has been led by Airgas, which is owned by the French multinational Air Liquide.

The company announced publicly in 2019 that supplying nitrogen for the purposes of execution was not consistent with its values. The move followed Oklahoma becoming the first state to adopt nitrogen hypoxia as a capital punishment protocol in 2015.

"Airgas has not, and will not, supply nitrogen or other inert gases to induce hypoxia for the purpose of human execution," the company said in a statement.

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Nitrogen hypoxia involves forcing a prisoner to breathe nitrogen, and nitrogen alone, through an airtight gas mask. The procedure leads to oxygen deprivation and death.

The four states that currently have nitrogen hypoxia on their books — Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Oklahoma — claim it is a quick and humane death. But when Alabama became the first state to carry out an execution using this method in January, witnesses recounted how the prisoner, Smith, writhed and convulsed on the gurney for several minutes.

"His took deep breaths, his body shaking violently with his eyes rolling in the back of his head," a reporter from the Montgomery Advertiser said.

Two other major nitrogen manufacturers have also confirmed to The Guardian that they are restricting sales of their gas. Air Products said that it had established "prohibited end uses for our products, which includes the use of any of our industrial gas products for the intentional killing of any person (including nitrogen hypoxia)".

Matheson Gas said that supplying nitrogen gas for use in executions was "not consistent with our company values", and that it would not do so.

Other manufacturers of medical nitrogen in the US were more circumspect. Linde, a global multinational founded in Germany and headquartered in the UK, would not say whether it was willing to sell its product for use in US death chambers and declined to comment.

One of the attractions of nitrogen for death penalty states compared with lethal injection drugs is that the gas is much more freely available. It is widely produced and distributed for industrial uses.

However, only a few companies produce medical-grade nitrogen that has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use with humans. The three producers who told The Guardian they have end-use protections in place are among the biggest suppliers of medical nitrogen, which is more carefully purified and regulated than its industrial equivalent.

Alabama has shrouded the source of its nitrogen in secrecy, in the hope of obscuring its supply lines and avoiding the kind of boycott that has troubled lethal injection drugs. If it became known that its gas was

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## In The News — continued

industrial quality and not approved for human use, that could lead to major legal challenges and puncture its public posture that nitrogen hypoxia is a humane way to end life.

"When nitrogen is used in industrial processes, it's not intended for inhalation and there would be questions about whether it is pure enough. People are entitled to basic human rights, even as you are trying to kill them," said Robert Dunham, director of the Death Penalty Policy Project.

Dunham added that if less stringent purification standards for industrial nitrogen led to a quotient of oxygen being present in the product, it could prolong the execution process with dire results.

Despite the opposition of manufacturers, nitrogen continues to be a growth industry for death penalty states. On Tuesday, Louisiana's governor Jeff Landry signed into law a bill that makes the state the fourth in the country with nitrogen on its list of execution methods.

Alabama is also moving along with plans to execute a second prisoner using the gas. It has applied to the state's supreme court for permission to send Alan Eugene Miller to the death chamber.

Like Smith, Miller had the rare experience of surviving an execution after the state called off an attempted lethal injection procedure in 2022 because it could not find a workable vein through which to pump the drugs.

Maya Foa, joint executive director of the human rights group Reprieve, said that the stance of the three nitrogen manufacturers brought them into line with almost all pharmaceutical companies producing drugs used in lethal injections. "Drug manufacturers don't want their medicines diverted and misused in torturous executions and the makers of nitrogen gas share the same objection: they do not want their products to be used to kill," she said.

Foa added: "States which claim that the lethal injection or gas inhalation are 'humane' methods of execution are merely seeking to mask what it means for a state to forcibly put someone to death. The makers of these products see through the lie and naturally want nothing to do with it."

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**Editor's Note:** For those of you who "just haven't gotten around to "buying your equipment," this article should be a reminder to get your equipment before you need it. It is all too easy for it to be legislated out of your reach.

## Local News:

### Choice & Dignity presents "Excellent Exit Plan" at Yavapai OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute)

Board Member Laura Vandergrift, with a long-distance assist from Sally Hall, M.D., and Myriam Coppens presented a series of four classes online for the Yavapai College OLLI group.

## Mortality Movies:

In California, Board Member Myriam Coppens orchestrated two showings of "**Jack Has a Plan.**" There were 45 people at the viewing in Aptos, CA. It was well received, followed by a panel answering questions from the group. And on February 18, in Santa Barbara, around 100 attended, with half staying for the discussion afterwards!

Our Tucson presentation of "**Dying Wish - A VSED Story**" on Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup> was well attended and provoked a good deal of discussion. Thanks to Board Member Maggie Molloy and Volunteer Mark Hess for facilitating the discussion. (VSED—Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking)

Our next movie presentation will be "A Short Stay in Switzerland" with Julie Walters on Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup> from 2:15 — 4:15 pm. It will again be at the Columbus-Eckstrom Library off 22nd St. in Tucson.

## Quarterly Highlights in Media News and Reviews

**A Curated Selection of Movies, Books, websites, Blogs and T.V. that may interest you.**

### T.V./Streaming/Film — "Extremis"

Witness the wrenching emotions that accompany end-of-life decisions as doctors, patients and families in a hospital ICU face harrowing choices. Learn more at: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5538078/>



## Book — “Going to Switzerland”

Going to Switzerland is the first book of its kind to document how the Swiss assisted dying process applies to foreigners. Since 1937 assisted suicide has been legal in Switzerland. Foreigners can fly in and get help to die. Going to Switzerland discusses the legal framework that makes this possible, providing a step-by-step guide as to how to prepare for an assisted death in this country. Going to Switzerland describes the application process, the qualification criteria in terms of a mental health diagnosis (including dementia and Alzheimer's), the different methods of death used by the different clinics and the variation in acceptance policies. The book also details what to expect before, during and after a death including cremation, death certificates and costs.

Available from Exit International or Amazon.

<https://www.amazon.com/Going-Switzerland-plan-your-final/dp/098032565X>

## Podcast — The Peaceful Pill from Progress, Potential And Possibilities YouTube Podcast

Dr. Philip Nitschke, MD, Ph.D. is a medical doctor, humanist and founder and director of the pro-euthanasia group Exit International (<https://www.exitinternational.net/>), a leading end-of-life rights advocacy and information non-profit. Dr. Nitschke has written extensively in the area of voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide, including three books, including: *Killing Me Softly: Voluntary Euthanasia and the Road to the Peaceful Pill*, *The Peaceful Pill eHandbook*, and *Damned if I Do: Autobiography*. Dr. Nitschke holds a Ph.D. in applied physics from Flinders University and is a graduate of Sydney Medical School. He is a seven-time nominee for Australian of the Year and is the recipient of many awards including the Rainer Humanitarian Award and Australian Humanist of the Year. Dr. Nitschke successfully campaigned to have a legal euthanasia law passed in Australia's Northern Territory and assisted four people in ending their lives before the law (Rights of the Terminally Ill Act) was overturned by the federal government. He was the first doctor in the world to administer a legal, voluntary, lethal injection.

Click here to watch or listen: [Peaceful Pill Podcast Series](#)

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## Website — “Cake”

Meet "Cake" - we're a dedicated crew of experts in the death, funeral, and end-of-life planning process. We believe that navigating death and loss is really all about **honoring and celebrating life**.

Whether you're navigating the loss of a loved one or planning for yourself, we are the authoritative source on the internet to figure out:

- what you have to do
- what options you have
- how to find professionals who can help you take care of yourself and honor your loved ones

We help you and your family know your rights, know how much things should cost, and simplify this complex and fragmented process. We stand by you with guidance and comfort when you need it most.

Our goal? To make sure everyone can **live fully and die well**. Check Cake out at: <https://www.joincake.com/welcome/>

## Upcoming Happenings:

**Exit Café—hosted by J'Fleur Lohman  
TALKING ABOUT DEATH WON'T KILL YOU!**

Date: Saturday, April 13

Time: 2:15 — 3:45 pm

Place: Murphy-Wilmot Library, 530 N. Wilmot

Is it Difficult to Find Someone to Talk Openly  
with About Our Fears and Wishes About Dying?

We will discuss issues like:

- How do I plan for a peaceful death?
- How do I talk to a loved one about my end-of-life concerns?
- How do I find someone to be my “medical power of attorney?”

**Feel free to bring a friend or family member.  
Open to the Public.**

**Refreshments Provided.**

**No admission Fee**

Register at [Meetup.com/choice-dignity-tucson-death-and-dying-meetup-group](https://www.meetup.com/choice-dignity-tucson-death-and-dying-meetup-group/). (Hint: You can just scan the QR code.)

Or send us an email at  
[ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com](mailto:ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com)



Scan to register for Exit Cafe

## “How to Get the Death You Want” — Class Series in May

Board Members Jim Schultz, J’Fleur Lohman, and Maggie Molloy, with an assist from elder care law attorney, Beth Smith, will be presenting this series.

The series of five 90-minute sessions will help you prepare for death — yours or a loved one.

Five Primary Topics:

- ◆ Introduction to Death and the Right-to-Die Movement
- ◆ Advanced Directives — your decisions about the types of care and life-sustaining measures you may or may not want.
- ◆ Medical Advocacy — how to ensure your wishes are honored. We’ll cover both choosing your advocate as well as being a good advocate for someone else.
- ◆ Communication with Family, Loved Ones, and Medical Providers. How to start and have the necessary conversations.
- ◆ Deliberate Life Completion — we’ll discuss the what, where and how Medical Aid in Dying and other methods to reduce suffering where MAID is not a viable alternative

In addition, we’ll discuss neurodegenerative diseases and their impact on the Life Completion process as well as other “to-do’s” for your list in preparation for death.

These classes will be held every Friday in May from 10:30 am to noon.

Location: Harmony Community Healthcare Education Center, 310 S. Williams Blvd., Ste. 210, Tucson

There will be no charge to Choice and Dignity members; for non-members, the suggested contribution is \$25 or whatever you can afford — no one will be excluded due to income. Additional donations are welcome.

Questions: 1-800-811-4112

Register with QR code:



Register for HTGTDYW

## Call for Volunteers

We admit it! Many hands make light work, and we need more volunteers. Our devoted Choice and Dignity Board of Directors is seeking help with several endeavors.

**Board Members** — We only have eight people on the Board, and we aren’t getting any younger. The Board meets quarterly, with sub-committee meetings in-between. Past non-profit experience would be helpful but isn’t required.

**Discussion Group organizers/leaders** — Would you like to help people discuss issues related to death?

**Grant Writer** — Do you have grant writing experience? We need someone to write applications for grants.

**Social Media Guru** — Are you skilled at social media? You could help develop our presence.

Please call 1-800-811-4112 or send us a note at [ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com](mailto:ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com) if you might be willing to help.





## Prepare to Die - Guest Article

### We Can Have It Both Ways: Know Each Other Better Now, and Be Prepared

By Ellen Goodwin, CSO, Artifcts

I want to share with you a bit about who I am as a means of sharing how preparedness for the ends of our lives is changing from the lens of technology.

I'm the co-founder of [Artifcts](#), (Ed. note this is a purposeful misspelling of artifact) a web- and mobile- based app through which you can combine photos, video, and audio to capture the stories and memories behind all the 'stuff' you collect and accumulate in life. Why would you do this? We want to change our relationships with 'stuff' and with each other, now, while we are still alive, and yes, generations forward, too.

When we launched Artifcts, we pitched to and won a spot in the [AARP AgeTech Collaborative](#). Why did AARP welcome us? AARP knows photo books are insufficient, as are questionnaires of the ilk, "What do you do for a living? How did you meet your spouse?" The tangible objects of our lives have a unique power to hold our memories and resurface them.

Fast forward a year, and I was on stage at [Longevi-Tech Tel Aviv](#) talking about legacy and technology and how we as technology leaders can and must do better to help people better prepare for end-of-life and preserving legacy.

Preparedness is multifold as you all likely know far better than me. There are mental, physical, and spiritual components, just as there is the unavoidable, tangible component.

An Artifcts Community member emailed us recently, and shared, in part, "*My parents were avid collectors ever since I can remember. When it came time to sell their home, what once appeared to be connoisseurship soon looked more like hoarding as I started sifting through their pieces. [...] It was TRAUMATIZING, having to figure this all out for them.*"

Is that the legacy you want to leave your loved ones? So much stuff, so few stories, so little sense as to what matters, and what's just stuff? I hope not. It's pain and loss above what your loved ones will already experience, even if they've prepared themselves for the end. Please prepare to pass down stories, not just things. Gift your loved ones a "why." They want to remember us.

Think through your "estate of stuff" holistically: Documents, photos, objects, research, and even digital assets. A woman who I met during an in-home Artifcts concierge service told me she was not sure if her son knew she had "loyalty points" to the local grocery store — likely unimportant in the end — or where she was banking — relatively more important — and was sharing this all with him by writing it down in the back of her address book.

The reality is that one day our loved ones will need to shut down our digital lives to protect our identify and security, even post death, no matter if it's a grocery store card or a bank account. Make technology your friend and ally in this preparedness and end-of-life process. To help you, I'll close with resources I've learned about while building Artifcts. Be assured, I gain nothing by telling you about the following resources other than the peace of mind that you may learn something new to help you along your path.

[Professionals of After Loss Services](#) help in all things pre- and post- end of life from legal and banking to digital accounts, saving families the time, cost, and trauma of going it alone. If you want to contact one of the founders for a 1:1 chat, email [Rachel](#) Donnelly of AfterLight.

[Trustworthy](#) & similar (GoodTrust, Keylu to name two) guides you through the preservation and updates to vital documents, online accounts, contacts, and more. You can even scan in all your documents, and it will sort them for you saving you hours of inputting it all manually. You can securely designate access to all this vital information to loved ones, estate attorneys and others.

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[The Photo Managers](#) can help you get your “photo estate” — that’s digital and physical photos — organized and even to “Artifact” that. Photos can’t talk after all. Share the stories of those cherished photos through your own memories and voice!

[LivNow Relocation Services](#), another AARP AgeTech Collaborative member, manages all parts of a move to a new home or community, including not just moving day but bridge loans and home clean outs, too.

[Wellthy](#), Lantern, Empathy, and Farewelling (to name a few) offer planning tools and community support resources to help you through illness and end-of-life. You won’t need to Google, “What do I do now for a loved one with a terminal diagnosis.”

Have a good end of life.

Ellen

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## On a lighter note ...

A funeral director asked a bagpiper to play at a graveside service for a homeless man. He had no family or friends, so the service was to be held at a cemetery in the country. As the bagpiper was not familiar with this area, he got lost and, being a proud man, didn’t ask for directions.

Finally, an hour late, he arrived and saw the funeral director had evidently gone and the hearse was nowhere in sight. There were only the diggers and crew left and they were eating lunch. He felt very bad and apologized to the men for being late. He went to the side of the grave and looked down to see the vault lid already in place. Not knowing what else to do, he started to play.

The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. He played out his heart and soul for this man with no family and friends. And as he played ‘Amazing Grace,’ the workers began to weep. They wept, he wept, they all wept together.

When he finished, he packed up his bagpipes and started for his car. Though his head hung low, his heart was full. As he opened the door to his car, he heard one of the workers say: “I never seen nothin’ like that before and I’ve been putting in septic tanks for twenty years.”

## Readers Write

Readers Write is our new column for the newsletters. If you have an experience to share or some food-for-thought related to end of life, send a copy to J’Fleur Lohman at Choice and Dignity, P.O. Box 86886, Tucson AZ 85745 along with your contact information.

Here’s an example of the kind of story we’re looking for:

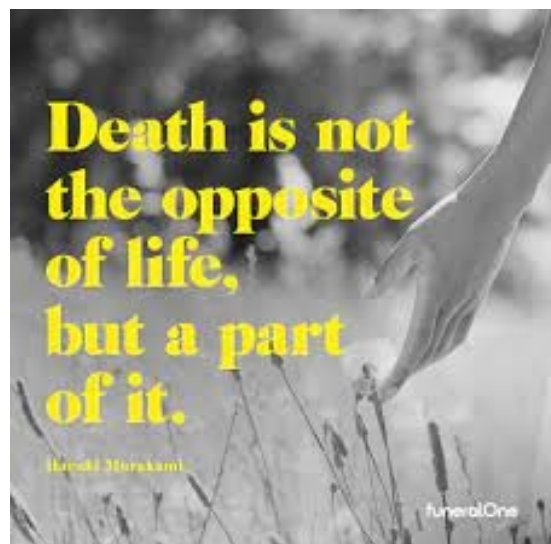
About eight years ago my neighbor and friend, Ruth was 75 and had suffered from Type One diabetes since she was 6. Often, she told me about the difficulty in managing this disease. Now she was having visual problems, weakness in her legs when walking, and felt exhausted most of the time.

She decided to end her life peacefully by stopping her insulin injections. Her close friend, a nurse stopped by for a visit a few days later. The nurse didn’t know what she should do. She wanted to support Ruth but knew that all nurses needed to report any suicidal plans. She then went to a neighbor, a non-practicing doctor, and he said they needed to report Ruth’s decision. So, they called 911. The EMT’s took her, in an ambulance, to a psychiatric ward where they kept her for two weeks. She was then taken to a hospice care facility where her wishes were finally honored, and she died in peace.

I learned that day that my end-of-life plans needed to be kept private and shared only with like-minded family and friends.

Sincerely,

J’Fleur Lohman





## MEET YOUR BOARD

### — Susan Becker



My name is Susan Becker, and I currently reside in Surprise, Arizona. I was originally hired in January 2021 by Choice and Dignity as the Bookkeeper. I was not familiar with the non-profit, but as soon as I discovered Choice and Dignity was a death with dignity

organization, I asked if I could join the Board. My request was overwhelmingly received, and I became the Treasurer in February 2021.

I support death with dignity because I feel everyone has a right to choose when and if they no longer want to be part of the physical aspect of life. My Aunt in Mississippi recently passed away after spending over 3 years dealing with the aftereffects of several strokes. I know her religious values prevented her from considering an alternative to suffering for all those years in a skilled nursing facility. I support Choice and Dignity because I want people, including myself, to have a choice if and when that time comes.

In my free time, I enjoy giving back to my community through volunteering. In addition to being on the Board, I also volunteer for a dog rescue, Cherished Tails Senior Sanctuary, and Billy's Way Home which feeds the homeless in Phoenix. I enjoy traveling and my favorite vacation is a cruise.

We encourage you to share this newsletter with family and friends and perhaps encourage them to join us.

Donations are always welcome and can be easily made on our website: [www.ChoiceAndDignity.org](http://www.ChoiceAndDignity.org)

Tax ID# EIN- 84-4667788

Choice and Dignity, Inc., PO Box 86886,

Tucson, AZ 85754

More than one-third of nonprofit groups' income comes from bequests - generous members who want to help others after they are gone. Please consider adding us to your legacy by including us in your will.

### Choice & Dignity Board

President	James (Jim) Schultz
Vice President	Tracy Corbin, MPA
Treasurer	Susan Becker
Secretary	Margaret Molloy, MA
Director of Member Services	Sally Hall, MD
Member at Large	Myriam Coppens, MA, LMFT
Member at Large	J'Fleur Lohman, PhD
Member at Large	Laura Vandergrift

### Advisory Board

Phineas Anderson	Derek Humphry
Richard MacDonald, MD	Elizabeth Smith, Esq.
Colleen Whitaker, MA	

### 2024 Board Meeting Schedule

Saturday April 27, July 13, October 12

All meetings 5 – 6:30 pm AZ time, via Zoom

To participate, please click here:

[mailto:ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com?subject=I'd Like to Attend the Board of Directors Meeting](mailto:ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com?subject=I'd+Like+to+Attend+the+Board+of+Directors+Meeting) to request a Zoom link

for the meeting.

### Become a Member

We don't have a lot of expenses but it does take some money to keep things rolling around here. Please consider joining us.

Scan the QR code to go to our website

