

2025 Walks of Life Honoree

Judy Bartel



When Ursuline College became the first college in the country to offer a master's degree in palliative care 25 years ago, Judy Bartel was among its first recipients.

Now, as the Chief Clinical Officer for Hospice of the Western Reserve, she is recognized as a pioneer and a national leader in hospice care. Hospice groups across the country have copied the standards of care she established.

She entered hospice nursing in 1986 when it was a comparatively new specialty. Today, she is responsible for more than 700 clinical team employees who each day provide care for about 1,400 seriously ill patients and 800 in palliative care.

Judy was among the first to receive her bachelor's degree when Ursuline began offering its nursing program in 1979. Besides holding a master's degree in palliative care, she also is a Certified Advanced Practice Nurse and one of 75 nurses in the country to be awarded the distinguished title of Fellow in Palliative Care Nursing.

Among her achievements was the creation of Western Reserve Navigator, a community palliative care program that is one of the few of its type in the country. Hospice of the Western Reserve helps patients with advanced illnesses maintain their independence, preventing hospitalizations by managing their symptoms at home. The program earned a national Circle of Life award from the American Hospital Association in 2019.

Judy has made presentations nationally and internationally on end-of-life topics and has published many articles relating to this specialty. In 2021, she was named Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Administrator of the Year by the Hospice and Palliative Care Credentialing Center and received the Advance Practice Nurse of the year award from the national Hospice and Palliative Care Certifying Board for her contributions to serious illness and end-of-life care.

She is one of eight children of Joseph and Julia Burke who both immigrated from Ireland in 1949. Joe was from Tullamore in County Offaly, and Julia from Tourmakeady in County Mayo. The Burke family treasured their Irish roots, and Judy and her seven siblings were immersed in Irish culture from hurling to music, with membership in various Cleveland Irish cultural organizations. She enjoys participating in local Irish events and treasures her 14 trips to Ireland.

Judy and her husband of 46 years, Ed, live in Mentor. They have three sons, Kevin, Sean and Brendan (who passed away last year at the age of 38), and three grandchildren.

2025 Walks of Life Award of the Irish American Archives Society, Cleveland OH