

IN MEMORIAM  
DR JUDY OVERALL  
(1947-2024)

Dr Judy Overall, dearest friend and colleague, went to “the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns,” but her proper place is in our hearts; she left an indelible mark. She belongs to the generation of our colleagues inspired by scientific and professional values — working in a world where the only constants are rapid changes and challenging times. Dr Overall was not only a colleague but also a lighthouse of knowledge, mentor, and support to countless colleagues.

The first time, I met Dr Judy Overall, was on a ship, passing through the Bosphorus, two or three years before the global Public Health Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2012.



*Dr Judy Overall (to my left) in Addis Ababa 2012*

Dr Judy Overall discovered the world of public health and law, expanding her knowledge and competencies in working with the community of practice. She quickly found the horizons of international cooperation by improving herself at well-known world universities. In her career,

dedicated and driven by the desire to help vulnerable groups... she documented her experiences. She was recognized for mobilizing public health professionals to work devotedly to preventing many legal violations, primarily violations of patient rights. Therefore, we always evaluated her work as extraordinary.

Dr Judy Overall dealt with numerous issues of human rights, especially the international framework and regional and country-specific legal procedures. She led and inspired generations of physicians and lawyers in professional and scientific work. The Belgrade team will always be grateful for the multidisciplinary approach she has passed to us; with Judy, we learned to work together and find a mutual field of understanding between physicians and lawyers. We accepted that real-life case studies are critical, and we collected many examples of compliance with and violations of human rights in patient care. The Belgrade team and Judy have developed the Serbian version of the Human Rights in Patient Care Practitioner Guide, a long-desired and urgently necessary compendium of actual national regulations and case studies, which the Open Society Institute supported. One effective way to make this Guide accessible to a broader audience was by providing practical examples from the courts and government agencies in Serbia. Specifically, the practice of the Agency for Peaceful Settlement of Labor Disputes in cases related to the infringement of the rights of healthcare professionals and patients, including lawsuits for damages caused by medical errors, was helpful. This approach achieves another goal of the Guide, which is to help readers understand the issue of human rights in patient care and to demonstrate the available legal frameworks for resolving disputes and protecting these rights at both national and international levels. Dr Overall led and inspired academic staff and practitioners to significantly contribute to the permanent improvement of everyday healthcare practice.

Dr Judy Overall was also an evaluator of the Belgrade Roma mentoring project financed by the Open Society Institute for many years. Her excellence has set a standard that will endure as a legacy in the academic community. In addition to the recognition and achievements accompanying her distinguished career, Judy Overall was a friend, advisor and source of inspiration. She possessed a rare ability not only to impart knowledge but also to nurture the intellectual and personal development of those around her. We are grateful for the time we shared and the lessons we learned from the exceptional Dr Judy Overall.



I was fortunate enough to know Judy and work alongside her to enhance the public health sector and improve the healthcare system. Judy is deeply missed every day, especially during these times of rapid change. However, she has left a bright light shining for us to follow, for her family, and for all of us. She has opened new horizons, and we are grateful for her contributions. Thank you and may you rest in peace.

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