Obituary

Capt. Judith Ann Goins Bell-Krotoski
March 30, 1945– October 20, 2013

Judith Ann Goins Bell Krotoski, MA LOTR, CHT FAOTA passed quietly into “New Life” on October 20, 2013 in Baton Rouge, after fighting cancer. She graduated with a degree in occupational therapy from Texas Woman’s University in 1968, and obtained a Master of Arts in OT in 2009. Judy married Wojciech “Al” Krotoski in 1985 and celebrated 27 years of marriage on August 2. Judy’s greatest joys were her son John A Bell IV and stepdaughter Aleksandra Krotoski. She also had a passion for horses. Breeding and racing horses fueled her passion in her free time. Judith had a strong belief in God, with an admirable faith reflected throughout her life.

Professionally she had a remarkable career. She was an Occupational Therapist and certified hand therapist with over 40 years of experience. In her early career, Judy developed a specialty in hand therapy while working closely with Drs. James Hunter and Lawrence Schneider, and therapist Evelyn Mackin at the Hand Rehabilitation Center in Philadelphia. Most of her professional life was with the U.S. Public Health Service from which she retired with the rank of Therapist Director in 2003. After Philadelphia she worked with the US Public Health Service Hospital in New Orleans and then relocated to the National Hansen’s Disease Center in Carville, LA. She was the Chief of the Hand and Occupational Therapy Department at the Gillis W. Long Hansen’s Disease Center in Carville, Louisiana from 1973 – 2003. At Carville, she had the opportunity to work extensively with Dr. Paul Brand whose influence made her a strong proponent for a biomechanical approach to the remodeling of soft tissue and correction of the hand and upper extremity impairments. Judy was known and respected internationally for her extensive research in the area of sensibility testing, objective measurement of peripheral neuropathy, validation of objective testing, biomechanics and correction of impairments, and disability prevention. She worked extensively with the international Hansen’s disease community to distribute monofilaments and develop testing protocols to evaluate sensation in persons with leprosy.

She was one of the original six organizers and a past president of the American Society of Hand Therapists and a founding and current Board member of the American Hand Therapy Foundation. She was an advocate of a journal for hand therapists and served as a member of the Editorial Board for the Journal of Hand Therapy for many years. She published over 100 scientific articles, papers and chapters in hand therapy and surgery literature. She was a co-editor of the first edition of the book “Rehabilitation of the Hand”, by Hunter et al, and has subsequent chapters in all further editions including the most recent “Rehabilitation of the Hand and Upper Extremity” by Mackin et al. She contributed to the books “Tendon Surgery in the Hand” and “Tendon and Nerve Surgery in the Hand” by Hunter et al. She wrote on splinting in the book “Hand Splinting” by Fess, et al and co-authored chapters in the book “Peripheral Nerve Injuries”, by Omer et al.
Most recently she encouraged evidence-based practice by developing a therapist research and education website for the American Hand Therapy Foundation (ahtf.org), and by working with HANDSIGHTS, a special interest group of hand therapists attending the American Society for Surgery of the Hand Meetings. She lectured nationally and internationally on a wide variety of topics related to the hand and to upper extremity rehabilitation and splinting.

Capt. Judith Bell-Krotoski was an extraordinarily dedicated and passionate clinician, researcher, teacher, innovator, and mentor. She will be missed by her family, friends and colleagues.

Linda F. Lehman, OTR/L MPH C.Ped
Technical Director, Programs
American Leprosy Missions

November 13, 2013