

In Memorium: A Tribute to Carol J. Shanaberger

The following four contributions form our eulogy for CJ Shanaberger, and this issue is part of our memorial to her life. Her teachings and her writings give evidence of her greatness.

Our Loss, Our Gain

Marvin L. Birnbaum, MD, PhD

*It was but yesterday, we met in a dream.
You have sung to me in my aloneness, and I of your longings
have built a tower in the sky.
But now our sleep has fled and our dream is over, and it is no longer dawn.
The noontide is upon us and our half waking has turned to a fuller day,
and we must part.
If in the twilight of memory we should meet once more,
we shall speak again together and you shall sing to me a deeper song.
And if our hands should meet in another dream,
we shall build another tower in the sky.
So saying he made a signal to the seamen,
and straightway they weighed anchor and cast the ship loose from its
moorings, and they moved eastward.
And a cry came from the people as from a single heart,
and it rose into the dusk and was carried out over the sea like a great
trumpeting.*

—From *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran

Carol J. Shanaberger, Esquire, emergency medical technician-paramedic, is dead. Her death came shortly after completing the finishing touches on the lead article in the last issue of *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*. We grieve our loss, for the EMS community has lost a shining star. This entire issue of *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* is dedicated to the impact that this vibrant, young woman has had on the practice of prehospital emergency medical services in the United States.

All of us actively involved in out-of-hospital emergency medical services in the United States know of CJ, for she helped mold the way we think and the way we practice. For those of you not familiar with this diminutive, young EMS giant, her activities have affected profoundly what you do and how you do it. Now, she is gone, and we miss her and will miss her more and more with the passage of time.

We know CJ as a remarkable woman who above all cared—she cared about us, each of us. She cared so much that it caused her pain whenever we hurt, whenever things were not right, whenever something was left undone or not thoroughly understood. As we so well know, we hurt often. It is not possible for things always to be right, and it seems we never finish and rarely understand. For CJ, this was very difficult. The pain was severe.

We have lost a great friend. We have lost a legal cornerstone of our profession. We have lost an advocate for what EMS could and should be. We have lost one who always sought truth. We have lost one who helped us find our way in areas for which we were not prepared. We have lost an ability to understand EMS

law in cultures other than our own, for she had promised to help us understand. We have lost the freshness and vibrancy that accompanied her presence. And to each of us who knew and loved CJ, we have lost someone who loved us in return, for the heart in that small, wiry frame encompassed us all.

What have we learned from this special person? We learned to be proud and humble. She taught us some of what we did not know. We learned mutual respect. She made us more aware of the definition of and the value of a friend. We learned compassion, and we learned that no matter who we are and what we may be, we need to stay close. As Norm Dinerman noted in the letter that accompanied his remarks that follow, “CJ’s death truly underscores our need to maintain the bonds which exist between colleagues, friends, and our loved ones at home.”

Her death gives us reason to pause and take stock of where we are and what we feel. It puts us in contact with our innermost beings and our fears. Her presence in our respective lives has made each of us stronger and has broadened our being. Her death forces us to recognize our exposure to the unrelenting stress of our jobs and that we must take care of ourselves as well as others. Extending our caring to ourselves and each other was the most important of all that CJ sought in her short but profound life.

Please take care.

*There are rainbows everywhere in life
as the sun touches even particles of dust
color shines through
and rainbows surround you
all it costs is time and stillness
give yourself one calm and brilliant moment
today and ever after.*

Diane Westlake

As you peruse the pages of this issue, think often of CJ. Whether you knew her or not, you will miss her.

A Lawyer, A Paramedic, and A Friend

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We are told that some souls are too gentle to live among wolves. So, it was for my friend and colleague, Carol J. Shanaberger, whose life on this earth ended so tragically. Although her smiling and gentle countenance no longer will be physically among us, her spirit and enthusiasm are immortal and transcend the importance of our feeble inability to provide explanation or answers.

CJ was a person who sought neither favor nor fortune, was uneasy with her creative genius, and wanted only to be a healing force in the lives of her patients, clients, and friends. She was first, foremost, and always a patient advocate. She also believed deeply that the law always should be a positive and constructive force for the betterment of patient care, in general, and for emergency medical services, in particular. She spent her life trying to aid others in this understanding. She had an insatiable desire for medical and legal knowledge. Most of all, she loved to think and to write in such a manner that her work would be of benefit to others. She was a truly humble person of unyielding personal integrity and honesty in all that she did or attempted.

CJ also had good heroes. She loved and admired people like Jim Page, who recognized her creative genius and shared it with the EMS community and the nation when it wasn't necessarily popular; Norm Dinerman, who shared CJ's gentle but deeply compassionate longing for the alleviation of pain and suffering, particularly in cases involving the elderly, the poor, and children who could not protect and defend themselves; and Marv Birnbaum, whose own creative genius and editorial expertise profoundly motivated her early intellectual interest and writing in *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*.

For me, CJ was a comrade in arms, a friend and a colleague without peer who could always be counted on when she was needed. She never said "no" to anyone in EMS who needed her. She was a practical idealist who simply believed that if everyone loved and supported the profession of emergency and prehospital medicine as much as she did, the providers on the front lines ultimately would reach their potential and make all of us proud.

I will remember CJ best as she was shown in a picture on the cover of *Fire Command* magazine. There she is in the midst of a bloody extrication, full of energy, living her dream of saving lives, and using her many talents to the betterment of humankind. Although her light on earth is now dark, her star in heaven forever will shine brightly.

CJ Shanaberger, JD, EMT-P: A Requiem

Norm Dinerman, MD

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The medical professions are founded both on a technical body of knowledge as well as on a set of principles governing the interaction of providers in applying this knowledge on behalf of patients. The scientific basis for a specialty such as medicine, thus, is paired with a code of behavior describing our obligations, responsibilities, and, more broadly, our accountability for the actions we take. As with the double-helix of life itself, these two bodies of knowledge are inextricably intertwined.

CJ Shanaberger knew them both, and well. As a paramedic, she witnessed the ever-broadening technical reach of our interventions and the scientific substantiation for their use. But it is as an attorney where she found her life's work and her calling. She realized far earlier than almost anyone that the ultimate maturation of our

specialty was dependent on the creation of a knowledge base that described our responsibilities to our patients and to that of society as a whole. Accountability is the bench mark of adulthood. This is no less true for a profession itself. The ultimate metamorphoses of our profession to a more sophisticated form depends on our appreciation of its legal framework.

It was to this aspect of EMS that CJ turned her attention, zeal, and considerable talent. Case by case, finding by finding, precedent by precedent, she researched and, ultimately, revealed what was expected of us as a profession—in a society all too quick to condemn, yet mindful of our capacity to save and care for the ill and injured among us. Like the genetic researcher, she revealed the "code" of expectations. In scores of articles, lectures, and chapters, she exhorted, cajoled, warned, promoted, and articulated the nature of the legal principles that govern the provider-patient relationship. She did this neither as a parent, nor adversary, but rather, as a learned colleague with an uncompromising dedication to pursuit of the truth and ethical behavior. Tirelessly and meticulously, she sought to engage us all in focused study of the legal foundations of our specialty. This was not always fun. Partisan, parochial, and petulant inquiry on our part found no safe harbor in her midst. Those who sought to trivialize the importance of legal or ethical precepts soon found themselves incurring the wrath and unshielded wit of this powerful, though physically diminutive and passionate spokesperson.

As we discovered the scientific truths, so she revealed the legal ones. She made us realize that care, without regard or understanding for the legal framework of obligations in which it is provided, is but a pretense of professionalism, an exercise in technical intrusion. With our mutual friend, mentor, and colleague, Jack Ayres, Jr., she made clear that which was muddled, gave form to that which was shapeless, and gave standing to each and every provider whose chaotic, dangerous, and intense world was a shared venue.

CJ became the victim of her own perfection. As such, she epitomized the tragedy of EMS providers worldwide. The intense, passionate, pursuit of excellence will not admit those of any less ardor or focus. Ultimately, the love and appreciation of an EMS community across America was not enough to soothe her soul at home, nor sufficient to stay her hand from its determined course. Good-bye dear friend and colleague.

A Fond Farewell from Colorado

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Carol J. Shanaberger was an institution in Colorado. Our CJ shaped emergency medical services in this state like no one else could. CJ was not just active—she was driven. Not just concerned—she was passionate. Not just a treat to work with—she was a role model. Not just uniquely qualified to craft the language of EMS—she was the authority who essentially oversaw how EMS was codified in Colorado legislation and regulation.

CJ was active at the core of legislative drafting efforts. She edited what we know as the "Acts Allowed" for emergency medical technicians and paramedics under the Medical Practice Act. She authored the rules pertaining to physician advisor responsibilities and pulled together the state's Physician Advisor Course. CJ represented us as an attorney when we required counsel, and she personally intervened on our behalf when we needed direction.

CJ was the consummate professional who never strayed from her self-defined mission to push us toward

excellence. She helped to define our profession, protected our practices, and set the standard. Quite a lady!

For all of her accomplishments, the image that will remain indelibly inked in my mind is that of a spunky, stubborn, tough, and impassioned fighter. A spirited colleague who expected nothing less of us than of herself. A force to be reckoned with.

Carol Shanaberger was a national expert. She touched the practice of the entire profession. We were blessed in Colorado that she also touched our lives.