

# FACULTY OBITUARIES

## A Bilingual Legacy

*SED's Julie Coppola was a dedicated teacher at home and in the classroom*

By Lee Indrisano

Professor Julie Mary Coppola is remembered by her colleagues in the School of Education for her devotion to the SED community and to Boston's public schools, where she worked with English-language learners and teachers. Coppola (SED'97), a clinical associate professor of education and the program coordinator of bilingual education, died on October 6, 2014. She was 58.

In the days that followed her passing, friends and colleagues penned many tributes, none more poignant than the remarks of remembrance written by her children, Ann and Matthew, and read at their mother's funeral Mass:

*We've been trying to think of a way to honor someone like our mother who did so much and touched so many people. Our mother truly was a light on this earth. We wanted to share with you today how she lived her life and what was important to her.*

*Family was important to our mother. Julie Mary Coppola*

*was born on October 11, 1955, to Patrick and Patricia O'Sullivan. She was the eldest of eight brothers and sisters. Mom made sure that family was a huge part of our lives growing up. We have so many wonderful family-filled memories, thanks to our mom.*

*Work was important to our mother. Julie worked so hard for every one of her accomplishments. She earned degrees from the University of Massachusetts and Georgetown University, and a doctorate from Boston University.*

*Julie was always a teacher: at home, in the classroom, and through her research. She was an associate professor at Boston University School of Education, specializing in teaching methods for students who are learning English as a second language. She published a textbook on literacy and language acquisition.*

*Julie also worked as a consultant in the Boston Public Schools, helping teachers and students to thrive in some of the city's*



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*most vulnerable and challenging classroom environments. She loved the students. Julie was a champion for celebrating the cultural differences that influence how we learn, and for giving every student an opportunity to succeed through education.*

Like her children, Coppola's colleagues appreciated her dedication to family and work. When SED was restructured, Coppola was elected faculty director for language and literacy education and, subsequently, chair of the

Academic Cluster Council. Both leadership roles were emblematic of her colleagues' respect for her work and her commitment to the SED community.

Bruce Bucci, director of the Deaf Studies Program, offered a tribute that echoes her children's remarks: "Julie made our cluster a family."

John McCarthy, a clinical assistant professor at SED, with whom Coppola worked at Boston English High School, remembers her work with faculty and students through-

out the years. “Her commitment to improving instruction and creating a productive school climate for English-language learners was unwavering,” he says. “Julie found joy in connecting to the students at the high school and was a model of poise and grace for her students at Boston University.”

SED Dean Hardin L. K. Coleman expressed the appreciation of the school’s community. “At SED, we seek to create an inspired union between teaching, research, and service. Julie’s professional work brought that union to life and, through her leadership in the school, helped all of us to become better at serving our students and our profession. I will miss her spirit and I will miss working with her.”

The family, friends, and colleagues who revere Coppola’s memory are joined in gratitude for her life, leadership, and spirit, described in the profound words of her husband, Robert, who writes his wife’s legacy is “about tireless commitment to teaching and students, about social justice and our responsibility to students who struggle to make their way in school and life, and that we are required to enjoy our work, no matter how difficult.

“It is about Julie’s spirit and her standard of excellence that was close to unreachable, and that she asked nothing of us that she did not ask of herself.”

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**GENE STOLLERMAN, 93**, a School of Medicine professor emeritus of medicine and a School of Public Health professor emeritus of health policy and management, on August 1, 2014.

Stollerman, who grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., and specialized in geriatrics and preventive care, aspired to be “the whole person’s doctor,” as he wrote in his 2012 memoir, *Medicine: A Love Story* (Outskirts Press, 2012).

Stollerman graduated from Dartmouth College in 1941, earned an MD from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1944, and went on to serve as director of New York University’s Irvington House for Children with Heart Disease. While at NYU, he was nationally recognized for his research on using penicillin to prevent rheumatic fever. His research resulted in an endowed professorship at Northwestern University, which he accepted in 1955.

In 1964, Stollerman became chair of the department of medicine at the University of Tennessee, where he expanded the biomedical research programs over the next 16 years; his students and colleagues endowed the Stollerman Clinical Branch Library and the Gene H. Stollerman Professor of Medicine Chair in his honor.

He joined the MED faculty in 1981, focusing on research and clinical training in geriatrics, preventive medicine, health services research, and primary care, according to the *Boston Globe*. As chief of general internal medicine at Boston’s Jewish Memorial Hospital, “he imparted to all of us the joy of caring for aging patients and the fascinating science of medicine,” says former fellow Douglas Kiel (SPH’86). “Dr. Stollerman pushed all his trainees to aspire to excellence in patient care and research. He was nothing short of the most inspiring mentor I have ever had.”

In 1986, Stollerman was appointed distinguished physician of the US Department of Veterans Affairs and established the Center for the Health Maintenance of the Aging Veteran in Bedford, Mass., which, according to codirector Dan Berlowitz (SPH’87), now employs more than 120 medical professionals. Stollerman retired in 1995.

Berlowitz, a BU School of Public Health professor of health policy and management, describes his friend and colleague as “a master clinician whose groundbreaking research and superb teaching skills led to many successful academic programs.”

Stollerman authored more than 200 research publications and was editor of the *American Journal of Geriatrics* for 6 years, and *Advances in Internal Medicine and Hospital Practice* magazine for 25 years. He was president of the Association of Professors of Medicine and the Central Society for Clinical Research; master, regent, and vice president of the American College of Physicians; and master of the American College of Rheumatology. He served on national and international health councils and committees for the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, and the World Health Organization.

Stollerman was a founder of the Infectious Diseases Society of America. He received numerous awards, including the Bicentennial Medal in Internal Medicine from Columbia University, the Bruce Medal for Preventive Medicine from the American College of Physicians, the Thulis Award from the American Geriatrics Society, the Jacobi Distinguished Alumnus Medallion from Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and the Maimonides Award from the State of Israel.

“He was always interested in people in general as they were, not labeling them in any way, just understanding them and trying to learn and trying to relate to people,” Stollerman’s daughter, Anne DiZio, told the *Globe*.

Stollerman published his memoir at 91, according to the *Globe*. “All these stories I remember him telling me at different times, and he put it all together,” his son, John, told the paper.

“In addition to his many achievements, I will always remember Gene’s skillful bedside manner,” Berlowitz says. “His legacy will live on through those he called his ‘academic grandchildren,’ the mentees of his mentees who are continuing his research. He followed their careers closely and took great pride in their accomplishments.”

—ASHLEY JONES (CAS’15, COM’15)