

The Rotary Club of Wenatchee bid farewell to longtime member and biggest supporter of eradicating Polio, Carmen Bossenbrock who passed away on Sunday July 31, 2022.

Carmen Bossenbrock was a 94-year-young Rotarian. She was the second female inducted into Wenatchee Rotary in 1987 by Earl Tilly (who is still a member of the Rotary of the Confluence Club) and remained active until her passing.



Carmen was a pioneer in the Wenatchee Valley medical field, specializing in patients with Polio. She worked at Deaconess Hospital and later at Central Washington Hospital. She was the only physical therapist in North Central Washington, working long days and nights at treating polio victims. She became the head of Physical Therapy until retirement. After retirement, she loved tending her 15-acre pear orchard on the family homestead built in 1919 where she grew up with her parents and brother in Dryden, WA.

Her first experience with the Rotary Club of Wenatchee was as a graduate student. The club gave her a \$500 scholarship to attend Stanford to receive a physical therapy degree. Carmen wanted to be a teacher but was guided to the new profession of Physical Therapy due to her hearing impediment.

Bossenbrock returned to the Wenatchee area with her degree in 1953 during the height of the polio outbreak in the region. At one point from the mid to late 50s, Carmen was the only physical therapist in North Central Washington. Past RI President, Dr. Edward Cadman commented that she spent long days and nights at Deaconess Hospital in Wenatchee treating polio victims, rubbing knots out of sore muscles, and massaging non-functioning limbs to prevent atrophy.

During Bossenbrock's time working at Deaconess, she approached Wenatchee Rotary and asked for a \$50 grant to buy craft supplies to create a gift counter at the hospital. The proceeds would raise funds for the fledgling Physical Therapy Guild. The guild would go on to purchase \$360,000 in PT equipment for the hospital from the 1950s to 1970s.

Bossenbrock was a firm believer in Rotary's mission to eradicate polio. Until her passing she remained a steadfast supporter of PolioPlus, actively participating in the club's Polio Day fundraiser. Bossenbrock received many awards and accolades for her work on the Polio Eradication Mission. In 2016 the Wenatchee Rotary Club named her the Polio Champion.

Rotary 5060 Past District Governor Bill Jenkin surprised Carmen with the first-ever Rotary District 5060 "Polio Achievement Award" in May 2018 in recognition of her longtime commitment and dedication to the awareness and eradication of Polio Worldwide.



In 2019, Past District Governor Sherry Chamberlain, presented Bossenbrock with the Rotary International PolioPlus Pioneer Award, established in 1996 to recognize outstanding personal service to PolioPlus. The award honors Rotarians who provide extraordinary service to The Rotary Foundation, such service having a substantial impact on the ultimate goal of polio eradication. Eligibility is limited to Rotarians who performed exceptionally meritorious service to the ultimate cause of polio eradication prior to 1 November 1992. "I am truly proud of the years of service and to honor those who serve, for the good work they do" states Chamberlain.



During her tenure with the club, Bossenbrock was the club photographer, multiple Paul Harris Fellow, Wenatchee Rotary Foundation Paul Scea Fellow, and a member of the RI Foundation committee and PolioPlus committee. During her 20 years on the PolioPlus Committee, she arranged Polio immunization in the community, helped with Polio fundraisers and, of course, donated to the cause herself. At the District Conference in May 2022, Carmen's longtime caregiver, Alice Nieman, was presented with a Paul Harris Fellow in honor of her support to Carmen.

To learn more about Carmen Bossenbrock's fight with Polio, you can watch the following videos. The Life of Carmen: <https://vimeo.com/550064486>

Carmen talks about Dr Cadman and the fight against polio: <https://vimeo.com/709736207>

Longtime friend Pete Van Well sums up our beloved Carmen perfectly.

"District 5060, which has a rich history of being a strong supporter of Rotary International's efforts to eradicate polio, lost a true champion with the passing of Carmen Bossenbrock. Not only did she actively support Wenatchee Rotary's efforts to raise funds for PolioPlus as a member of the World Service Committee, but she was also a front-line worker in the 1950s during North Central Washington's polio outbreak as the sole physical therapist in the region. Carmen thought she would see the day when the scourge of polio was gone from the world. My hope is our District will continue its efforts to this fight through to the end in honor of Carmen's dedication and service to Rotary." **Pete Van Well, Dist. 5060 Polio Chair**

Donations in memory of Carmen can be made to the Rotary International Polio Plus Fund.