
In Honor of Bonnie Bullough

Gerald A. Larue

Bonnie Bullough, a longtime friend of and contributor to FREE INQUIRY, died April 12, 1996, in Northridge, California. The following tribute is adapted from remarks by Gerald A. Larue at a commemoration ceremony on April 21, 1996.

Bonnie Bullough was born in Delta, Utah, to a seventeen-year-old mother. Her father left almost immediately and Bonnie never met him or knew him. Her first years were spent with her grandmother, and, although she had been named Louise, "Bonnie" reflects the name her Scottish great-grandfather used when he dandled her on his knees. When she was three and one-half years old she was horribly burned, and it was not until the Crippled Children's Act was passed in 1935 that she received the needed surgery to cope with her injuries. Between the ages of eight and twelve she spent every summer in the hospital. When she was fourteen her mother disappeared, and she was officially adopted by her uncle, Clyde Uckerman, although her mother's second husband expressed a willingness to take her. Uckerman was only fourteen years older than Bonnie and a master sergeant in the U.S. Army fighting in the Pacific theater. She was cared for by her grandmother, using the dependency allotment of her bachelor adopted father to support her. It should not be assumed that Bonnie was raised without love and affection—this was not so—but at a very early age she was pushed into relying on herself.

Bonnie was fifteen years old when she met Vern. They were both members of a student debate group. It is important to note that Vern did not come from an affluent family. They were, in Vern's words, a working-class family. Vern joined the army in 1946, and on August 7, 1947, he and Bonnie were married. The story of

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their wedding is one for the books—it involved the determination to avoid the three-day waiting period required by the state of California by traveling by bus to Reno. They were wed by an aged minister, to whom they were introduced by a taxi driver who got a cut of the wedding fee. After a bus trip back to Santa Rosa, arriving at 2 A.M., they walked a mile to their tiny converted one-car garage apartment and collapsed out of fatigue. Talk about bravado!

Most of us recognize Bonnie as an outstanding scholar. She wrote, co-wrote with Vern, and edited more than thirty books. Presently, she has two books in press and another to be sent to press. She wrote and co-authored more than 160

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refereed articles plus more than fifty other articles and over twenty chapters in a variety of books. She gave nearly 100 public lectures.

Bonnie's college education began in Utah when she received a Diploma in Nursing from the Salt Lake General Hospital and the University of Utah in 1947. From 1947 to 1951 she served as a head nurse in the operating room. With Vern she moved to Chicago in 1951, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1954. She was, for a year, a nurse in the operating room in the University of Chicago Clinics before she joined the City of Chicago Health Department as a Public Health

Nurse. As an added extra to her busy career, she became a mother and bore her first son, David, in 1954.

Her B.S. degree in Nursing was earned in 1957 in Youngstown, Ohio, where Vern had a University appointment as an Associate Professor at Youngstown University. Bonnie became a part-time instructor in Nursing at the same institution. Here she bore their second son, James, in 1956. In 1958, their son Steve, who was at that time in Florence Crittendon Center, became the first adopted member of the family.

When Vern got an appointment in California in 1959, Bonnie became a part-time nurse at Northridge Hospital and a student at the University of California at Los Angeles. Can you imagine this dynamic woman ever getting less than A's in her graduate studies? But it did happen in 1961 when she was working on her master's degree in nursing at UCLA. She was required to take an undergraduate course in psychology, which she resented because, as Vern puts, she knew the subject backward and forward. This was the week when Susan—the first and only girl adopted into the expanding Bullough family—came into their lives. Bonnie was up all night before the examination, and she fell asleep during it, awakening when there were just 10 minutes left to complete it. She did a hurried job and received her first and only C grade. In 1962, Bonnie earned her Master of Science degree in Nursing followed by an M.A. in Sociology in 1965 and a Ph.D. in Sociology in 1968. And as if that was not enough, she earned a Certificate as a Family Nurse Practitioner from UCLA shortly afterward.

In 1966 she became a Fulbright lecturer in Cairo, Egypt, and it was that year while the family was in Jerusalem that David was killed. The story of their efforts to have this twelve-year-old child buried in the American Cemetery in Jerusalem reeks of religious bigotry by the fundamentalist Christian minister who was in charge of the burial ground. It is enough to say that the Bulloughs persevered and were successful in surmounting this man's stalling efforts.

For the next year Bonnie was a part-

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time instructor in Sociology at Cal State Northridge. In 1968 she became an Assistant Professor of Nursing at UCLA. This was the year the Bulloughs adopted two-year-old Michael. Four years later Bonnie became an UCLA Associate Professor and Chair of the Primary Care Section. In 1975 she joined the staff at Cal State Long Beach as a Professor of Nursing and Coordinator of the Graduate Program. Bonnie was a pioneer in the Nurse Practitioners Movement, which was designed to relieve doctors of tasks that could just as well be performed by trained nurses, establishing the first degree courses in California and probably in the country. As a result training centers were developed nationwide.

Bonnie decided she wanted to become a dean. When she sent out her resumé, four schools responded. Bonnie chose Buffalo, and in 1979 she became Dean of Nursing at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Vern tagged along. After all, he points out, Bonnie had been following him around from school to school and city to city—now it was his turn to follow her. In 1993 they both returned to Southern California and became professors at the University of Southern California.

There is one more important dimension to Bonnie's life. She was born into a Mormon family, but soon became disaffected. In 1946, while in nursing school, she and Vern came under the influence of the great Unitarian minister, Ed Wilson, one of the pioneers in the humanist movement. Through him they discovered their identity as humanists and together have made endless contributions to the growth of humanism in America and elsewhere in the world. Bonnie's humanistic concerns led her to embrace a wide variety of friends without regard to race, religion, color, or lifestyle. Her interests were humanistic, humanitarian, professional, and inclusive.

Obviously, she never lost her commitment to nursing. Throughout her professional life she wrote and acted on behalf of the nursing profession, including studies of the career ladders in nursing, evaluation of student attitudes, research in nursing practice law, three volumes on the history of nursing, and two books on community

health and preventive health care. She wrote about alienation and discrimination, including discrimination in the health care delivery system, as well as about poverty and ethnicity, and about discrimination against African-American applicants to nursing school. She wrote about women's health in articles ranging from concern with providing emotional support for women with breast cancer to Kegell exercises for stress incontinence to issues of poverty, ethnicity, and community health as they relate to women and children.

Both she and Vern were actively engaged in studies pertaining to human sexuality. They wrote about the history of prostitution, about homosexuality and lesbianism, about cross-dressing and other transgender behavior, about contraception, family planning, abortion, and population.

Every study, every research, every article, every book expressed humanistic concern. Each publication was more than a statistical study, but represented feelings and commitments that welled up from the heart and from commitment to life, to living, and to loving and helping others.

Characteristically, Bonnie, the multi-gifted wife, mother, scholar, and educator, was her efficient self right up to the end of her life. Even as she was suffering from the interstitial lung disease that she knew

would soon end her life, she won a bridge game and then she left Vern with a list of jobs to do—including the final preparation of a book she was completing.

Many of her published writings also bear Vern's name. These two were a team, tightly bound together, appreciative of and so in love with each other and with life that they were free to reach out and embrace life. Their combined efforts have never been simply theoretical; they have been socially practical, influencing humanity and the lives and well-being of others. Her life has affected society and helped make the world a better place in which to live.

We are grateful that Bonnie Bullough has been and still is a part of our lives. Her influence endures in the wonderful humanistic and humanitarian consequences that flow from her character and her acts. Who she was and what she stood for endures in our thoughts and words and acts. We will remember Bonnie as a living presence and that memory will bring refreshment to our hearts and strengthen us in times of trial. We have shared some of the reflections of her presence among us and we can treasure these for in this troubled world there can never be too much of the warm, friendly, helpful loving outreach that Bonnie represented. •

CODESH Changes Name to Council for Secular Humanism

Effective with this issue of *FREE INQUIRY*, the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism changes its name to the "Council for Secular Humanism." The name was changed for two reasons:

1. "Democratic" was included at the Council's founding in 1980 to reduce Americans' confusion between secular humanists and Marxist atheists. With the fall of Communism in eastern Europe, this distinction is no longer critical.
2. Because of its length, the original name was often shortened to the acronym CODESH, which carried no meaning for people not familiar with the organization. In particular, when spokespeople appeared in the media, it did little to strengthen the secular humanist position to have them identified as representatives of CODESH.

Wherever possible, the Council for Secular Humanism plans to avoid the use of an acronym. When brevity counts, call us "the Council." By this means we hope to enhance the visibility of secular humanism as a cause and a life-stance, especially when *FREE INQUIRY* writers and editors appear in the media.

—Tom Flynn

