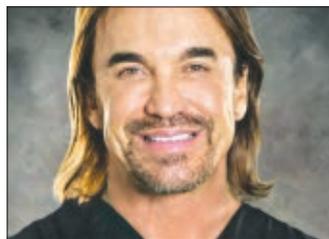


FORT WORTH BUSINESS PRESS

HEALTHCARE HEROES 2019



What do you call someone who's dedicated **40 years** to End of Life Care?

A Healthcare Hero!

Congratulations to

Dr. Kendra Belfi

on a lifetime of achievement in mentoring & training clinicians and Founding President & member of Care  Prepare formerly known as The Coalition for Quality End of Life Care

From your friends at

VITAS® and Care  Prepare
Healthcare



Kendra J. Belfi, MD, FACP

Past President of the Board, Coalition for Quality End-of-Life Care

In a death-averse culture, it takes courage to address end-of-life discussions gently but effectively.

That, says nominator Leah Wingard, administrator at Coalition for Quality End-of-Life Care (CQEC), is where Dr. Kendra Belfi excels. Belfi is a founding member and immediate past president of the coalition.

“After 40 years, she is still encouraging and mentoring young physicians and other health care professionals to not only talk about, but to prepare for, end of life,” Wingard said. “She is constantly working to bring pastoral, legal and clinical minds together; we are currently working on a potential Continuing Legal Education event in the spring of 2019.”

Belfi was born in New York City but her parents moved almost immediately to Cleveland, Ohio, and then when she was 12 to La Jolla, California. She came to Texas to attend Rice University in Houston and earned her MD degree in 1968 from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas.

At that time, only 10 women were admitted each year, she says in her resume. She joined Fort Worth Clinic in 1976 and practiced internal medicine and geriatrics there until 2008 and then at the Medical Clinic of North Texas until her retirement in 2011.

What drew you to your field?

My father was a veterinarian and my senior year in high school I began to think about a career in medicine. I entered Rice University as an English major and pre-med, but by my junior year at Rice, I realized that medicine was the way I wanted to go.

Tell us about an influential person in your life, how they influenced you and why he or she was important:

John E. Johnson Jr., MD, was one of my partners when I first went into practice at the Fort Worth Clinic. His approach to patients and

Wingard said the current Texas Advance Directives Act is a direct result of Belfi working with her peers and legal experts on the Texas Medical Association Committee on Aging and Long Term Care.

Belfi has been the lead instructor for CQEC and created unique content for its program, adding more medical, psychosocial and strategic communications information for families and elders who are struggling with memory issues. More than 5 million Americans have dementia, and by 2025 the number of people age 65 and older with dementia is estimated to reach 7.1 million.

“Dr. Belfi has been retired for five years, but you would never know it according to her day timer. We are so blessed to have Kendra on our board,” said Jaime Cobb, board president of CQEC. “She always sees strategic alliances that help move end-of-life conversations to the forefront.”

She was the 2011 recipient of the Tarrant County Medical Society’s Gold-headed Cane award, considered the highest honor given by the medical society. It recognized her in 2003 with the Physician Humanitarian Award.

Belfi became medical director to Trinity Terrace when it opened in

his involvement with nursing homes caused me to end up in geriatrics as a primary emphasis in my practice. Because of him I became very involved in nursing homes – seeing my own patients there and later becoming a medical director and involved with other professionals who were working to upgrade the quality of care in nursing homes.

What’s your best advice for people wanting to enter the health care profession?

I think that it is most important that people entering a health care profession have a sense of calling – and a desire to serve. It is also very



1983. She later was medical director at Lakewood Village for 10 years and then co-medical director at the James L. West Center.

– Paul K. Harral

important to carve out time for rest and reflection to avoid becoming burned out by the demands of the profession.

If you could make one change that would improve health care for everyone, what would it be?

A restoration of the recognition of the sacred nature of the doctor-patient relationship, with hospitals, insurers and corporations employing doctors all understanding that doctors are professionals with a covenantal duty to their patients and not just “replaceable entities” whose primary duty is to “make money.”