

**Award:** Lilia E. Peters Service to New Immigrants and the International Community Award - 2018  
**Recipient:** Lilia E. Peters (posthumous) – dedication of Award  
**Presenter:** Mike Doyle

It is truly my privilege tonight to be able to help dedicate the Lilia E. Peters Service to New Immigrants and the International Community Award, in memory of, and tribute to, our friend and sister, Lilia Peters.

This award will honor Lilia's life and work by recognizing others in our community who work to improve the lives of immigrants, as Lilia did. Lilia did this work with extraordinary energy and compassion in delivering health care services to newly arrived immigrants, and in arranging access to health care providers here in our community.

Lilia was an immigrant to the U.S. from the Philippines. She came here to pursue a career in nursing with the Exchange Nursing Program.

Her career choice already tells you that she was a caring person.

Starting in the 1970s, Lilia worked for Burnham City Hospital and McKinley Student Health Center. She also completed her master's degree in health education at the University of Illinois. After retiring from McKinley in 1994, she joined the C-U Public Health District as the County Tuberculosis Coordinator who worked tirelessly monitoring and supporting TB patients.

Lilia had a special affinity to and compassion for immigrants in our community, and she understood exactly how confusing and daunting it could be to be a new comer here and to need health care.

Lilia in recent years worked with newly arrived immigrants, international students, student dependents, and elderly immigrants with special needs. She was particularly effective in getting expectant mothers lined up with prenatal care through the Kids and Moms program. She got school-age children lined up for school physicals and immunizations. She worked with international student dependents in thwarting TB and other infectious diseases, and with elderly immigrants with special health issues.

I don't remember exactly when I first met Lilia or exactly when she first became involved with Health Care Consumers, but it was definitely in the early days of our organization, and she remained an active volunteer for the rest of her life.

I remember Lilia being around and doing advocacy for the patients she cared for, along with other great nurses in our community, including Fran Friedman and Jan Anderson, to name a few.

Lilia was deeply committed to improving the lives of her patients and the community members who needed health care – whether through public health, clinics, or hospital services.

Lilia was part of the team of nurses who, in the late 1990s, helped us advocate and organize for the creation of the county-wide public health department.

Lilia was not the kind of leader who would give a speech at a rally. She was the kind of leader who was stalwart and reliable and true. She showed up for every meeting, and she contributed her voice, and she did the work. And she brought other people into the struggle through encouragement and support. With her quiet, steady, and caring ways, she helped build our community. She had grace, compassion, and humor, and she was universally loved and appreciated.

Lilia had an important voice, and through Health Care Consumers, she helped give voice to others in order to make improvements in our health care system.

Champaign County Health Care Consumers exists to give voice to people.

And Lilia was one of those people. Lilia made sure that the priorities of the people she cared for would not be ignored, and that those priorities would be part of shaping our health care system.

There are other people like this in our community who come to mind. People like Lucia Maldonado, Mauricio Salinas – who is a Health Care Consumers Board Member, and Susan Ogwal, Luis Cuza and Ricardo Diaz to name a few.

Organizations like Health Care Consumers are so important. But organizations are made up of people – people who bring their gifts, their strengths, their priorities, and their voices to the organization.

With an organization like Health Care Consumers, I know that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. But I think of Lilia Peters and the part she has played in the life of Health Care Consumers and our community, and I am reminded that these parts, these individuals, matter greatly.

Lilia's work – most of it which she did on a volunteer basis, as a helper and connector in our community – mattered a lot. And she has left a lasting legacy.

And by dedicating this award tonight in memory of Lilia and her work, we will continue to honor her lasting legacy, and recognize those important people in our community who do the hard work of serving immigrants and the international community here in Champaign County.

Ron and Frank, on behalf of Champaign County Health Care Consumers, it with great admiration, gratitude, and love that we dedicate the Lilia E. Peters Service to New Immigrants and the International Community Award to Lilia.