

CONSUELO 'CHELO' MURRAY: Cared for AIDS patients battling cancer and the homeless

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Dr. Consuelo "Chelo" Murray served the underserved.

She freely gave her time to help AIDS patients battling cancer, years before medical science gave them hope. She also gave care to the homeless. In her free time, she rescued dogs.

Dr. Murray, 57, died June 20 at her Dallas home of complications of rectal cancer.

Her services were private.

"She was definitely a driven person with a lot of interests," said her sister Vikki Murray Wolff of Rochester, Minn.

"She was my younger sister – and I'm a financial person – so sometimes I thought she was kind of a dreamer," Ms. Wolff said. "But I realize now that her interests were what her interests were. She really served the underserved."

Dr. Murray was born in Mexico City. Her parents divorced and her mother married Dr. R.W. "Bob" Kimbro of Cleburne. He founded the Kimbro Clinic, which became the Kimbro Medical Center in Cleburne. Dr. Kimbro died in 1985.

In 1968, Dr. Murray graduated from the Hockaday School in Dallas, where the National Merit Scholarship semifinalist and drama student demonstrated her independent nature.

At her 25th high school reunion she recalled being one of the first in her class not to wear a bra. She also started an underground newspaper, *La Cucaracha*, which she sold out of her locker for a quarter a copy.

"I thought we needed to have some silly stuff, underground stuff, anti-war stuff and, at the time, feminist stuff," she recalled at the 1993 reunion.

Dr. Murray received her bachelor's degree from Rice University, where she graduated cum laude in 1972. She earned her medical degree at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston in 1976.

After her internship and residency at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, she had a fellowship in hematology and oncology at what is now the UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

Dr. Murray started her career with Texas Oncology at Dallas in the 1980s. She was the first woman physician specializing in hematology and oncology at Baylor University Medical Center.

Dr. Murray also volunteered to treat cancer in AIDS patients at Parkland hospital, in the days before the use of antiretroviral cocktails. She also volunteered at what is now the Nelson-Tebedo Health Resource Center in Oak Lawn, which also treats AIDS patients.

"All her patients – despite her best efforts – were dying of AIDS-related cancers," her sister said. "It just got to her after a while."

Dr. Murray considered getting out of medicine. She trained for a year or so to become a medical paralegal. In 1998, however, she returned to medicine as medical director for the Trinity Works Clinic for the homeless.

With Dr. Murray on board, the clinic was able to expand its services and receive Medicaid and Medicare payments, Ms. Wolff said. But the clinic failed, and Dr. Murray entered private practice with Dr. David Donnell in 2004.

When the two-doctor practice appeared to be too small to succeed, Dr. Murray started working part time for CareNow in North Dallas.

Eighteen months ago, she was diagnosed as having cancer. Her part-time work allowed her to continue to practice medicine while she was being treated, her sister said.

Dr. Murray last worked in mid-May, when the cancer prevented her from practicing medicine.

She had worked in dog rescue for years, first rescuing greyhounds and more recently all breeds, her sister said.

Dr. Murray also was involved in the North Texas Irish Festival in Dallas, playing the fiddle and hosting young traveling singers in her home.

In addition to her sister, Dr. Murray is survived by her sisters Penny Kimbro Kraus of Houston and Amanda Murray Green of Sebastopol, Calif.; and a brother, Bill Kimbro of Beaverton, Ore.

Memorials may be made to VistaCare hospice in Dallas or Straydog, a sanctuary for rescued dogs in Gun Barrel City.