

CELEBRATING

20

YEARS OF

CHOICE. SUPPORT. COMPASSION. EDUCATION. CARE. DIGNITY.

FINAL EXIT NETWORK

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JANUARY 2005
The newly formed
Final Exit Network
publishes its first
newsletter (4 pages)
and mails it to its
members.



AUGUST 13-14, 2004

Ten right to die (RTD) activists met at a hotel in Chicago and formulated the plan to establish a new organization, to be called Final Exit Network (FEN).

SEPTEMBER 16, 2004

FEN is officially founded, with Earl Wettstein named as its first president.

Faye Girsh and Derek Humphry sit on the new organization's advisory board.

Founding Board Members:

- Earl Wettstein, President
- Ted Goodwin, VP & Treasurer
- Bob Brush, VP & Secretary
- Judy Coats
- Ila DeLuca
- Rosalie Guttman

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I write these words, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the incredible journey we have embarked on together. The year 2024 marks the 20th anniversary of Final Exit Network, and it is with great joy that I reflect on the remarkable growth, unwavering dedication of our volunteers, and the profound importance of our mission supporting choice in dying.

You will read in these pages about the journey that began two decades ago, when a small group of individuals with a shared vision and passion came together to establish FEN. What started as a humble initiative has blossomed into a beacon of hope, support, and education. Our growth is not just measured in numbers, but in the lives we have touched and the positive impact we have made in the right to die movement.

The dedication of our volunteers is central to our success. They are the heart and soul of FEN, tirelessly working toward our shared goals. Their commitment, compassion, and selflessness have been the driving force behind every achievement, every milestone. Today, we honor and celebrate each volunteer who has contributed their time, skills, and passion to make FEN what it is today.

At the core of our existence lies a mission that goes beyond the ordinary: promoting death with dignity. It is a mission that demands empathy, courage, and a profound understanding of the human experience. Over the past two decades, we have been at the forefront of advocating for the rights of individuals to make choices about their end of life. We have provided support to those facing difficult decisions, ensuring that their voices are heard and respected.



Our journey has not been without challenges, but it is in overcoming these challenges that we have grown stronger. The landscape of end of life care is evolving, and FEN remains committed to being a guiding light, educating about choice in dying, supporting those who choose their path to exit, and celebrating autonomy and dignity at life's end.

As we celebrate this milestone, let us not only look back on our achievements but also forward to the future we envision. Together, let us continue to be a force for positive change, challenging norms and championing the rights of individuals to face their final moments with grace and dignity.

To the past 20 years, filled with resilience, compassion, and progress, and to the many more years ahead, where we will continue to make a difference: Happy Anniversary to us!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mary Ewert', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Ewert
Executive Director

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



Since our beginning, Final Exit Network has been blessed with exceptional volunteers, starting with our founders Derek Humphry, Faye Girsh, and Richard MacDonald. Our volunteers are bright, compassionate, and from all walks of life. They speak with people dealing with a tremendous amount of stress, and travel around the country meeting with and educating clients. Their reward is helping other incredible people who, because of their suffering, are ready to die in a safe, peaceful manner. Clients' and family members' gratitude is amazing and deeply meaningful to our volunteers.

Doing what our guides do is neither easy nor socially acceptable. Because much of society does not believe that a rational person would choose to die before they must, FEN has faced its share of challenges with the legal system. We have learned from each of these encounters and have the best-trained, experienced guides with well-defined procedures as a result of what we've learned and experienced along the way.

Since 2004, we've grown from an all-volunteer program to an organization with three full-time employees. These outstanding people manage our finances, member relations, outreach, and guide program. Our organization is well positioned to continue providing our services for as long as there are qualified people who want to manage their end of life options.

Looking forward, I see FEN continuing to play a small, but extremely important, role in the right to die movement. Our regional coordinators will continue to offer support and resources to all who reach out. Our guide program will continue to provide services free to qualified people who are ineligible for medical aid in dying. We will continue to make a case for managing your end days outside the medical model. We will take every opportunity to advocate for greater social acceptability of chosen death. We will continue to accept people with dementia and research how others with dementia, and their families, feel about hastening death before losing capacity.

Thank you to all of our volunteers, our staff, and you, our members and supporters, for your role in FEN's growth. I hope that in the next 20 years, Final Exit Network services will be more socially acceptable and used by increasing numbers of people to manage their end days.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Ruder". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brian Ruder

President, FEN Board of Directors

OUR MISSION

To educate qualified individuals in practical, peaceful ways to end their lives, offer a compassionate bedside presence, and defend their right to choose.

OUR VISION

That any competent person unbearably suffering an intractable medical condition has the option to die legally and peacefully.

A seed gift of
\$10,000 from one individual
helped to shape FEN in 2004.
Since then, over 14,500 FEN
donors have given combined
support of \$9.4 million.

FEN began
as a 100% volunteer-led
organization founded by 10
people. It has grown to a
full-time staff of three, whose
work is supported by 70+
dedicated volunteers.

A small group from around the
country grew into an active
membership base of
nearly 3,000 FEN members.

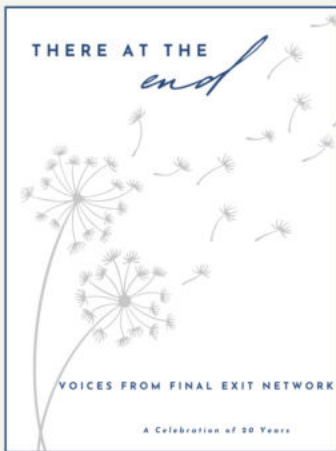
WHAT HAS NOT CHANGED SINCE 2004?

1:1 SUPPORT

FEN remains the only right to die organization with an Exit Guide Program that provides information and a compassionate presence to individuals who are suffering from intolerable medical circumstances, are mentally competent, want to end their lives, and who meet FEN's criteria for guide support.

There at the End: Voices from Final Exit Network **Anthology Set for Summer Release**

In honor of the 20th anniversary of Final Exit Network, a new anthology capturing the spirit and sentiments of the organization's clients and volunteers will be published this summer.



There at the End: Voices from Final Exit Network—A Celebration of 20 Years is a collection of unique first-person accounts that explores the range of emotions of Final Exit Network clients as they come to terms with end of life decisions for themselves and their loved ones, as well as the experiences of FEN's specially trained volunteers who discuss their roles as coordinators, guides and, often, confidants.

Forewords by Final Exit Network co-founders Derek Humphry and Faye Girsh detail its origin, beginning with a single phone call suggesting the creation of a unique organization that would offer direct advice and guidance to terminally ill adults on end of life options. FEN founders saw the need for a dedicated group of individuals to explain the benefits of peaceful deaths to those who lived in states without medical

aid in dying laws or simply fell through the cracks caused by restrictive legislation. FEN, as we know it today, was established to address that need.

Many of the accounts, which include titles such as *Helping to Cross the Final Bridge*, *Farewell Brief Friend*, *Finding Hope in Something Hopeless*, and *Goodbye—With Gratitude*, were originally published in Final Exit Network's magazine. Others were gathered over the years from grateful family members and FEN volunteers.

Mary Ewert, executive director of Final Exit Network, believes the anthology is the perfect way to honor the organization's rich history, while looking to the future.

"This book, which was 20 years in the making, is an ode to all of those who have worked tirelessly to create an environment where chosen death is an accepted practice, and one that can offer peace to those who are struggling," said Ewert. "It is also a heartwarming way to thank our clients for putting their trust in us and to deliver FEN's message of hope for the future."

There at the End: Voices from Final Exit Network—A Celebration of 20 Years will be available in early summer of 2024 in digital and print-on-demand formats.

Videos Celebrate FEN's Accomplishments and Look to the Future

To Russell Bates, commercial & TV director and a volunteer coordinator for FEN, the decision to write, direct, and produce two commemorative videos in celebration of FEN's 20th anniversary was simple.



"I wanted to create the kind of video that I wish had been available 14 years ago when my dad decided it was time to end his life. It's for potential clients and their families and loved ones who may be in a place of fear, panic, and hopelessness and want to know that they're not alone and there are options available to them."








Since its inception in 2004, Final Exit Network has been dedicated to doing just that: educating qualified individuals in practical, peaceful ways to end their lives, offering a compassionate bedside presence, and defending their right to choose when necessary.

The upcoming video series, which will be launched in June 2024, provides compelling narrative, powerful visuals, and heartfelt testimonials that highlight FEN's mission, its vision, and the people who have defined FEN's legacy.

Final Exit Network has played a pivotal role in the right to die space, providing a supportive bedside presence for Americans choosing to end their own lives. The anniversary video series serves as a tribute to the unwavering dedication of its staff, volunteers, clients, and supporters.

For more information about the 20th anniversary video release and book launch, please visit our website or follow FEN on social media.



-  www.FinalExitNetwork.org
-  linkedin.com/company/final-exit-network-org
-  facebook.com/FinalExitNetwork
-  twitter.com/FinalExitNetwrk
-  youtube.com/@finalexitnetworkofficialc-2352

On Making the Video:

You walked in the door as strangers and left as members of our extended family... I have the happy experience of living long enough to recognize and cherish moments of grace when we all come together to honor the importance of our connections with each other. There is no better way to honor my beloved husband than to have the magical experience that we have shared (participating in this video), and that was made possible by our willingness to open ourselves to the possibilities of meeting others heart-to-heart.

*~ Catherine Smith
FEN Client Family Member*

Where it All Began

DEREK HUMPHRY AND FAYE GIRSH REFLECT ON FEN'S BEGINNINGS

By Jay Niver, FEN Magazine Editor

Derek and Faye catching up in FEN's "early days."



DEREK

Derek Humphry's right to die odyssey began almost 30 years before Final Exit Network came into existence. At 20 years old, FEN is a relative youngster compared to the father of the North American RTD movement.

When Derek observes his own birthday in April, he'll be 94, many decades senior to the organization he and Faye Girsh formed in 2004 (with a few other mavericks). They were dissatisfied with how the Hemlock Society had morphed into Compassion and Choices, a newly named organization they considered more like a corporate merger than a passion-fueled mission.

Derek, an English journalist, first faced end of life issues when his wife, Jean, had terminal cancer and, at her request, he helped her die in 1975. Three years later, he published *Jean's Way* to tell her story, and Derek's RTD journey took off like a shot.

"I had requests from all over to speak on the subject, and all of a sudden I was an expert on the right to die," he says. "People said, 'Help me. What should I do?' I got so many inquiries, I decided to form an organization to deal with it, and I started the Hemlock Society in 1980."

Hemlock was the first of many audacious initiatives

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FAYE

Faye Girsh will become a nonagenarian in May, but that won't make her eligible for California's End of Life Option Act. She's far too active and healthy to plan any exit, unless it's to leave a building.

That doesn't mean she hasn't thought about her *final* exit. "People do not want to live with dementia," she says. "I'm not going to eat peanut butter sandwiches and listen to 'Mary Had a Little Lamb.'" When it's time, she adds, "I'm going to Switzerland, and my children agree to go along."

When she leaves, Hemlock Society of San Diego will lose its founder and often-president of nearly four decades. Faye's efforts began with using her expertise as a clinical and forensic psychologist in a case of a quadriplegic woman in 1983. Five years later that led to starting the Hemlock Society of San Diego, and later being on the board of the Hemlock Society USA. Hemlock was the first serious right to die organization in the United States, founded by Derek Humphry in 1980. He resigned in 1991 after the publication of his classic book, *Final Exit*. Girsh became the executive director of Hemlock USA in 1996, the year of the first legal euthanasia in Australia.

In 1997, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that physician assisted dying was **not** a constitutional right. Girsh, with her board and Hemlock's medical director Dr. Dick MacDonald, launched the Caring Friends program, which trained Hemlock volunteers to visit people with serious illnesses who wanted to end their lives and explain what they needed to do. The volunteers added the reassurance that a Caring Friend would be with them, though that volunteer could not provide the means or help them physically - both of which constitute the crime of assisted suicide.

In 2004, Hemlock's board voted to change its name to

(continued on next page)

End of Life Choices and to merge with the smaller Compassion In Dying to become the new Compassion & Choices. Girsh and some of the chapter leaders and Caring Friends volunteers sensed the conservative leaning of the new organization and moved to form another organization – Final Exit Network. Derek Humphry, initially skeptical about the success of such a model, was completely supportive at the organizational meeting in Chicago and lent the name of his best-selling book to the title as well as gave a generous contribution to get the new organization – Final Exit Network – off the ground.



Even as Hemlock USA changed its name, San Diego kept “Hemlock” and remains the country’s only surviving – and thriving – organization with the original name recalling Aristotle’s death by ingestion of hemlock.

Though the national Hemlock Society and its 30-plus chapters were gone, the silver lining was FEN’s birth, which allowed the new organization to continue the Caring Friends program Faye had started. Now, the Exit Guide Program is the heart and soul of Final Exit Network, which makes her proud of FEN’s work and 20th anniversary.

There is still much to do. After nearly 30 years of legal US medical aid in dying, Faye says, “People aren’t aware of it or eligible under its restrictions. I don’t think most doctors know about it, and many don’t tell their patients about their options.” It’s a slow battle that Hemlock and Derek started and FEN and others are fighting, now with increased

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

Jim Van Buskirk

FEN Volunteer Jim Van Buskirk spent a few moments sharing what drew him to FEN, why he continues to lend his time and expertise, and how the 20th Anniversary Anthology came to be.



My introduction to FEN occurred over six years ago when an acquaintance asked me to be present at her exit. I was so impressed with the experience that I wrote an essay which appeared in FEN’s magazine. Soon thereafter, I was invited to volunteer as a regional coordinator. Since then I have heard many heart-wrenching stories - from callers, clients’ family members, and colleagues. Knowing the importance of personal stories to help explain who FEN is and what FEN does, I began paying closer attention to these inspiring stories of grace and gratitude, as well as cautionary tales. It occurred to me that a collection of these pieces might be valuable to the FEN community. As a retired librarian, I envisioned a physical book - one that could be made available in libraries and bookstores, at public programs, passed among friends and family members to commemorate, celebrate, and explain FEN’s unique role in the right to die movement.

In a fit of inspiration, I made a list of possible inclusions and drafted a description of what eventually became the anthology to be released this summer: *There at the End: Voices from Final Exit Network*. I am very much looking forward to the publishing of this never-before-seen portrait of FEN’s committed and compassionate volunteers and grateful clientele.

FEN Launches Bequest Society

Longtime FEN supporter Craig Phillips recently became the first member of the newly formed Infinity Society. He shares why he decided to make this commitment:

I named FEN as a beneficiary of my estate because, while the battle for personal autonomy (specifically medical aid in dying) continues in this archaic society, FEN is compassionately easing people's suffering in their hour of greatest need. FEN teaches those who meet their criteria how to end their lives peacefully at a time and place of their choosing. I know first hand what a huge relief this option is for someone, even if they don't end up taking that course of action.

In addition, I am an end of life doula at a well-run hospice. In this role, I have sat with hundreds of imminently dying people. A few die with ease. A few die in torment. The majority waste away for days, even weeks, in a drugged semi-conscious state. And I do not wish to die this way (let alone in a hospital ER). Anyone who helps people avoid such a fate is a hero, a saint, a bodhisattva. I'm happy to be able to support FEN and, with hope, someday I will use their services.



Craig poses in front of the Zen Garden in Baltimore's central park. He created the space and designed and etched the monument.

Every charitable organization aspires to make a lasting impact for generations to come. It's with this vision in mind that we proudly introduce our Infinity Society, which invites supporters to leave a lasting legacy by including FEN in their estate plans.



FEN has been the recipient of many generous bequests through the years, each of which has contributed significantly to FEN's ability to sustain our critical work. This generosity provides the resources we need to continue our vital work and expand our outreach.

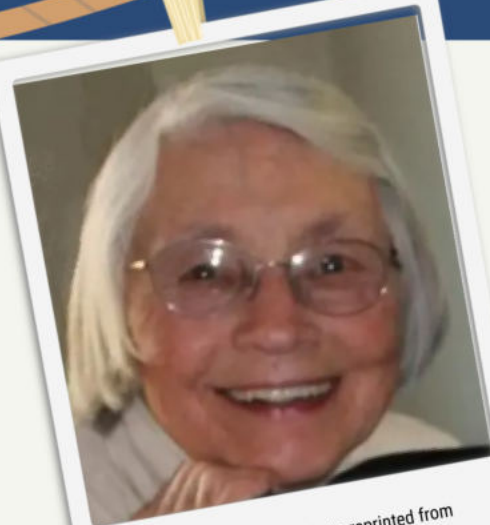
By choosing to include FEN in your estate plan, you will become a member of our newly formed Infinity Society, a group of forward-thinking supporters who have made a lasting commitment to our cause. As a member, you'll receive special recognition on our website and in our magazine and annual report (unless you inform us that you prefer to remain anonymous).

We hope you'll give serious consideration to becoming a founding member of the Infinity Society. For more information or to join the Infinity Society, please reach out to us at info@finalexitnetwork.org or visit finalexitnetwork.org/bequest-form.

Only through the acceptance of our mortality can we lead our fullest lives...



Rosalie Guttman was a founding board member of Final Exit Network. Photo submitted by family.



Ludmila "Em" Sabatiuk, photo reprinted from clutterfuneralhome.com

Remembering Rosalie

by Ed Gogol, FEN Volunteer

My meeting Rosalie Guttman, like my involvement in the right to die movement itself, was accidental. It was not long after the founding of Final Exit Network, when my now-deceased wife's best friend (I'll call her Jane), who was in a very bad way from advanced Parkinson's, said to us, "I can't bear it anymore. I want to die. Can you help me?"

I had read Derek Humphry's book and joined FEN, so it was natural to refer Jane to FEN and then to attend the FEN annual meeting in Chicago, where I happened to sit next to Rosalie. She introduced herself as the president of Hemlock of Illinois. I told her Jane's story, and she said, "You should join our board." I responded, "I couldn't possibly," as I had a demanding job and was heavily involved in the abortion rights movement.

This conversation repeated itself at the FEN annual meeting for the next two years, at which point I felt a sense of obligation and said yes, without a clue of what I was getting myself into. Soon thereafter, I was driving to Chicago's south side, to Rosalie's beautiful apartment overlooking Lake Michigan, for my first Hemlock of Illinois board meeting.

Rosalie was a force of nature, the heart and soul of Hemlock of Illinois, a ferocious advocate and tireless campaigner, always giving talks about the right to die movement, and doing a weekly TV show on Chicago public-access cable together with Jerry Dincin, FEN's president at the time. I learned a great deal from her, sitting in

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Ludmila "Em" Sabatiuk - A Life Remembered

by Ann Mandelstamm, FEN Volunteer

Em Sabatiuk (born Ludmila) was an experienced interviewer and associate guide with Final Exit Network when I joined the Exit Guide Program volunteers in 2014. To my knowledge she rarely, if ever, turned down a request for an interview, which she wrote up painstakingly by hand, in complete sentences. She didn't hesitate to ask follow-up questions if she thought the responses might better inform the guides assigned to the client.

Much earlier in her life, Em learned to value family and hard work, claiming that her family survived the Great Depression because their farm produced enough food for the family. In college, Em studied elementary education, with master's degrees in both reading (Columbia University) and library science (Rutgers). She had a lengthy and rewarding career as a public school teacher and librarian. She married Andrew Sabatiuk in 1948 and they had three children. Because Andy was an aeronautical engineer who specialized in jet engine development, the family moved a number of times to accommodate his employment. Always one to problem solve, Em started her own day care when she was unable to find good options for their preschool children. Andy and Em loved to travel with their son and two daughters. They were happily married until Andy died in 2002.

I first spoke with Em when she interviewed a client I worked with as a FEN coordinator. She was kind, sensitive, smart, and had a great sense of humor. She loved to talk books; we would always compare notes on what we were reading. She was progressive in

(continued on page 12)

WHY FEN?

Naturally, people have different reasons why they choose to support, volunteer, enter the Exit Guide Program, or become members of Final Exit Network. Over the past 20 years, many have graciously shared their "Why." Here are a few...

Your story matters.

Whether you've been touched by FEN's guide services, advocacy efforts, or educational resources, your story has the potential to shed light on the importance of end of life choices and compassionate care.

Your voice matters.

It has the power to inspire, to educate, and to spark conversations that can lead to positive change.

We invite you to share your story.

Your words could be featured in our publications, helping to raise awareness and advocate for the rights of individuals facing end of life decisions.

Together, let's honor the range of experiences within our community and work towards a future where everyone has the right to die on their own terms.

"The essential work that you and your team have undertaken to give people an opportunity for a dignified and graceful exit from ruthless indignities and medical perils at the end of life was an incredible gift to our family and friends."

I joined FEN because I strongly believe in the right to end of life autonomy. But I stayed and served as president because it has the most compassionate, courageous, and dedicated people I have ever worked with. I am proud to support FEN volunteers as they ease the suffering of others, and I am deeply grateful knowing they will be there for me if I need them.

*~Janis Landis, Past President of FEN
Current Board Member*

"As difficult as this experience was, it would have been much more difficult without FEN... I will be forever grateful to everyone who helped me, and I wanted you to know what a big difference you made. In the time since my husband passed, I have been sad, but the reassurance of knowing that he ended his life exactly as he wished makes everything easier to accept."

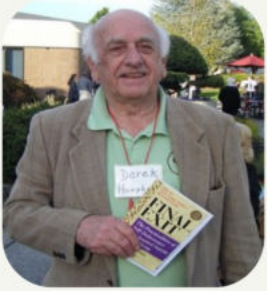
Mary Ellen, a senior guide, Chosen Death Forum moderator, and workshop presenter, considers it more of a privilege than a responsibility to provide a "nonjudgmental presence during profoundly intimate times grappling with life's ultimate questions." She is grateful to be "one of the few outlets they have for voicing their inner truths about a chosen death."

Go to finalexitnetwork.org/news-events/shareyourstory for more information or to tell us your story.

Derek - continued from page 6

Derek engineered in half a century of RTD advocacy. "Everybody laughed and scoffed at the idea," he recalls. "They said it's the time of (Ronald) Reagan and Billy Graham; they will destroy you. I said, 'No, I'll be there long after they've gone.'"

Hemlock was based in Derek's Santa Monica garage. "There was a tremendous demand for a guidebook," he says, "something to tell people what they could do."



So, Derek had *Let Me Die Before I Wake* ready for print in 1981, except for two problems: no publisher would go near it, and he couldn't afford to print it himself.

Derek turned to the fledgling Hemlock Society, whose 2,000 members pre-ordered enough copies to pay "every dime" he needed to give America its first do-it-yourself manual on self-deliverance.

Fast forward 10 years. Hemlock was well established, had moved to Eugene, OR, and it was time for an updated DIY suicide guide to replace *Let Me Die*. Derek wrote *Final Exit* and had a good New York agent, but (guess what?) "he couldn't get anybody to touch it," Derek says. "I thought, hell, we'll publish it ourselves" using Hemlock funds.

It was another Derek rabbit-from-the-hat moment. In August 1991, *Final Exit* became the #1 *New York Times* Best Seller – and stayed on the list for 18 weeks. "Everyone was staggered," he says. "People were lining up in New York to buy a book on suicide."

According to Derek, not everyone was impressed. He and Dr. Jack Kevorkian were both making news, and Derek says they "didn't get on very well...(Jack) didn't believe a non-medical person should be saying these things. His book was a disaster, by the way. He was upset that mine was a big seller."

Derek's biggest jaw-dropper came in 1994 when, after years of Hemlock effort, Oregon voters approved a referendum giving America its first death with dignity law, "to everybody's surprise and a lot of peoples' shock," he says.

It didn't sit well with state lawmakers, who put a countermeasure to undo it before voters in 1997. Voters defeated it by a bigger margin than they approved the first one.

Hemlock thrived after the Oregon triumph, but movements in the RTD cause essentially spelled its demise. The "Hemlock" brand was jettisoned in 2003 to become End of Life Choices, which merged a year later with Compassion in Dying.



August 14, 2004 - The founding members of FEN.

Upset with how things were going, a group of former Hemlock and (now) EOL Choices leaders gathered in Chicago in 2004 to form a new organization. "I was delighted," Derek recalls, though he had stepped down much earlier to resume writing. He gave permission to name the new group after his book, *Final Exit*.

If not for Derek, Final Exit Network might not exist. He explains: "They wanted to call it the Final Exit Society, and I said it should be Final Exit Network. That's a more modern name than 'Society.'"

The rest, as they say, is history.

Faye, continued from page 7

resistance from religious conservatives.

Faye is striving to educate the public and healthcare providers and update the California law as other states are moving to improve theirs. She embraces fading residency requirements and shorter waiting periods. On the horizon, perhaps, there will be no need to self-administer or be terminally ill, "which is a ridiculous requirement," she says.

Not content with writing, presenting, and other usual activities, Faye has endowed a lecture program for the UC San Diego School of Medicine. "I figured, in my last decade, I'd better do something important for the movement."

Like she hasn't already.

board meetings in her living room.

One day, while assembling copies of the HOI newsletter, I asked, "Why do we call it death with dignity? I don't lose my dignity just because I'm sick." And she replied that when you're suffering, you do. I don't remember her exact words, but they were to the effect that, when you're in pain, in agony, suffering greatly, maintaining dignity goes out the window. You're howling, you're moaning, all you want is for your suffering to end. It's a true bit of wisdom, together with its corollary: you can never know how you're going to feel about suffering until it's you who are suffering.

As one of the founding members of Final Exit Network and as a very senior exit guide, Rosalie was the embodiment of FEN's vision: that any competent person unbearably suffering an intractable medical condition has the option to die legally and peacefully. She touched many lives and will be sorely missed.

For a fuller picture of Rosalie and her fascinating life, which included fleeing London as a child during WWII, publishing under a *nom de plume*, and leading advocacy efforts for death with dignity, I encourage you to read her full obituary in Chicago's *Hyde Park Herald*.

Ludmila "Em" Sabatiuk, continued from page 9

her politics but always fair and compassionate. Her great joy was her family: her children, their spouses, grandchildren and their spouses, and eventually great grandchildren. She saw them as often as possible and drove long distances to be with them.

She loved travel, reading, movies, opera, politics, birdwatching, and visiting friends and family. She loved and appreciated beauty in nature, always.

Of course, she believed that people had the right to choose to end their suffering and she lived her principles. Although I never met Em in person, I talked to her often, delighting in every conversation. I grew to love her, as well. One of her best friends was Fran Schindler, another much-beloved FEN Exit Guide Program volunteer.

In 2021 Em moved to Mountain Memories, a retirement home in Elkins, WV. She died on December 19, 2023 at the age of 95. Memories of Em will be a blessing to all of us lucky enough to work with her in Final Exit Network.

FEN RECOGNIZED FOR TRANSPARENCY IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

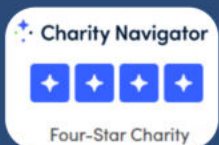
Platinum
Transparency
2024

Candid.

FEN has again earned the Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid, the agency that collects and provides information about every IRS-registered nonprofit organization.

This distinction shows FEN's dedication to transparency about our goals, strategies, capabilities, achievements, fundraising initiatives, and communications. Fewer than one percent of US-based nonprofit organizations have been recognized with the Platinum Seal, and we are proud to be among them.

In addition, FEN has earned a 4-Star rating from Charity Navigator, which is their highest rating and is reserved for those organizations to which one can "give with confidence."



FINAL
EXIT
2020

Digital Edition

Self-deliverance
and assisted dying
for the terminally
and hopelessly ill

DEREK HUMPHRY
Founder of the Hemlock Society

HUMPHRY'S LATEST EDITION

AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE ONLINE

Derek Humphry's renowned book, *Final Exit 2020: Self-deliverance and assisted dying for the terminally and hopelessly ill*, has been updated from the printed edition and is available as a PDF download, which can **only** be purchased at www.finalexit.org.

Humphry's book addresses the advance planning and documentation needed by a person about to terminate their life: advance directives, life insurance, the law, final notes to family, and drug dosages are explained in straightforward terms. Those interested in the inert gas method should get the updated digital edition.

The Back Page

A COMPENDIUM OF RIGHT TO DIE WORLD NEWS

UNITED STATES

- **California** - Proposed changes to the End of Life Option Act, which passed in 2015, would remove the requirement that a patient be terminally ill and a resident of the state.

Like medical aid in dying (MAID) in other states, California's law specifies patients must be terminally ill, defined as "an incurable and irreversible disease that...will, within reasonable medical judgment, result in death within six months."

State Senator Catherine Blakespear's bill will replace terminal illness with "a grievous and irremediable medical condition." In addition, it would:

- Expand the law to those with early- to mid-stage dementia;
 - Allow MAID drugs to be received through an intravenous (IV) infusion self-administered by the patient;
 - Remove the requirement to wait 48 hours between oral requests;
 - Eliminate the residency requirement; and
 - Remove the law's 2031 sunset date.
- **Colorado** - An amendment to the End of Life Options Act would reduce the waiting period for MAID and expand the number of practitioners who can participate in the process.
- The revision passed its third reading in March, voted 24-11 out of the Senate, crossed over to the House of Delegates and was referred to the Health and Human Services Committee.
- **Illinois** - A bill to legalize MAID has been referred to the Senate Subcommittee on End of Life Issues. Illinois would be the first midwestern state to legalize MAID, after a 2023 poll showed 71 percent of likely state voters support the legislation.

- **Minnesota** - Its MAID bill passed 8-5 out of the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee in March. Advocates have been fighting to pass "death with dignity" for almost a decade, and multiple public hearings in the House have been held this session. A companion bill in the Senate has yet to be debated. It's not clear whether the bill could pass in that chamber.

- **West Virginia** - Voters will decide in November whether to amend their constitution and bar healthcare providers from participating in "medically assisted suicide."

MAID is already illegal under current state law, but this would mark the first time any state changed its constitution to explicitly

prohibit assisted dying, creating a new avenue for opponents to deny terminally ill patients the right to make their own end of life decisions.

FRANCE

After months of deliberation, President Emmanuel Macron announced in March that he backs a bill to introduce new end of life legislation for terminally ill patients. "The term we retained is that of 'helping to die' because it is simple and humane," Macron said in a press interview.

Macron said the bill would allow a terminally ill person to self-administer a lethal substance or, if a patient was not physically capable of that, he or she could request another person to do so.

The proposed legislation would apply to adults only, and Macron stated that minors and patients suffering from psychiatric or neurodegenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's will not be eligible.

The bill would be brought before key ministers in April and presented to Parliament in late May.

UNITED KINGDOM

Sir Keir Starmer has pledged that Parliament will debate and vote on changing assisted dying laws if his Labour Party wins the next general election.

In a phone call to TV presenter and assisted dying campaigner Dame Esther Rantzen, the Labour leader said he was "personally in favor of changing the law."

Starmer's pledge marks a historic juncture after years of campaigning by pro-RTD groups. The man who wants to be the next prime minister has said he would offer MPs a "free vote," meaning members would not be compelled by party line to vote for or against the proposal.

His position marks the first time the law would be debated under a supportive prime minister. The last time MPs voted on legalizing MAID was in 2015, when it was defeated 330 to 118.

A bill to make MAID legal in Scotland is expected to come before lawmakers this spring.

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Final Exit Network

PO Box 10071
Tallahassee, FL 32302
866-654-9156
EIN: 80-0119137
www.finalexitnetwork.org
info@finalexitnetwork.org

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