



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
GERONTOLOGY

Do You Have The Cour**AGE** to Care?



Judy Dierkhising

Martin Wayne Gronborg, Jr

Captain

D TRP, 3RD SQDN, 5TH CAVALRY, 101ST ABN DIV, USARV
Army of the United States

[Omaha, Nebraska](#)

December 14, 1945 to September 04, 1971

[MARTIN W GRONBORG Jr](#) is on the Wall at [Panel W2, Line 10](#)

See the [full profile](#) or [name rubbing](#) for Martin Gronborg



Captain Martin Gronborg

My Story:

Many people have life experiences that draw them into their field of work. A life experience led me to the field of Gerontology. My search to find some answers to loss and grief started for me shortly after I found myself widowed at a young age with two small children.

My husband Captain Martin W. Gronborg Jr was a genuine caring individual who loved his country and flew helicopters... his passion. He was killed on September 4, 1971 in Vietnam and with him my life as I knew it also ended. We had two beautiful daughters, ages 3 and 2. The journey began on how to survive; care for my family; and find a way to always have Marty as a significant piece of my life tapestry while moving forward.

It took me seven years to read, talk with others, and question why the books (few as there were) did not talk about the aspects of grief that I knew my children, other families, and myself were experiencing. No theory by Freud; no diagnosis; nothing could describe what I saw happening around me in regard to dealing with dying and bereavement until I was able to meet Dr (Dame) Cicely Saunders and participate in workshops with Dr. Kubler Ross.

In 1978 I became the coordinator of one the first hospice programs in Omaha Nebraska at Montclair Nursing Home. At that time the majority of people who were cared for in a hospice program were cancer patients. Most individuals were older and working with cancer patients and their families drew me to the field of Gerontology for some answers.

In 1980 I graduated from UNO with a Masters in Social Work and a Master's specialty in Gerontology. Dr. James Thorson who was at the time Director of the Gerontology Program at UNO wanted to teach a course in regard to Hospice and asked if I would be open to teach the course. In 1980 the first class was offered under the heading of "Issues in Aging": Hospice: Care of the Dying. Today the Gerontology Department still offers a Hospice Course that is available to all students. I still teach a graduate course in Gerontology: Dying, Death and Bereavement.

Since 1980 many expansions in academic offerings have taken place in the Gerontology Department and much has changed in the field of gerontology. With these changes the need to academically prepare students to work in the field of dying, death, and bereavement has become even more significant.

