

**DR. PAULA JAUDES** 1946-2018

# U. of C. professor was president of La Rabida

**BY BOB GOLDSBOROUGH**  
Chicago Tribune

As president and CEO of La Rabida Children's Hospital from 1996 until 2011 and also as the longtime medical director at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Paula Kienberger Jaudes devoted her career to providing medical care for children with lifelong disabilities or who were in foster care.

"Paula was a life force and left a major imprint on La Rabida Children's Hospital and even more so on the children she cared and advocated for, as well as their families," said Brenda Wolf, La Rabida's president and CEO.

Jaudes, 71, died of complications from ovarian cancer June 16 at her home, said her sister, Peggy Oglesby. Jaudes had been a Near West Side resident.

Born Paula Kienberger in Panama to a doctor father who was serving in the Army there, Jaudes grew up in Independence, Mo., and graduated from Notre Dame de Sion School in Kansas City, Mo. She received a bachelor's degree in biology from Creighton University in 1968, followed by a master's degree in physiology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Jaudes then decided to pursue a career in medicine and spent two years at the University of Missouri School of Medicine before moving with her husband to Chicago and finishing medical school in 1975 at Rush Medical College.

Jaudes worked for her entire professional career in the University of Chicago's Department of Pediatrics, where she rose to become a professor of pediatrics. She served a pediatric residency from 1975 until 1978 at the U. of C.'s Wyler Children's Hospital, followed by a fellowship in pediatric ambulatory care from 1978 until 1979.

After completing her residency, Jaudes joined the U. of C.'s medical staff permanently, seeing patients and also doing research. She became an assistant professor in 1980, an associate professor in 1987 and a professor of clinical pediatrics in 1997. She then was promoted to professor of pediatrics in 2003.

In 1993, Jaudes took on added responsibilities as the first medical director for the Illinois DCFS. In the part-time contract post, which she held until her death, Jaudes was the first physician in the U.S. to be named medical director of a



CHICAGO TRIBUNE 2009

Paula Jaudes was a long-time child welfare advocate and worked with DCFS.

state welfare agency.

Jaudes used her work for DCFS to improve health care for children in Illinois' foster care system. That included developing a protocol for wellness exams for children in foster care and giving foster children an electronic medical passport that kept their health care records available as they aged through the foster care system.

"People who worked with her adored her. She somehow managed to be both insistent and charming at the same time," said Neil Skene, special assistant to the director of the state DCFS. "She would say we needed to do something, and then she would just do it. I remember one day she was showing data that kids have better health care when they leave foster care than when they arrived. She was very proud of that, because she viewed every kid as her responsibility?"

Jaudes also had a long-time relationship with La Rabida Children's Hospital, which is in the South Side's ▲Woodlawn neighborhood, not far from the U. of C. Almost 40 years ago, she was the co-medical director of a "Homeward Bound" unit at La Rabida that was aimed at stabilizing and transitioning children who were in intensive care units and on ventilators, eventually to be brought home. The program included training parents how to care for their children at home, Wolf said.

"At the time, (that was) a very unique and forward-thinking model of care," Wolf said.

In 1996, Jaudes took on a larger role at La Rabida, as its president and CEO. Over the next 15 years, she "established the care model of providing a patient-centered medical home for children with special health care needs, offering primary and specialty care as well as care coordination for these children with complex needs," Wolf said.

Jaudes' work at La Rab-

ida led the nonprofit National Committee on Quality Assurance, an accreditation organization, to recognize the hospital as a "medical home."

"Paula's ultimate goal was always to make sure that the kids served by La Rabida received the care and services that they needed and deserved," Wolf said.

Jaudes stepped down from La Rabida in 2011. However, she continued working both at the U. of C. and in what was intended to be a one-day-a-week capacity as medical director for the state DCFS.

"She went all-out in that (role at DCFS), as in everything she did, and turned one day into five, taking phone calls and conferences whenever they might occur," said Nancy Frankenberg, a close friend. "She had fantastic energy almost to the end of her life. She could have run five hospitals at once, and balanced it all with a sense of fun and laughter."

Jaudes also sought national influence over policy initiatives on foster care. Since 2005 she had served on the executive committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Foster Care, Adoption and Kinship Care.

At the global level, Jaudes served as the associate director of outreach at the U. of C.'s Center for Global Health. Her interest in improving children's health around the world spurred a visit in 2011 and 2012 to Nigeria's University of Ibadan, where she developed an educational protocol for parents of children with sickle cell anemia. That work included informational materials widely distributed by doctors in Nigeria.

Friends and family said that although Jaudes never had children of her own, she often said that every child she served in her career was hers.

"She said, 'I have thousands and thousands of kids in the program and in the state,'" her sister said.

Jaudes never retired. She had been treated for cancer for the past 3½ years before entering hospice care, Frankenberg said.

Jaudes' husband, Paul, died at 40 of complications from a brain tumor. Apart from her sister, Jaudes is survived by two nieces, a nephew and eight grandnieces and grandnephews.

No public memorial service is planned, in accordance with Jaudes' wishes.

*Bob Goldsborough is a freelance reporter.*