

Bennett founded hospice

May 7, 2003

Hospice of Peel held its Volunteer Appreciation Evening last Thursday, but one familiar, beloved face was missing.

Just a few days earlier, on April 28, Laurie Bennett, the founding director of the hospice, died of cancer. She was in her mid 60s.

"It is ironically fitting that this evening coincides with the time of Laurie's passing for it was this event, out of all the year, that Laurie valued most," said Frances Henderson, a member of the hospice's board of directors.

Bennett was instrumental in starting the palliative care service at Mississauga Hospital (now Trillium Health Care Centre). In 1985, when the government and hospitals began to limit services to the terminally ill, Bennett and a few colleagues started an organization that could serve all termi-

nally-ill patients in the community.

"In a tremendous act of courage and faith, Laurie resigned from her full-time position at the hospital, sacrificing the security of a steady job and income, to start the Hospice of Peel," said Henderson.

From a mere handful of people and no paid staff in its earliest days, Hospice of Peel has grown in service and influence, becoming the second largest hospice in Ontario. Last year it served some 500 clients, made 2,500 home visits, supported 1,700 family members. Some 300 volunteers contributed more than 15,500 hours of time.

Bennett remained the executive director until her retirement



BENNETT

three years ago.

She closed her last newsletter with these words: "The poorest of men is not the man without a cent, but the man without a dream. May Hospice of Peel always have a dream."

Bennett leaves behind three children: Bruce, Brenda

and Lynne, and seven grandchildren.

About 200 mourners attended funeral services last Friday at the Turner & Porter Chapel.

For those who wish, it is the family's request that any donations be made to: Hospice of Peel, 855 Matheson Blvd. E., Unit 1, Mississauga, ON L4W 4L6.