

Dian Sparling, Midwife and Peace Corps Volunteer

Her Legacy: Pioneering in the field of midwifery in the Fort Collins area

While serving in the Peace Corps in West Africa, Dian Sparling found her calling—to become a midwife. A certified Nurse Midwife (NMW), she returned to Fort Collins and started WomanCare, her midwifery practice, almost half a century ago. During her career, she delivered more than 2,000 babies.

Dian started her practice, WomanCare, in 1981, as the only independent midwifery practice in Fort Collins. Hailed as a pioneer in her field, she works to connect clients with community services; the practice does not turn patients away on the basis of ability to pay.

Kathy Clarkson, a nurse in Dian's practice, said of her that she has always been "in tune with her patients, physically and emotionally." Another nurse who worked with Dian commented that midwives spend much more time with their patients than physicians do during labor. This allows the midwife the ability to make on-the-spot decisions and address the patient's needs promptly.

Reluctant to retire, Dian continued her practice well beyond the typical retirement age. In an interview with National Public Radio, she acknowledged that midwifery is not a money-making medical specialty; the reward is in successfully bringing new life into the world.

"People have asked me, 'Does this feeling after a delivery ever get old?' Absolutely not. It's a wonder to behold."

Written by Barbara Fleming, Author, Coloradoan Columnist and Living Her Legacy Wordsmith