



## In Memoriam

# DR RHONDA MATTERS

COUNCIL OF  
PROFESSIONAL  
ASSOCIATIONS IN  
PSYCHOLOGY (CPAP)

**L**eader, advocate, and psychologist well known for being PEI's first Chief Mental Health and Addictions Officer (2013), Dr Rhonda Matters will forever be remembered as a dear colleague and friend.

15 November 2021, at the age of 56, Dr. Rhonda Matters passed away peacefully in Charlottetown, PEI after battling lymphoma.

As a dedicated clinician, Rhonda contributed to the psychological health and wellness of countless children, adolescents, and their parents with her expertise and her welcoming and gentle demeanour. She served in Nova Scotia at the IWK-Grace Community Mental Health (Sackville)/IWK-Grace Assessment Services (Halifax), and in PEI for Community Mental Health at the Richmond Centre and the Eastern School District and later as the Behavioural Support Team Leader.

Serving as PEI's first Chief Mental Health and Addictions Officer, Rhonda was involved in the development of PEI's mental health and addictions strategy. In this role she worked tirelessly to identify and address critical service gaps for vulnerable children and youth, targeting wait times for both mental health services and psychoeducational assessments. She also saw the opening of PEI's first youth recovery centre for addictions (2014).

As an inspiring mental health advocate, Rhonda was relentless in her advocacy for access to psychologists and psychological services in PEI. PAPEI colleagues described her work as 'persistent in the pursuit' of advocacy. She was meticulously organized and known to follow through for results. Rhonda was one of the early champions of the PEI PsyD program, which has now launched, and was awarded PAPEI's Elizabeth Fox Percival Professional Award.

As a longstanding volunteer leader across our profession, Rhonda provided decades of service and leadership on the board of the Psychological Association of PEI (PAPEI), for the PEI Psychologists Registration Board, and is likely the longest standing member of CPAP. Rhonda was a meticulous voice of reason with strong relationships and connections to others. Social networking dinners often ended with dancing, which she would arrange, before being one of the first to start another day of productive meetings in the morning.

Despite her extensive volunteerism, and friendships, Rhonda was equally passionate about her family. Rhonda and Allan were together for 40 years and immensely proud of their children, Jonathan, Caitlin, and Alex. They explored where Alex studied, including Italy, the United Arab Emirates, and New York and Rhonda and Alex travelled twice to Nicaragua, in community service, building a school. In 2019 Rhonda and Allan were thrilled to host

two weddings at their home for Jonathan (Pamela) and Caitlin (Jeff).

Rhonda had a personality to draw people to her with her kindness, exuberance, and playfulness. She approached conflicts with grace and respect and focused on people's strengths. She always welcomed guests in PEI and never made you feel as if you 'came from away.' She had a love of people, music, food, and dancing. She was a regular at the PEI Fall Flavors Food Festival and would be the first one on the dance floor when a good 80s tune started to play, with a favorite band being AC/DC.

Rhonda graduated from the University of Prince Edward Island with a B.A. in Psychology and completed her graduate work at the University of Windsor as well as her internship (Windsor Western Hospital Centre and the Psychological Services Centre, University of Windsor), while raising a young family with her husband, Allan.

The memory of Dr. Rhonda Matters will continue through the Dr. Rhonda Matters Memorial Fund of the Community Foundation of PEI. This will support youth mental health initiatives in her name.

**“We must each lead a way of life with self-awareness and compassion, to do as much as we can. Then, whatever happens we will have no regrets.”**

Dalai Lama