

Barbara Coombs Lee, PA, FNP, JD

Barbara Coombs Lee is President of Compassion & Choices, a non-profit organization dedicated to expanding and protecting the rights of the terminally ill. She practiced as a nurse and physician assistant for 25 years before beginning a career in law and health policy. Since then she has devoted her professional life to individual choice and empowerment in health care. As a private attorney, as counsel to the Oregon State Senate, as a managed care executive and finally as Chief Petitioner for Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, she has championed initiatives that enable individuals to consider a full range of choices and be full participants in their health care decisions.

Ms. Lee took her undergraduate education at Vassar College and Cornell University and obtained advanced degrees in law and medicine from the University of Washington and Lewis & Clark College. She holds an adjunct position at the University of Washington School of Public Health and Preventative Medicine and is a member of the Oregon State Bar.

She has been interviewed by NBC News, CNN Crossfire, 60 Minutes, McNeil Lehrer News Hour, NPR, The Today Show, and Bill Moyers' "On Death and Dying" among others. She has also testified before the US Congress on end-of-life issues.

She has been recognized with a national health Policy Fellowship, Boeringer Ingeheim Foundation, an American Jurisprudence Award for outstanding performance in the study of medical law and a National Health Lawyers Association scholarship for outstanding student achievement.

Ms. Coombs Lee has been a presenter at programs sponsored by American Bar Association, Older Women's League, American Pain Society, Oregon State Bar, Americans for Better Care of The Dying, American Associations for the Advancement of Science, End of Life Concerns, and the American Pain Society. She spoke at the World Federation Right to Die conference in Zurich, Boston and Brussels.

Her audiences have included the Oregon Gerontological Association: the California Nurse Assembly & Education Conference. Her debate "*Doctor Assisted Suicide: Compassionate Alternative or Murder*" with James Bopp, Jr., was produced by "Justice Talking" a project of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center for Public Radio.

Since *Gonzales v. Oregon*, the lawsuit defending the Oregon assisted-dying law, Ms. Coombs Lee has been interviewed by many of the nation's newspapers. She has been quoted in the New York Times, The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune, and on NPR's All Things Considered. Recently, The Harvey M. Meyerhoff Lectures on Ethics at the End of Life hosted her presentation "Local Medical Practice and the Federal Threat" at Johns Hopkins University.