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Obituary

In Memoriam: Stephanie Solomon Cargill

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Stephanie Solomon Cargill, PhD, MSPH, a philosopher and empirical bioethicist, died peacefully surrounded by her family on May 9 after a diagnosis of stage IV non-small cell lung cancer in Fall 2024. She was 46.

Stephanie's life and career had a tremendous impact on her students, colleagues, community partners, and the field of research ethics. She made vast contributions, both seen and unseen, including teaching and guiding health professionals, serving on and chairing multiple IRBs, and teaching and mentoring graduate students. Her scholarship on the ways in which patient and community stakeholder perspectives can and should shape research practice and policy will have an impact on the field for generations.

Stephanie completed a BA in philosophy at Ohio State University and PhD in philosophy at Emory University. During her postdoctoral fellowship in research ethics at the Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research (MICHR) at the University of Michigan, she began to develop a passion for community-engaged research and public health.

After completing her post-doc in 2010, she joined the faculty in the Department of Health Care Ethics at Saint Louis University (SLU), where she stayed for 14 years. At SLU, she taught and mentored Health Care Ethics PhD students, especially those interested in research ethics career tracks, directed the Empirical Methods in Bioethics concentration and was an active participant in revising and assessing ethics curricula across campus. She served as deputy chair of the SLU IRB for 8 years and was the creator and coordinator of SLU's Responsible Conduct of Research Program and IRB education. She also taught public health ethics after completing an MSPH degree at SLU. Stephanie was committed to lifelong learning. During this time Stephanie also chaired the Castle IRB, a central institutional review board specializing in gene and cell therapy and rare disease research.

Stephanie used both empirical and theoretical methods to explore ways in which stakeholder perspectives can and should shape research practice and policy. She published on research issues such as vulnerable populations in research, IRB policy, biobanking ethics, community-engaged research ethics, and informed consent. Much of Stephanie's scholarly work aimed to give voice to research participants. Most recently, she was exploring the reasons why people decline participation in research, particularly in cancer genetics/genomics.

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Stephanie exemplified putting theory in practice. This is best evidenced by her work with community partners in Flint, Michigan. Stephanie collaborated with the Flint-based Community Based Organization Partners (CBOP), a network of grassroots community organizations that advocate for and engage in community-based participatory research (CBPR) aimed at addressing health disparities in their community, to evaluate, in partnership with them, their Community Ethics Research Board (CERB). Bryan Spencer, her community partner and co-author in this work, stated, "I developed a deep respect for her commitment to maintaining integrity in her work, and how she interspersed it with humor and candid assessments of realities faced. It was a unique pleasure to have experienced what she brought into this world and be a small part of the expansive tapestry that she has constructed."

In August 2024, Stephanie joined the faculty of the Alden March Bioethics Institute (AMBI) at Albany Medical College as an associate professor and associate Director of Graduate Studies in Bioethics. She quickly made a mark at AMBI by joining the IRB and undertaking revisions of the graduate curriculum in bioethics. With great enthusiasm, Stephanie expanded the course offerings in research ethics and worked on redesigning the requirements for the doctoral thesis projects. She reinvigorated the students' interest in research ethics and assumed the role of thesis advisor for several doctoral students. During her short time at AMBI, Stephanie became an integral part of the department.

Stephanie was a valued member of the American Society of Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH) and Public Responsibility in Medicine & Research (PRIM&R) communities, frequently speaking and serving on committees. She also served on the editorial board of *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* as well as *Ethics & Human Research.*

She will be remembered for her academic rigor, generosity, kindness and humor. Emily Anderson, who frequently collaborated with Stephanie on publications and panels addressing the ethics of community-engaged research, said, "When we wrote together, Stephanie was never afraid to make bold claims. When we presented together, I always let her take the hard questions." Erica Salter, who worked alongside Stephanie in SLU's Department of Health Care Ethics for 14 years, remembers her as one of the most rigorous and clear thinkers in the department, never afraid to speak her mind, question an assumption or call out an injustice. "In her confidence and self-assurance, she taught me to trust myself and be braver and bolder in my own work." Jessica Mozersky, who co-taught research ethics with Stephanie for 7 years at Washington University, said, "I learned something new from Stephanie every time we taught together. She helped me make connections and see the

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bigger picture which always enriched my thinking. She was also a wonderful friend." Tricia Piechowski, who worked with Stephanie at MICHR and was her close friend and colleague doing community-engaged research, reports that "Stephanie was my compass around ethical dilemmas that arose when engaging community partners in research. I can't imagine my life without her and her guidance." Her former students shared the following words to describe Stephanie and her impact: "an incredible professor and amazing person", "encouraging, inspiring and kindhearted", "an extraordinary mentor…wise and kind", "she helped me to be a better thinker, and modeled a disposition towards herself and others that is worthy of respect and emulation", "I would not be the bioethicist I am today without her influence on my life." and "her legacy will live on in so many ways."

A former student, Andrea Eidsvik, states: "I remember Stephanie's sharp mind and being unafraid to speak it when it mattered. She was an honest person, which is not as simple as it sounds. Her ambition and enthusiasm were contagious. As you know, she impacted many students and was a strong mentor, especially to the young women in the PhD program. I got into my current role in research ethics largely because of Stephanie. Her impact and memory live on in many ways."

Lauren Baker, also a former mentee, remembers Stephanie as a rigorous scholar: "She challenged me to be a better thinker, and I am a better ethicist and scholar because of her. She was so spirited and so very, very funny. She brought such an intensity to her work and life and deeply cared about everyone around her."

Stephanie is survived by her husband Keith, two beloved daughters Elenore (10) and Margot (7), parents Gary and Marilyn Solomon, her brother and sister-in-law Marc and Jessica Solomon, and her grandmother Natalie Barr.

If you would like to donate to a charity in memory of Stephanie, we recommend ALK Positive, an organization dedicated to supporting patients and families with her same cancer diagnosis. Their donation page can be found here: https://secure.qgiv.com/for/alkpositive/.

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