



Dr. Sharon Lee Camp

November 7, 1943 - October 25, 2025

Dr. Sharon Camp, a pioneering advocate for women's reproductive rights and the visionary behind the creation and introduction of Plan B emergency contraception, passed away peacefully on October 25th. She was 81.

Throughout her remarkable life, Dr. Camp dedicated herself to advancing women's health, equality, and empowerment on a global scale. As the founder and former CEO of The Women's Capital Corporation, she led the development and launch of Plan B, ensuring that women everywhere could access safe, effective emergency contraception. Her leadership, determination, and belief in women's autonomy transformed the landscape of reproductive healthcare.

Before her groundbreaking work with Plan B, Dr. Camp served as President and CEO of Population Action International (PAI), where she spent over two decades promoting access to family planning and reproductive health services worldwide. She also later led The Guttmacher Institute, continuing her lifelong mission to ground public policy in science and compassion.

Dr. Camp earned her Ph.D. in international relations from Johns Hopkins University, before beginning her career in advocacy and global development. Her intellect, courage, and moral clarity inspired generations of women's health advocates, researchers, and policymakers.

Beyond her public achievements, Sharon was beloved by family and friends for her warmth, generosity, and sharp wit. Known affectionately as “Aunt Sharon,” she embraced her nieces and nephews as her own, showering them with love, encouragement, and a touch of her trademark sophistication. She will be remembered not only for her trailblazing professional legacy but for the laughter, grace, and strength she brought to every relationship.

Dr. Camp is survived by sister Cindy Lou Hampton (married to Wade Burton Hampton), niece Jamie Lynn Hampton (married to Jeff Gilbert), nephew Wade Burton Hampton II (married to Shelby Watson Hampton) their son Benjamin Wade Hampton, nephew Parker Talcott Hampton (engaged to Maeghan Heyen) their daughter Brynleigh Lou Hampton and countless colleagues and friends around the world who continue to be guided by her example. She is preceded in death by her parents June Marie Camp (Stout) and Albert Talcott Camp, younger sister Nancy Ganskow.

Visitation will be held on December 6th at Raymond’s Funeral Home in La Plata, Maryland from 10-12, with the memorial service from 12:00-1:00pm. Immediately following the services, a celebration of life and legacy will be held in the banquet room of the Holiday Inn in La Plata MD from 1:00-5:00pm. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in her honor to Charles County Humane Society or Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Her life’s work was rooted in one simple but profound belief that women should have the freedom to make choices about their own bodies and futures. Dr. Sharon Camp’s courage and compassion changed millions of lives and will continue to do so for generations to come.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

DEC 6. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Raymond Funeral Service , P.A.
5635 Washington Avenue
La Plata, MD 20646

Memorial Service

DEC 6. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Raymond Funeral Service , P.A.
5635 Washington Avenue
La Plata, MD 20646

Celebration of Life

DEC 6. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Holiday Inn Banquet Hall
6860 Crain Highway
La Plata, MD 20646

Tribute Wall

PC

“ I want to send condolences to Sharon's family. I met some of you when Sharon and I were students together at SAIS in the 1960's. There we both shared a concentration in African studies. Most special however was sharing a 10 month hitchhiking trip around Africa in 1967. We visited about 17 countries meeting many interesting and kind people. Sharon became quite ill with pneumonia and pleurisy when we were literally in Timbuktu. During this time we were in touch with medical personnel who were part of the final conquest of smallpox. Our connection with them enabled us to be a little part of this successful and inspiring world public health campaign.

I am sorry not to have been able to reconnect in recent years. She made wonderful contributions to reproductive health, perhaps having been inspired by our adventures in Africa when we were in our 20s.

Paddy Colligan

Paddy Colligan - February 13 at 07:43 PM

KM

“ With many thanks to Sharon's family for hosting such a loving and moving tribute. It was an honor to be able to join you and share memories of such a remarkable person who helped shame so many lives and careers and adventures of others! Dr. Camp was someone who clearly believed women could and should do BIG things and showed many of us the way. Sincerely, Kirsten Moore

Kirsten Moore - December 08, 2025 at 06:53 PM

SC

“ I am very sad to learn of Sharon’s passing. With her larger-than-life presence and personality, I somehow always thought of her as invincible. My deepest sympathies to her sister and extended family.

Sharon hired me in 1987 at PAI. She took a chance on me as a research analyst and writer, since I had just returned to DC after working with family planning program implementation overseas. She was my direct supervisor and mentor for a number of years, and we worked together on numerous PAI publications. I learned more from her than anyone else I ever worked for, especially about writing and public speaking.

As others have noted, Sharon was a visionary, strategic and inspiring leader, with an unshakable commitment to women’s reproductive health. She used her extraordinary intellect and her writing and public speaking skills to advance the cause in a powerful way. She was also an empathetic and humane mentor who encouraged staff to grow their own skills. She had great integrity and authenticity.

I admired and respected her as a mentor and liked her so much as a human being. My only regret is that we lost touch after we both moved on from PAI. However, Sharon had a lifelong influence on me, and 30 years later I remain indebted to her for everything she taught me.

Taking a moment to be grateful for such an inspiring role model early in my professional life.

The photo below is of Sharon with Catherine Cameron and myself on a work trip to China and Tibet in 1991. We are dressed in traditional Tibetan regalia, while our Tibetan hosts are in western dress!

Shanti Conly
Washington DC



Shanti Conly - December 05, 2025 at 02:18 PM

TC

“ *What an honor and a joy to be Sharon's cousin and to overlap with her professionally. She was the paradigm of a creative and determined problem-solver. Exhibit A: When no existing U.S. pharmaceutical company would bring emergency contraception to market, she founded Women's Capital Corp. Done! But she was also very generous and so much fun. She loved to laugh and was, schedule permitting, always ready for dim sum in NYC's Chinatown with her northern cousins. After she retired, we missed her in NYC, but we knew how much she loved living full-time in Maryland. Whenever we spoke, Sharon mentioned her involvement with Cindy and her entire family. We miss Sharon so very much, but we celebrate her life.*

Talcott Camp - December 04, 2025 at 12:15 PM

PJ

“ *Penny Jones planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Sharon Lee Camp.*

Penny Jones - November 28, 2025 at 11:53 AM

PJ

“ *Penny Jones purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Dr. Sharon Lee Camp.*



Penny Jones - November 28, 2025 at 11:53 AM

BK

“ Remembering how Sharon Camp first blazed into my world:
As a new nurse-midwife in the early 90's, working at a small FWHC ("feminist women's health center," providing full-scope, woman-centered SRH in Seattle), one day the news hit that one woman - and right here in our own city, no less - had just created her own independent, single-product, nonprofit pharmaceutical company, dedicated entirely to the manufacture and distribution of the simplest, safest, most unbelievably-affordable, dedicated postcoital contraceptive... its first such source in the US - well, it blew our collective minds. Brilliant. Desperately-needed. (And un-boycottable!) I had no idea such a thing could ever even have been possible... and yet, here it was. Done. *She* did it. (And sliding-scale, no less!)

Sharon Camp literally changed the world by launching the first (and most- affordable) US postcoital progestin contraceptive; one that would ultimately (via its multinational manufacturer/distributors) save millions of lives; demonstrating, once again, that yes, actually - one woman CAN move mountains.

Sending my deepest sympathies to Sharon's family, and my/all of our gratitude to them, and to everyone who supported her life, and her life's work (and who still continue that work, not shying away from the obstacles, but - like Sharon - finding a way through, over, and/or around them, with intelligence, compassion, and generosity).

100,000 blessings,

Beth Kruse, CNM (ret)
Seattle

PS to all - please forgive me if I may have gotten some facts or details wrong, or left things or people out - this is just my kernel, how I've remembered it.

Beth Kruse - November 26, 2025 at 02:24 AM



“ I will be forever grateful for the ten years I worked with Sharon during her tenure at Guttmacher. Sharon championed communications at a time when it was seen as an afterthought by funders and colleagues, and elevated the work of the small but mighty (at the time) communications team, ensuring that our work was valued and respected. As the primary media contact for the Institute, I spent a lot of time staffing Sharon in media interviews, which could be challenging when she diverged from her talking points (which happened often), but I learned so much from her about humanizing our work, and making sure people were paying attention. For all of her brilliance, determination and leadership within the Institute and across the field, which has been reported in the many articles about her legacy, what I remember most about her is how much she cared. She was a genuinely lovely human being, and she had a sense of humor and playfulness about her which came out in her interactions with staff, board members, funders and colleagues alike. She loved Halloween, and any opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of staff. And she made a point of getting to know every staff member personally, leaving an handwritten birthday card on everyone's desk each year, and taking junior staff out for coffee to get to know them and hear what they had to say. She was a true leader, mentor, and mensch. May her memory be a blessing.



Rebecca Wind - November 25, 2025 at 12:32 PM

CS

“ I remember when I was interviewing for the VP role at Guttmacher Institute in the spring of 2012, I spent over an hour meeting with Sharon, the then President & CEO there. At the end of my interview, she said, “You know what, Dr. Summers? You remind me of a younger version of me. You are fiercely smart and you’re a bad-ass. Don’t let anyone tell you differently. Whether here or elsewhere or both, you’re going to soar and do great things.” I’ve never forgotten that. And she was right. And I like to think her confidence in and mentorship of me played a role in my success and trajectory.

Sharon achieved so many important things that others have talked about far more eloquently than I can (read the *The New York Times* obituary below). She was a force who changed the world, no doubt. What I will remember her most for is her unwavering confidence in and proactive support of women coming up the ladder behind her. She made a difference in my career and she impacted how I lead today. She was a rare gem and I’m grateful to have worked for her, worked with her, and to have been her friend. 💜

Cindy Summers - November 23, 2025 at 01:43 PM

GI

“ Guttmacher Institute purchased the Rose Garden Heart for the family of Dr. Sharon Lee Camp.



Guttmacher Institute - November 19, 2025 at 04:26 PM

JD

“ I truly valued the time I spent working with Sharon Camp during her tenure as CEO of the Guttmacher Institute. Her steady leadership and clear vision guided the organization in meaningful ways, and I admired her ability to bring people together around a shared purpose. One of the highlights of my experience with Sharon was traveling with her to Europe on a work trip to promote Guttmacher’s mission, where her dedication and professionalism shone through and made the journey especially memorable. I feel fortunate to have learned from her example and to have shared those moments both in the office and abroad. --Joerg Dreweke

Joerg Dreweke - November 19, 2025 at 03:01 PM

JW

“ I had the privilege of working with Sharon for eight years and the great fortune of having her as a mentor at the Guttmacher Institute. As a leader and someone in the public eye, Sharon carried herself with immense (and well earned) gravitas. She had an amazing command of technical details, a rare ability to weave together research and policy, and a knack for making highly scientific information digestible, compelling, and actionable. And when she needed to, she could get her point across with force and power (especially when coming up against resistance). Because she had such presence and command externally, I found it especially heartening and endearing that she had a very gentle and open way of interacting with those of us who reported to her. She was never anything but patient with and supportive of me, and she welcomed my ideas and perspectives (no matter how misguided). I know that my experience was far from unique: Sharon had a genuine commitment to building up the next generation of leaders and professionals in our field, and she gave generously of her time to help young people who sought out her advice and wisdom. She was also really fun! She loved to dress up for Halloween, hold court at staff appreciation parties, and enjoy a laugh with colleagues. Once, she brought in a model skeleton that she put in our coat closet, and there it continues to sit—our literal skeleton in the closet—to this day, 12 years after she left the Institute. Seeing that still makes me think of Sharon and smile, and reflecting on her legacy at Guttmacher and the impact she had on me is something I will always treasure. Rest well, my friend. With love, Jonathan Wittenberg (the photo included here is from her retirement party in 2013)



Jonathan Wittenberg - November 19, 2025 at 01:31 PM

SC

It is with great sadness that I just learned of Sharon's passing. My sympathies to the Camp family.

Sharon hired me in 1987 at PAI, taking a chance on me as an analyst and writer — I was coming from more programmatic experience overseas.

She was my direct supervisor and mentor for a number of years. I learned more from her than any other person I ever worked for. As others have noted, she was a visionary and inspiring leader, with a rock solid commitment to women's health. She used her extraordinary intellect and amazing writing and public speaking skills to advance this cause in a powerful way. She was also an empathetic and humane mentor who encouraged staff to grow their own skills. She had such great integrity and authenticity.

I admired and respected her as a mentor and liked her so much as a human being. I regret that we lost touch after we both moved on from PAI, but she had a lifelong influence on me.

Taking a moment to be grateful I had such an inspiring role model in my professional life.

Shanti Conly - November 20, 2025 at 09:34 AM

GS

“ *I was at Gutmacher for most of Sharon's tenure as CEO. I traveled with her to Indonesia, sat in on donor calls, and watched her navigate challenging conversations with ease. She always had command of the situation. And in the hallways of the Institute, she was friendly and willing to get personal. She showed me what leadership can look like when authority and authenticity aren't at odds. - Gilda Sedgh*

Gilda Sedgh - November 19, 2025 at 01:22 PM

BC

“ I knew Sharon from her earliest days at PAI, the go to person in Washington on anything related to population policy and foreign aid. I consulted with her later around 1990 about what could be done to advance abortion policy in the US and globally. Then I joined USAID during the lead-up to ICPD, where she was a major player. We connected again when I was at Ipas and she was at Guttmacher. We travelled together in Europe to raise funds for abortion research and a conference in Addis Ababa on which we collaborated with other organizations and researchers from Africa to develop an abortion research agenda for the region. She was a strategic and capable leader and thinker, and I am proud to have known her.
Barbara Crane, New Rochelle, New York



Barbara Crane - November 13, 2025 at 09:55 PM

BC

The photo was from an ICPD reunion event in Washington in 2014. What a golden era in retrospect!

Barbara Crane - November 13, 2025 at 09:59 PM

CK

So true, Barbara.

I'm so glad to have worked with Sharon. She was my first client in Washington and she was one of the best students I've ever coached in 30 years of consulting.

What a mind! And the help she gave to women worldwide. Immeasurable.

Carol Ann Kell - November 18, 2025 at 04:59 PM

JW

Loved reading your reflections, Barbara, and it's so nice to see how you two intersected at various points in your storied careers. The work we did on unsafe abortion under Sharon's leadership--together with Ipas and our wonderful partners in Africa--left a huge mark that continues to pay dividends today.

Jonathan Wittenberg - November 19, 2025 at 01:35 PM