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## **Sharon Mulford Heads Hospice of The Gorge as Board Launches Regional Search**

*May 14, 2007 - Hood River, Ore.* - Hospice of The Gorge announced that effective May 8, Deborah Whiting Jaques relinquished her duties as executive director. Sharon Mulford, R.N., B.S.N., J.D., will act as interim director as the board forms a search committee. Mulford served as the organization's executive director from 2000 until her retirement in 2003. The board plans to launch a regional search and expects to hire a new director as soon as possible.

The board of Hospice of The Gorge is confident that Mulford can lead the agency through this transition period. "The staff of Hospice of The Gorge will continue to provide excellent care for its patients and their families," says Mooreen Morris, board chair. "Sharon is an experienced administrator and will have no problem overseeing operations until a director is hired."

Mulford is happy to suspend her retirement. "I left Hospice of The Gorge to travel with my husband," she says. "But Hospice has never left my heart."

The illness and deaths of Jaques's father-in-law, Robert "Ky" Jaques, in October 2006 and of her own father, Kenneth D. Whiting, at the end of April, gave her a more profound understanding of and appreciation for hospice care but took an emotional toll.

"I need a respite from professional demands to focus on personal and family issues," said Jaques in a letter to board and staff.

Jaques led Hospice of The Gorge through an important phase in the nonprofit's history, overseeing the construction of the Hospice Center on the Heights in Hood River as well as its adjoining Memory Garden (both projects funded by community donations and grants, apart from Hospice operational funding), improving quality issues like policy and procedures development, and promoting Hospice's role as a community partner through outreach activities. Jaques was recently elected president-elect of the Oregon Hospice Association and plans to continue her service on that board.

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**Hospice of The Gorge** is a nonprofit, Medicare-certified public-benefit agency that since 1981 has provided comprehensive and compassionate care to those who face life-limiting illness and to their families. From offices in Hood River and The Dalles, Hospice of The Gorge serves seven counties: Skamania and Klickitat in Washington, and Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam and Morrow in Oregon. Hospice of The Gorge receives support from the United Way. Please visit the website for more information: [www.hospiceofthegorge.org](http://www.hospiceofthegorge.org).

Photo: Sharon Mulford