

Debra Parker Oliver, PhD, MSW

Bio

Debra Parker Oliver is the Paul Revere Family Professor of Family Medicine in the School of Medicine, at the University of Missouri. She has a Masters of Social Work and PhD from the University of Missouri. She was a hospice social worker and administrator in three hospice programs for a total of more than 20 years, including the founding Director of Hands of Hope Hospice in St Joseph Missouri. After getting her doctorate in 2000 she continued her commitment to the improvement of hospice care through research. She has over 160 peer -reviewed articles and several book chapters related to palliative and hospice care. She is an active researcher funded by the National Institute on Aging, The National Cancer Institute, and the National Institute of Nursing Research for intervention studies designed to improve the hospice caregiving experience.

Despite her professional experience and expertise, Debbie found herself ill prepared in when she became a caregiver for her husband who was diagnosed with Stage IV terminal cancer. In an effort to teach and advocate for those facing cancer and terminal illness she and her husband created a blog to share their journey with others. They received the Project Death in America Community Education Award from American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine care two weeks before David passed away. Debbie now continues the journey through grief and bereavement, continuing her commitment to share her journey. She has recently published a memoir on her experience, "Legacies From the Living Room: A Love-Grief Equation".