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Jeff Patterson, DO, Madison physician and professor was an indefatigable champion serving Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) Wisconsin and will be sorely missed by all who knew and worked with him. Jeff passed away on Thursday night, January 23, of a heart attack.

Dr. Patterson first work with PSR was to establish the Madison PSR chapter. With two other founding members and students at the UW medical school, they challenged the concept of a “winnable nuclear war.” Hundreds of people joined to formalize the Madison PSR chapter in 1983. Jeff remained very active in the chapter throughout three decades, and particularly enjoyed providing direction to interested medical students and nurturing their understanding of humanitarian ethics and activism.

Dr. Patterson served in every capacity at PSR, from decades on the PSR’s board of trustees to terms as the president in 2010 and 2013. He served as International Councilor with the US affiliate of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize. He traveled extensively in the former USSR, visiting Chernobyl and sites of nuclear testing and nuclear weapons' production. He lectured about the effects of nuclear weapons and radiation there, in Europe, and in the US. He was also interested in non-violent alternatives to war as means of preventing war and sustainable methods of ameliorating climate change. He provided pivotal guidance to staff and educated the public on the threats from nuclear power, especially after the disaster in Fukushima.

“Jeff was so committed to our collective struggle to protect our world for our children and grandchildren,” added Dr. Bob Gould, current president of PSR. Jeff exuded compassion. He cared for human life and committed himself to the relief of suffering; it motivated all his work. Jeff was a gentle soul with a powerful spirit and always a calming influence in difficult times.

While Jeff regularly served as an expert speaker, he approached this task from stories of human health and as a witness to those suffering. He had a gift for sharing the stories of people impacted by radiation exposure, from poor, elderly farmers in the abandoned land around Chernobyl and concerned mothers downwind of Fukushima to veterans exposed to radiation in the line of duty. All stories from his own experience as a doctor and activist and from first-hand conversations with the people affected.

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In addition to his extensive service with PSR, Dr. Patterson was the medical director of the Hackett Hemwall Foundation (HHF), a charitable foundation doing charitable medical work in Honduras, Mexico, and the Philippines. Through the foundation and with the help of many dedicated volunteers, he taught physicians from over 20 countries the procedures of prolotherapy to treat chronic pain. He practiced medicine and was the former director of the Northeast Family Medical Center in and a Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Wisconsin.

Jeff listened carefully and attentively; he had a huge capacity for kindness and was a nurturing physician and colleague. His internal compass pointed others to just acts and a world without suffering. He served his patients and the international peace community well and we are grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from him. We will miss but always remember his deep, reasonable voice and wise counsel.

Jeff is survived by daughter Becca and grandchild, Kira, and Mary Doherty, his loving partner of many years.