

There is so much we can offer our communities if we have the time and choose to get involved. It doesn't have to be medically related or large in scope. Like many experiences throughout my medical career, I have found putting this program together and taking seniors out for rides to be incredibly humbling, gratifying, and heartwarming. Our volunteers routinely say this too, that it is even better than they imagined.

A bit of kindness goes a long way. The experience we give in providing trishaw rides to our elderly passengers we get back in spades with the stories and laughter we hear and the smiles we see. Life doesn't end at 80. Our elderly are important. Someday we will hopefully be there too.

Cycling Without Age's motto is "The right to wind in your hair." There is a lot of truth to this!

To find out more about the program, visit <https://cyclingwithoutage.ca>. To get in touch with the Vernon chapter, email cyclingwithoutage.vernon.bc@gmail.com.



BC Medical Journal
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The BC Medical Journal provides continuing medical education through scientific research, review articles, and updates on contemporary clinical practice. #MedEd

BCMJ New self-screening program to detect #CervicalCancer. A BC-wide cervix self-screening program will be available starting 29 January 2024, including a first-in-Canada option to screen at home.

Read the article: bcmj.org/news/new-self-screening-program-detect-cervical-cancer



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Dr Mary Conley

The inspiring life of an incredible doctor, artist, author, volunteer, and teacher.

Konia Trouton, MD, CCFP, MPH, FCFP

Dr Mary Conley received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of New Brunswick on 17 May 2023. This is an incredible honor for an incredible woman. Dr Conley also holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of New Brunswick (1966) and a Doctor of Medicine from the University of British Columbia (1975). She attended the Honolulu Academy of the Arts and the Vancouver School of Art between degrees, achieving excellence in both. Devoting herself to both art and science has been her joy, one she shares through teaching.

Dr Conley began her medical career a few years after decriminalization of contraception and abortion in Canada in 1969.

Dr Trouton is a clinical professor in the Department of Family Practice at the University of British Columbia and a clinical associate at Women's College Hospital in Toronto. She completed her medical training at Queen's University and her residency in Calgary, and she holds a Master of Public Health from Harvard. She co-founded the Vancouver Island Women's Clinic in 2003. In addition to reproductive health care, she participates in many research and teaching initiatives. In 2016, she added MAID to her practice and co-founded the Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers, currently serving as its president.

This article has been peer reviewed.

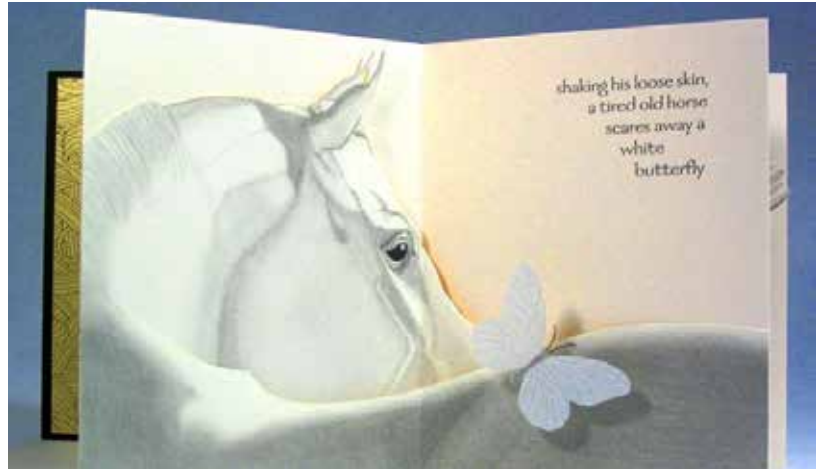
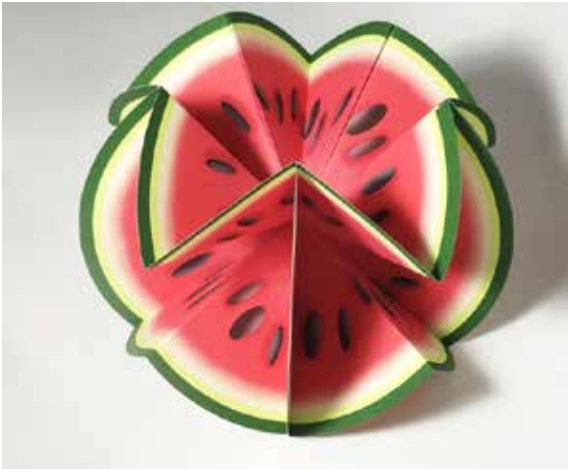


Dr Mary Conley.

When she began practice, she was motivated to work in these fields; at that time, women still needed to make their case to terminate a pregnancy to a three-physician hospital-based committee, waiting on their consensus before proceeding with an abortion. Dr Conley opted to step forward and train to do the procedure and sought training with Dr Henry Morgentaler in Montreal in 1980, the first doctor outside of Quebec to do so. Both are family doctors, as are most of the physicians who provide abortion services in Canada. Dr Morgentaler, along with two other family physicians, challenged the Supreme Court and won, establishing today's reality that a decision about ending a pregnancy is made between the patient and their physician. Dr Conley worked through this transition, providing care in the operating rooms of Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria until her retirement.

With a passion to ensure that women could decide if and when to have children, Dr Conley worked tirelessly, and under extreme personal risk to her life, to ensure access to safe abortion services was available on Vancouver Island. She was threatened, bullied, harassed, and picketed but still managed to shine through with her positive attitude, kind words, and careful procedures. When Dr Gary Romalis was shot for providing abortions in Vancouver

PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT



in 1994, all the family physicians who provided abortion services on Vancouver Island were threatened, and most quit. Dr Conley carried on. In 1996, she won a Victoria YWCA Women of Distinction Award for Health for volunteer service to the community. In 2008, Dr Conley was profiled in Dr Eileen Nason Cambon's book *Uppity Women We Are: 100-Year History of Medical Women in British Columbia (1893–1993)*. As a summative award for her years of work, she received the 2011 Reproductive Health Award from the Federation of Medical Women of Canada.

Her career in art is no less remarkable. In 2003, she won first prize in the International Realism Show on Granville Island and since then has won major awards at the Sidney Fine Art Show. As a dedicated author, she has written six books, illustrating two of them. *The Artistry of Art Deco*, an illustrated selection of buildings in Greater Victoria, won the 2020 Hallmark Heritage Award. Other paintings, sculpture, calligraphy, and paper art have qualified for other awards and accolades and have been the subjects of numerous exhibits and media stories. She exhibits a whimsical view of the world, with a love for color and nature, and captures happiness in every medium she touches.

Once she developed her excellence in care and technique, Dr Conley taught and encouraged others. In 1998, she was voted as a leader by her peers at the University of British Columbia for her influence in the



A selection of Dr Mary Conley's works of art.

field of education. Teaching has always been one of her passions, and she has taught interns about contraception and given lectures about women's health at Camosun College, the University of Victoria, and various community centres. At the University of New Brunswick, her alma mater, she established the Dr Mary Conley Scholarship, awarded annually to a student entering the Bachelor of Science in Environment and Natural Resources program. Today, she teaches international groups via Zoom, focusing on pop-up books and book binding, a rare skill. Her most recent exhibitions were in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, in May and

June 2023. Her works are also featured on her Facebook page, Mary Conley Artist, as well as on her website, www.artworksbymaryconley.com.

Dr Conley is an inspiration, balancing art and science and sharing her enthusiasm and zest for life. Her focus is clear and her achievements exemplary. It is no wonder that the University of New Brunswick decided to confer a Doctor of Science on her in 2023. ■