

## Tribute to Terry Reed, 1940 - 2021



In 1961, Terry Reed qualified as a physiotherapist at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington. Her many voluntary activities included working: for the National Childbirth Trust, as a Samaritan (for 18 years) and as a magistrate (for 22 years). Terry also obtained a first-class honours degree in history at the Open University.

In 1989 Terry learned that her third child, Neil, was experiencing gender dysphoria and intended to undergo transition to live as Niki. Terry supported Niki, as her daughter, at every stage and tried to ensure that everyone else did too. However, at work, the other employees bullied Niki viciously and refused to help her with the required heavy lifting.

Consequently, Niki suffered a series of injuries that prevented her from working. The employer fired her and claimed she was not protected by the law.

Terry and her husband, Bernard, then embarked on a ground breaking legal battle to obtain justice, which Niki finally won in 1997. Niki's terrible experience inspired them to try saving others from the same persecution. They worked with a group of transgender activists to establish the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIREs).

Terry applied her artistic, scientific and literary skills to preparing excellent material for the GIREs website and its training courses. Each year, she delivered 50 training sessions and presentations in the UK and overseas, always alongside gender diverse people.

Although Terry was a loving, sensitive, gentle, kind, clever and funny person, renowned for her warm smile, many see her as one of the fiercest advocates for gender diverse people. Baroness Liz Barker, Chair of the Parliamentary Forum on Gender Identity, of which Terry was a long-standing member, says of her: "almost indestructible", "elegant", "infinite patience", "one of the greatest educators", "endless determination", "formidable", "a loveable, indefatigable terrier" and "unforgettable".

Niki's death in January 2021 was a profound shock. But there still remained much to do to improve the lives of others. Terry, who had breast cancer diagnosed in 2010, hurried to complete another resource for the GIREs website while dealing with the inevitable consequences of stopping chemotherapy, which had been making her very unwell and unable to work.

Although Terry and Bernard were each awarded the OBE and received the International Education Award from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, what pleased Terry most was being quoted on the front cover of the special transgender issue of The Lancet medical journal:

"The only valid route to understanding a person's gender identity is to listen to them. Whatever our scientific understandings, the needs of transgender people should be met on the basis of universally recognised human rights."

Written by Bernard Reed OBE

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