



# Humanitarian Award

Stephen Alderman, MD '65

Stephen Alderman, MD '65, along with his wife Elizabeth, has made a major impact on mental health care in post-conflict countries. In 2002, the Aldermans founded the Peter C. Alderman Foundation (PCAF) in memory of their son, Peter, who was killed at age 25 at the World Trade Center on 9/11. Their goal was to bring mental health treatment to victims of terrorism and mass violence in countries around the world.

In the nearly 20 years since, PCAF has trained hundreds of medical doctors and psychologists in 22 countries to diagnose and treat trauma victims. They in turn have trained several thousand mental health professionals. Partnering with national and local governments, the foundation launched nine mental health clinics in Burundi, Cambodia, Kenya, Liberia, and Uganda, providing staff training and support in exchange for clinic space and consumable supplies. In each country,



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caregivers were indigenous professionals trained to deliver evidence-based treatment adapted to cultural norms. The foundation has also provided training for caregivers in places where ongoing conflict made it impossible to establish programs. Employing a train-the trainer model enhanced by continuing supervision, PCAF built capacity in 22 post-conflict countries on five continents.

In addition, the foundation published a journal, *The African Journal of Traumatic Stress*; and produced evidence-based findings on global mental health published in peer-reviewed literature, including *The Lancet*.

The impact has been profound. By creating on-site mental healthcare systems in areas where unspeakable violence has desecrated communities, PCAF has helped to rebuild those communities by restoring normal function to war-affected populations through the development of individual resilience.



Participants at a Pan-African Trauma Conference held in Nairobi.



**Elizabeth and Stephen Alderman, MD '65, Humanitarian Award winner**

"Clinical medicine has to be done patient by patient and family by family," says Dr. Alderman, whose efforts have been recognized with the 2009 Purpose Prize from AARP and the 2011 Presidential Citizens Medal, awarded by President Barack Obama. "But if you keep doing it, and doing it, and doing it, you can bring back a community. What you're doing is reinstating social capital by replacing feelings of hate and revenge in war-affected people with trust for each other and their institutions."

In 2018, PCAF merged with HealthRight International, a health and human rights organization based at the New York University School of Public Health. Both Aldermans are board members of the organization.

Before retiring from medicine in 2002, Alderman had a 30-year

career as a radiation oncologist. He completed his residency training at University of California, San Diego, then relocated to New York City. During his career, Alderman served as chair of radiation oncology at Roosevelt-St. Luke's Hospital and assistant clinical professor at Columbia University; followed by chair of radiation oncology at Catholic Medical Center and associate professor at New York University. He also had a private practice in White Plains and served as chair at White Plains Hospital.

Alderman says he and Liz created the foundation to leave a mark that Peter had existed, that the world would be a better place because he had lived. "This was a way for me to think about Pete every day," he says.



**The Aldermans received the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Obama in 2011.**