

In Memoriam: Mary C. Kasch, OTR, CHT, FAOTA, 1947–2012



**Mary C. Kasch, OTR, CHT, FAOTA,
1947–2012**
**Beloved colleague, mentor, and
friend**

Mary C. Kasch was born on February 15, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois. She attended the University of Illinois for two years and then graduated from Tufts University Boston School of Occupational Therapy in 1969. Early in her career, Mary had a passion for treating patients with upper extremity injuries and sought people with similar interests that resulted in her attending a meeting where the six founders

met, and the rest began hand therapy history.

Professionally, Mary was a visionary. No matter what the professional group or organization, Mary saw needs and went about the business of finding solutions. Mary was always thinking, "What should we do next." The remarkable growth of hand therapy as a developing specialty and the development of a certification program were fueled by Mary's vision. Mary believed that the individual attainment of goals is a personal measure of success and that each of us contributes to the whole when we share the same vision. She challenged and mentored many therapists to be active in their profession and shared that vision. The American Society of Hand Therapists (ASHT) and Hand Therapy Certification Committee (HTCC) consisted of individuals who were considered trailblazers during a unique period of history in hand therapy, and Mary's passion and dedication made her a natural leader. Mary served as a cofounder of ASHT and was the President in 1984. In 1984, ASHT formed a task force to begin to investigate how to establish a formal certification program. It should be noted that eight years of tireless leadership by Mary, alongside the work of the ASHT and HTCC board, were required before the first certification

test was administered in 1991. She was the first President of the Hand Therapy Certification Commission in 1989 and became the Executive Director in 2001 until her passing in 2012.

Mary was a colleague, mentor, and friend to many. She was always willing to listen with a sense of compassion to all she encountered professionally and personally. The celebration of her life will be continued in the legacy she leaves to the hand therapy profession and all those who encountered her creative, generous, and kind spirit. On behalf of Mary, she would in her own way want to thank all of you for continuing to cherish the blending of our two professions of occupational therapy/physical therapy and for the sharing of knowledge, which leads to a greater number of therapeutic options and evidence-based outcomes. Mary was always reminding us all to never miss an opportunity to question, learn something, find a new way, a better method, engage with others, share, and live a life you enjoy. She lived a remarkable life of dedication and passion for her family, profession, and friends. We salute you Mary!

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