

# Carmen Cruise

## A Force for Patients and Her Union

**Carmen Cruise, registered nurse and dedicated patient advocate, passed away May 11<sup>th</sup> following a brave fight with cancer.** A strong union leader, Carmen spent 27 years caring for patients at Kern Medical Center (KMC), and was recently elected to be the first president of SEIU Local 521.



**Carmen was active for two decades in SEIU**, served on the steering committee of the SEIU Nurse Alliance of California, and went on frequent lobbying trips to Sacramento. Carmen imparted her strength to everyone she worked with. *"I always felt so strong and empowered when we worked together on things. It was just so awesome to walk the halls with her... we really turned people's heads... and we had so much fun!"* said Carmen Morales, a SEIU 521 board member who worked with Carmen at KMC. *"People just warmed up to her no nonsense 'can do' spirit."*



At Kern Medical Center, Carmen spent the last few years in case management. She assessed patients and managed every aspect of care for trauma patients at the hospital. **She was known for caring for the health not only of patients, but of colleagues and neighbors.**

Carmen was born in East St. Louis, Illinois. **At 21 she received a degree in electrical engineering**, and worked for a short time in that profession in Alabama. She eventually left the field and moved, due to the sexism and racism she encountered.

As her health declined earlier this year, Carmen was cared for by many of the nurses and health professionals she trained, along with the many friends she made over the years in Bakersfield. **Carmen Cruise will be remembered as a tireless and dedicated fighter for the rights of her patients and her fellow workers.**

**“With members leading the process, we developed democratic bylaws to govern our Union. We have stated our purpose and set our goals. We are in motion. My name is Carmen Cruise and I am asking to be your President.”**

*-Carmen Cruise’s candidate statement, issued during her successful campaign to be the president of Local 521.*

# We’ll Always Remember You, Carmen!