

## The “Last Hurrah”



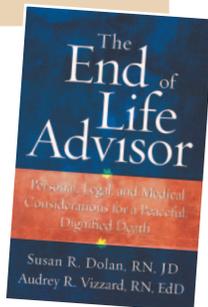
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Barbara Dossey, PhD,  
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Susan R. Dolan RN, JD brings twenty years of hospice experience to her work as a healthcare consultant, advocate and advisor on end-of-life care. A registered nurse and attorney, Susan is coauthor of the 2009 award winning book, *The End-of-Life Advisor: Personal, Legal and Medical Considerations for a Peaceful, Dignified Death*. Susan appears in the critically acclaimed film *Consider the Conversation: a documentary on a taboo subject*.

In addition to helping private clients, healthcare professionals and care facilities, Susan speaks for groups and large fund raising events and publishes a popular blog at Huffington Post.

The Last Hurrah is a final surge of vitality that appears to come from nowhere and briefly energizes a dying person. People may get out of bed, ask for food and drink, converse with friends and family when they had been barely responsive. They may even consume a large meal that Hospice calls “The Last Supper.”

No one knows exactly why some patients enjoy a Last Hurrah. One explanation is that a final burst of energy provides a brief respite, like a long-distance runner who somehow summons the power for a final dash across the finish line. Families often consider this phenomenon a miracle. Hospice professionals think of it more as a final gift, a last opportunity to connect and say “I love you.”

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