

SPOTLIGHT ON ORNAC MEMBERS

AN INTERVIEW WITH PATRICIA POCOCK RN, DIPL.NSG. ED., BSN.

Submitted by: Heather Dow, ORNAC Executive Director.

Patricia Pocock is a health care leader with experience in perioperative and surgical services system alignment and program planning. She is a graduate of the University of Windsor and a registered nurse. She has worked in many capacities at St. Joseph's Health Care, London, ON, including leadership of the operating room, post-anaesthetic care unit, intensive care unit, respiratory therapy and lithotripsy program. Prior to retirement from St. Joseph's, in 2005, she held the position of Director, perioperative services, urology clinic, and central processing. She was then involved in Perioperative Consulting for eleven years, including acting as Senior Consultant for the Surgical Efficiency Targets Program with the Ministry of Health, and then officially retired in June of 2017.

Pat is a founding member, and past Co-Chair, of the Canadian Operating Room Leaders Network, Past-President of the Lung Association of Ontario, a founding member, Past-President and former Treasurer of the London and District Operating Room Nurses Association, and a past Board Member of the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada. She was awarded the Excellence in Nursing, Leadership, Coaching and Mentorship Award from St. Joseph's in 2003 and was a 1992 Sisters of St. Joseph Award for Excellence recipient. She is married to Rev. Bruce Pocock and has two sons and five very active grandchildren.



Patricia Pocock
RN, Dipl. Nsg. Ed., BSN.

How long have you worked in the OR and what is your current role?

I have worked in, and with, the OR for 57 years in various capacities. Those included Staff Nurse, Charge Nurse, Head Nurse, Teacher, Patient Care Coordinator, Burn Nurse Specialist, and as a Manager, Supervisor, and Director of Surgery. My final leadership position was as the Director of Perioperative Services, Urology Clinics, Lithotripsy Program, and Central Processing, at St. Joseph's in London, before moving on to work as a consultant. As Senior Consultant for the implementation of the Surgical Efficiency Targets Program in Ontario, I had the opportunity to visit all the Hospitals involved in the Surgical Wait Time Project, across the Province. This was a great teaching and learning opportunity. I was also involved in Medical Legal patient reviews and consultations of other hospitals surgical programs across Canada.

What was it about perioperative nursing that attracted you?

I spent many shifts in the Operating Room as a student and I loved the patient contact and the role of patient advocate. I was fascinated by the technology and techniques used in surgery to aid in the healing of patients. The constant advancements, successes, continuous learning, and the urgent and emergent nature of the environment also lured me in the direction of the OR.

How has your role changed over the years?

Over the years I have been offered many opportunities that supported my role in the position of Clinical Project Coordinator with ORBCoN (a provincially funded organization).

SPOTLIGHT ON ORNAC MEMBERS (CONT.)

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What value do RNs bring to the leadership of OR teams?

It has changed significantly. In what I can only describe as ‘leaps and bounds.’ Technology has had a major impact on our profession and practice.

What value do RNs bring to the leadership of OR teams?

My passion for nursing in the Operating Room has always been that leadership is demonstrated by a nurse who fulfills his or her accountability for the role. RNs have the skill, ability, and the heart to influence the level of care given to patients and to make a real difference in outcomes. Every RN who works in the Operating Room has the potential to be a leader. The OR operates under a shared leadership with an emphasis on the principles of accountability, partnerships, and ownership and equity. The people in administrative leadership roles are accountable for the context and the people in staff roles are accountable for the content, while decisions are made by those who do the work at the point of care or service.

What continuing education has supported your journey?

I believe in the importance of education and that learning is a continuous journey. I have attended both the University of Windsor, in Windsor, ON, and Huron University College, in London, ON, to study courses for the

baccalaureate. I developed an interest in burn care while working in the Operating Room and so I completed my Burn Nurse Specialist Certificate, at the University of Michigan, and then set up a Burn Unit in Windsor, ON. I have attended annual workshops on leadership including the Achieve Leadership Programs, Leadership Effectiveness Training, Crucial Conversations, and Crucial Accountability.

Who do you consider a key mentor and how did s/he influence you as a leader?

All of my colleagues have had an influence on my career – including students, professors, and work colleagues. I greatly admired Isabelle Adams and Victoire Odette from Quebec. Muriel Shewchuk, from Alberta, and I were mentors to each other through early consultation work we did together and through the development of CORL. Dr. Tim Porter-O’Grady influenced my views on shared leadership. Dr. Susan Kleinbeck taught me the value of research in perioperative nursing. Mentorship is a two-way street and I do hope that I have also been a mentor, for people I have come in to contact with, over the course of my career.

Tell us about your involvement with ORNAC.

I had the opportunity to attend the early Quebec Conferences and the inaugural ORNAC Meeting in Jasper, AB. I also held leadership roles in the London and District OR Nurses Association. Muriel Shewchuk and I began talking, in 1998, about starting a network for leaders across Canada. We saw a need for leadership development, mentorship, and knowledge sharing. We were joined by Valerie Zellermeier, who became our

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Treasurer, and the first Canadian Operating Room Leadership (CORL) Network conference was held in Halifax, in conjunction with ORNAC's Conference, in 1999. It was essential that we be connected to ORNAC for strength and support. Eventually a seat was created for CORL on the Board of ORNAC. Muriel and I have both had an opportunity to be a Board Director for this seat. I have also had the opportunity to work on the creation and completion of the Letters of Continuance and the new by-laws for ORNAC, and to Chair the Nominations Committee. Following my tenure on the ORNAC Board I continued in the role as Pillar Co-Chair for Governance under the Advocacy Pillar.

What was your motivation to join the ORNAC Leadership?

Being on the ORNAC Board, for several years, has allowed me to bring leadership skills to the national organization as an active Board member in a decision making/voting capacity. I felt that being involved with ORNAC would allow me to help create a strong organization that could collaborate and advocate for excellence in the perioperative environment. I also felt that I could promote the role of leadership and strengthen the role of CORL. A new Strategic Plan was initiated while I was on the ORNAC Board and I Co-Chaired the Advocacy Pillar, Governance Component. At this time the new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act was proclaimed and I worked with the Executive Director and ORNAC's lawyer to develop Letters of Continuance and new by-

laws. I was able to utilize the knowledge I had obtained, specifically in governance, as a Hospital Board Member and to apply this knowledge to my role with ORNAC.

What future do you see for Perioperative RN leaders?

A very bright future awaits any Perioperative Registered Nurse that is interested in taking on further leadership development. There is a need to embrace shared leadership, demonstrate accountability at the point of care or service, contribute to excellence in care, and always serve with enthusiasm and engagement in the journey. It is, of course, also very important to love what they are doing and to seize every opportunity to develop, motivate, and empower themselves and others.

Any last words of wisdom?

Perioperative Nurses are the strength that will create the future of our profession. We do so by consistently advocating for the patient, ensuring excellence in care and practice, being competent and safe in our practices, and above all mentoring and leading their colleagues. ✨

