

SPOTLIGHT ON ORNAC MEMBERS

AN INTERVIEW WITH LEONOR DE BIASIO RN, BSCN, CPN(C)

Submitted by: Heather Dow, ORNAC Executive Director.

Leonor De Biasio completed her Nursing Diploma Program at Humber College in 1995. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing in 2005, from Ryerson University, and in the same year successfully obtained CNA Certification in the perioperative specialty. Leonor completed the Operating Room Post-Graduate Nursing Program, at George Brown College, in 1996. She is currently pursuing her Master of Education specializing in Educational Leadership.

Leonor has worked as a perioperative nurse at SickKids, in Toronto, since 2002. She has worked in various facilities ranging from small community hospitals, to large teaching hospitals and trauma centres across the United States. Leonor has maintained the position of Nurse Lab Specialist for the Operating Room Post-Graduate Nursing program, at George Brown College, since 2005. Since 2013 she has been in a part-time role as the Clinical Project Coordinator / Transfusion Safety Nurse for the Ontario Regional Blood Coordinating Network (ORBCoN).



Leonor De Biasio RN, BScN, CPN(C)

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

My perioperative nursing career started over twenty years ago. When I graduated from the Operating Room Nurse Post-Graduate Nursing Program, in 1996, full time OR Nursing jobs were scarce and Virginia Warren, the professor of that program, suggested I take the opportunity to be a travelling nurse. I took her advice and began my career as an OR travelling nurse. I started my adventure in the southwestern US in the small town of Las Cruces, New Mexico, where I worked for two years. After various travelling nursing positions, across the southwestern US, I eventually travelled my way up to the western and eastern coasts of the US and, after 6 years as a travelling nurse, I found my way back to Canada to work as a full-time nurse at SickKids in Toronto. After 12 years I transitioned, in 2013, to a casual perioperative nursing position.

What was it about perioperative nursing that attracted you?

Since I was a pre-schooler I have always wanted to be a nurse. I would take my toy stethoscope and medical bag and pretend my parents, and every visitor that walked into the house, was my patient. It was not until High School that I discovered my fascination with the human anatomy and the pathology of diseases. While in nursing school I discovered that being in the OR was the only place I wanted to be. I was captivated by the collaborative approach of the multidisciplinary team caring for the surgical patient and I was attracted to an environment where I would work under pressure during emergent and trauma situations.

How has your role changed over the years?

Over the years I have been offered many opportunities that supported my professional growth as a nurse. My time as a travelling nurse helped me appreciate and understand the many ways medicine is practiced throughout North America. I was, because of my extensive experience in various institutions and environments, given the opportunity to be a clinical lab instructor (later changed to Nursing Lab Specialist) at George Brown College for the perioperative nursing program. I still enjoy being in this role eleven years later. SickKids supports and values the knowledge and expertise that nurses bring to health

Since I was a pre-schooler I have always wanted to be a nurse.

SPOTLIGHT ON ORNAC MEMBERS (CONT.)

AN INTERVIEW WITH LEONOR DE BIASIO RN, BSCN, CPN(C)

care and also offers many opportunities for nurses to be a part of international work. SickKids provided me with the opportunity to travel and be a project lead and subject matter expert for a project in Doha, Qatar, that involved developing an organizational nursing leadership model as well as being involved in a needs assessment for developing a nursing curriculum. With all the opportunities I have had as an OR nurse I have been able to expand my role to include holding the position of Clinical Project Coordinator with ORBCoN (a provincially funded organization).

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

Before answering the question I would like to quote Dr. Lance Secreton (1998), “Leadership is not a formula or a program, it is human activity that comes from the heart and considers the hearts of others. It is an attitude, not a routine.”

Leadership teams in the perioperative setting have to make important decisions to create and improve practices. I think perioperative nurses bring a great deal of value to the leadership of OR teams. I feel we have good collaborative relationships with interdisciplinary teams, we make ethical and informed decisions, we are committed, and we are accountable to our nursing practice.

What continuing education has supported your journey? And what made you decide to pursue it?

Perioperative nurses are offered many opportunities for continuing education through RNAO. Through this organization I completed a Project Management Course for health care

When opportunity comes knocking at your door TAKE IT.

professionals. I feel that when one is considering any leadership position it is important to understand and know how to lead a team... and this course offered just that.

There are many leadership positions available for us as perioperative nurses, however, without a graduate degree, positions that one might be interested in may require higher education; therefore, it was necessary for me to pursue my master's degree to have more options available.

Tell us about a key mentor in your career.

The nurse mentor that stands out to me, and has influenced me as a leader, is Janet Anderson. She is the Chief Quality Officer at the College of Nurses of Ontario and was one of the professors I had at Ryerson University. There was a time in my career when I wanted to be proactive in the nursing community but did not, however, have the confidence in myself or my leadership abilities. Janet Anderson was supportive, made every effort to assist me in any way, and introduced me to the, now deceased, Dr. Joan Lesmond who was an inspiring and well-respected nurse leader. I will never forget the impact both women had on my career as a nurse.

Tell us about your involvement with ORNAC.

ORNAC is great for networking and education for perioperative nurses nationwide. I am grateful to this

organization to have been able to meet and learn from many leaders in the perioperative nursing. ORNAC has provided me with the opportunity to share my knowledge and expertise through presentations and recently, the ORNAC Journal featured an article I authored on blood safety. Preparing that article for publication was quite an educational experience.

What future do you see for Perioperative RN leaders?

I see many leadership opportunities for perioperative nurses. I would like to see more of us leading in research. Healthcare professionals are constantly searching for new and innovative ideas to provide optimum care. Perioperative nurses becoming leaders in research will help strengthen our profession.

I also believe that perioperative nurses can contribute to our profession by being in leadership roles within education. It not only strengthens their leadership capabilities but it also helps create future leaders.

Any last words of wisdom?

When opportunity comes knocking at your door TAKE IT. Do not be afraid to try something new as you never know where it will lead you. 🍁

