

SPOTLIGHT ON ORNAC MEMBERS

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARLENE SKUCAS RN, CPN(C)

Submitted by: Heather Dow, ORNAC Executive Director.

Marlene Skucas has worked in the OR since 1981 and is currently the Patient Care Coordinator (PCC) for perioperative services at East Kootenay Regional Hospital in Cranbrook British Columbia. She has been an ORNAC member since 1981. She graduated from nursing from the Galt School of Nursing, in Lethbridge, AB, in 1976 and initially pursued her career in a small-town hospital in Rocky Mountain House, AB, doing general duty nursing for 2 years. Then she continued nursing on a surgical ward at Burnaby General Hospital in Burnaby, BC. In 1979 she moved to Cranbrook and continued working in various areas of the hospital casual until a general duty position on a medical ward came available and worked there until 1981 when she joined the OR team as an OR nurse. She was President of PRNABC from 2014 to 2016 and the Marketing Pillar Chair for ORNAC from 2013 to 2017. She was the Director on the ORNAC Board, representing British Columbia, from 2013 to 2017. She currently lives in Cranbrook, BC, with her husband and has 3 grown daughters.



Marlene Skucas RN, CPN(C)



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What was it about perioperative nursing that attracted you?

The part of perioperative nursing that attracted me was the caring for patients during one of the most vulnerable times in their life. The trust they put in us, to be their advocates and keep them safe, and the opportunity to see the positive outcomes in people whose lives have changed, or quality of life has improved, because of their procedure makes the OR a very fulfilling place to work.

How has your role in the OR changed over the years?

My role has changed from being a nurse that followed orders handed down by the surgeon to that of a team player. This change in approach has allowed me to be part of a multidisciplinary team that is focused on caring for all aspects of the patient's needs and safety. I have, during my 37 years of OR nursing, moved from

working as a staff nurse to being in charge to being a team leader.

What value do RNs bring to the team leadership?

RNs have the critical thinking that provides great strength and leadership within the OR team. Our scope of practice results in us having a broader view than might be the case for some team members whose job role is more focused on a specific portion of the procedure. We are also in the position to advocate for patient safety and our leadership in this role helps protect our patient.

What continuing education has supported your journey?

Obtaining my CPN(C) certification and attending conferences to hear speakers talk about new procedures and

SPOTLIGHT ON ORNAC MEMBERS (CONT.)

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technology and to visit the exhibit booths and learn from the vendors have helped keep me current and informed. Enrolling in a series of leadership courses offered by my employer has help with problem solving and communication. I also read... books, journals, articles, anything related to my practice and to being a better leader.

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

One of my head nurses saw me taking an in-charge role which she encouraged me to pursue. She was very supportive and offered me every opportunity to take on that role and encouraged me to enroll in a series of leadership courses.

How did you get involved with ORNAC?

As soon as I became a staff nurse in the operating room I was asked to join our provincial perioperative nursing group (PRNABC) at the local level. This role led to another role... and the rest is history. I have now been involved at the local, provincial, and national level for 37 years. Being involved in ORNAC has kept me informed on what is happening across the country in operating rooms and how united we need to be to standardize perioperative nursing. It has also made me aware of how important it is to have the ORNAC Standards as a guide for our practice in order to ensure safe care is provided to every patient, every time, across Canada.

What future do you see for Perioperative RNs interested in developing leadership skills?

Nurses who are willing to put in the effort to take leadership and management courses will find themselves with a range of positons to choose from. I think there is going to be a shortage of perioperative leaders as those eligible for retirement leave the workforce. This is a great opportunity for our younger nurses to thrive and become the leaders the profession will need. It can also really enhance their career opportunities

Any last words of wisdom?

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people with never forget how you made them feel.” - Maya Angelou

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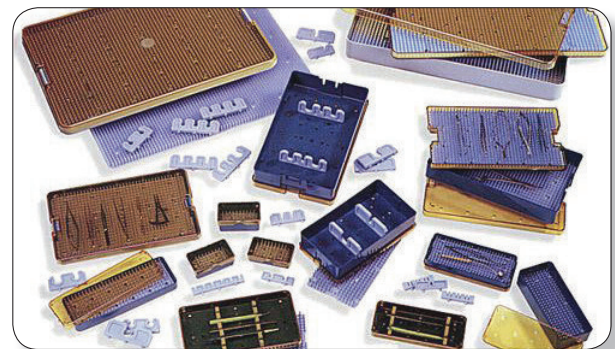
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