

Tribute to Gloria Stephens

Immediate Past President of ORNAC

By Agnes Forster

If space allowed, many operating room nurses could be singled out as exceptional practitioners, or teachers, or association members, and honored accordingly for their many hours of dedication to the development and enhancement of perioperative nursing. But, Gloria Stephens stands out, in large measure because of the sheer volume of her services, accomplishments and the many awards recognizing her contributions over the years. I believe she must be acknowledged in this anniversary issue in a special tribute as she steps down as president of ORNAC. It is important for organizations to record their history and she has been significantly involved in many of the advancements in perioperative nursing, especially since the inception of both ORNAC and this Journal.

Gloria has been deeply committed as an educator and association board member in program development and practice standards development, within her hospital as well as at a provincial and national level. She was a member of first ORNAC Standards Committee and later, as chairman of the National Standards/Education Committee, her committee published the "Recommended Technical Standards" in 1988. In 1993, her committee published the combined Professional and Technical Standards. Also under her chairmanship her committee published "Approval of Post Basic Operating Room Nursing Standards" in 1988.

She has been impressively active in highly public ways, for example as President of ORNAC from 1990 to June of 1993, and just as often in private, quietly behind the scenes, in some tedious, exacting and time consuming undertaking.

I am not an intimate friend, but I have grown to admire her over the past decade as a gifted communicator, a woman of great warmth and generosity and most especially as an educator. Her legions of students offer unsolicited admiration and many of them have been encouraged to write articles in the journals. Many have successfully done so. She herself is a lifelong learner and uses all the new toys and innovative techniques available to educate in the classroom, at conferences, in her speeches, in videos, and across Canada for the teleconferencing projects.

She is one of the most frequently published authors in this Journal's history, and probably the record holder for conference presentations to OR nurses across Canada and as a Canadian rep around the world.

Gloria started work at St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver as Team Leader (in charge) Neuro, Ortho, Plastic Surgery. She has specialized in thoracic surgery and in her early nursing days in Halifax was a public health nurse. In 1960, she assisted in developing the Open Heart Program at St. Paul's and scrubbed on the hospital's first open heart procedure.

As the Nurse Clinician in the 560-bed teaching hospital in downtown Vancouver, a position she has held since 1972 she was responsible for the development and implementation of their six-month Operating Room Nursing Education Program offered twice a year. St. Paul's program was one of the first programs to receive "accreditation" by RNABC 1974.

In addition she also conducts inservice and orientation programs for all levels of staff at St. Paul's, including OR staff, surgical ward nurses and interns.

Gloria Stephens is a role model for all OR nurses and educators. She is strongly rooted in operating room nursing practice and through her unique and creative educational approaches she has transformed perioperative nursing in many areas. She is committed to excellence in nursing and has labored on hundreds of committees, over endless reports, manuals, and publications.

She has served with distinction at all levels of OR associations. She served as founding member and later as president of the British Columbia Operating Room Nurses Group (BCORNG) 1970-72.

We cannot list all her achievements, all her memberships and publications, but we list some of her major awards.

Awards

1992 - British Columbia Operating Room Nurses "Award of Excellence";

1990 - Registered Nurses Association of B.C. "Award of Excellence in Nursing Education";

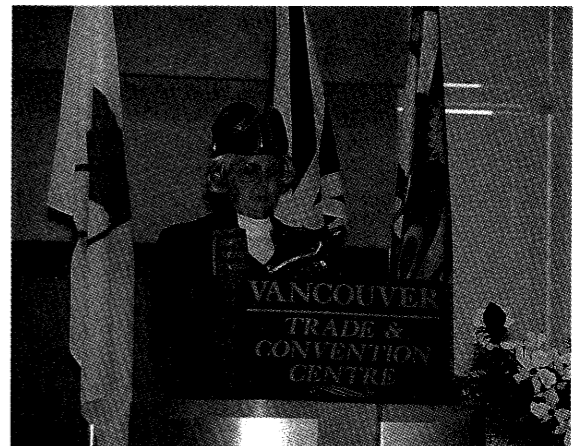
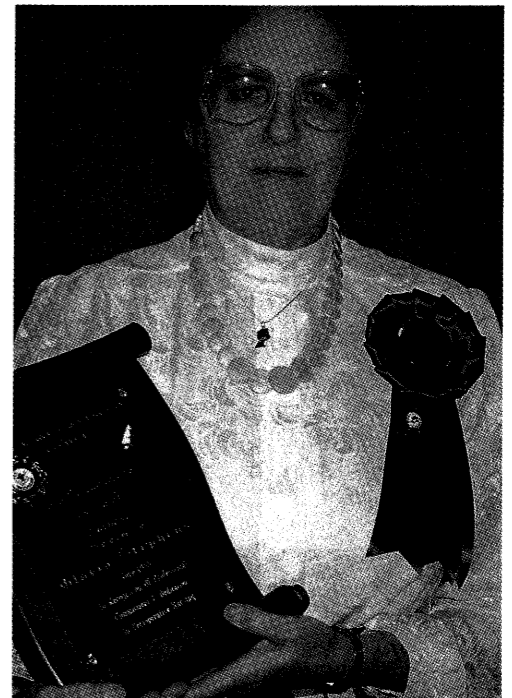
1988 - Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC), "Isabelle Adams Award for Excellence in Perioperative Nursing";

1987 - Registered Nurses Association of B.C. "Award of Excellence in Nursing Practice"; and

1973 - RNABC Vancouver chapter - "Innovative Nurse Award for writing the first *Standards of Operating Room Nursing Care*".

Currently, as immediate past-president of ORNAC, she is the chairperson of the Research Committee and has one article in this issue and another awaiting publication. Gloria, we all look forward to working with you, reading your informative and inspirational works, and following your future achievements.

On behalf of all our readers, we thank you.



Top Photo - Gloria Stephens receiving the British Columbia Operating Room Nurses "Award of Excellence". Marnie Simon, (right) BCORNG president (1992) presents the award.

Middle Photo - In 1988, the first recipient of the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada "Isabelle Adams Award for Excellence in Perioperative Nursing".

Lower Photo The lighter side of Gloria was demonstrated in 1988 as ORNAC's National Conference Coordinator in Vancouver. She wore her "Captain Vancouver" outfit to both promote the successful conference in a year earlier, and while hosting its 1,400 registrants.