

# THE CAREER OF A LIFETIME

## Bonnie Peatross, MS, RN

This Richmond Memorial School of Nursing graduate has followed her heart and her passport across the globe to serve others. From Richmond, Virginia to Italy and Nepal — this registered nurse has kept it interesting for five decades. This is her story.

### A L U M N I P R O F I L E

My nursing career has followed an interesting path. After graduating in 1970 from Richmond Memorial School of Nursing, I worked for a short while at Richmond Memorial Hospital. The first night on the job, I was the head nurse for the evening with an LPN and an aide. There were about 20 patients with nine units of blood being administered. That is a night I will never forget!

In the fall of that year, I entered the University of Virginia for my BSN. I worked in the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) at UVA hospital while I was a student. After graduation I left for Denver, Colorado and accepted a position in the CCU at Denver General Hospital. There I participated in the initial studies for acetaminophen.

I married an Air Force man and we moved to Aviano, Italy! I joined the Aviano Nursing Association for a monthly luncheon with one of the military base physicians as our speaker. One of those physicians asked me to help him open a clinic in town to serve those who did not want to visit the base clinic. For a few months, I drew blood and drove it to the local hospital for testing, took blood pressures, kept the books, etc. for \$2 an hour! We also assisted two couples that wanted an at-home birth experience. We did not attend, but with thorough education, they both were successful. I had the pleasure of living in Italy for about 18 months and still wish to live there someday.

I found my true calling in Salt Lake City, Utah when I became a member of the new IV Team at the University of Utah Hospital. Later, I was asked to go to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) to introduce the idea of starting an IV Team there. It was not well received,



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but I was given the position of Infection Control/IV Therapy nurse. This was later changed to Nutritional Support/IV Therapy nurse. Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) and the use of central venous catheters (CVC) were just beginning to be popular interventions.

In the early 1980s, I was one of the first five nurses in Utah to learn Peripheral Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) line placement. This was quite the challenge. About two years later, I was asked to join the VAMC National Committee for Nutritional Support to develop guidelines for the use of CVCs and TPN within the VAMC system. Those were exciting times to be a part of this new field of medicine. Over the years, I taught about 100 nurses from Washington State to Washington, D.C. the art and procedures of placing

PICC lines, developed practice guidelines, provided protocol and troubleshooting tips. During that time, I received a master's degree in community health and nursing education. I gave lectures at local and national conferences and published one article in the Journal of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition. Eventually, I placed about 3,000 PICC lines. I also was a consultant to Bard & Dickinson for a year regarding the improvement of their catheters, safety features and the unsuccessful attempt to develop a new skin prep.

In 1994, my husband and I moved to the Brighton Ski Resort in Salt Lake City and ran a Bed and Breakfast for six years. After our first snow season, my husband, a member of the Brighton Doctor Patrol, opened an urgent care clinic at the resort. I worked there as a nurse some of the time due to the needs of the B&B, but in the end managed the insurance, payroll, mailings, etc. We lived at Brighton Resort for twelve years. The clinic is still functioning today.

Since 2000, my husband, a pediatrician, and I have participated in humanitarian service work with YouthLinc in Salt Lake City. We have traveled to Mexico, Peru, Kenya, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Nepal. We always go with a group of 25-30 students and mentors to a local school and provided English lessons, health lessons and construction projects. We were the medical support for the group as well as mentors. Because of these trips, I have kept my nursing license current until this year. Once a nurse, always a nurse.

I have been very lucky to have all these amazing experiences with good health and many wonderful friends.