



MURIEL SHEWCHUK LEADERSHIP AWARD

Muriel Shewchuk graduated from the University of Alberta School of Nursing in 1962 and began her lengthy career as a Registered Nurse. Alberta born, raised and employed, her 44 years of nursing experience included positions as staff RN, Educator, Manager, Charge Nurse (urology, plastics, ophthalmology & neurosurgery), School of Nursing Instructor, OR Techniques Instructor, Assistant Director, and Director of Surgery in Alberta's two largest acute care teaching health care centers – the University of Alberta Hospital in Edmonton and the Foothills Medical Centre and in Calgary. Prior to her retirement in 2005, Ms. Shewchuk spent 19 years as the Director of Surgical Suites in Calgary and successfully led the regionalization of all surgical suites in seven hospitals, consolidating 47 operating theatres into three adult hospital sites. Muriel managed a budget of over \$95 million with over 850 staff providing care for over 325 surgeons in operating rooms and clinics. Muriel Shewchuk personified leadership.

Muriel was instrumental in the formation of ORNAC in 1983 and her name is listed in the history of the Association many times as a Board Member, Chair of the first Awards Committee and co-author of the first ORNAC Communiqué' (1965-1991). She also designed an ORNAC Awards plaque and pin. Muriel was always actively involved with her home province perioperative organization, ORNAA, as well as with the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses (AARN) regarding competencies and standards.

Perioperative practice caused Muriel to develop expertise in sterilization, and she obtained her certificate in Sterilization. She taught many classes, gave many lectures and also instructed in central & instrument processing. Muriel helped to set and publish standards for ORNAC, organizations / associations and clinics.

The following are a few highlights of her outstanding perioperative nursing career:

- ◆ In the early 1980's, Muriel worked very closely with Agnes Foster to create the *Canadian Operating Room Nurses Journal (CORNJ)*; throughout the years, she continued to write many articles for the Journal including the CORL Corral.
- ◆ 1984 – Chair of the 1st Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC) National Conference in Jasper, Alberta
- ◆ 1986 – designed Operating Room Nurses Association of Alberta (ORNAA) logo and pin
- ◆ 1988 – assisted in creating ORNAC Post Basic curriculum and program review
- ◆ 1988 – was front & center in the creation of the first ORNAC Standards
- ◆ 1990 – 1992 ORNAC Secretary
- ◆ 1991 Chair of Exhibitors for the 4th ORNAC National Conference, Banff, Alberta
- ◆ 1991 – received the Isabelle Adams Excellence in Perioperative Nursing Award, the highest recognition that ORNAC awards
- ◆ 1995 – assisted in the creation of the first perioperative certification examination (CPN(C)) with ORNAC and the CNA, ran study groups in Alberta & also maintained her Certification
- ◆ 2001 – recipient of the ORNAC/Johnson & Johnson Drake-Thompson Writing Award
- ◆ Represented perioperative nursing practice for many years with the Canadian Standards Association

◆ Co-Chair and co-founder of the Canadian Operating Room Leaders Network (CORL)

Ms. Shewchuk was a part time consultant, providing expertise in surgical nursing practice, administration, planning and surgical suite design, workflow, legal issues, administrative issues and problem resolution. Muriel consulted in twenty hospitals over seven provinces and two territories as well as in Puerto Rico and London, England. In addition, she provided consultation to private sector physicians/surgeons for the design, development and operations of non-hospital surgical suites. Muriel was an advisor to the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons for their Standards and monitoring of private sector surgical suites.

Ms. Shewchuk is one of three original authors for ORNAC's *Professional, Technical and Competency Standards* (1986). She presented at 6 World OR Conferences (WCORN) and was a frequent speaker at national and provincial OR and leadership conferences. Muriel's leadership articles were regularly published in the *Canadian Operating Room Nursing Journal (CORNJ)*, now known as the *ORNAC Journal*.

Muriel Shewchuk was acknowledged at local, provincial and national levels for excellence in nursing practice, education, and leadership. She has been the recipient of many awards including ORNAC's Isabelle Adams Excellence in Perioperative Nursing Award, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses and the ORNAC / Johnson & Johnson Drake Thompson Writing Award. In addition, in 2002, Muriel was nominated by ORNAC for the Order of Canada and for the Canadian Nurses Association's Jeanne Mance Award – although neither nomination was successful, they showed the exceptionally high esteem in which she was held by her perioperative nursing colleagues.

Ms. Shewchuk was a co-presenter with her longtime pal Gloria Stephens at the 25th National ORNAC Conference, *Harnessing Our Power* in Niagara Falls, ON. In 2017. This was a plenary session on Monday, May 1, 2017, *Evolution of ORNAC Standards of Practice, Competencies and Certification, "Perseverance to Professional Excellence"*, which was then published in the December 2017, *ORNAC Journal*. This presentation with Gloria Stephens and its subsequent publication were the final contributions Muriel made to ORNAC and perioperative nursing.

Ms Shewchuk passed away suddenly on May 11, 2017. She is missed by her family, friends and the global perioperative nursing community. One of the most moving tributes to Muriel was the honour guard formed by "her" perioperative nurses from Calgary, dressed in OR attire who lined the path from funeral service to her hearse, a truly moving tribute and a fitting closure to her career in nursing and contributions to ORNAC and perioperative nursing. The following quote is from an article written by Muriel which was published in the first edition of the *Canadian Operating Room Nursing Journal (CORNJ)* and is as true today as it was in 1983!

"It behooves every operating room nurse to strive to be the bright shiny gold fish in a bowl because of the tremendous overall effect on everyone including the patient (p.53)".

A tribute offered by Mary Knight and Margaret Farley at Muriel's funeral on May 17, 2017 was published in the September 2017 ORNAC Journal 35(3):50-52.

References

Stephens, Gloria & Shewchuk, Muriel, (2017). Evolution of ORNAC Standards of Practice, Competencies and Certification, "Perseverance to Professional Excellence", *ORNAC Journal*, 35(4):70-74.

Shewchuk, Muriel (1983). Gold fish in a bowl, *Canadian Operating Room Nursing Journal*, 1(1):13-14 and reprinted (2017) *ORNAC Journal*, 35(3): 53-54.