

Nurse to know: Barbara Ann Harmer



Many ASORN members that have gone to the annual meetings have met or spoken with Barbara Ann Harmer. She is charismatic and easy to approach and always open to meeting new members joining ASORN. It was an extreme honor to be asked to talk with Barbara Ann Harmer, our 2019 Edna Ashy Excellence in Nursing Award winner and December's Eye Nurse you Need to Know.

Barbara has always been a nurse in the surgical setting, and although her background is multispecialty, she found herself in many eye care specialties. She started her career as a bachelor's prepared nurse in the 1970's. She relates that she enjoyed the cataract surgeries of the 1970's when she would volunteer to do the eye cases that many of her colleagues would prefer to not do.

Barbara has been an avid volunteer throughout her career. She was frequently a speaker at the AAO meetings when she was approached to come and present for the nurses at the ASORN meetings. It was through this opportunity of volunteering that she became the Provider Chair a position that she would hold for 6 years. She made many improvements while in the position including the beginning transition from handwritten records to the initial push to computerized electronic reports.

After Provider Chair, Barbara transitioned after a short break to the President-elect of ASORN; she has been on

the ASORN Board for over 10 years. Volunteerism is the basis of the entire organization and has been a strong theme in Barbara's passion and her career. While the position of President is on its own full-time position, Barbara has also worked as a surveyor of organizations to meet the AAAHC standards for accreditation. This position has allowed Barbara to travel all over the United States and abroad to places all over the world as far away as Athens, Greece. She has amassed over 3 million air miles traveling at least weekly with her assignments.

I asked Barbara how she can fit in all this work and voluntarism into her life, and she confided in me she has never drunk a sip of coffee in her life, she is just naturally energetic and comes from a great upbringing. She attributes her drive to have a very supportive family. She will be married to her husband for 40 years in April, and they have a daughter that is a very successful attorney. She enjoys spending time with her mother who she is very close to. She also has 2 beautiful twin cocker spaniels. Family is very important to her. She believes in having fun with her family. One of her favorite activities is spending time at Disney World. Some of her most cherished memories have happened with her family while visiting the Magical World of Disney, memories that could never be duplicated. Barbara has been a leader in ASORN for an amazing 25 percent of her nursing career. She relates that ASORN has been an amazing opportunity to build life-lasting relationships both professionally and personally. Barbara has become a mentor for many people that she has met. Her work brings an opportunity to make a difference in someone's life.

Through her experiences at ASORN, Barbara has been able to forge relationships with nurses that call her at home for advice and mentorship. This goes beyond the normal manager-employee relationship one can have in an employment setting, it is a personal connection and a reward for a life of voluntarism. Congratulations on your much-deserved award and recognition Barbara.

Samantha Owens, MHA, MSN
ASORN Member

ASORN EYE KNOW e-Newsletter
December, 2019