

Dr. Joan Donald, 1936-2022

Co-founder of the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC).

Joan graduated from Moncton High School in 1952 and after 2 years with the CIBC, went on to become a Radiologic Technologist accepting a position as an X-Ray Technician at Carleton Memorial Hospital, Woodstock, NB. Her desire for increased Patient contact led her to nursing and she graduated from Victoria Public Hospital School of Nursing, Fredericton, NB in 1961.

Joan returned to Moncton following graduation and worked at the Hotel Dieu Hospital in the X-Ray department prior to going on to post graduate studies in Operating Room Nursing at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, PQ. After successfully completing a program in Operating Room Technique and Management, she returned to Moncton where she married Hugh Donald and settled back to life in New Brunswick. Joan worked in various departments at The Moncton Hospital until settling into a full-time position in the Operating Room.

During the following years, the Donald's gave birth to a daughter Stacey and then a son Andrew. Although her family life was her pride and joy, Joan maintained her love for Operating Room (OR) Nursing and while working part-time, Joan began studies at the University of Moncton and completed a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1975. She later earned a B. Ed. and an M.A.(Ed.) at U de M. She developed and taught a course of instruction for OR Technicians which provided a vital program for RNAs wishing to work in the OR.

Joan eventually became involved in the New Brunswick Operating Room Nurses Group that led to her representing New Brunswick at the national level. It was during a National Planning Committee meeting in Winnipeg, MA that Joan put forward the motion to formalize a national OR nurses' association. A committee was struck to determine the feasibility of such an organization with Joan as a member and the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC) became a reality in 1983.

Following on the heels of this momentous occasion, Joan was appointed Chairman of the Standards Committee. The landmark first edition of ORNAC's "Recommended Standards for Operating Room Nursing Practice and Quality Assurance Audit" was published in 1986.

In addition to being the first Perioperative Nurse in Canada to complete a Doctorate, she has several certificates of accomplishment. Throughout her professional career, she accepted many challenging opportunities contributing to the nursing profession. During a period of transition in Healthcare in the Greater Toronto area she held the position of Program Coordinator, Perioperative Services at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. In this capacity she assisted with the transfer of the OR from Wellesley-Central Hospital to St. Michael's Hospital. She also managed the Pre-Admission Facility, Surgical Day Care, Operating Rooms, Post Anesthetic Care Units, and the Central Processing Department.

Prior to that, from 1995 to 1999, Joan was the Associate Director of Perioperative Services at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, ON. Joan loved her work in Toronto and always referred to those days as "the icing on the cake of her nursing career."

A sampling of other positions held during her career includes:

- Healthcare Management Consultant, Riverview, NB;
- Associate in Nursing, Cross-Appointment, University of Toronto, ON;

- Director of Ambulatory Care for South-East Health Care Corporation, NB;
- Director of Nursing, Sackville Memorial Hospital, NB;
- Assistant Director of Nursing, The Moncton Hospital, NB;
- Educator at the Miss A.J. MacMaster School of Nursing, Moncton, NB;
- Nurse Educator and staff nurse, The Moncton Hospital, NB; and
- Manager of the X-Ray Department Carleton Memorial Hospital, Woodstock, NB.

Between 1988 and 1998 Joan was recognized for her hard work, contribution, and dedication by being honoured with numerous awards. The acknowledgement in which she took the greatest pride was being presented the Isabelle Adams Award of Excellence in Perioperative Nursing. This award is presented at the national ORNAC conference that is held once every two years and is voted on by nurses right across Canada. She noted that “having nurses right across the country deem you worthy of such an award is an awesome experience!”.

Joan acted as a consultant with Universities and Hospitals as far away as the Caribbean, British Columbia and frequently in Toronto. During her nine-year involvement on the Executive of ORNAC where she was President from 1988 to 1990, Joan was active provincially, nationally, and internationally. She worked closely with the Association of Operating Room Nurses based in Denver, CO and represented Canada on the International Planning Committee for World Conferences of Operating Room Nurses. She moderated and presented both on a national and international level at various conferences and was the closing keynote speaker at a World Conference. She was the first Canadian Operating Room nurse invited to participate in 3M’s Research Cruise that had previously been attended only by prestigious OR managers from the United States.

Over the years Joan has been a member of over 50 organizations that included membership on more than 75 professional committees. She developed material for numerous workshops and made over 26 presentations. Her work has been published in 19 professional journals. Joan was a Board member of The United Church Home for Senior Citizens, Inc. in Sackville, NB for many years as well as Chairperson for two years. She was a member of the Board of Directors of The New Brunswick Association of Nursing Homes from 2003 to 2006 during which time she chaired the By-laws committee as revisions were completed. Joan was a founding member of the Women’s Probus Club of Southeast New Brunswick as she helped provide the framework for a vibrant organization as its Founding President. She assisted with the inauguration of a sister club in Charlottetown, PEI and encouraged a collaborative friendship between the two clubs. Joan held various offices with the Girl Guides of Canada, coordinated “Spring Thaw” that was a popular venue for showcasing the talents of employees of The Moncton Hospital and was actively involved in Saint John’s United Church and the Riverview Arts Centre.

Throughout all the years of her nursing career, Joan’s family encouraged and supported her in every way possible. Following his retirement, her husband Hugh accompanied her on the various educational and professional activities that required travel. These times were viewed as their “latest adventure” and provided both challenge and satisfaction. Joan loved her work in Toronto and always referred to those days as “the icing on the cake of her nursing career.”

Continuing education was fundamental to Joan who remained a lifelong learner.

Joan’s family and friends have been a constant source of support and joy throughout her life. Her Mum and Dad, brothers and sisters were always ready to help when needed, or just listen and while away the evening hours in friendly chatter. An avid skier, Joan enjoyed travel throughout much of Canada, the US,

Europe, the Caribbean, and Australia. A wonderful and creative cook, she took great pride and pleasure entertaining at home, especially when music, dancing and a glass of wine were involved. Visits to Texas and time spent with Stacey, Rob, Ashleigh, Taylor, Matthew, and Logan were favourite times for Joan, Hugh, and Andrew. Joan was blessed with a loving and generous family.