

Old Roots and New Growth

Spring is in the air as I write this, my first editorial for the *Oncology Nursing Forum*. I have been thinking about this column a lot over the past months; during the application and interview process I dreamed that this day would happen and, over the past few weeks as I dipped my toes into the reality of being the editor of this esteemed journal, I thought about what I would write. A new person in an established role is an opportunity for change, and hopefully growth, too. But the buds of spring cannot develop without the support and sustenance of the roots, and I want to begin this editorial by thanking Susan Moore, RN, MSN, ANP, AOCN®, for her leadership and grace during the past two years of her acting editorship. Over the past few months, she has been the warm voice at the other end of the telephone, often very early in the morning, when I needed guidance or practical assistance. As someone who loves words, I find myself searching for the right words to express my gratitude to her, and I am left with just two—thank you!

As editor, I am in the unique position of being able to use 800 or so words every issue to express myself and my opinions about oncology nursing, cancer, and anything else I choose. So I would like to use these next 600 words to tell you a little about myself and how I came to this spring of my career. Like many of you, I am a nurse to the very smallest cell in my body; this has been a most fulfilling work life for me. I have had an interesting career with many varied experiences, a Heinz 57 kind of career. My background is in women's health with a stint of HIV/AIDS care in the early 1990s. I spent seven years as an academic and went back into clinical practice in 2004 because I felt I was not making a difference as a professor—and that is why I became a

nurse in the first place. Along the way, I had developed expertise in the area of sexuality and cancer and it was this that drew me back into clinical work and where I have really bloomed in the past eight years.

But my roots in the world of cancer were really sown in 1979 when my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 47. I was living overseas at the time, and my memory of her journey with cancer began with a hurried phone call to inform me that she'd had a mastectomy. I was back home within two or three days, caring for someone who was fundamentally changed both physically and emotionally. Twenty years later, she was diagnosed with a contralateral breast cancer, this time treated with lumpectomy and radiation. Her experience has informed my life and health practices and, in part, my desire to make a difference in the lives of other women and men with cancer. Coincidentally, I wear my hair very short, and I am often greeted in the elevator at my workplace by another woman with very short hair. "Your hair's growing in nice," she will say. And I smile and tell her that so is hers. I may not have had cancer, but I appreciate the connection.

It is bittersweet that a number of articles in this issue focus on aspects of breast cancer that I wish my mother and her healthcare providers had known about. Twenty and 30 years ago, our knowledge and understanding about the link between physical activity and recurrence were practically nonexistent. Cancer survivorship was

a question back then, not a burgeoning field of research and practice. Fatigue was barely acknowledged as something that could be treated and not just suffered.

We have come a long way, and so have I—from old roots to new growth. I am humbled and inspired by the trust



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placed in me by the Board of Directors and publishing leadership at the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS). I intend to nourish and take care of this journal with the help of you, the members and readers of this journal, aided by the Editorial Board, reviewers, and publishing staff at ONS. Please join me as I grow personally into my role—e-mail me and talk to me at Congress and other ONS meetings that I attend. Just as the new spring buds need the nourishment and warmth of the sun, so I, too, need your thoughts and opinions for this new season of growth.

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