Imelda Kelly, RN, CRNO

Imelda Kelly, RN, CRNO, we all have an event in our lives that led us into the field of healthcare. Our Spotlight nurse was only four years old when a trip to the emergency room in Owensboro, Kentucky for stitches impressed upon her “that repairs could be made to the human body to restore its function.” Even as a little girl, she assisted the “doctor,” dressed wounds, and dispensed medication (cinnamon drop candies).

Imelda Kelly continued her interest in nursing. She graduated from St. Mary’s School of Nursing in Evansville, Indiana which provided a well rounded and balanced education in nursing to prepare her for her career ahead. As a student at St. Mary’s, she received the award for “Most Interested in the Art of Nursing.” Early in her nursing career, Imelda was a Medical Surgical charge nurse. Then she became a clinic staff nurse and private scrub in Indiana. She stated, “It was this position where I was able to tie together the physiology, the pathology, the results of the surgical procedure, plus the caring for patients before, during, and after surgery, that really defined the role I wanted as a nurse.”

Moving to Arizona, Imelda continued as a surgery staff nurse until thirty-five years ago when she accepted a position as Clinical Supervisor and Private Scrub Nurse for the Lear Eye Clinic in Sun City, Arizona. For the past thirty years, she has worked for Barret Dulaney Perkins Eye Center in Phoenix as Director of Nursing, Surgical Administrator, and Director of Regulatory Compliance.

Unstoppable energy and the ability to multitask enabled Imelda to excel in our profession. She leads and manages a team of nurse managers at the eight Barret Dulaney Perkins Ambulatory Surgery Centers in Arizona. She keeps the ASCs in compliance with CMS, the State of Arizona, and the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care. Imelda credits her birth order (number seven in a family of thirteen) as the foundation for management, leadership, and negotiating skills.

Imelda is a Certified Registered Nurse in Ophthalmology (CRNO) and a member of the American Society of Ophthalmic Registered Nurses (ASORN). She is certified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support and a member of the Association of Peri-Operative Registered Nurses. In her spare time, Imelda participates as a member of St. Paul’s Women’s Guild and enjoys crafting with paint.

When asked which historical era she would like to have lived, Imelda replied, “I feel very fortunate to have lived during the last 50 years in an era of such progress in Ophthalmology. I have been able to witness first hand so many changes that brought us to modern day surgical treatment for eye problems. From inpatient procedures and immobilization of the head for up to two weeks in outpatient surgery, to patients in and out of the facility in two hours. New techniques and new equipment for safer and better outcomes continue to be developed. So, I prefer the present era to any other era in history. Other eras have realized change, but in my opinion, none to equal the changes of the past 50 years. I am thankful to the pioneers in medicine and in nursing that got us to the 21st century. I could not have survived the hardships they had to endure.”

Lorrie Durbin, RN, BSN, COMT