MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meredith Winkler, RN, MSN, CRNO

“AFTER A SIX-WEEK ORIENTATION in the operating room during nursing school at the University of Nebraska, I realized I really liked the experience. I enjoyed the pace, the close collaboration with the operating room team members, and I felt I was helping people get well.” After nursing school, Meredith Winkler began her nursing career as a staff nurse in a small Texas hospital with four operating rooms, one of which was designated for cataract surgeries.

Meredith’s husband is a career U.S. Air Force officer and pilot, and his assignments moved the family every three years. She continued her education, earning her bachelor of science in Nursing from Texas Tech University and her master of science in Nursing from St. Louis University.

As a career in nursing is flexible, Meredith found job opportunities everywhere they moved, even overseas in Japan. During a job interview upon moving to the St. Louis area in the mid 1980s, Meredith said, “Do you do eye surgery here? I really like that work.” Thus, she became part of the eye team mentored by Martha Huff and Carol Al’Kolberi, the eye nurses. She was taught to scrub ophthalmology cases (anterior segment, cornea, and cataract). These nurses also encouraged her to join ASORN and attend the local and national seminars.

When it was time to move to Alaska, Meredith was prepared to become a private scrub for a private practice anterior segment surgeon in Anchorage. While there, she worked in the office two days a week in order to help with both preop and postop patient education.

After returning to St. Louis from Alaska, Meredith continued in ophthalmology at the Anheuser-Busch Eye Institute in the operating room, where she circulated and scrubbed anterior and posterior segment surgery, cornea, cataracts, muscle, and plastic cases. At the Anheuser-Busch Eye Institute, she met more ASORN friends, who again encouraged her to become active in the local ASORN chapter and attend the national meetings.

Currently, Meredith is a nurse coordinator for a busy oculoplastic surgeon at Washington University’s Department of Ophthalmology. She functions in the office as the nurse coordinator, scheduling surgeries for this physician and accompanying him to the OR to scrub all his surgeries. She also provides patient education and support for each patient during the entire surgical experience.

Meredith feels the biggest influence in her career has been her ASORN friends from the local St. Louis chapter. There are two past national ASORN presidents in the group who show commitment and concern for the organization by playing an active role, even after retirement from nursing. The whole group is dedicated to working toward planning and providing an annual educational seminar for the local community of nurses and technicians who are interested in expanding their knowledge in ophthalmology.

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