

Patricia Blackley

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The legacies, memories and accolades of Pat Blackley will remain with many of us for years to come.

Pat's commitment to stomal therapy nursing internationally and in Australia and to improving the lives of patients with stomas was unquestionable. During 1985 and 1986 Pat was simultaneously the WCET® Journal Editor, Publications Committee Chairperson and ID for Australia. Pat assumed the role of journal editor from Norma Gill in 1986 when the WCET® Journal became independent of any external sponsorship. She continued in that role for the next seven years. In addition, Pat had a further term as journal editor between 1997 and 1998.

For those who knew Pat, even for a short period of time, she impressed as someone who loved and lived life to the fullest. There have been many wonderful tributes to Pat from around the world some of which have been captured within the WCET® BULLETin and Journal of Stomal Therapy Australia. It is a pleasure to be able to share more reflections of Pat with you from those who knew her well.

Dr Julia Thompson (Sydney, Australia) reminisced of her long and great respect for Pat, stating Pat was clever, insightful, practical and a hard worker. Julia described Pat as a "very competent editor and was amazed that she did such a good job using longhand editing, a typewriter with white out and snail mail. It must have been enormously time consuming ... it was bad enough when I was editor and I edited using word processing, digital technology and email." To Julia's knowledge, "Pat always had issues ready on time and when some other editors failed or dropped out, she stepped in and sorted things out. She had commitment."

Heather Hill (Sydney, Australia) reminds us that "those of us who were fortunate to have known her personally, Pat (or Trish) Blackley was a wonderful nursing role model, mentor, colleague, and, most importantly, our beloved friend." Heather recalls that as one of Pat's students, and subsequently her work colleague, she had the privilege of observing and participating in nursing care guided by Pat which was both "holistic and multidisciplinary long before these principles were generally adopted as the norm." Pat was not only a

pioneer nurse advocate for specialty nursing but, more specifically, a leader in enterostomal therapy nursing education and excellence in clinical practice. Her actions facilitated research and quality improvement in care delivery, nursing development and professionalism. In 1998 Pat wrote *Practical Stoma Wound and Continence Management*, the first Australian text about stomal therapy nursing practice (published



by Research Publications Pty Ltd; Vermont, Victoria). Pat contributed significantly to the development of tertiary education for stomal therapy nursing in Australia. Heather states that "regardless of Pat's impressive list of achievements the indelible impression Pat Blackley leaves is the memory of her indomitable character, unquestionable sincerity, humility, courage and unforgettable sense of humour."

In a guest editorial in Volume 28 Number 2 of the WCET® Journal (2008) entitled 'Back to the future. Celebrating 30 years of WCET®: Memories of life members', Pat recalls how she and Mary Jo Kroeber, then president of WCET®, established the philosophy and objectives for the proposed journal. These encapsulated the journal being an educational tool that described the multi-faceted aspects of the role of enterostomal therapy nurses (ETs), the human interaction between ETs and patients, the nurturing of novice writers to achieve publication and that the journal be translated into languages other than English to demonstrate that the needs of the members in other countries had been considered.

The objectives set by Pat and Mary Jo remain true today and are a testament to their collective ethos and foresight.

As a tribute to Pat her last editorial is reprinted on the next page.

Jenny Prentice

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*Patricia Blackley
RN ET,
Australia*

THE VIEW FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

I have just taken a long trip down memory lane as I looked for a specific item somewhere in 13 years' worth of *WCET Journal* publications. "It will only take a minute," I thought as I hauled out all the old issues (remember the ones with all the flags on the front cover?) and started flicking through them. Then I began reading them and realised what a remarkable change there had been to the volume of contributions to the journal from the membership at large over those years.

That change has not been for the better. Once, there were contributions from all over the world in the *WCET Journal*. Where are they now – those from colleagues in England and Scotland, Ireland and Wales? What's happened to stoma care in the European union? In earlier days, papers from Italy, Spain, Germany, Scandinavia and other countries in that important part of the world were published in both the national language of the writer and English. Where are the contributions from Canada, the USA and South American countries? What's happened to stomal therapy or ET nursing in those places? Is it still alive and well or has the flame begun to flicker and die out, extinguished by economic constraints? Have we all become 'too busy' or too detached from actual hands-on caring for people with stoma, wound and continence problems to be able to (or capable of) sharing through contributions to this journal? Has the necessity of writing assignments to achieve the postgraduate qualifications required of us these days taken over where contributing to the journal left off? I wonder. Perhaps those of you with electronic equipment prefer to source your information from the Internet. Soon there will be a *WCET* home page, but let me assure you that, for the foreseeable future, information will appear on these pages first!

A journal does not appear every quarter of its own accord. No contributors mean no journal. It is only you, the members of the *WCET*, who can keep our publication alive. With the advent of evidence-based nursing it is incumbent on us as stomal therapy nurses to publish the evidence that underpins our practice. No-one else can! We now have a new editor with a fresh outlook (see page 3 for details); she will take this publication on to fresh fields of endeavour, enhancing its reputation and that of the *WCET* ... but there does have to be copy for the editor to edit! (See page 30 for an added incentive.)

So, I urge you all to remember your experiences in stomal therapy (ET) nursing, whatever they might be, and provide valuable food for thought for others in the problem-solving field. How do you help people with painful, reddened peristomal skin? What has your most recent client audit revealed about the people you assist through your stoma, wound and continence practice? Is the client population ageing, or are serious health disorders appearing in younger age groups? Do socio-economic factors play a part in the health disorders you encounter? There are thousands of questions in this specialty that have yet to be answered in a definitive way.

Don't worry about whether your writing is 'good enough'; submit your work without hesitation. This journal is proud to usher new writers into the world of professional publication and the editor is always pleased to assist in preparing papers. When competition is intense for specialist nursing positions the candidate who has just published may be the one who wins out!

Throughout the world, day after day, enthusiastic stomal therapy nurses (ETs) re-invent the wheel, trudging around the same learning curve that hundreds have trudged before. Why do we, who claim to be such cost-effective practitioners, waste so much time and money when, collectively, there is an enormous amount of knowledge just waiting to be tapped and disseminated through these pages? I don't know; do you?

I hope that some time during this 40th anniversary year of stomal therapy (ET) nursing you will – as we have attempted to do with the journal – emulate Janus (who looked to the past and after whom the month of January is named) and revisit our stomal therapy pioneers, as well as looking to the future.

Well, I'm off to my garden now. I bid you a happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous new year, and trust it will lead to a sparkling future. Wherever you live in this wide world of stomal therapy nursing, the future is yours for the taking (and publishing). I hope, too, to encounter a whole new generation of *WCET Journal* contributors, together with old friends, in Singapore in the year 2000. ●