

A Case Report: Is Retirement Really the End of a Nursing Career? One Nurse's Experience

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1. Introduction

Retirement can bring about new and unexpected experiences for anyone; however, for a nurse who has been at the forefront of healthcare (in various roles for about 45-years.), this may be a difficult transition. One question that may come to mind is "when should a nurse consider retirement?" I asked myself that same question for several years. Tabloski¹ identified "approx. 1 million nurses will retire or contemplate retirement in the next 5 to 10-years". Deshaies² lists the average retirement age for nurses as 62, with almost half of those surveyed being over age 50, planning retirement within the next 15-years. Some possible reasons nurses may continue working, in one form or another after retirement, may be to keep current on health care advances, fulfilling a calling or may be due to financial concerns.

My retirement journey began several years ago; however, my actual retirement was in September 2022. As an educator working full time at a Nursing University, the Covid 19 pandemic changed the academic setting from in-person classroom to a virtual classroom overnight. This was not easy for a nurse educator; however, we used all resources to make the transition as seamless as possible for educators and nursing students alike³. When it was identified that virtual classroom would be the norm for a while, one thing that was needed in the home-schooling setting was a larger monitor to view 30+ students in my class. So, my first task was to go shopping and purchase a monitor that is still being used today.

Teaching virtually seemed like an opportunity to investigate other aspects of nursing, such as disseminating my research. Research is an important aspect of scholarship in academia⁴. As I had experience disseminating my research in various formats after receiving my doctoral degree (in-person, in print and

virtually), this seemed like a logical path to follow. However, searching for opportunities to present my research during a time when in-person conferences were not available, seemed like a new route to investigate for me. I had presented my research at several local and regional nursing conferences across the country pre-pandemic.

My next step would be searching virtual conferences. While investigating the opportunities that were available, I noted some required pre-recorded presentations while others requested either posters or virtual keynote addresses⁵. Submitting abstracts around the world allowed me to disseminate my research virtually via posters as well as keynote addresses during a time when many thought that this opportunity would not be available. In all, I presented my research to over 25 virtual conferences over a 3+-year period. I still present virtually if the opportunity arises.

I continued to present my research virtually as the world had not yet opened fully and my academic institution continued virtually classes. One of the conferences I presented at was hosted by United Research Forum (URF), a research organization based out of London. After a keynote presentation, I was then invited to join URF as a member of their scientific committee (in a volunteer capacity). URF opened many new doors for me. URF began developing numerous electronic healthcare journals. Being invited as a member of the editorial team for their healthcare journal allowed me to gain additional experience in another realm while still working full time in academia remotely.

URF invited me to be Section Head overseeing the Nursing section. Several weeks passed and I was asked to take over the role of **Editor-in-Chief** of the **Journal of integrated Health**⁶. During the academic winter break 2021, my husband and I

decided to sell our home in suburban New Jersey once we both retired. We planned to move south and bought a home in Georgia early in 2022. We expected to remain in New Jersey until our retirement in q32022; however, our home sold rapidly which changed our plans. For my academic responsibilities, some classes were back on campus; however, some those I taught remained virtual, which permitted me time to continue working with URF, prepare for retirement & pack our home (preparing to move 15+ hours away). Luckily, both my husband and I were still working remotely and were able to move sooner than expected (June 2022). My husband continued to work full-time after our move for a few weeks while I worked part time, both remotely. We both retired in September 2022.

It has been over 2 years that I have been volunteering with the URFI am keeping my hand in the health care arena by being involved in several nursing organizations: the Georgia Nurses Association (as a member), Georgia Association for Nursing Education (as a member) and Sigma, the Honor Society of Nursing (as a facilitator for the Retired Nurses Community). I am continuing my professional development in a new area now, working with many facility administrators, leaders in various areas of healthcare, educators from around the world.

Don't get me wrong, Life of a retired nurse is not just about nursing and healthcare. Being retired has let me spread my wings and have a little fun. I am a member of a local Red Hat Society chapter (a social organization for women over the age of 50 to network and have a little fun), Sassy Belles of FUN-Ship in Effingham County Ga. Volunteering is my way of being involved and not losing sight of what I worked so long and hard to achieve. Retiring after 45 years in nursing but continuing to be a part of the nursing and healthcare community allows me to use the skills I have gathered and give back in a different way⁷. I was also asked to speak at a Church Group by one of my fellow Red Hat Sisters about my area of expertise- **STROKE**. I contacted an old friend to obtain some material that I can use during my presentation and will relive my earlier years as a “**stroke nurse**” for one more community presentation, teaching ways to prevent and recognize the signs of stroke, the 5th leading cause of death in America.- Remember, I now live in the “Stroke Belt”- Southeastern part of United States has been called the Stroke Belt due to a much higher incidence of stroke compared to the rest of the country. *Once a nurse, always a nurse!*

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