



Introduction

Barbara Sheer PhD, FNP-C, FAANP is energetic individual has been active locally, regionally, nationally and internationally promoting NP practice and education. She developed the nurse practitioner programs at the University of Delaware and has taught in an NP program in Taiwan. She continues to serve as a consultant for Nurse Consultant Associates. She has been active in international education through the International Council of Nursing (ICN). She was one of the founders of the Fellows group within AANP and served as one of its presidents. She is currently chair of the AANP History Committee preserving early and ongoing historical events, awards and member accomplishments.

Interview Abstract

The interview primarily focuses on Dr. Sheer's vision to begin the Fellow's program within the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, now the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. Dr. Sheer wanted to develop leadership within AANP to mentor newer NPs. The first class of 21 Fellows was inducted in 2000. Since that time, over 800 Fellows have been inducted. As an educator and innovator, she developed the first FNP program in the state of Delaware. After launching the original NP program, she expanded the NP program to several other specialties and populations. She has been very active nationally and internationally. She taught in an NP program in Taiwan and helped organized the first international nurse practitioner/advanced practice nursing network conference held in London through the International Council of Nursing. Although she is officially an emeriti faculty of the University of Delaware, she continues to serve as a consultant for Nurse Consultant Associates. Dr. Sheer is also the current chair of AANP's History Committee. She remains dedicated to preserving NP history.

Biographical Sketch:

Dr. Sheer holds a doctorate from Widener University in nursing education, a MSN with a concentration as family nurse practitioner from the State University of New York (SUNY) Binghamton, a pediatric nurse practitioner certificate from Rutgers School of Medicine and College of Nursing, and a BSN from the University of Pennsylvania.

She developed the undergraduate nursing program at the University of Scranton and the nurse practitioner and combined nurse practitioner/ clinical nurse specialist programs at the University of Delaware. She has been an educator / consultant in nursing education and curriculum development for over 40 years and has consulted with nurse practitioner programs nationally and internationally. She was nationally certified as a family nurse practitioner by AANP and ANCC and is a consultant with Nurse Consultant Associates.

Dr Sheer has been actively involved in the nurse practitioner movement and has held regional, state, and national positions in nurse practitioner organizations. Among the positions were the President of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (now the American Association of Nurse Practitioners) and Chair of the National Alliance of Nurse Practitioners and Chair of the Fellows of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. She was the US representative in planning for the first international nurse practitioner conference in London.

As a former Public Health Policy Fellow she continues to work with multidisciplinary groups to forward the primary care agenda. She served as the chair of the Communications Subcommittee of the ICN International Nurse Practitioner Advanced Practice Nursing Network.

Dr. Sheer is committed to developing leadership within the NP community and is tireless in preserving the history of NP leaders within the American Association for Nurse Practitioners. She is currently chair of the AANP History Committee and has guided multiple initiatives to preserve historical materials, interviews, insights of the early days and leaders of AANP.

Keywords

Advanced practice nursing, nurse practitioner, leadership, nurse practitioner program development, international nurse practitioners

Transcript

Barbara Sheer

AANP Oral History Project



Celebration of Charter Fellows by Judith Lynch

Barbara Sheer

Dr. Sheer is Professor Emeritus at the University of Delaware School of Nursing and a consultant in Nurse Consultant Associates (NCA). She has been actively involved in the nurse practitioner movement since 1976 and has held various local, regional, state, national, and international positions in nurse practitioner organizations. These positions include the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Nurse Practitioner/Advanced Practice Nursing Core Steering Group; Chair of the Fellowship of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners; President of the Academy of Nurse Practitioners, and Chair of the National Alliance of Nurse Practitioners. She developed and directed the first Family Nurse Practitioner program in the state of Delaware. The original program was expanded to womens' NP, geriatric NP, adult NP, and pediatric NP under her leadership.

Dr. Sheer has been a site visitor for NLNAC and an ANCC Magnet Hospital appraiser. She has consulted with nurse practitioner programs nationally and internationally and has facilitated international nurse practitioner conferences from the first UK/USA conference in London, England in 1993 to later network conferences globally.

As a former Public Health Policy Fellow, she continues to work with multidisciplinary groups to facilitate the primary care agenda for nurse practitioners. Currently she is an associate with Nurse Consultant Associates and has developed and taught in a Master's nurse practitioner program in Taiwan. She continues to consult, give presentations nationally and internationally, and actively mentor nurse practitioners in professional development.

The interview took place at her winter home in Phoenix, AZ, where she lives

with her husband, George, a retired interventional radiologist. We had recently returned from the Fellows winter meeting where we found a hard-working, energetic group working to provide leadership for the future of the profession.

JSL: Barbara, you were one of the originators of the Fellowship concept. Could you talk about the initial reasons for forming the Fellowship?

BS: The initial concept came out of an early 1990s invitational American Academy of Nursing meeting in Washington DC about the future direction of nursing. Jan Towers and I attended on behalf of the AANP. This forum was inclusive of all levels of nursing from LPNs to advanced practice nurses. The main question was how nursing would fit into the health care delivery system of the future. After that meeting, I began to think about the future of NP practice and who would determine our future position in the health care system. I felt that we were in charge of our own destiny and needed continued leadership to formulate how care would be provided. The four areas vital to this vision were practice, education, research and policy. At that time, there were no national awards for NPs and recognition of excellence was needed. It was also essential to provide role models and a mechanism for mentorship of new graduates.

A group of AANP leaders met and presented a proposal that was accepted by the AANP Board of Directors in 1999. The charter induction was performed in 2000 and included 21 leaders of excellence. These included NPs who were instrumental in forming national continuing education programs, researchers, educators who were also master clinicians, policy experts, and practitioners in various types of health care systems. The initial purpose was to utilize a nationally known group of leaders to influence the four identified areas and to mentor future leaders.

JSL: What has the Fellowship meant to you professionally and personally?

BS: The Fellowship has become a forum for leaders of the profession to meet and provide ideas and strategies for future NP contributions to the health care delivery system. It also provides an opportunity to meet with one another and develop ideas to identify future directions in education, research, policy, and practice. Throughout the years and the work we have accomplished it has also been fun to see and network with colleagues. We were all committed to the same goals and found some humor in the challenges we encountered.

JSL: What focus would you like to see the Fellowship take in the future?

BS: The Fellowship is evolving from a “think tank” into an organization writing important position papers on various current health care topics. It must continue to be a valuable resource to the public, the profession, and the political arena. There will be an increasing need to mentor members for political leadership. I feel strongly that the Fellows are ready to become an important resource for developing global programs. Many Fellows are already working with nurses, organizations, and academic centers throughout the global community.

JSL: You are certainly deeply involved in many facets of national and international NP life. Where is the time for a personal life?

BS: I live in Delaware and Phoenix and thoroughly enjoy cultural activities, yoga and other exercise, and reading. I continue to travel extensively and mix professional commitments with pleasure. Recently I was in Helsinki, Finland for the ICN/APN network meeting and toured the Baltics and Morocco. It is always fun to get into New York City where I enjoy theater and ballet. I also continue to be professionally active with Nurse Consultant Associates and I recently had the opportunity to develop and teach a NP program in Taiwan.

JSL: Barbara, you have managed to combine retirement with continued professional involvement with energy and enthusiasm. You are a wonderful role model for future nurse practitioner leaders. Thank you for this interview.

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