

Elaine Cessna Oral History

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JT: My name is Juliette Tinney, I'm a student nurse at UNCW we're in Wilmington, North

Carolina on October 28th, 2010, and these are nursing interviews for the public health

association conference. Good morning!

EC: Good morning.

JT: What is your name?

EC: My name is Elaine Cessna.

JT: Okay and where were you born?

EC: I was born in Cumberland, Maryland.

JT: And when?

EC: July 26th, 1962.

JT: And where did you grow up?

EC: I grew up in Maryland.

JT: Great. And what brought you to North Carolina?

EC: I moved here after I graduated from Towson State University in '84.

JT: Tell me why you decided to become a nurse.

EC: I went to nursing school starting in '91 after the death of my first husband and I was left

with two children, and I decided that I wanted to go into nursing to give them a better life.

JT: Where and when did you go to nursing school?

EC: I got my Associates degree from Fayetteville Tech and graduated in '94. And I am currently

enrolled at Fayetteville State going for my BSN.

JT: Tell me a little bit about your nursing education especially as it relates to community and

public health

EC: Well I did the generic nursing program at that time in Fayetteville Tech and actually went

into public health straight from nursing school. This is the only career field that I have been in,

in nursing.

JT: So why did you decide to become a community health nurse?

EC: Honestly, I went into the public health field because at the time I was a single parent, and I was looking for something that I could work daytime hours, and didn't know exactly what my niche was in nursing, and discovered quite quickly that public health was the area that I belonged in.

JT: So tell me about your first job in community health.

EC: I started out in what was our county wellness program, working with the county employees, which I was with that from '94 until 2001 when the program folded. Then I went into adult health in the STD clinic where I became an STD nurse clinician through UNC at Chapel Hill. And I am still a nurse clinician through the STD clinic but I have moved out of that clinic and I am currently a nursing supervisor.

JT: So your current position?

EC: I am a Public Health Nurse Supervisor right below the Director of Nursing.

JT: Tell me your most memorable story about community health nursing. This can be a time that you made a significant contribution to your community or the people within your community, or a time something went horribly wrong, or something surprising that happened to you as a community health nurse, or a memory of a nurse that inspired you or anything else you would like to share. Most memorable story.

EC: I would have to say probably the most, the biggest thing that stands out most to me would be the incentive I was given throughout my career to help form me into the nurse I am today, and that would be through my Director of Nursing today. She has helped guide my career and helped encourage me along the way. But I think the things that stand out the most along the way would be as a nurse clinician and some of the things I faced in that field. And I've done a lot of learning and growing up along the way as well.

JT: If you had to do it again would you be a community health nurse, and why?

EC: Without a doubt. The public is in so much need of our care and that's what we're there for, and I would definitely do it again just to be there for the public, because the whole public is our patients.

JT: Is there anything else you would like to share with nurses in the future who are interested in community health nursing in 2010?

EC: The need is there, come join us.