

# Karen Copley, RN, PHN oral history 2010

Interview with Karen Copley (0:00-2:34)

KM: ...a nursing student. We are in Wilmington, North Carolina right now conducting an interview. It's October 28th, 2010 and we are at the Public Health Association Conference.

What is your name?

KC: Karen Copley.

KM: What year were you born?

KC: 1956.

KM: And where did you grow up?

KC: I grew up in Randolph County, North Carolina.

KM: Why did you decide to become a nurse?

KC: Well I really don't know. It sounded like it would be exciting. I don't have a real reason. I didn't have a mentor who was a nurse.

KM: Where did you go to nursing school?

KC: University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

KM: Tell us a little bit about your nursing education as it relates to your community and public health career.

KC: UNCG was big school that pushed public health nursing. Our dean, Dean Lewis, loved public health nursing. At one time you could find public health nurses from UNCG all over North Carolina. We could have an alumni association at our health department.

KM: Why did you decide to become a public health nurse?

KC: I loved it when I was in college. That was one of my best rotations, and I knew that's what I wanted after I graduated.

KM: tell us about your first job in community health.

KC: It's where I work now, at Davidson County health department. I have been there now 30 years. I love it. I've always liked public health nursing. We have hands-on nursing and we work very independently. We don't work under all that hospital type nursing.

KM: What is your current position?

KC: I'm the communicable disease supervisor for Davidson County Health Department.

KM: What's your most memorable story about community health nursing, if you have one?

KC: Well I have several, but I think we truly look at the whole family. It's not just going in to see one individual patient for one disease or whatever. We look at the whole family. Sometimes you can make a big difference with the whole family, you know. You go in and talk to the mom

about family planning and immunizations, and even check on the dogs and the cats to see if they have rabies vaccine.

KM: Very good. If you had to do it again would you be a community health nurse?

KC: Yes.

KM: Definitely? Good. Is there anything else you would like to share with nurses in the future who are interested in community health nursing?

KC: Community health nursing is where it's at. You can always do other types of nursing, but public health is very important. It's a very rewarding nursing profession.

KM: Alright, well thank you so much for your time.

KC: Okay thank you.