

Pam McCall Oral History

Pam McCall Oral History

EM: This is Emma McMantis an UNCW student nurse we are in Wilmington NC conducting interviews at the Public Health Association Conference it is October 28, 2010

EM: What is your name

PM: Pam McCall

EM: And where did you grow up

PM: I grew up in Gaston County right outside of Charlotte

EM: And why did you decide to become a nurse

PM: Well I actually got a degree from UNC Chapel Hill in communications but I never really worked in that field I got married and had children and stayed home and raised my children when I was doing that I did part time work with different people with this elderly lady to help take care of her and a lot of what I did was nursing type things I enjoyed it and I thought this might be a good career for me so I went back to nursing school as an older student and my younger son was in kindergarten and I became a nurse

EM: And where did you attend school

PM: I went to North Carolina Central University I transferred credits in but I received my bachelor's degree of nursing there

EM: Can you tell me a little bit about why you became a community health nurse in particular

PM: Well we call ourselves public health nurses instead of community health nurses it's a little different basically I always really enjoyed prevention part of nursing I wanted to prevent illness and help people to be healthier and not just deal with people who were really sick like in the hospital I worked in the hospital for 3 years and worked on a wellness committee in the hospital for staff and looked into ways for prevention and the job came up in the county health department so I took that job as a staff nurse

EM: Great what is your current position

PM: Now I am the director of nursing at the Chattahoochee County public health department

EM: Alright do you have a most memorable story about your public health nursing career

PM: Well Um I think that one thing that was really memorable to me is when I was working at Orange County working my first job as a public health nurse we had refugees that came into the county and we had a lot of TB in those populations I remember one young man that it was so difficult to get through to him through the culture with language barriers and interrupters to try and convince him that he was sick when he didn't think he was sick but then he had to take six months of treatment for TB when he didn't feel sick that was a real challenge with the cultural difference and the realization just because you tell somebody they need treatment they may not believe you if they don't feel like they're sick you know so that was a challenge he ended up being kind of a friend of mine and was a big buddy after that it was tough at first

EM: Okay if you had to do it all over again would you become a public health nurse

PM: Yes, I would to me it's one of the best forms of nursing I mean I haven't done all of them but I have done hospital nursing and in public nursing you get to operate with a lot more independence there is so many things you can do to be on the preventive side this is the best way to go

EM: Alright thank you is there anything else you would like to share with future public health nurses

PM: Well people view that you lose some nursing skills when you go into public health but I feel like you don't realize how many skills you use and you use a lot of critical thinking and I think it is a challenge and it is a great field for any nurse to go into

EM: Alright thank you so much

PM: Your welcome