

Felicia Reid, RN, PHN oral history 2010

Interview with Felicia Reid (2:35-8:14)

KM: My name is Katie McCollum. I am a UNCW nursing student. Today we are conducting an interview in Wilmington, North Carolina. It is October 28th, 2010 and we are at the Public Health Association Conference.

And what is your name?

FR: My name is Felicia Reid.

KM: And when were you born?

FR: I was born in Greensboro, North Carolina.

KM: And you grew up in Greensboro?

FR: I did.

KM: Why did you decide to become a nurse?

FR: I think I decided to be a nurse because I had an older cousin who was very influential in my life. She was going to go to nursing school. That's when I decided I wanted to be a nurse.

KM: And where did you go to nursing school?

FR: I went to North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro.

KM: Tell me about your nursing education and how it relates to public health.

FR: Well I went to a four year college and got a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree. The curriculum was pretty much like other universities. We had a community health rotation that I really enjoyed a lot. I like the fact that help was also out in the community and it wasn't always focused in the hospital as the perception had been to me growing up, that nursing occurred in the hospital. So going through my community health rotation I found out that it most certainly was going on out in the community as well.

KM: very good. When did you decide to become a community health nurse and why?

FR: Let's see. I worked in a hospital for about eight years and that during that time I worked twelve hour night shifts, so I had several days on and several days off. On the days off I found out about, the hospital where I worked they also were in partnership with the home health agency. They did home visits out in the community. So that's how I started doing home health or community health. And later I started working at a health department. In 1986 I started working in public health. Initially I started working in public health because I really wanted to spend more time with my young son and not have to work weekends and holidays. But then I found out that I really liked public health once I got started in it. Now it's been about 22 years that I have been in public health.

KM: What is your current position at the place you're working right now?

FR: My current position is director of nursing for all of our community health services, and those services can include our school health nursing program, maternity care coordination, childcare coordination, and daycare nursing. I think I'm leaving something out. Those are the main ones.

KM: What's a memorable story that you have thinking of community health? Is there one in particular?

FR: let's see, there are a lot of memorable stories. It was probably when I first started working at the health department, probably for or five years after I started doing maternity care coordination. That was when you going into their homes after the mamas had their babies and do post-partum assessments and newborn home assessments. I found out after I got there that the mom just need a whole lot of assistance, a whole lot of information. She was kind of fearful of taking care of the newborn. It was kind of the feeling that I got doing public health altogether, that it was really meaningful. The clients that I provided care to were really appreciative of care, and they appreciated that one-on-one, how you were able to build a rapport with them. They were more open to ask questions that they may not have felt that free to ask their obstetrician while they were getting their prenatal care. It was in the comfort of their own home. It really sunk in and I could see a positive outcome. I would come back later to see how things were going with the baby and with her. And she was a whole lot more upbeat and feeling a lot more confident in providing care to her baby and being a mom.

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

FR: Absolutely. I wish I had known that it was going to be this fulfilling when I first got out of nursing school. I probably would not have spent eight years in the hospital.

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

FR: I would say if you are interested in community health nursing that you are going to find out that you are even more involved and love it even more than you think you are right now. It really is fulfilling and it really is a lot, you do a lot of different things. It's not monotonous, you're not doing the same things every day. It's very rewarding. I think that you will absolutely make the right decision if you decide to do it.

KM; Well thank you so much for your time.

FR. Thank you.