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I went to Georgetown University School of Nursing. Graduated in 1964 and I can't say there was a revelation to become a nurse. When I was a Girl Scout we did service hours at the old Providence Hospital as sort of a candy striper type of thing. And I think from there it was just assumed that I would become a nurse. I had no objections to it. Back then, you either became a secretary a nurse or you worked at the five and dime... or the mills, since I grew up in Holyoke. And nursing seemed O.K.

(What brought you to Georgetown?)

Well, there were a few criteria. Having been raised Catholic it was supposed to be a Catholic school. My parents did not go to college and were determined their children were going to. So we were looking for a four year Catholic nursing school. I visited Boston College, took the admission test and actually met one of the girls who actually was later a classmate there. But the girls were living in what was then known as the combat zone. So momma nixed that right away. My other applications were Georgetown and Catholic University, both in Washington. My uncle was priest who went to Catholic University. He said you don't want to go there; it's full of nuns and priests. And Georgetown accepted me. So I went there in September of 1960 totally sight unseen. Had never been interviewed down there; had never been to Washington D.C. And middle of September I was launched.

(Now tell me a little about the school and the program. I take it you lived on campus?)

Oh yes. There was no idea of living off campus. No combat zone down there. We all lived in St. Mary's Hall all four years. The first floor was pretty much classrooms and administrative offices; the second floor was students; the third floor was nuns.

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Because we had nuns as our dean and there were nuns in the hospital. And that lasted until I think my senior year when we got a lay woman nurse as our dean and the nuns sort of disappeared. But that was where we lived all four years. No question about it.

We did some classes there on the first floor and other classes that were the college classes: the theology, philosophy, history, chemistry, and biology were all done on the main campus and with the premed students. And so we did the nursing stuff there and the college stuff on campus.

(I'd like you to tell me a little about the program, the class work as well I'd also like you to look at the clinical and how that was...)

We had no clinical until our junior year. The first two years were purely academic. I wasn't the greatest academic. But I passed, with a little help with logic. I wasn't really logical. He *[future husband- pre-med]* was the philosophy... I married my philosophy teacher. Extracurricular philosophy teacher. I did get through with average grades; there was no brilliance there. And we started our clinical in junior year and really just did a couple of hours a day and never had an entire shift. We did a grand total of two weeks on nights.

(This was the first clinical...)

The first clinical was junior year and we had more clinical in senior year but the first year I don't think we had more than a couple of hours at a time like three days a week. And senior year we did half days every day and then we did a whole two weeks of eleven to seven and they pulled the class at three o'clock in the morning, which is your most brilliant time of the day. And (laughs) we struggled to stay awake; between three and four; those were always critical hours. But there was really not a lot of clinical practice. Between my junior and senior year we had summers off; we were regular college. Freshman year we had about a month of

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summer school. Between Junior and senior year I worked here at Providence Hospital as a student nurse with the third year students who were ready to graduate. We did a lot of interchange: they knew how and I knew why. Which is exactly what we're discussing. So we'd get together at lunch time or at breaks and we would exchange this, and that was probably was my most valuable clinical experience all the time. Because we really got to do hands-on nursing.

(That would have included...what at that particular point?)

Well, back then you actually talked to patients and you made beds and you gave back rubs and might sit and talk with them. I did some time in pediatrics because the floor had a pediatrics unit and I spent a lot of time in their tonsillectomy unit. They would start tonsils at nine and you'd come in at ten to seven or something like that, so when the kids were coming back you do the little ice packs and ginger ale and that sort of thing to keep them comfortable and non hysterical. And other times the kids who were there for other reasons, we did everything except... I did everything except medications. But whatever the nurses would have been called upon to do we were doing because I was working with the girls who within a month were to be full fledged nurses.

(How, at that time, based on the fact that you had a junior year with very little clinical,, how was that arranged with Providence? What was the criteria for letting you...?)

I think it was because I was from Georgetown. It had some cache there. Yes. So I went and asked about working as a student nurse during the summer and I was accepted and given an assignment with other student nurses...

(Did you get an orientation?)

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Yea, there was some sort of orientation. That was fifty years ago, I don't really remember. But yea, there was some sort of an orientation but not like we would consider orientation now. It was sort of this is here and that was there. But yea it was great experience as far as I was concerned. And gave me something of a leg up when I got into my own school, back to Georgetown. I was never like I said before, I was never great as far as class room work went. I always got very good grades on the clinical. I was more of a doer than a thinker I think. But I enjoyed it more. I didn't like going to classes, not that I balked at it -- but it just wasn't my favorite thing to do. But I loved being on the floor with the patients and of course we had in addition to the student nurses, it was a medical school. So you had medical students and interns and residents who did all the things that nurses are doing now. We didn't draw blood, because that was their scut work to do. So we never learned to draw blood. There were things like that that other nursing schools had learned, but we didn't. And it was one of those things when you get a job where you need to do it, you learn how to do it there. All in all it was a good four years. Probably because I didn't know any better! But it was a good four years.

(Tell me a little about the program and the courses. How was it arranged? Was it like the medical surgical pediatrics, or did they...)

We had rotation of different services. I'd be on a medical... I spent most of my time actually on medical. They gave me very little surgical. But we did medical floors and we did the surgical floor and we did obstetrics and gynecology. And those were I guess the major ones.

(Did you have pharmacology course?)

Oh yes, we had pharmacology courses. I stunk at it! To this day I can't remember medicines. I can't even tell you what I'm taking. Which to his¹ annoyance, But I can

¹ Refers to husband, a physician.

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rely on him; I can read the label. Yes, we had pharmacology, we had chemistry. Here again, the chemistry course was terrible. I still remember the main part of we learned the phlogiston theory. And I remember him collapsing gas cans with negative pressure. That was sort of the highlight. We didn't even get all the way through the table of various elements. Which, when we got to pharmacology, really annoyed the pharmacology teacher because we really didn't have all the...

(Did you have bio-chem?)

No. No bio-chem. But we did the classroom work and learned like I said they knew how and I knew why. So we learned all the whys And then got to practice the how later. But during that time we had English classes, we had history classes, philosophy and theology because it was a Catholic school; a Jesuit Catholic school and what else did we have? I think most of the rest was... but we had all four years we had philosophy and theology... all four years English. History I think was a two year course. And then we also did rotations and visiting nurses. That was in senior year. There... most of the girls wound up going into DC. We had our little blue uniforms and a little overseas cap... and they went into DC all over and Wow, going into DC but you had that uniform and there was a respect for it so none of the girls had a problem. So they would go in and they would work with a visiting nurse to go to see her patients. They didn't actually have their own patients. Because I had access to a car, I was sent out to only Maryland. Only Maryland; it's beyond Chevy Chase and Bethesda. It was really out in the boonies in those days. Now it's suburbs with the big fancy houses. But it was like the farthest any nurse had been sent from Georgetown. Now they go to Guatemala and Ireland and all those places but that was a big adventure that I was sent way out there for a couple of months. But it was great fun I went around with that nurse out there and we got a lot of... It was very poor area out there and we had a lot of teenage pregnancies. People were living in hovels essentially. May not have plumbing and you had to go in and see the new

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mother. Well, we were in school; the prenatal in school and then we get to go to their houses afterwards and you have three, four generations living in a three room shack. And trying to instill basic sanitation for caring for the baby. Actually, I really liked that part. The only problem was well the office was a converted gas station. It was really cute and they would hold maternity clinics in there: female clinics. And when they talked about birth control and showed the various methods of birth control, we weren't allowed to go because we were from the Catholic school. So we never got to see a diaphragm. We knew they were doing that in the other room but we could never do that. We also went into the schools for various other things that the school nurses would do. I mean now you've got school nurses and visiting nurses; back then one did both and it was a small community anyway. But it was a wonderful experience; that, I really liked.

(Where did you for psych?)

Oh Yea! Psych. Where did we do psychiatry? We did psychiatry at Walter Reed Army hospital actually. I was there during the Cuban missile crisis which meant the patients didn't react to that because it was a military thing. That was interesting to see and we also had to socialize with them. They had little dances and things like that that the nurses had to do. But that's where we did our psychiatry and we assisted with electro-shock therapy. That was awful. But that was the thing of the day back then in the sixties so we did that there.

And we did a TB rotation at a TB hospital somewhere out in Maryland someplace. I don't remember the name; I haven't remembered it for years and I don't even know where it was; it was somewhere way out in Maryland. And we got to learn basically sterile procedures so you don't get it from them and you know, all that sort of thing, and I got to see... my only time I got to see an autopsy was on a TB patient. That was sort of interesting and I didn't pass out so that was okay. I forgot about those

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two rotations: the psych and the TB were off campus, definitely; I had forgotten that.

(...Communicable diseases.... So when you were ready to graduate, where did you go from there?)

I got a job at Georgetown University Hospital, working in the clinical study unit which was one wing of the second floor of Georgetown Hospital which was run by NIH and they had... we didn't do anything like the hospital; this was purely self contained and we had kidney dialysis there; it was the first dialysis. The dialysis machine was made from an old Bendix washing machine, the kind with the swisher in the middle and the chemicals were put together in the laboratory by the renal group and membranes were made out of Saran wrap or whatever proceeded Saran wrap. And so that was the first dialysis and also they did Washington area's first kidney transplant and I had the joy of taking care of Rudy D. who was the Peruvian air force pilot. I still remember that. I took care of him for months. Because back then you get a kidney transplant, you were in isolation like forever. And I remember sitting with him during dialysis and then after the transplant. And at that point I was pregnant and got to sit watching somebody upchuck for eight hours. (Laughs). it was really... They were doing me a big favor by giving me a lighter load. But it was fascinating, I still remember from 1964 so obviously that made an impression on me.

And there was a twelve year old on dialysis who had a kidney transplant and he did not survive. And there was an older gentleman who was having abdominal dialysis; I forgot what they call it, when they put the fluid in and leave it in for a little while and then dump it out.

(Peritoneal dialysis)

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Peritoneal dialysis. Thank you. I told you I had forgotten more than I ever learned (laughs). So that was a different kind of dialysis. We also did metabolic studies where there were people who were not sick who volunteered and they would have particular diets and everything was measured in and out. You'd bring the tray and know exactly what was on it; they measured. Everything was measured when it came back to the kitchen. They also measured what went in and out of the patient by using little dye capsules and we had to find when those dye capsules came out and they went in a tin hat, you know, that sort of thing. So we had all that charting and all that stuff.

I don't remember what some of the other ones were; the metabolic and the renal were the primary things I think that we did there.

(It sounds like you enjoyed it.)

I worked there for nine months. From the time I graduated to the time my first was born.

(Question. When you graduated and went into your first position, were you oriented and how prepared did you feel at that time?)

There was some sort of orientation I don't know how long it was or what they did exactly but yea, we were oriented to what we were going to do. And I felt very good with it. I didn't have any... I wasn't afraid of doing it and I sort of just jumped in and did it, unlike some other jobs that I (laughs) but that's another story forty years later. But I had no trepidation about doing that. There's that thing about being young and dumb but maybe that helped. It was good; it was very good. And at one point going on between and around children, I would work three nights a week; eleven to seven, when he was home during his medical school and internship and residency. And they were very good about letting me work and I had applied for a job at Georgetown and I was told I couldn't work there because my husband was an

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intern at the time and I might hear something derogatory about him and it might affect me. So I said the heck with it and I went to Sibley Hospital where I was hired on the spot. I had two toddlers and one strapped to my back. And she said, "when can you start?" So I worked a couple of nights a week and I was rotating: I was a float, I didn't have... the only thing that negative about that experience was that I was oriented to the OBGYN section one night when one lady was aborting. She had been given a saline fusion and was aborting which... having been raised Catholic and being against abortion was wrenching. Fortunately I was working with an aide who had worked there forever and knew what to do and did everything. The next morning I told them don't ever put me in that position again because I had certain moral and ethical feelings about this. And they never did. I rotated to different places there and it was a good experience.

I also at some point worked for a pediatrician in his office. And it was similar to what I wound up with later. His wife was the office manager. And I also... it was a learning experience for what the future would be.

I went many years without working because he was in the service so we were away and the kids were growing up and then,... when we moved here in '76 I got a job at Heritage Hall nursing home and my primary criteria for that was you can't do too much damage at night. Not having been in nursing for a while, all I had to learn was about insulin and a few little drugs and learn nightly evacuations. And everybody was given an 'urge to go' in the evening. Which means shortly after I arrived everybody was pooping. I worked there for about six months and I got a job in Springfield as an instructor in a nursing assistant program. And I worked there for six months. I left there because of an ethical dispute. They were charging these girls some outrageous amount of money to take this course. They were charging like \$800 for this eight week course, which was a lot of money.

(Who was this?)

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It was a private firm and I disagreed with the people who owned it. And they were being told they could work anywhere. And that was at a time when hospitals were no longer just hiring aides, they were having their own instruction programs for the aides, so the only place these girls could work would in nursing homes. By the second time around I said that's it. This is a deception, essentially. One of my students did go on to Western Mass Hospital and got her LPN but I guess most of them wound up in nursing homes.

And then after that I worked for about six months at Noble Hospital on two north. Nights again as the floor nurse and that was a little scary at first because I had always worked with somebody else and it was me and an aide. It was me and an aide which was the normal way of doing it then. But I had never had to rely on me to be the one who knew what was going on. Fortunately the aide had been there like forever so we worked well together.

After about six months there I went to work as *[my husband's]* office manager and johnny-coat washer and front desk person and whatever was called for. We had other people working for us but that was basically... we were all cross trained: anybody could do the desk and anybody could set a patient up to see the doctor and that sort of thing, so that was good.

When the hospital took over the practice, I went to visit *[interviewer]* and got a job as a visiting nurse. And *[you]* took a BIG chance on me at that point because I really didn't have the background and experience. But I really liked it and I did that until other administration took over that had no idea about medical care or nursing and were bossing us around to do things that we did not feel were right. So I quit! And that was my last job... fourteen years ago.

(O.k. Was there anything else that you would like to share going back to your experiences as a student and new graduate?)

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I don't think so. The thing that had come to me that was sort of prominent was the thing at Providence Hospital where I knew why and they knew how. That was a good learning experience. But I think all in all I didn't do too badly, all those years. I really don't miss it a whole lot. Every once and a while I think about it. I would never go into a hospital; it scares me to death just to go visit somebody with all the machinery and everything else that I have no idea about. The new medications and the... everything else. It's so changed that it would take a year of orientation to work there. And a refresher course primarily.

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