



# PUGET SOUND QUARTERLY

Oncology Nursing Society

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## 2004 McCORKLE LECTURE

# Nurses Significantly Influence Quality Care

**Ruth McCorkle PhD, FAAN**  
Yale University School of Nursing  
PSONS Symposium Speaker

**T**his past March I was asked by the planning committee to give the McCorkle lectureship at the annual PSONS conference to celebrate our 25th year as a specialty organization. I was overwhelmed with a sense of pride of how much we have accomplished and yet quickly reminded of the many challenges ahead. In accepting this speaking engagement, I wanted to say something meaningful to my colleagues and friends, but I also realized many of the people in attendance didn't know me. I shared with the group a brief history of how we got started; then summarized my research and how I thought the future of oncology nursing could be influenced by advanced practice.

I have always felt my life was blessed when Jeanne Quint Benoliel supported my initial appointment as an Assistant Professor at the University of Washington School of Nursing in 1975. Together we created a graduate program entitled "Oncology Transition Services" that was community based and prepared graduates as advanced practice nurses in oncology. As we graduated students from the program, they became the leaders of oncology nursing in Seattle, the region, and surrounding states. My good friend Dr. Gail



Past McCorkle lecturers gather for a photo at the annual PSONS conference. Left to right: Ann McElroy, Janet Applebaum, Renee Yankee, Judy Petersen, Ruth McCorkle, Patty Mulhern, and Mona Stage.

Hongladarom and I wrote a training grant funded by the National Cancer Institute. As that grant was implemented, we developed an education training program to teach nurses in their own communities basic oncology content and skills. Our original group was called the Regional Oncology Nurses (RONS) and included nurses from Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Alaska, and British Columbia. As part of that grant, an annual conference was planned and has continued through the years today. I was fortunate to be elected the first president and when I moved

to Pennsylvania, this lectureship was established in my honor.

Since 1975, I have had an academic appointment in a School of Nursing and part of my faculty responsibility has included the development of a program of research. I have been fortunate to have received continuous extramural funding for my research as a principle or co-principle investigator. The overall purpose of my research has been to test the effects of the advanced practice nurse on patient and caregiver outcomes. A list of the grant titles, funding

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