

A Tribute to Mary Edwards on the Occasion of Her Retirement
(ACOTUP Newsletter Submission – Deadlined – August 29th to Editor for September Newsletter)

Mary grew up a country girl. She and her brother had the good fortune to be raised on a farm in Jordan Station, Ontario, close to the lake and surrounded by the Niagara Escarpment and green fields. Much to her father's surprise, she elected to go into the Occupational Therapy program at the University of Toronto, where, for all intents and purposes, she was a model student. However, from time to time, even today, a slow smile does cross her face when recalling her student days – enigmatic even then!



Following graduation, she returned to her own neck of the woods and was employed in St. Catharine's, Ontario at the Rehabilitation Centre. Over the first few years, she rose to a leadership position and also started to become involved in the newly developing, and somewhat controversial, occupational therapy educational program at Mohawk College. Mary was involved as one of the key clinical preceptors within the broader community.

Around that time, McMaster University Medical Centre was seeking a senior OT for the adult physical dysfunction programs. Mary decided to apply and participated in an interview of now historic account – sitting on Sue Baptiste's back deck, drinking a refreshing beverage, while watching Sue's twin sons who both had chicken pox. Needless to say, Mary got the job – what flexibility she showed given the circumstance! After her move into Hamilton, Mary joined a gourmet cooking class and voila, a new couple was formed – she met her soon-to-be spouse, Dave, over a wok and now they are celebrating over twenty years of marriage.

As hospital structures changed, Mary accepted new responsibilities and challenges, eventually becoming one of the Practice Leads in the OT Department at Hamilton Health Sciences. Later still, she assumed more general management roles, and is still involved in senior project work. Mary has been most recently the Clinical Manager of the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) at Hamilton Health Sciences overseeing client care and therapeutic staff in that role. In addition to this work, an opportunity arose to become more involved in the educational process and she accepted a secondment to the School of Rehabilitation Science as the Professional Practice Coordinator (PPC) in 2002.

Mary has been the PPC for the MSc OT Program at McMaster University for 6 years, and has amassed a 30 year history of dedication overall to the education and development of student OTs at both Mohawk College and McMaster University. Simultaneously, Mary has taught in other areas of the curriculum, focussing on older adults. Research has been an ongoing involvement for Mary who has produced many papers for publications, and numerous presentations to educate and expand the field of occupational therapy. Mary has capably represented occupational therapy at McMaster University in a variety of committees both at the local and national levels.

Despite these full and far-reaching responsibilities, Mary has always held a high level of dedication to her family, community and church. She is an Elder and spends a great deal of time and effort ensuring that those in her church community are involved and valued. Mary is also an accomplished gardener evidenced by her beautifully designed and maintained gardens and her passion to improve and augment these. In the kitchen, Mary is gifted in her culinary skills and makes the best cheesecakes ever!

In all things that Mary tackles, there are consistent patterns in her modus operandi that impact everything she touches. These include an openness and willingness to bring people together to work collaboratively and a sincere devotion to excellence and comprehensiveness. Mary is never at ease with the status quo when improvements are possible. Through careful attention to details and a keen eye for improving processes and situations, Mary is remarkable in her dynamic approach to questioning and shaping as she champions positive change in so many aspects of her professional and personal life.

It has been a sincere pleasure to work with and know Mary over the past many years. She leaves not only a large footprint on the topography of occupational therapy at McMaster and in the profession generally, as well as large shoes to fill in the future. We wish Mary every greatest happiness as she embarks on this new adventure in retirement and we will miss her greatly.

Happy Retirement, Mary!!

If you would like to extend your wishes to Mary,
she can be reached at edwardsm@mcmaster.ca