

ONA Family Ties

To mark Nursing Week 2020, we bring you this special feature section celebrating nursing families within ONA.

FEATURE
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Amy Frew, RN

When you talk about nursing being “all in the family,” one just has to look at ONA member Amy Frew, RN, and the three generations of nurses and five close nursing relatives in her family. Most have spent their entire nursing careers at their community hospital, Renfrew Victoria Hospital, ONA Local 49, in Renfrew, Ontario.

Amy's grandmother, Jean Miller, RN, who passed away in 2018 at the age of 96, worked as a nurse at Renfrew Victoria Hospital for 40 years, and was a proud founding member of ONA, established in 1973. She worked in a variety of settings, but it was hospital obstetrics she loved the most.

Amy's mom, Sue McLaughlin, RN, is an emergency room nurse at Renfrew Victoria. In her 41 years as a nurse and ONA member, McLaughlin has worked in intensive care, chronic care, and medical/surgical units, and also as a float nurse.



Amy Frew's grandmother Jean as a nursing student in 1943.

Amy's sister Katie McLaughlin, RN, is a surgical float nurse at Kingston General Hospital, ONA Local 99. She has been an ONA member for three years.

Cousin Ashley Miller, RN, also a nurse at Renfrew Victoria, currently works in the ER and has worked in the special care and medical/surgical units. She has been an ONA member for eight years.

Amy's aunt, Linda Horne, RN (Ret.), spent most of her nursing career working in British Columbia and Alberta.

This brings us to Amy herself, an ONA member of 15 years and an ER nurse at Renfrew Victoria. Frew says one of the reasons she went into nursing was because she saw the love and respect people had for her mother and grandmother, and was deeply touched by what they could do for people who were at their most vulnerable.

“The most rewarding thing about nursing is having the opportunity to impact someone's life. With all our professional skills as nurses, I still find the best part of it is giving a hug and support when someone is overwhelmed or has had a loss,” she says.

Amy says the reason there are so many nurses in her family is that they all have the common trait of wanting to care for others, and find a “beautiful balance of common sense and skill.”

Amy works periodically with her mom Sue in their rural ER, and while there can be a lot of teasing back and



Three generations of nurses: Amy, mom Sue and sister Katie.

forth – when appropriate – they share the experience of being valued and important to patients at their most vulnerable.

When Amy's grandmother Jean was admitted to the same hospital she worked at for 40 years, Renfrew Victoria, Amy and her sister Katie and cousin Ashley rallied around to provide extra support for her.

“There was always a beautiful connection with her; we all credit grandma for a lot of decisions we made in our lives – including our choice of careers! Being able to share those last moments was such an honour.”

Amy says that both her mom and grandmother were honest about the pros and cons of nursing, including shiftwork and missing family get-togethers. Aside from the rewards of nursing, one of the benefits in having close family in the profession is that they all understand the challenges and are forgiving of the occasional missed family event.

Elaine Montgomery, RN

A nurse at London Health Sciences Centre, Local 100, Elaine shares her nursing heritage with her maternal grandmother Hilda Margaret (Nisbet) Logan, seen here in her 1928 graduation photo (at right).

Says Elaine, “I used to love hearing my grandmother’s stories of riding in the back of a speeding ambulance, driven by the undertaker, who was yelling at her to open the windows for ‘Oxygen, Hilda, Oxygen!’, or racing out of the farmhouse when a neighbour came to say someone wasn’t well and needed care.”

“I am so proud to carry on my grandmother’s legacy. She was a hard-working, adventurous, caring lady who was an asset to her profession.”

Elaine has worked on the thoracic surgery unit for most of her 19 years as a nurse, and recently became a charge nurse for ENT, burns and plastics, and thoracic surgery. “It’s a different kind of nursing from what my grandmother did, but the same premise exists across the generations; the desire to care for others. I am so proud to carry on my grandmother’s legacy. She was a hard-working, adventurous, caring lady who was an asset to her profession. I try every day to be the same.”



Grandmother Hilda Margaret (Nisbet) Logan.

Jennifer Cooney

Jennifer Cooney’s family skipped a generation when it comes to nursing.

Jennifer loves to watch the nursing process in action when her mother and daughter interact. Jennifer’s mother, Heather Clement (currently working), and her mother-in-law Janet Cooney (now retired), are RNs. Her daughter

Kelsey, Heather’s granddaughter, is in the final semester of her nursing degree program.

Heather is a long-time ONA member and RN, working at Almonte General Hospital for the past 47 years. She continues to work full time in obstetrics. Kelsey, aged 23, is completing her clinical placement at Almonte in the ER. Jennifer says that Heather has been an unbelievable resource for Kelsey, from reading her papers before submission to studying medications on cue cards while on family vacation. In fact, Heather

“I have loved watching the bond grow between these two amazing ladies as they both share their passion for nursing with the rest of us.”

has been a preceptor for many nursing students over the years. Says Jennifer, “I have loved watching the bond grow between these two amazing ladies as they both share their passion for nursing with the rest of us. I feel truly blessed to have my mother inspire my daughter and show her you can still love nursing after 47 years.”



Jennifer’s daughter Kelsey (left) takes time to say hello to her grandmother, Heather, after wrapping up a 12-hour shift in the ER.

Marg Harrison

With five generations of nurses, Marg’s family likes to joke that they are “either the sickest family around or the healthiest.”

Her maternal grandmother, Queenie E. McPeak, was a nursing sister in England but was forced to resign, as was the norm, when she married Chelsey Gray in 1910. She emigrated with Chesley to Canada and had two daughters, Joan Gray Usher, (Marg’s aunt) and younger sister Ruth Gray Menzies (Marg’s mom), both of whom became RNs in Nova Scotia. Ruth later moved to Ontario and was an ONA member for years until her passing.

Marg was a registered nursing assistant (RNA) – now called a registered practical nurse – until her retirement in 1998. Marg’s second oldest granddaughter, Allison E. Savoie, the only family member who is currently an ONA member, works in the ICU at Sudbury’s Health Sciences North. Marg’s daughter, Barbara, went back to school and became an RNA. Marg’s son’s wife, Shelley Willard Harrison, was an ONA member for years but is now with OPSEU, working at the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). Marg’s eldest granddaughter, Samantha D. Savoie, is a registered practical nurse in North Bay.

Ingrid Garrick, RN

There are 10 nurses in Ingrid Garrick's family, including herself.

Given her family history of blazing trails for Black nurses in Ontario, it is no surprise Garrick is also an ONA leader and human rights and equity activist. The Bargaining Unit President at Toronto's Princess Margaret Hospital, ONA Local 97, Ingrid Garrick regularly attends ONA meetings and workshops promoting human rights and equity. Garrick's activism was ignited by her Aunt Valcina Garrick's experience in Toronto when she was denied a position as head nurse at a home for the aged. Valcina successfully appealed the decision at the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal and went on to work as assistant Director of Public Health and then Director for the City of Etobicoke.

Ingrid's family history:

- Aunt Isa Garrick graduated in nursing from the University of Toronto and went on to obtain her masters in nursing from Columbia University. Isa now teaches nursing at Columbia and works as the Director of Nursing at a veterans' hospital in New York.
 - Aunt Vie Sheppard, first to be trained, worked as a nurse in St. Vincent.
 - Aunt Garidella Garrick worked at Toronto's Riverdale Hospital as a registered nursing assistant until retiring in the early 90s.
 - Aunt Bertina Matthews worked in a retirement home until her early 80s.
 - Cousin Monica Garrick worked as an RN at Princess Margaret until her death in 1982.
 - Cousin Donna Garrick is a licensed practical nurse (LPN) working at a Family Clinic in Brooklyn, New York.
 - Cousin Drina Young is an LPN working triage in a rehab facility in Atlanta, Georgia.
- The newest addition to the Garrick nursing "sorority" is niece Tania Garrick, RN MScN. While not a member of ONA, she attempted to organize the nurses at the outpatient facility where she works and plans to keep on trying.



ONA human rights activist and front-line leader Ingrid Garrick. Inset: Ingrid's Aunt Valcina at graduation in the 1970s.

Being an ONA leader compounds the satisfaction Ingrid feels in being a nurse. "I love nursing and to be able to help our members," says Garrick.

Karen Bertrand, RN

ONA Board Member Karen Bertrand, RN, has a strong multi-generational connection to nursing as her great aunt, mother and nephew are all nurses.

A graduate of St. Clair College in 1975, Karen worked in long-term care and then for a community clinic before taking a position at Sun Parlor Home for the Aged, where she became the Bargaining Unit President, then Local 8 Coordinator and then the Region 5 Vice-President. She is now serving her seventh term (12th year) on ONA's

Board of Directors representing the nurses in the Counties of Bruce, Grey, Huron, Perth, Oxford, Middlesex, Lambton, Elgin, Kent and Essex.

Karen's great aunt Jessie Woof trained in the UK, worked in multiple clinical settings and then worked in long-term care after immigrating to Santa Monica, California. Karen's mother, Joan (Woof) Jones, trained in Toronto at the Hospital for Sick Children, graduated in 1953 and then attained her BScN in 1983. She was a strong ONA activist and a member of the RNAO. She finished her career as a public health nurse at the Windsor-

Essex County Health Unit and served as the ONA Local Treasurer.

Karen's nephew Jamie Young graduated in 2017 from the University of Windsor collaborative program with Lambton College and now works full time in long-term care at Henley Place in London, ONA Local 45, where he is the Bargaining Unit President, the Labour-Management chair, Negotiations chair and is the lead on workload and professional responsibility.

Karen says it was early influences in her family, being the eldest of six children, that taught her about responsibility and caring for others.

She says Jamie demonstrated kindness, empathy and a desire to help the elderly as a young boy. He recognized early that he would make a good nurse, and discovered leadership capabilities along the way.



From left to right, Karen Bertrand's mother Joan in 1953, Karen in 1975, and nephew Jamie in 2017 – three generations of nurses!



Georgia and her mom Susan MacKinlay in 1995.

Georgia Norgate, RN

When she was in kindergarten, Georgia told her teacher she was going to be a nurse.

Coming from a long line of nurses and doctors, it wasn't such a surprise. Her grandfather, Archie MacKinlay, was a popular general surgeon in Sarnia, and her grandmother, Mid MacKinlay, was a nurse, who stayed home to raise six children. Georgia's mother, Susan, left her career as a supply teacher to pursue nursing, but dropped out of nursing school when her father, George, passed

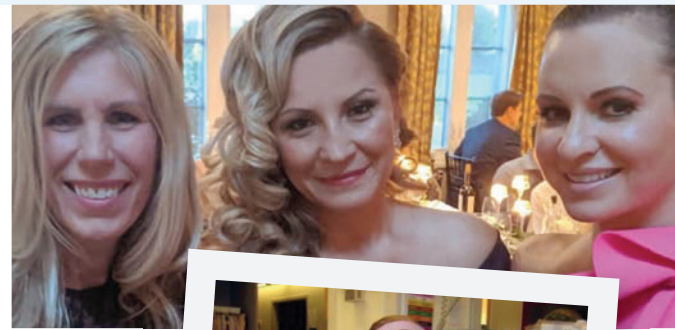
away. At the time of his passing, Georgia was in her second year. Despite her grief, Georgia persisted. Her mother returned to nursing school a year after her husband died and graduated at the very same time as Georgia. They sat side-by-side to write the nursing exam. "We got through it together," says Georgia. While her mother went back to teaching, Georgia continued to work as a critical care nurse for 25 years, as well as 11 years as a travel nurse in the United States. "Nursing will always be a bond between me and my mother. It's something we both worked at through adversity," she says.

Nadine Pahor, RN

Nadine was in her first year of kinesiology at the University of Waterloo. She didn't like the program and wasn't sure what else she should do.

"I knew I loved to help people and I knew I loved science. I called my cousin Cynthia (Cindy) Chmeil, an ER nurse, and she described a typical day for a nurse and what the role entailed," she says. "I learned that it goes beyond the personal care of the patient and that it demands a lot of science and critical thinking skills. I ended up in nursing at Ryerson University, and loved it from my first placement until my last."

Now an ONA member, Nadine works in cardiovascular intensive care (CVICU) at Southlake Hospital in Newmarket. Cindy, also an ONA member, is there in surgical admissions. Working alongside her friend and ONA member Adriana Jermolow for eight years in CIVCU, Adriana met and married Nadine's cousin, Peter, which makes her nurse number three in the family. And wait... Adriana's mom is also a nurse! The last connection is Nadine's other cousin Peter, who is in a relationship with nursing student Margarita Machura, doing her final placement at Southlake. If they marry, well you know the rest....



Left to right, Adrianna, Margarita and Nadine.

Nadine – proud to be a nurse!



Elizabeth and mom Shirley with Elizabeth's baby Nora. Inset: Shirley's mother Joan Ferguson as a nurse-in-training in 1945.

Shirley Hill, RN

Nursing has always provided interesting conversation in our family, Shirley Hill says.

"None of us ever regretted our decision to become nurses, but discussions with potential nurses in the family would certainly be about the realities of nursing today.

We've all done our share of shift work, as hard as it is on everyone."

Shirley's mother Joan Ferguson trained as a nurse. Shirley herself has worked as a nurse in hospital, nursing home and primary care settings and has been an ONA member for nine years with Local 49. Daughter Elizabeth

worked for several years at Renfrew Victoria and Arnprior District Hospitals and then worked at a nursing outpost station in Nunavut with her partner Jason Watt, also a nurse. They both are back in Ontario and ONA members of Local 49 at Arnprior Hospital.

Elizabeth's paternal grandmother Mona Hill served as a nursing sister in southern England during World War II. She returned to work at Renfrew Victoria and Pembroke Civic hospitals, did private home nursing and ended her career well into her 60s. Elizabeth's paternal aunt, Margaret (Hill) Harrison, worked as a nurse for 46 years, approximately 30 of that as an ONA member. Sister-in-law Judith Finlay Hill is a nurse in England. Niece Tracy Barr is a nurse in British Columbia.



Muriel Vandepol, RN

From a field hospital in World War I, a “fever” hospital in Edinburgh, to providing health education and the many aspects of public health nursing for the Region of Waterloo health department, Muriel Vandepol’s multi-generational family of nurses covers a lot of territory.

Mary Yeoman (Muriel’s grandmother) was a field hospital nurse in Palestine during World War I. Maisie Yeoman, Mary’s oldest daughter and Muriel’s aunt, did three years of training in fever/infectious diseases in Edinburgh, Scotland. She emigrated to Canada and became head nurse in the OR at Royal Victoria in Montreal. Muriel’s mother Jean (Yeoman) Peebles trained at the Royal Victoria in Glasgow. She emigrated to Canada and went to work as a midwife in nursing outposts in northern Ontario.

Muriel’s twin sisters have mirrored each other for nearly four decades:

Mary (Peebles) Reed, an ONA member for 38 years, has worked in coronary care at London Health Sciences for 36 of them. Moira (Peebles) Barnes, has also been an ONA member for 38 years and worked in London Health Sciences recovery for 36 of them.

This brings us to Muriel, an ONA member for 34.5 years, working as a Waterloo public health nurse. She has also served in many ONA executive positions throughout her career, including Local 15 Treasurer, Bargaining Unit Vice-President, Bargaining Unit President (six years) and Local Coordinator since 2007.



Top: Muriel Vandepol. Bottom: Twin sisters and RNs at London Health Sciences, Moira Reed and Mary Barnes. Photo at right: Muriel’s mom Jean Peebles, on the left, outpost nursing with a colleague in the early 1950s.

Muriel says a conversation with her mom helped her decide what path to take. “I was trying to decide between nursing and being a dietitian. My mom said, ‘It’s simple, do you want to work with people or food?’ That made up my mind right then and there.”

Zak Ashley, RN

Zak Ashley’s mother, Marilyn, graduated from the Fanshawe College School of Nursing, Woodstock Campus in 1983.

She started her RN career at Wingham and District Hospital in 1984 and through the years, she worked in almost every nursing department the small hospital had to offer.

Growing up, Zak saw how dedicated his mother was to her nursing career, and could see how respected she was in their small community. In Grade 12, Zak was given the opportunity to shadow his mom at work. Then and there, he decided that nursing would be his career. He graduated from the

University of Windsor in 2014 with a BScN and began his RN career at Wingham and District Hospital.

Zak says he and his mother have shared many experiences together as co-workers at Wingham.

“I administered my first medication IV direct with my mom’s guidance. We have even saved a couple of lives together,” he says.

“With her encouragement, I left Wingham for a higher acuity experience. I eventually came back to work as a charge nurse like my mom. Luckily, I will always have my mom to look to for guidance. She endured years’ worth of change in the nursing profession, and in 2019, after 35 years, she retired and passed the torch on to me.”



Marilyn Ashley and son Zak have often worked side-by-side.

Elizabeth Romano, RN Lisa Romano, RN

Picture showing up to work and finding that the senior ranking ONA union rep in your Bargaining Unit is your mom!

That's what it's like for Lisa Romano, RN, whose mother, Elizabeth (Liz), is the Local 97 Coordinator at the Toronto General site of the University Health Network (UHN) where they both work.

Liz Romano started her nursing career in 1980. Lisa launched her career in 2017. The third member of their trio of family nurses was Lisa's grandmother (Liz's mom), Helen Margaret Leddy, who embarked on her nursing career in 1945 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Toronto. Together, they have covered ER (grandmother Helen), medical/surgical and ICU (Liz) and head, neck and plastics, gynecology, oncology and urology (Lisa).

A member of ONA's provincial Nursing Week Advisory Team, Lisa hopes to one day step into a leadership role with ONA like her mom. Her mom would like nothing better. Says Liz, "Knowing what ONA has done for me over the years, I want that for Lisa. She has all the skills necessary to be a great ONA leader!"



In the photo above, Liz (left) and Lisa Romano, mom and daughter RNs at UHN. Inset: grandmother Helen Leddy in 1945.

Kaley Lapierre, RN

Kaley and her mom, Karen Lapierre, are both currently working as nurses. Kaley is an ONA member of eight years, working in the ER/ICU at Pembroke Regional Hospital, ONA Local 49. She is also a clinical instructor at Algonquin College. She had twin sons five months ago and is currently on maternity leave, but studying for her masters in nursing part time. Kaley's mom is the manager of home and community care at the Champlain Local Health Integrated Network and has a specialty in geriatrics. Kaley's grandmother on her mom's side, Doreen Novak, is a retired nurse but still very involved in her community. In her 80s, Doreen works at the local soup kitchen and delivers food to those in need.

Tina O'Malley, RN

An RN and former ONA Bargaining Unit President (two years) and Treasurer, Tina currently works at Valley Manor Nursing Home with her daughter, Megan O'Malley, who is in her last semester to become an RPN. Tina's mother, Carolyn Beanish, is a personal support worker. They all work at Valley Manor.

Kimberley Evans, RN

Kimberley Evans, the Local 35 Coordinator and Bargaining Unit President at the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integrated Network, is the daughter of Sue Gelinas, RN, the former Bargaining Unit President of the same unit. When she was the Bargaining Unit President, Sue led her members during the memorable Community Care Access Centre strike of 2015, during a frigid winter. Approximately 2,500 nurses from across the province went on strike, including Sue's crew, for 17 days. Kimberley has two aunts who are also nurses.

Shaune MacLeod, RN

Shaune MacLeod is an ONA member at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC), ONA Local 100. Her mother Janet Margurite Harding, is a retired nurse and her sister Janet Isabel Harding, is a nurse and ONA member at LHSC.

Rebecca Park, RN

Rebecca is an ONA member and clinical nurse educator at London Health Sciences Centre. Her grandmother, Edith Turner, graduated as a nurse from Grace Hospital in Windsor in 1941. Part of the movement to organize nurses in Ontario, Edith was a founding member of ONA in 1973. Says Rebecca, "I am proud to be able to carry on the legacy that my grandmother and her coworkers left to the nurses of the next generation." Rebecca's cousin, Kayley Turner, is an RN at Trillium Health Partners, Credit Valley.



1941 graduation photo of Rebecca Park's grandmother, Edith Turner, a founding ONA member.