Leadership & Professional Development

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Legacy of a Leader: An Interview With Pearl Moore

In 1975, a small corps of dedicated nurses turned a vision into reality: establishing a national organization for cancer nurses. The new organization, the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), would allow them to formally learn from one another, to support each other, and to create dialogue to improve clinical cancer care, education, and research. At the time, Pearl Moore was a graduate student in a new oncology clinical nurse specialist master’s degree program at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania. Several oncologists and faculty members told her about the group of dedicated oncology nurses, and Moore became interested and involved immediately. She became a charter member of ONS—chairing the Bylaws Committee in the Society’s critical formative years and serving as treasurer of the Board of Directors. Over time, as the organization grew to more than 5,500 members and 37 chapters by 1983, a need arose for more formal organizational leadership. Moore was hired as the Society’s first executive director in 1983 and transitioned to the role of chief executive officer in 1999. Throughout her career, Moore has worked tirelessly to support oncology nurses and volunteer leaders, igniting in them a passion for providing high-quality cancer care and advocating for patients and families. She also has nurtured the development of ONS and its affiliated corporations—the ONS Foundation, Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation, and ONSEdge—as well as her own professional development.

On January 31, 2007, after more than two decades of exemplary service, Pearl Moore, RN, MN, FAAN, will retire from her position as ONS chief executive officer. In this edition of “Leadership and Professional Development,” she reflects on the challenges that she experienced when transitioning to a formal leadership role, describes what she believes are traits of an effective leader, and shares her belief that all nurses are true leaders.