

Remembering my friend...

Jane L. Forrest, RDH, EdD



Numerous announcements of Denise (Nina) Bowen's passing on February 17, 2019, have already appeared in dental and dental hygiene publications. You may have already read about Denise's many accomplishments in dental hygiene and how she was considered one of the top leaders and thinkers in dental hygiene research. You may

already be familiar with her many publications in the peer reviewed literature as well as her textbook contributions and authorships. Denise is also well known for her many years of service to Idaho State University Department of Dental Hygiene. Unlike those memorials that have recounted her life and the many contributions she made to dental hygiene education and research, or the recognition she received through many awards, this remembrance provides a more personal accounting of her work and our friendship.

In 1993, our research team at Thomas Jefferson University (TJU) received a grant to establish the National Center for Dental Hygiene Research (National Center). One objective of the grant was to assist dental hygiene researchers in mentoring a collaborative team of faculty and clinicians based at different universities across the U.S. who would use the American Dental Hygienists' Association's National Dental Hygiene Research Agenda to develop a protocol to advance our knowledgebase. We accomplished this through a 5-day Summer Research Institute (SRI) program over 3 years. I was very fortunate to have Denise and Peggy Walsh appointed as Visiting Professors at TJU to assist with the implementation of the SRI. Denise's project conceptualization and mentoring skills were very evident and much appreciated by the teams attending the SRI each summer.

Denise also served on the Advisory Board for the National

Center. She was instrumental in shaping our mission and facilitating workshops at several of our Global Dental Hygiene Research Conferences. We worked together on the workshop, "Jumpstarting Your Research" at our last conference assisting dental hygienists who were, or interested in investigating behavioral, clinical, educational, public health, independent practice, and basic science issues.

Denise also was a prolific and hilarious storyteller. I have to chuckle everytime I think about her telling the stories of how the sleeve to her wedding dress was lost in a snow-covered parking lot, or when her luggage was left on the curb when a taxi driver forgot to put it in the trunk, or when she tried to check into a hotel for a meeting and the clerk couldn't find her reservation because she was a week early. You would need a box of tissues as you listened to her, for the tears of laughter that would always come with one of her stories. I also recall at the passing of her mom, Denise took charge of the memorial service when it needed some levity. Denise told the story of how her mom, Joanie (in New Jersey), would shop for her and send designer clothes to her in Idaho. Denise stated that she now had serious misgivings about how she would look and how quickly she would need to learn to put new outfits together to maintain her image. Somehow, she managed to do just fine. She also enjoyed telling the story of how the two doctors at the memorial (Peggy Walsh and myself) stood in the kitchen of her parent's house washing glasses and fine china dishes for hours as friends came to pay their respects. Using paper cups and plates were out of the question.

When both Michele Darby and Peggy Walsh were ill, Denise stepped in to finish all the edits to the 4th edition of their textbook, *Dental Hygiene Theory and Practice*. After their passing, Denise was asked to serve as the editor of the 5th edition, which she did along with her co-editor, Jennifer Pieren. When I was asked to update my chapter on "Evidence Based Decision Making" I decided to visit Denise to finalize it

(it was also an excuse to visit). I sat at her dining room table finishing my chapter knowing that when I left all the new features and style changes would be included in the correct format. What I didn't realize, nor would it ever have crossed my mind, was that this would be the last time I would ever see her, laugh with her or raise a glass with her. It's still hard to realize she is gone and reinforces how important it is to cherish the time you spend with friends and loved ones, and to tell them how much they mean to you.

I will miss her stories and laughter, but most of all I will miss her love, friendship and support. Rest in peace my friend.

A final celebration of Denise's life will be held on June 29, 2019 (the day after her 65th birthday!) in the Grand Rotunda of the Performing Arts Building, Idaho State University, Pocatello, ID.

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