When I entered graduate school I chose a major in the supervision of medical-surgical nursing. At the time, the faculty member registering me asked if I did not intend to have psychiatry nursing major. When I asked why, she replied, “That’s what all of the men do.” I stayed the course with my original choice of major and have never regretted it.

Over the years have you seen any change in attitude toward men entering the profession?

Over the years the profession has changed significantly. The percentage of men has more than doubled. Although it isn’t nearly where we would like it to be, the members continue to increase. The technology is astounding. A room on a medical-surgical unit looks more like the ICU of forty years ago. The number of medications has

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quadrupled and nurses have to have an increased understanding in order to keep pace. It is much more complex now than it was when I entered nursing. However, both women and men are rising to the challenge as we see nursing outcomes improve the quality of care.

What do you think is the biggest barrier that men now entering the nursing profession face?

The biggest barrier that men now entering the profession face is the fear that some, but certainly not all, women nurses have. That men will take over. Historically, men will have the better jobs with better pay simply because of their gender. This notion can be overcome if men reassure their female counterparts that they too are interested in the care and nurture of patients. They must convince those who oppose men entering the profession that their goals are the same. Both men and women will have the better positions with higher pay if they continue to educate themselves. Lifelong learning is the answer to parity.

What was your greatest reward in nursing?

My greatest reward in nursing has been my ability to offer leadership to students and novices in nursing. Mentoring others is the greatest gift we can have. I have seen individuals grow in stature and position within the profession and I am proud that I may have played some small part in their success.

What advice would you give to men entering the profession?

My advice to men entering the profession is to keep an open mind. The opportunities are limitless. I know of no other occupation that offers so many different paths to employment opportunities. Always remember that patients come first. That is the reason for our being, no matter what path we follow. It is the most satisfying career that anyone can have.