

IN MEMORIAM

Susan C. Weiss, BS, CNMT, 1944–2009

Susan C. Weiss, BS, CNMT, whose productive career in nuclear medicine spanned 44 y and included multiple groundbreaking achievements, died on July 19 from pancreatic cancer. She was a pioneer and innovator in the development of numerous nuclear medicine techniques for children and a noted mentor, teacher, and organizer to several generations of nuclear medicine technologists (NMTs).



Susan C. Weiss, BS, CNMT

Sue began her career in the field by training with Merle Loken, MD, at the University of Minnesota (St. Paul) in 1965 and 1966, followed by work as a staff technologist at Manchester Memorial Hospital (CT) from 1967 to 1969 and at the Albert Einstein Medical Center (Philadelphia, PA) from 1969 to 1971. In 1971 she went to the Children's Memorial Hospital (CMH; Chicago, IL). Within 3 y she had become chief NMT, a post she held with distinction for almost a quarter of a century, also serving as the hospital's radiation safety officer (RSO) for most of these years. She was the first practicing NMT to be certified by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as an RSO. While at Children's Sue earned a bachelor's degree in biology by attending night school at Roosevelt University (Chicago, IL).

In 1967, CMH had acquired the first Anger gamma camera to be installed in a pediatric hospital. Sue readily adapted the adult equipment and techniques to those needed for children. One of her first publications was a booklet on pediatric techniques. Her methods of sedation and handling of children for nuclear medicine procedures won a scientific exhibit award and were published. She helped to perfect the technique of direct radionuclide cystography that has been adopted throughout the world and participated in the first prospective pediatric dosimetry determinations for ^{99m}Tc -MAG3. Numerous other investigations and pediatric adaptations in which she participated included pinhole dacrocystography, thallium SPECT imaging of the heart in Kawasaki disease, early use and promotion of ^{99m}Tc -glucoheptonate for diagnosis of pyelonephritis in infants, elucidation of the mechanism of Legg-Perthes-Calves disease and creation of an early staging protocol that accurately predicts outcomes in this

disease, documentation of asymmetric pulmonary perfusion in D-transposition of the great vessels in newborn infants, portable brain scintigraphic angiography for brain death, and microtechniques in radioimmunoassay using minute blood specimens from newborn infants.

Sue published 21 scientific abstracts and 20 scientific papers in prestigious journals. Her award-winning scientific exhibits were presented at the SNM meeting as well as those of the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), the American Medical Association, the Society for Pediatric Radiology, the Society of Uroradiology, and the American Academy of Orthopedics. Sue believed it was important to publish articles on pediatric nuclear medicine both within our field and in specialty journals outside the field to make sure that clinicians and specialists were aware of the most up-to-date and promising uses of radioisotopes in children. In 1974 she was awarded the Best Paper Award from the *Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology*, a journal she would go on to edit from 1989 to 1994.

Sue was most noted on the national and international nuclear medicine scene for her extraordinary energy and accomplishments in mentoring NMTs. She was first an outstanding educator. She coached and taught technologist students from Triton and DuPage Colleges as well as nuclear medicine residents from Northwestern University Medical School, Hines Veteran's



At the 2009 SNM Annual Meeting, Kirchner presented Weiss with a plaque honoring her years of service to the ERF.

Administration Hospital, Cook County Hospital, and the U.S. Armed Forces nuclear medicine training programs at CMH. Sue taught pediatric nuclear medicine to technologists and physicians from Canada, Japan, Germany, Chile, Belgium, Turkey, Kuwait, and Australia as well as international physician trainees sponsored by the International Atomic Energy Agency. She presented more than 100 lectures in countries around the world, including Japan, Canada, Australia, Germany, and Chile. Countless physician residents from radiology, urology, pediatrics, orthopedics, and other disciplines and nearly 1,000 NMT students benefited from her knowledge and wisdom in pediatric nuclear medicine. Sue served on the Joint Review Committee on educational training programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology (JRCNMT) for more than 20 y. Her philosophy when evaluating nuclear medicine programs was not merely to find faults with the programs but to assist them in improving the programs for their students. Sue was a founding member of the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board and worked with other NMT pioneers in creating a valid certification process for nuclear medicine technology. As coordinator of the Associated Sciences Consortium for the RSNA, she planned their yearly educational themes and developed the day-long educational programs for the RSNA annual meeting for several years.

Sue excelled at organizing and leading. She initiated the reorganization of the Education and Research Foundation (ERF) of SNM into a cooperative alliance made up of the ERF as a separate entity and the SNM and SNMTS. Based on her experience at an educational conference sponsored by the American Express Corporation, Sue presented a concept aimed at creating a cooperative alliance with shared governance and representation. After many summit meetings, a strategic alliance was outlined and implemented. Sue would go on to be the executive director of the ERF, where all areas of nuclear medicine would benefit from her unique combination of farsighted strategy and attention to detail. The ERF now contributes more than a quarter of a million dollars each year to nuclear medicine education and research. At the 2009 SNM Annual Meeting in Toronto, ERF leadership acknowl-

edged her many accomplishments over 30 y of service to the foundation. ERF President Peter Kirchner, MD, presented Sue with a heart-shaped pendant in recognition of what she so frequently called her "labor of love." Long-time ERF supporters Mitzi and William Bland, MD, presented her with a miniature version of the Benedict Cassen award, which she had administered since its initial presentation.

As a natural leader, Sue also broke traditional barriers for women and technologists. She was the first woman elected president of the SNMTS, the first woman and first technologist elected president of the ERF, and the first woman and first technologist elected president of the Central Chapter (the largest chapter) of SNM. She served on the Central Chapter's board of directors for 24 y. She represented the Central Chapter at the 2009 meeting of the SNM House of Delegates, despite the physical challenges of chemotherapy. She served numerous terms on the SNM Board of Trustees, House of Delegates, SNM and SNMTS committees, and the National Council of the SNMTS. The SNMTS elected Sue to represent NMT at the constitutional convention of the National Commission for Health Certifying Agencies. She was elected as speaker of the commission's general assembly in 1981 and served on the executive council from 1981 to 1984.

Sue was instrumental in establishing NMT as a recognized medical profession. Her primary professional goal was to ensure that the relationships among the various groups in the field—NMTs, physicians, physicists, and others—continued to prosper and grow. She had the wisdom and confidence to work with and understand the viewpoints of those who challenged her efforts and the talent to compromise and work together to achieve the best results for all.

There are so many things to remember about Sue in her short stay with us. We will each remember Sue in our own way. Sue was a caring, challenging, fun-loving, considerate, strong, and intelligent woman who impacted our lives immensely as a loyal friend and colleague. We will miss her terribly.

*James Conway, MD
Children's Memorial Hospital Chicago, IL*