

Judith Ray

(1948 -)

Judith Ray was born in Berwyn, Alberta on July 15, 1948, the oldest of three siblings. Her father was a United Church minister, so young Judith's social life mostly revolved around church organizations, which focussed on international and community outreach. This showed Judith that she was privileged compared to many others, and she made a commitment from an early age to help people.

Her aspirations for the future began when, at about 8, Judith ended up in hospital being given antibiotic injections. She informed her mother that she had decided to be a nurse so she could give people needles! Judith graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Nursing Degree in 1970. Her first job was in the medical/surgical unit at Victoria Hospital in Winnipeg, followed by a stint in the Outpatient Department at the Winnipeg Children's Hospital. In 1973, she moved to BC and was hired as Head Nurse of Paediatrics at Royal Columbian Hospital. Here she implemented several provocative changes in staff uniforms and family visiting routines, and also helped create a child abuse program.

In 1979, Judith started searching for work internationally, finding that the United Church was looking for a nursing school tutor in Papua, New Guinea. The job was to include 6 months of general duty prior to tutoring. Upon arrival, she discovered that she was to be the Principal of the school effective immediately, and one of two tutors teaching all subjects for the three-year program! This was interrupted so that she could be the health care administrator for the area. After 3 years, Judith decided to come back to Canada, and worked as an administrator in home care and continuing care until 1994.

By this time, Judith was married to her husband Fred, and they came to live in Mission. She likes to work in the community where she's living because there is a benefit of understanding the dynamics of that community, and the people who live there. She successfully answered an ad for Executive Director of Pleasant View Housing Society.

Judith's duties included management of the care home, apartment building, day program, and outreach services. She soon joined the Rotary Club, and was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship for her work as co-ordinator of the Terry Fox Run and the Carol Festival for a number of years, as well as fundraising and international work. Also, she was elected to the board of the Registered Nurses' Association – a position she held for 4 years.

She was a Seniors Advisory Committee member, providing leadership in strategic planning, which led to the establishment of Mission Association for Seniors Housing (MASH) where she was instrumental in bringing the groups together that were in competition with each other to build affordable seniors' housing. Her efforts culminated in the building of The Cedars, and she was recognized for this achievement as Mission Citizen of the Year.

Judith retired in 2008, but continues to stay involved. She is currently the president of MASH, is on the Mission Literacy Association board, and also volunteers as a Reading Buddy. Judith believes that volunteering means contributing your skills and abilities to make your community a better place.

Courtesy of Mission Community Archives