

Kathy Wilkinson

Saying nice things about Kathy Wilkinson – how hard can that be. Well, very hard as it turns out – not finding nice things to say of course but getting all the nice things there are to be said into 2 minutes!

Where to start? Kathy's professional life began with joint training in anaesthesia and paediatrics. She obtained her Diploma in Child Health, transferred to anaesthesia at GOS and decided she liked PICU.

She already had FRCA, so it was off to the Royal London as an SR for 3 years, obtain MRCPCH and then to Melbourne as PICU Fellow for a year.

She came back as the perfect candidate for an anaesthesia/PICU consultant job at GOS (an almost impossible job with a 1:3 rota, at that time). She was there for 3 years and, along with others started changing the face of intensive care at GOS with a much more 'hands on' approach. They also started retrieval for the first time.

She then had a career change and moved to Norwich – some suggested for a quiet life – they could not have been more wrong!

It was now she started to influence the wider sphere of children's service in the UK. She was elected to APA Council, as the 1st member from a DGH in 2000, just as the strict membership rules were relaxed. She was immediately made Membership Secretary and removed the need for a job plan from the application process. As a result, the membership increased from 250 to the current level of around 1000. Following this she was Honorary Secretary until 2008, always the most difficult job in an organisation. She was then a natural for President and was duly elected in 2011 for 2 years.

In these roles, she added Professional Standards and Education Committees to Council, started a newsletter and an Annual Report, organised regular meetings with the Presidents of RCoA and RCPCH and the National Clinical Director for Children.

Using her influence in the APA and outside she has consistently championed the care of children in the DGH – repeatedly highlighting the evolving crisis in the provision of elective and emergency surgery at local level.

Outside the APA, she was advisor for the 1999 NCEPOD report 'Extremes of Age', has been a clinical advisor for the organisation since 2008, with David Mason, she co-authored the last paediatric NCEPOD report 'Are We There Yet' in 2011, and currently leads the NCEPOD Child Health Review. For the RCoA, she was the lead author for the Paediatric Chapter of GPAS from 2005 – 2016, she leads for safeguarding and has co-edited 2 editions of the National Intercollegiate standards on this subject and is currently lead for Safeguarding PLUS – due next year.

Since everyone else has finally realised there is a big problem, she has just been invited to join the NHS England national review of paediatric surgery and intensive care, so there is no doubt much more to come but I need to stop talking about her achievements here because I need time to highlight a quality that I found to be very special, her pastoral care – Kathy was

always the Council member who noted major events in members lives; she sent Christmas cards, congratulations cards and flowers, get well and condolence messages. She is the 'go to' person to ask about significant events of Members and colleagues.

And finally, a bit about her: She likes hill and coast walking, but I bet you didn't know she enjoys paddling Canadian Canoes and can plough a field with a horse drawn plough? I certainly didn't.

She calls her family - Arthur, Kim, and John - long suffering but I'm not sure they are as she'll certainly put at least as much effort into her care for them as she has into everything else in her life.

So, for all these and many more reasons, it gives me great pleasure to propose Kathy Wilkinson for Honorary Membership of the Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland.

Bob Bingham
Past President APAGBI