



February 12th, 2016

Long-serving NHS worker retires

A health worker who was instrumental in setting up the NHS ultrasound service for South Tyneside patients has retired.

Marilyn Wilkinson's expertise led to her being asked to provide examples of 4D scanning for the world-famous Gray's Anatomy textbook of human anatomy and to her being invited by a hospital in the Arab state of Qatar to review its ultrasound obstetrics service.

Her career in radiology spans more than 45 years yet she came to it purely by chance. After spotting a job advert in The Shields Gazette for a student radiographer in 1970, she was offered a place on the training course at Sunderland Royal Infirmary and worked for a couple of years in Sunderland after qualifying. In 1975, she took up an offer to join the staff at the then South Shields General Hospital. She was selected to do ultrasound training in 1979 and was part of the small team which established the ultrasound service. She was promoted to superintendent radiographer at South Tyneside District Hospital in the early 1990s and went on to do the job for about 20 years. She retired in 2012 but came back part-time and remained a valuable member of the team, working as a sonographer doing ultrasound scans.

Mrs Wilkinson, of South Shields, said: "I have had a lot of job satisfaction over the years because I was in a position to make a difference for the patients. There is a real community in the Radiology department, and in South Tyneside District Hospital generally, and I always worked closely with the consultants and was able to instigate further investigations when I thought it necessary. I have made a lot of lifelong friends, many of whom have been in the department as long as me."

She also contributed to various worthy causes linked to health. She did a fundraising parachute jump with a colleague for St Clare's Hospice, in Jarrow, and was a member of a team who were regional winners of an assault course competition to raise money for the British Heart Foundation. In 2010, she joined the volunteer medical team from the District Hospital who annually go to help people in one of the poorest areas of India.

Clinical Business Manager Bronia Fleet said: "Marilyn has always been very supportive of her colleagues and sharing her knowledge has proved to be very helpful. She is hardworking and professional and has done her utmost to ensure that the ultrasound service provided to the patients is second to none. She has been a true friend and colleague to numerous people within South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and she will be a great miss."

Grandmother Mrs Wilkinson is looking forward to having more time for herself in retirement, as well as for her family. She will still take a keen interest in the Trust, however, due to family connections: sister, Alyson Baker, is an assistant practitioner in Radiology; her other sister Adrienne Clark, who used to be a radiography assistant, now works in Training and Development, and daughter, Helen Wilkinson, is an information assistant in Cancer Services.

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Pictured above: Marilyn Wilkinson, holding flowers, with some of her Radiology colleagues, left to right, Ultrasound Manager Jayne Richardson, Clinical Business Manager Bronia Fleet, Radiology Service Lead Karen Green and Consultant Radiologists Dr Oliver Schulte and Dr Lance Cope

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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