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MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 33

COUNCIL MEETING May 17/76

Re: INFORMATION ON RETIREMENT OF MISS MARY ROSS

Following is a report from the Personnel Director regarding the retirement of Miss Mary Ross.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a letter of appreciation from Council be presented to Miss Ross for her many years of loyal and dedicated service to the Municipality.

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M. J. Shelley  
Municipal Manager

Dear Sir,

Re: Retirement - Miss Mary Ross, Coordinator, Community Health Nursing

Miss Mary Ross will be retiring from the Burnaby Health Department May 31, 1976. This job has enormous responsibilities which she has undertaken in her quiet manner and has performed in a very successful way.

Much growth and change occurred during Mary's 33 years of service with the Burnaby Health Department. Mary's first choice for a profession was botany or horticulture. However, nursing was a popular choice for a woman to make, and Mary added the slight twist to this career choice - Preventive Health and Community Nursing was her "thing" and she knew it. Her aim, through her Vancouver General Hospital and University of British Columbia training, was always to go into Public Health Nursing.

She worked with the Victorian Order of Nurses in Vancouver for a very short time, and she joined the staff of the Burnaby Health Department in September of 1943. At that time the Nursing Staff consisted of two Public Health Nurses, Miss Mary Shand the supervisor, and Mary Ross. At that time Miss Ross was given the responsibility of the nursing in the whole of North Burnaby. Their office then, was at Edmonds, in a gray building that was formerly an old theatre. Social Services in the orchestra pit, and the Health Department including the Victorian Order of Nurses, occupied the stage! The roof leaked so badly that buckets were liberally and strategically placed, and umbrellas were opened inside the office to protect the staff!

The nurses drove over roads that were so bad that they were forever in fear of broken axels. The only route from North Burnaby to South Burnaby was via Boundary Road. And we think the connecting routes are bad today!

There were 5 Child Health Centres and 21 schools at that time. Dr. Agnes Weston Black was the Medical Health Officer and Mr. Joe Fuller was the Environmental Health Section.

In 1947, Mary went on a scholarship to Ann Arbor, Michigan where she received her Masters Degree in Public Health Nursing. She graduated at the top of her class, and was thus honoured by being invited to attend a reception held by the President of the Ann Arbor University.

She worked for one year in Vancouver City in preparation for the Supervisory position in Burnaby, (there being no Assistant Supervisor in those days). Her appointment as Supervisor in Burnaby came in September 1952. By then Burnaby's population had risen to 50,000 and there were over 9,000 school children.

It was in October of 1954 that the location of the department moved out of that old building. This time the move was to an apartment on Arcola Street. Mary's office was in the dining room, the eye clinic was in the bedroom, the clerical staff were in the livingroom. The Nursing Staff were in another suite and the Medical Staff and the Immunization Clinic were held in the third suite in this apartment building.

In 1955 clinics were started for the long awaited bulk polio vaccine. Lineups at the Arcola Street apartment stretched all the way down Arcola to Sperling Avenue. The polio clinics were held in many locations, some evening clinics were held under the auspices of the Kingston Club. It is remembered that one evening 2,400 "shots" were given.

The Arcola Street apartments were only a temporary measure until the new Burnaby Municipal hall was completed. That move took place in May of 1956. Now, the nursing service consisted of 14 Public Health Nurses, a new Assistant Supervisory position, and a new Registered Nurse position.

Also in the late 1950's Burnaby's nurses took part in several Civil Defence exercises. The most memorable exercise was in 1957 and had the title of "Maytime" and took place at Clearbrook. The St. John's Ambulance Staff had many people very well made up to resemble all kinds of wounds, fractures, burns and other such states of disaster and these so-called victims were then brought to the Casualty Clearing Centre which was staffed by the Burnaby nurses.

In April of 1962, Mary, who has long supported and strongly believed in the Canadian Public Health Association was elected President of the British Columbia Branch.

Mary also was very instrumental in getting "Meals-on-Wheels" in operation in Burnaby.

The 1960's saw a great deal of growth within the Health Department. A second assistant supervisor was added and the staff grew to 28½ Public Health Nurses. The red measles vaccine came in August 1969. Kindergartens were introduced into the school system in September of 1969. Family planning clinics were housed in the Health Department.

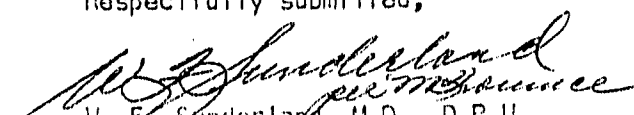
Now in 1976 the picture has changed again. It was very timely, that the title "Supervisor" changed to "Coordinator" - a change much supported by Mary, who has always acted closer to that role, than a strict adherence to the "Supervisor" image. The Health Department staff as it now exists consists of 1 Medical Health Officer; 1 Coordinator, Community Health Nursing; 2 Associate Coordinators; 29½ Community Health Nurses; 1 Community Care Nurse; 1 Home Care Liaison Nurse; 1 Registered Nurse; 2 Psychologists; 1 Speech Therapist; 1 Nutritionist; 8 clerks; 11 Environmental Health Inspectors.

So you can see, coordination is indeed required, and Mary has fulfilled that role long before official recognition ever came along.

Mary's philosophy of Administration has been to allow for, and promote independence for her nursing staff in their districts. This has given much freedom and room for growth among the Community Health Nurses which they fully appreciate and try to live up to. Many times has she been complemented upon the friendly, happy group of nurses who work in Burnaby - this is so important and so pertinent to Mary - and this is in the quiet manner in which she has brought this about. Mary's wisdom and stable thinking has held her and the Nursing section in good stead throughout her tenure.

Recommendation - That Council extend a letter of appreciation to Miss Mary Ross for her many years of loyal and dedicated service to the Municipality.

Respectfully submitted,

  
W. F. Sunderland, M.D., D.P.H.  
MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER