



Building Bridges to Chapel Hill

As founding editor-in-chief of both *Hospital Quarterly* and *HealthcarePapers*, Dr. Peggy Leatt has established within their covers a fine balance of academic rigor and practical value. We find that this is, in fact, a reflection of the person. The editorial boards and our staff are inspired by this as we are by her passionate interest in healthcare and in life-long learning. So you can imagine how delighted we are that her move to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will allow her to continue our extraordinary working relationship and so add extra dimension to the resources and networks she brings to these publications. Peggy will provide an excellent bridge for academics, for managers, for researchers, for authors and, yes, for publishers.

Transitions are a good time for a retrospective and so we asked Duncan Sinclair to tell us what makes Peggy so special. You will find his notes below.

I can only add that we are delighted that we now have an opportunity to help build the bridge to Chapel Hill and all the new resources that this renowned organization brings to our readers.

– **Anton Hart**
Publisher

Sketch of a Passionate Teacher Dr. Peggy Leatt

The news that Peggy Leatt is leaving Canada with her husband and colleague George Pink for new challenges in North Carolina brought first to mind an old song's opening lines:

*From this [country] they say you are leavin'
We will miss your bright eyes and sweet smile ...*

We will also miss the quiet but inspired leadership Peggy Leatt has given Canadian health services research, health policy and health administration throughout her distinguished career. The only consolation to her leaving is that modern communications are making the world ever smaller. She will still be close at hand in Chapel Hill where, despite the enormous challenges and opportunities of studies of health and healthcare in the United States, her lifelong commitment to how things are and ought to be done in Canada will continue to claim a share of her time and apparently boundless energy.

First, a brief biography.

Born and raised on the Yorkshire dales, Peggy Leatt took her undergraduate degree in Nursing Science, a Masters in Health Services Administration, and a PhD in Sociology, all from the University of Alberta. She was recruited to the Department of Health Administration of the University of Toronto in 1980. There she quickly established herself as an imaginative, productive and well-funded researcher, award-winning educator, innovative leader, prolific author, keen editor, and tireless champion of evidence-based policy and decision-making in health. She became a generous contributor to the life and work of her discipline, university and its affiliated hospitals and a sought-after collaborator with a multitude of friends and colleagues far and wide.

First Director of the MSc and PhD and then MHSc (Health Administration) Programs, Dr. Leatt was appointed Associate Chair of the Department in 1983, full Professor in 1984, and Chair in 1988, a position she held for 10 years. Under her leadership the enrolment of Masters and Doctoral students doubled; the professional Masters program welcomed part-time students (meeting contemporary needs) and was twice accredited for the maximum allowable terms; and research funding grew to over \$5 million/year. She was also responsible for setting in motion the necessary steps to accord the department Graduate Department status in the University.

As a result of these initiatives the department was able to broaden its mandate. Throughout, Dr. Leatt continued to teach and to propose and conduct innovative research that always attracted both generous funding and enthusiastic collaborators from among the providers of health services, academia and governments alike.

An articulate speaker and elegant writer, Peggy Leatt also possesses a subtle wit and humour that lie close beneath the surface of a very long list of presentations and publications that record her enormous contributions to the world's store of new knowledge about health services research, health policy and health administration. She was the first woman and the first Canadian to chair both the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (1987/8) and the Accrediting Commission for Education in Health Services Administration (1993/4). She was the first North American editor of the *Health Services Management Research Journal*. She is the founding editor of *Hospital Quarterly* and *HealthcarePapers*, both high-quality Canadian publications dedicated to the dissemination of best practices, innovation and strategic thinking in health services management and policy.

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Immediately on stepping down as Chair of the Department in 1998, Dr. Leatt was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Health Services Restructuring Commission, succeeding its founding CEO, Mark Rochon. This arm's-length body, created in 1996, was charged by the Government of Ontario with restructuring the province's public hospitals and providing advice on strategies to foster the creation of a genuine health services system. By the time the Commission reached its "sunset" in 2000, Dr. Leatt had supervised the research, synthesis and publication of reports on:

- Building a Community Mental Health System in Ontario (February 1999)
- Better Hospitals, Better Health Care for the Future (April 1999)
- From Here to Where? ... Defining the Next Steps in Health System Reform (May 1999)
- Ontario Health Information Management Action Plan: The Top Priority for Building a Better Health System (June 1999)
- Implementing Integrated Health Systems in Ontario: A Review of Legislative/Regulatory Implications (July 1999)
- Reforming Ontario's Health System: Key Considerations (August 1999)
- Advice on Rural and Northern Hospital Networks (November 1999)
- Primary Health Care Strategy (December 1999)
- A Strategy for Improving Health System Performance (March 2000)
- Integrated Health Systems Cases (December 2000). (Independent of the Commission, she and George Pink have together contributed seminal work on how the concept of integrated health systems would work in Canada.)

Returning to the University of Toronto, Dr. Leatt was appointed in 2001 the first Liberty Health Chair of Health Management Strategies. Effective July 2002, she will become Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Administration, School of Public Health of the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.

So much for the facts. They describe the career of an exemplary scholar/educator/leader, but they do not do justice to Peggy Leatt. Nothing in her curriculum vitae captures characteristics and accomplishments like the following:

- "For me, it is Peggy's poise and patience that comes through time and time again. Her tolerance and humanitarianism shine through ..."
- "Peggy is not only dedicated but passionate about health administration education and lifelong learning."
- "Single-handedly she turned our department around."
- "She is a risk taker [who] never passes up an opportunity to try out new ideas. She is always ahead of the crowd."
- "She was well ahead of the times in recognizing that healthcare occurs not only in large institutions but extensively in community organizations, [and] incorporated individuals from these organizations in the [department's educational] program."

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- changed the health system for the better.”
- “Under Peggy’s leadership the health administration program at the University of Toronto became one of the pre-eminent programs in North America.”
- “Peggy’s credibility and style was a magnet in attracting outstanding faculty and bright students.”

“She is above all a great teacher and always has been.”

- “In 1980 Peggy looked younger than many of the students and there were some who questioned her apparent youth and inexperience in the leadership role she was assuming. We were soon to learn that her youthful appearance, good looks, and mild manner were only a façade. Underneath that innocence was a mind like a steel trap, a sharp sense of humour, and an undeniable determination and drive for success. By the end of that year Peggy had established herself . . . as an academic and researcher with credibility, a caring teacher, and a wonderful person.”
- “She has always had a quiet dignity about her that seemed to take moments of great fun and add to them a learning aspect that turned them into something even greater . . .”
- “She is above all a great teacher and always has been.”
- “Another of her great strengths is in relationship building. She has always been able to strike mutually beneficial relationships to advance the matter under discussion.”
- “Even as a new graduate she had the ability to take what she had just learned and translate it into something else that was quite remarkable.”
- “Peggy cultivates ideas, concepts, words and people as she does her garden – wonderfully well!”

Culled from notes from a small sample of former students and colleagues, these comments reflect the admiration and love we, her friends, have for Peggy Leatt, a remarkable woman. We are sad she is leavin’ and will miss her sorely!

– Duncan G. Sinclair and correspondents



Hamilton Health Sciences
EXEMPLARY CARE • ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

7:48 A.M.

— After hearing her patient has just lost her unborn son, a nurse came back in on her day off to tell a woman “what a great mother she was” - words that continue to heal.

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10:32 A.M.

— Innovative nurses embrace a powerful healing practice by opening the OR doors so parents can comfort their child as he drifts off for surgery.

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3:03 P.M.

— A tragic car accident brings a dying young woman and her family to a Hamilton Health Sciences’ ER. Caring nurses develop a bond and cancel her transfer in order to provide comfort until the end.

• • •

7:49 P.M.

— Nurses realized the healing power of hope and gave an 81-year-old woman with progressive paralysis the miracle of going home.

Everyday **2800 nurses** at
Hamilton Health Sciences
come to work to
make it better,
and we thank them.

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