

Barbara K. Horton, who was instrumental in the establishment of the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB) and served as its first executive director, died last April near her home in Stone Mountain, GA, after a lengthy illness.

I first met Barbara Horton in 1983 when she was serving as the Executive Director of the NMTCB. I had just been elected to the Board of Directors for that organization. After our first meeting, I remember thinking that I had never met anyone who had so much “historical perspective” stored in her head. And for a Southerner, she sure talked fast! What I didn’t realize then was how passionate Barbara was about nuclear medicine.

After attending Samford University (then Howard College) in Birmingham, AL, Barbara had the opportunity to enter a new training program—nuclear medicine technology—at the Birmingham Veterans’ Administration (VA) Hospital. She completed the nuclear medicine technology curriculum and became the program’s first graduate in 1970. Barbara then moved to Georgia, where she worked in nuclear medicine and became active in various professional societies. She founded the Atlanta Society of Nuclear Medicine Technologists and cofounded the Georgia Society of Nuclear Medicine Technologists. Barbara also became active in the Technologist Section of the Society of Nuclear Medicine, particularly in the areas of legislative affairs and professional credentialing. She served as secretary/historian of the Southeastern Chapter and as president of the SNM Technologist Section. One of Barbara’s proudest accomplishments was to be the first non-physician appointed to the Georgia Governor’s Special Advisory Committee on Non-Routine Use of Radiopharmaceuticals. She served on that committee from 1977 to 1980.

As part of her work with the Technologist Section, Barbara was actively involved in the creation of the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board. This board was formed to establish an independent certification examination process for nuclear medicine

technologists. In 1978, Barbara was named the NMTCB’s first Executive Director and served in this capacity until her retirement in 1986. Upon her retirement, Barbara was named a Distinguished Honoree of the Technologist Section in recognition of her outstanding service to the profession. In 1994,



Barbara Horton

Barbara was also recognized as an outstanding alumna of the nuclear medicine technology program by the School of Health Related Professions of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where the program that was started at the Birmingham VA Medical Center now resides.

The facts are impressive but can’t really convey how passionate Barbara was about nuclear medicine and the concept of an independent examining board for technologists. Many volunteers, including Barbara, expended countless hours to establish the NMTCB. Money to develop a national certification examination and to provide administrative support was in short supply. When Barbara became the director, she generously offered an extra room in her home to provide office space for the fledgling organization. Barbara rarely took credit for the good work that the board accomplished, stating that she was privileged to work with some of the smartest and most dedicated people in nuclear medicine. But the board and the nuclear medicine community were most fortunate to have someone manage the NMTCB who accepted that responsibility so personally and with such dedication. Recognizing that the present and future of our profession are in no small part based on the vision and determination of our predecessors, Barbara often said that we “stand on the shoulders of giants.” Our profession stands on a foundation in which Barbara played a significant role. We are standing on her shoulders.

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