



Nancy C. Burke MS, AT Ret.

EDUCATION: James Madison University (BS), 1973; Eastern Kentucky University (MS), 1976

CAREER: Teacher/athletic trainer, George C. Marshall High School, 1976-78; teacher/athletic trainer, South Lakes High School, 1978-2005; director of Injury Care and Prevention, Fairfax County Police Department, 2005-17

VOLUNTEER SERVICE: BOC examiner, 1980-2004; Virginia High School League Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, 1985-2008; U-19 Girls World Cup Lacrosse, Women's World Cup Lacrosse, 1986, 1989, 1999; U.S. Olympic Training Center, 1988; U.S. Women's Lacrosse Association Safety chair, 1990-98; World Cup Sabre, 1992, 1994; Atlanta Olympic Games site medical coordinator/athletic trainer, 1996; U.S. Lacrosse Sport Science and Safety chair, 1998-2008; Committee on Practice Advancement representative, 2008-12; Public Safety Athletic Trainers Society executive director, 2010-present; World Police and Fire Games

athletic trainer, 2011, 2015; Mid-Atlantic Athletic Trainers Association Honors and Awards, 2013-present; World Figure Skating Championship

Why did you pursue athletic training as your career?

I was a freshman at James Madison University playing field hockey and an opponent was seriously injured. No one knew what to do. The men's soccer team had someone and I thought we should, too. Coming from a family with a lot of medical knowledge, I struck out to become that person and found the field of athletic training. Auditing an evening graduate course, I became hooked – it was the perfect combination of sport and injury/health care. With my athletic training skills, it gives me great satisfaction to see that I can make a difference in the quality of a person's life and in their athletic career or activity of choice.

What inspires you to volunteer and what do you get out of it?

My parents were good role models for my brothers, sisters and I. They volunteered for various activities and we just naturally took it up to help make things better. I have been very fortunate, and to give back is a good thing. I love this career and my experiences. I want to share with those who are coming up and I want to work to make things better for those of us in practice. Volunteering has helped me grow as an athletic trainer as well as an advocate for athletic training. I get the satisfaction of knowing that an athletic trainer has made a difference. It's a win-win.

What is your most memorable moment?

The most memorable is receiving the letter – back in the day snail mail – from the BOC that I had passed the certification exam on the first try. I literally had to sit down as my legs were to give out. I was 24, and that day I knew my life would take an immediate new path. I've had proud moments when athletes return to play following difficult injuries and recoveries. Great moment on the football field early in my career with a severe cervical injury, having some tension between myself and the EMTs when the EMT captain shows up and said, "Nancy's the athletic trainer, she is in charge." That recognition across professional boundaries was immense. Still is.

Who are your biggest mentors and what impact have they had on you?

Dr. Ramey Martin was my first mentor and allowed me to audit his graduate class on athletic training. He further supported me in my quest to act as an athletic training student for the women's athletic program at JMU before athletic trainers were hired at the university. He and Dr. Leotus Morrison made very clear that I was the experiment and had to meet their expectations. I met Linda Hammett at a Cramer workshop, she instilled confidence to follow a dream and guided me on the path to make it happen. Ken Murray at Eastern Kentucky University brought me in as a graduate student for the women's program and supported my education and efforts. I met

Marje Albohm soon after. Her career path gave me something to shoot for. She saw potential where I did not. Later she propelled me to be better and to contribute on a higher level.

What is the most valuable advice you have received during your career?

I plucked this out of the NATA Journal some 30-plus years ago – it was a page facing the obituary of an athletic trainer and perhaps his favorite inspiration. I have had it on my wall in every office since then; it gives me something for which to strive. "Why were the saints, saints? Because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful, patient when it was difficult to be patient; and because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still, and kept silent when they wanted to talk, and were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable. That was all. It was quite simple and always will be."

What advice would you give to young athletic trainers just starting out in the profession?

Your work is your signature. Everything from being prepared with medical kits, EAPs, equipment and supplies, skills in injury/medical assessments, dress, bearing, handwriting, good grammar, clean language, respect for self and others and facial expression. You are a billboard for yourself and athletic training – how you take care of yourself and your preparation/care of patients demonstrate honor and value for what you do and who you are.