



## Honoring Water Quality & Health Member Barbara M. Soule

*By the Water Quality & Health Council*

*July 19, 2019*

Our friend and colleague, [Ms. Barbara M. Soule](#), was recognized for her extraordinary career in infection prevention and control during the 2019 [Association of Professionals in Infection Control \(APIC\)](#) annual meeting in Philadelphia. The Liberty View Event Center, with its perfect view of Independence Hall, was the special setting for the June 13, 2019 festivities. The event marked Ms. Soule's upcoming retirement at the end of 2019 as a consultant for [Joint Commission Resources](#) and [Joint Commission International](#). As part of the evening program, Ms. Soule was interviewed on topics including highlights of her career, lessons learned, and the future of the field of infection prevention and control.

### *Starting as a Nurse*

Ms. Soule began her 60-plus year career in health care as a registered nurse. She also has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, Sociology, and Health, as well as a Master's degree of Public Administration with a focus on health policy. Certified in infection prevention and control, Ms. Soule created one of the early infection control programs in the U.S. in the 1970s at Providence St. Peter Hospital in her home city of Olympia, Washington. She served as Director of Infection Control and Epidemiology there for 25 years.

Ms. Soule has published extensively in the area of infection prevention; she was the editor-in-chief of the first "APIC Core Curriculum for Infection Prevention and Control," which established the knowledge and skill base for the professional. The curriculum was a roughly 1,000-page, two-volume document that took three years to complete. As her husband, Dr. Oscar Soule noted, the project claimed a substantial portion of their living room! Since then, she has edited and authored over 10 books and chapters in infection prevention and control.

Ms. Soule served as the President of the Certification Board for Infection Control in 1988 and APIC president in 2003, and filled positions on APIC committees for Scientific Research, Education, and Strategic Planning. Ms. Soule also chaired committees of the [Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America](#) (SHEA). She was presented with the Carol DeMille Award, the highest award of the infection prevention profession, and the President's Distinguished Service Award from APIC. She also received the



*Barbara Soule, RN, MPA, CIC, FSHEA, FAPIC, was honored at a June 13, 2019 event during the annual APIC conference in Philadelphia*

Advanced Practitioner Award from SHEA. She has taught in schools of nursing and other colleges throughout her career. Ms. Soule is a Fellow of both APIC and SHEA.

### *A Globe-trotting Professional*

As a consultant for the Joint Commission Resources and Joint Commission International, Ms. Soule traveled the country and the world to provide services in infection prevention and control; these include program assessment, professional development and mentoring, education and training, and product development. She related that early on in her career a better understanding of adult learning principles would have been helpful for teaching, including incorporating active, problem-based learning as opposed to passive listening. Looking back on her four-decade career in infection prevention, Ms. Soule noted that understanding science and data is critical; that “education does not equal competency;” and that instructors in infection control and prevention must design curricula and experiences with students’ cultural and social norms in mind. On a lighter note, as one of the attendees noted, overseas trips usually included a jewelry souvenir for the globe-trotting professional.

### *The Past and Future of Infection Prevention and Control*

Ms. Soule’s career coincided with a significant maturing of the field of infection prevention and control as, through the years, evidence mounted to support infection control practices. She advocates being a “risk taker” and honing skills to confront challenges in professional settings proactively and with leadership. In a discipline often devoid of an adequate working budget and direct authority, Ms. Soule developed effective strategies to advocate for and secure needed resources and best practices. Finally, she endorses using multi-discipline approaches to help ensure a strong future for the field of infection control and prevention. These, she stated, should include supplemental expertise for professionals in the behavioral sciences, quality and performance improvement, and technology.

### *Our Barb*

“Barb” has served on the Water Quality & Health Council since 2006. We are not surprised by the recent honors bestowed on our distinguished colleague by her peers, and we heartily congratulate her on this impressive tribute. We happily note that although she will retire from her Joint Commission Resources position, Ms. Soule intends to remain active on the Water Quality & Health Council, which she described during her remarks as “an absolute privilege.” The privilege is ours, Barb. *Well done!*

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