

It is my pleasure, though with sadness, to speak to you of Joyce Rosenthal.

Joyce welcomed me as a peer and colleague when I arrived on the ET Nurse scene here in San Antonio 12 years ago. She encouraged my personal goals and professional growth.

In 2000, Joyce and I talked almost daily as we worked together to organize the SCR regional conference in San Antonio. The conference “raised the bar” for future regional gatherings. Her contributions were unequalled in organization and execution.

During that year of planning, our relationship grew beyond professional cooperation to a personal friendship. I learned very soon that Joyce did not just befriend, she pulled you into the bosom of her family. I never again thought of Joyce alone but always in the context of her family.

Her devotion to her family members, Dani, Gina, Liza and Becky was an effervescent reality. When she spoke of her family, love and pride lit up her face.

In July 2002, Joyce and I headed to Florence, Italy for an international conference of ET Nurses. The adventure was a highlight in my life – my first time to Europe. Since the Rosenthals spoke Italian, it was easy to sample gelato flavors and have many adventures

Joyce encouraged me to present findings from a research project at the conference I had been part of for 3 years. Joyce also presented and I proudly attended her presentation to these ET nurses from around the world. She spoke about the importance of ostomy support groups: how to think of them, the anatomy of a support group and the evolution and always changing dynamics of the group. Her talk was one of the most popular given and she was mobbed after the talk by attendees for more information.

She was one of the brightest and most interesting persons at the many social gatherings. What was her secret? She made you think you were the only person in the room. You alone had her attention. And that was the professional Joyce, also. All of her patients felt her genuine interest and concern for their problems and wellbeing.

Our local ostomy support group felt Joyce was everything an ET Nurse should be. They nominated her for the National United Ostomy Association’s award of ET Nurse of the Year of 2004. I was chairman of that national awards committee and it was my job to re-type all the nominations leaving out names and recognizable references so that the committee members would be choosing without bias. I was not allowed to vote! The sheets with criteria and scoring trickled back to me. In the late spring I called Joyce ecstatically – “pack your bags for Tampa!” where the award would be announced.

Joyce received the ET nurse of the year 2004 at the Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse Society annual conference in Tampa. She was cheered on by 1500 other ETs as the President of the United Ostomy Association presented Joyce with a plaque. Her acceptance speech was typically Joyce. “This award is not mine alone, but for all the ET nurses who make a difference in the lives of their patients.”

Joyce did not rest on her laurels. She continued to go to work each day making a difference. She met with the support group each month She continued to send ostomy supplies to the Friends of Ostomates Worldwide.

By 2006 the excitement at the Rosenthal's was building with the advent of Liza's decision to adopt. Joyce was really tuned into Liza's feelings as the process had ups and downs. She was thrilled when Gina offered her sister babysitting services. And she listened to Dani's suggestions for her to retire and become a full-time grandmother. And when Zoe Sophia arrived, Joyce was christened "Nana."

Joyce would sometime raise an eyebrow in wonderment, make funny play on words or slowly smile and laugh a little because within her soul there was a love a whimsy.

I will remember Joyce, as many of you will remember her in many roles: a consummate professional, a friend, confidant, mother, and loving wife to Dani – she adored him. She was a role model to all of us reminding us to excel as professionals, to live with courage and respect others.

A donation was made per Joyce's wishes to the San Antonio Botanical Gardens.