

## Highlights of the 2015 AONE Annual Meeting

Phoenix, Arizona April 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>

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AONE Region 7 Board of Director

The AONE Annual Meeting opened on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> with a lively and productive AONE Board of Directors Meeting. We have a wonderful Board led by this year's president, Dr. Linda Burnes Bolton, CNO at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. She is a breath of fresh air with endless energy. Her passion for nursing, nursing leadership, patients and inclusivity drive her vision for the year. There was all the routine business meeting agenda items to review and approve. Agenda items drawing the most conversation included the Nurses on Boards campaign and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of Indiana. From the Religious Freedom dialogue, a special half-day meeting of the full board has been planned for July 2015 to discuss a possible policy or position statement regarding inclusivity.

The Chapter and Affiliates Meeting took place on Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Cole Edmonson represented Texas well. TONE, as you'll recall, was the first chapter to become an affiliate of AONE. Our Louisiana Organization of Nurse Executives was also present for Region 7 (Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana). Louisiana is the most recent chapter to become affiliated. As of this writing, there are currently 22 Chapter Affiliates. Other state chapters are completing the requisite documents to become affiliated. This half-day meeting was filled with updates from AONE and a report from each state regarding something significant within the state. Dr. Edmonson reported on the great turnout for the TONE Annual Meeting Pre-Conference session, Nurses on Boards. There were 170+ present for this event.

The AONE Board of Directors had lunch with the Past Presidents of AONE. This is always an exciting time to visit with significant leaders in nursing. Each past president was asked by Linda Burnes Bolton to introduce themselves and tell what they might have changed about their term as president if they had to do it all over again. Many of them wouldn't change anything. Others felt like they could have enjoyed the journey a little more.

AONE's President's Dinner honoring Dr. Linda Burnes Bolton was held at The Venue in Scottsdale, Arizona. She had many of her family and colleagues from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center present for the dinner. Linda has worked with her CEO for many years, and he gave a great tribute to her leadership. The Board of Directors donned hats and surprised Linda with a song and dance to Pharrell's tune *Happy*. Great times were had!

The attendance at this year's AONE Annual Meeting surpassed 3,000. The opening ceremony with Native American Indians dancing and then singing the National Anthem was fitting for Arizona. The opening keynote session by Simon Sinek was phenomenal. Simon is the author of *Start with Why* and *Leaders Eat Last*. He discussed the different receptors each of us has that gives us the bump we need (e.g., endorphins, dopamine, oxytocin and serotonin). It is important for nurse leaders to understand these receptors in giving meaningful feedback and recognition.

There were many great breakout sessions for attendees. Of the more than 400 abstracts submitted, only 40 or about 10% are selected for podium presentations. In visiting with Dr. Joan Clark, Texas Health Resources, she

noted that Texas had at least four podium presentations and additional poster presentations. Texas was well represented!

As always, the exhibit hall was packed with exhibitors giving away great items and providing insights into products to improve healthcare operational activities. The evening of the first day was capped with the AONE President's Welcome Reception. The dance floor was packed as more #funtimes were had by those attending. I use the hashtag as AONE had an app this year full of good information. In the app there was an opportunity for attendees to tweet or post their activities including pictures. There were many pictures posted that night.

On Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, several Sunrise Sessions were offered to attendees. I attended The DAISY Foundation session. It is wonderful what Bonnie and Mark Barnes have created to recognize extraordinary nurses around the globe. You may be interested in learning more about some new recognitions by them including leadership, student and faculty, if you are not giving out these recognitions already.

Following the Sunrise Sessions, the AONE Region 7 Meeting ensued with great attendance (about 70 members) and lively discussion from our region. Thank you so much for your contributions to the discussions. In our region, we had robust discussions about consolidation of organizations (mergers and acquisitions). It was felt that this would be the case for years to come and that it may be a good thing. The people being affected by these changes are felt to be doing okay. Other discussions were held around staffing and bullying or harassing behaviors. We had an expert in the crowd with Dr. Cole Edmonson to discuss anti-bullying. We have such great support in Texas and across Region 7. Again, thank you!

The AONE Plenary Session Friday afternoon was Dr. Rishi Desai, an infectious disease doctor from Stanford University and Khan Academy. His presentation was profound...challenging the way we educate folks in our country. A quote from him that I have used in multiple settings since leaving the conference was, "Not ONE of us is as good as ALL of us." That rang so true to me with the work we do to continually make improvements in our work environments for people to be able to perform at their best. People performing at their best provides for exceptional care and experiences for patients, families and others we interact with regularly.

Rishi made an appearance that evening at the AONE Foundation Sunset Soiree. The event was attended by a record 280 nursing leaders. As the AONE Foundation Chair, I believe this is one way for leaders to give back to the nursing leadership profession. Donations to the Foundation go towards nurse leadership research and nurse leadership development. The newest program offered through the AONE Foundation is the Nurse Director Fellowship. This yearlong program begins this summer.

Speaking of AONE Foundation leadership development, the event following the Sunset Soiree was a reception for the past Nurse Manager Fellows, Board of Directors, Past Presidents and International attendees. Lots of noise was made in the courtyard this evening.

The last day of the AONE Annual Meeting began with the AHAPAC Breakfast with Michael Murphy giving his take on the state of politics as we head into the presidential elections in the next year. He had people laughing pretty hard for first thing in the morning.

The AONE Foundation Nurse Research Lecture featured Dr. Sharron Pappas from Porter Adventist Hospital and Health System in Colorado. She gave a wonderful presentation on her research into the value of nursing. At times the crowd was laughing and clapping. She made nursing research fun.

This year's endnote speaker was Bonnie St. John. She had a leg amputated when she was young, yet has gone on to do remarkable things in her life including winning medals in international downhill skiing events. She stated in her closing remarks to "let the nursing voice be heard."

As you can tell from this summary report, the AONE Annual Meeting was fun and filled with meaningful educational and inspirational sessions for attendees. Next year's AONE Annual Meeting will be held in Ft.

Worth, Texas. Right in our own backyard (or stockyard☺). If you have never attended this conference, I consider it a premier conference for education and networking opportunities. Take advantage of AONE and all our organization has to offer. Let me know if you have any questions by contacting me at [bob.dent@midland-memorial.com](mailto:bob.dent@midland-memorial.com); call me at (432) 221-4566; and follow me on Twitter @bobdent.