

Member Spotlight

Anita Jensen Thibodeaux, RD, LDN

The Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group (PHCNPG) is pleased to recognize Anita Jensen Thibodeaux for 50 years of membership in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics!

After completing her dietetic internship in 1964, Anita began working as a public health nutritionist in Southern Mississippi. In 1965, Anita took her first job working as a clinical dietitian at Jefferson Parish Hospital, and then as a public health nutritionist for the Jefferson Parish Department of Public Health. In 1968, she became the first dietitian in the state of Louisiana to work for a Home Health Service. She served in this position for 13 years before she began working as a clinical dietitian with a small local hospital, where she was assistant director in charge of the dietary department. In 1989, Anita began working for the Jefferson Parish Council on Aging as administrator for the Elderly Nutrition Program. Anita has spent the majority of her career working as a public health nutritionist with the Louisiana Office of the Governor in the Office of Elderly Affairs. She has served in this position since 1991, working closely with the Office of Public Health to coordinate sanitation for approximately 17 kitchens and 460 meal sites across the state of Louisiana. Through her career, Anita has enjoyed working with the elderly participants, training local staff, and working with other agencies to provide services to the elderly. Anita will retire in May 2014.

Anita grew up in New Orleans, Louisiana. She attributes her interest in nutrition and dietetics to her grandmothers – one who raised 11 children during the Great Depression, and another who completed a “homemaking” program in Denmark. Anita earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of Southern Mississippi and completed a dietetic internship at the University of Alabama and Hillman Clinic in Birmingham, Alabama. It was during an internship rotation with Mrs. Harriet Cloud, a public health nutritionist in Birmingham, that Anita was inspired to pursue a career in public health nutrition.

Anita joined the Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group (PHCNPG) around the time that dietetic practice groups were established. She was interested in learning what other public health nutritionists were doing related to nutrition and aging, particularly in conjunction with the Administration on Aging and the State Units on Aging.

In her free time, Anita enjoys gardening, fishing, reading and caring for two toy poodles and “the world’s greatest cat”. Among her favorite foods are crawfish, fish, oysters and crabs. She also loves persimmons, figs, strawberries and red beans. Anita has two sons, four step children, three grandchildren, 15 step grandchildren and seven step-great-grandchildren. Her mother will turn 97 years old in October and still lives on her own! PHCNPG is proud of Anita’s work and appreciates her contributions to the Academy, public health nutrition, and our profession for many years to come!

A message from Anita to PHCNPG student members:

Talk to as many dietitians who will give you positive information regarding your interest in dietetics. Take every opportunity to spend time with other dietitians in the area of your interest, not only your instructors. After all, do what will make you happy for the rest of your life! – Anita Jensen Thibodeaux, RD, LDN