

# Member Spotlight

## Judith (Judy) H. Bodner, MS, RDN

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

Born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, Judy received her Bachelor of Arts in Home Economics (Foods and Nutrition) from Ohio Wesleyan University. From her very first college nutrition course, Judy was drawn to the field of nutrition, intrigued by the relationship between science and health and how to effectively educate the public about the benefits of proper nutrition. Although she was uncertain of her interest in work in a hospital setting, Judy completed the necessary prerequisites for a hospital-based dietetic internship. Judy's major nutrition professor assigned a field trip so that Judy would meet the Director of the Nutrition Association of Greater Cleveland. This fateful meeting introduced her to dietetic opportunities that would allow her to combine her love for nutrition science with serving the community at large.



Judy's helpful major nutrition professor also guided Judy to apply for a US Public Health Service (full scholarship) traineeship in a graduate degree program that provided both American Dietetic Association (ADA) credentials and the academic preparation to work in the field of community nutrition. Upon college graduation, Judy received a traineeship at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health. Most classmates already had work experience in public health and related health fields, so learning from her classmates was as enriching to her education as the formal clinical and coursework experiences.

Upon completion of her master's degree, Judy began her dietetic career in North Carolina in 1964 as a district public health nutritionist. It was this dream of a first job where Judy developed a personal philosophy for public health work and received the necessary experience to become an ADA member. A family move to Georgia transitioned Judy to positions in an outpatient clinic, teaching, and in a residential care facility for developmentally disabled children and young adults over the course of fourteen years. Judy found numerous opportunities to engage with community agencies and partnerships to provide nutrition outreach, care, and education for clients. From 1980 onward, she worked in local public health agencies in Georgia and Florida at the administrative level. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was established, and Judy utilized this program as a springboard to improve the health status of vulnerable populations. Directing nutrition programs also permitted Judy exciting and rewarding opportunities to improve health benefits for other, more widespread community groups. After returning to Georgia, Judy worked with the state health department for six years on a project to establish a system of contact, support, and service coordination for children from birth to school age.

In retirement, Judy chaired a consortium of agencies and organizations working with families and young children and implemented educational programs to increase awareness of how early life experiences can significantly influence youth brain development. She currently enjoys community

volunteer work for organizations like Habitat for Humanity, spending time with her three granddaughters, gardening, and soaking up Atlanta's cultural and educational opportunities, with a little travel mixed in. A few of her many favorite foods include peaches ("Georgia, of course!"), shrimp, carrots, arugula, cheeses, and New England clam chowder.

Although Judy has seen many things change in the past 50 years, working in community settings to help people become and stay healthy through making healthy food choices is still as exciting, challenging, and rewarding for her as she first thought it was over 50 years ago when she met the Director of the Nutrition Association of Greater Cleveland.

A message from Judy to PHCNPG student members:

- *Nutrition, at its core, is a people profession. Do not become so immersed in technological advancements that you lose sight of the ultimate reason why we do our jobs: to relate to the people we serve as we help them to make healthy food choices to achieve good health.*
- *Pay it forward by mentoring and helping other nutrition professionals.*
- *It is important to be involved in public policy development and to develop relationships with elected officials.*