

## **Irene Darlaston MSc (Hon)**

Irene trained as a shorthand typist and was awarded Student of the Year award after which she taught at the same College. Her 44 year career in the Health Service started in 1962 as a medical secretary at George Eliot Hospital Nuneaton. Later moving to Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Renal Dialysis Unit where she was a member of the editorial team for the European Dialysis and Transplantation Association's conference proceedings held annually in European cities.



She later took on the role of Corporate Contracts Information Manager responsible for clinical information to support GP Fund Holding and Clinical Governance. During this time she studied at Warwick University and achieved a MSc in Health Informatics (Hon). After which she lectured students on the same course. She eventually moved to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham as Head of Health Informatics responsible for medical records and improving the quality and accuracy of coding clinical information and subsequent analysis for clinicians and managers including research and NHS targets. As well as working with the National Casemix Office was a member of the working group developing and implementing the new national electronic patient record system. Throughout she has worked with clinicians undertaking research and presentation of data at national and international level.

Irene joined SI Nuneaton in 1972 together with her sister April, one of their sponsors being their mother Jessie. Irene became Club Secretary, DU representative and went onto become DU secretary and Club President. In 1983 was registrar for the Federation's residential Conference in Birmingham and installed as DU President at the closing Ceremony. With the closure of Nuneaton Club she transferred to SI Central Birmingham.

She became the DU Federation representative the following year and enjoyed the experience learning more about the work and objectives of Soroptomist International. She continued to serve on the Federation Executive Committee until she was elected Federation Vice President in 1989. Her year as Federation President (1992-1993) remains a very memorable time and gave her opportunities to visit clubs and members throughout the Federation. In South Africa she saw the work Clubs were doing supporting the township communities. In Zimbabwe she presented a cheque for £2000 from the Emergency Relief Fund towards the Feeding programme.. She represented the Federation at the launch of the Charter for Children's Rights to Freedom from Tobacco and chaired a working group in Birmingham on Drug Awareness in Schools with the Police and City Education Department.

Following the Federation Conference in Hong Kong she went on to India to charter a new Club in East Calcutta. In India she had the privilege to spend time with Mother Theresa and visit the 5'O project in Calcutta Later that year was able to charter a new club in Malta and with members of the Mauritius Club went to the Seychelles to meet a group wishing to form a Club.

At International level she attended Board meetings and was a member of the International Convention committee in Nottingham, In 2001 she was asked by SI President Ermeli Torssonon to act as Liaison Officer to recruit and appoint new staff for the SI Office undertaking regular staff appraisals.

