For our 40th Anniversary, we asked our Past Presidents for their thoughts regarding the following:

1. What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader?
2. What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
3. What is your first memory of TSMSS?
4. What did the organization do for you?
5. What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
6. What would you tell new MSPs?

What you will find below are the combined Pearls of Wisdom from our 30th Anniversary (2007) and the responses to these 40th Anniversary questions (2017).

We thank all of our past board members for their service to TSMSS – we simply wouldn’t be where we are today without them!

1977: Cindy Gassiot, CPMSM, CPCS

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: I am semi-retired now, but what a ride it has been over the past 36 years. I feel so fortunate to have “fallen” into this career. I love what I do. I am passionate about it and could never imagine doing anything different. And what a pleasure it is now to teach in the online medical staff services degree program. It is very rewarding to mentor. So I would advise you to network, share, and mentor a newcomer to the field. If you are a newcomer, take some courses, read everything you can about the field, and educate yourself as well as you can about what you do. It will make a difference.

Changes: It seems that I started in medical staff services during the dark ages. It was a very long time ago – November 1970. The JCAH Standards Manual (as it was called then) was not a very large document. The standards were referred to at that time as minimal – not as optimal and achievable - as they are today. There were no requirements to reappoint, there were no requirements to delineate privileges. There were no specific requirements for verifying credentials. We did verify licensure, but that was about it, folks! A physician was appointed to the staff in this manner: the physician’s name was read for the first time at the monthly general staff meeting, and for a second reading the next month. Then, at the third reading of his name at the next staff meeting, if no one had come forward with horrifying information about the applicant, his name was added to the roster. Voilà!

I remember that our first “reappointments” consisted of sending a list of the entire medical staff to the governing board and they were all magically reappointed. And how well I remember our first floundering attempts to delineate privileges. This was the blind leading the blind. No one knew how to do it – so the first lists evolved from the AMA’s Current Procedure Terminology (CPT) codes from the medical record department. If you ever wondered where those awful laundry privilege lists came from, they evolved from those first delineation of privilege forms developed in the mid-1970s.
I’ve seen so many changes over the past 36 years I can’t remember all of them. I think one change I’ve seen has taken credentialing and privileging back a few steps. In the years before managed care credentialing became the monster that we thought would consume us in the late 1990s (hundreds of letters each week requesting verification of hospital membership), we used to get wonderful reference letters with real information from hospitals and peer references. Because none of us could survive the onslaught of reference requests we were getting in the late 1990s, we had to take short cuts to stay alive. Now, it is a rare thing to get a really informative reference letter from another hospital. NCQA no longer requires managed care organizations to verify hospital membership, but we’re all still using those not very informative automated form letters, many of which are accessed online.

2017: 40th Anniversary:
Biggest lesson learned:
I had a career that was immensely satisfying and rewarding. Sometimes it could be very frustrating, but looking back, it was a wonderful way to spend a working life that spanned almost 50 years.

Fondest Memory of TSMSS:
My fondest memories are of the wonderful friends and colleagues I met and enjoyed throughout the years. My dearest friend to this day is a person I met in TSMSS and we are like sisters. Some of the best times I’ve had in my life were at TSMSS seminars with groups of friends and colleagues.

First Memory of TSMSS:
Trying to convince a hospital administrator to put in a good word for the formation of the society at the Texas Hospital Association. Colette McGinley and I convinced her administrator, who held some leadership position at that time at TSMSS, to support the formation of a brand new affiliated society. The rest is history. Some years later, TSMSS left THA and became an independent organization.

What the Organization did for Me:
Inspired me to be the best I could be. Brought recognition to the role I played, inspired me to write text books, and to teach and mentor people who were new to the field.

Struggles:
There were times in my career when I was no longer happy in my position and I wanted to find a more fulfilling one. Sometimes it took a few years to find just the right job and to make the change. The most rewarding part of my career was teaching medical staff services online for El Centro College, which I did for 17 years.

Advice to New MSPs:
Learn all you can about your role. Study and become certified. Be the best that you can be. Reach out to your colleagues for help and advice.

1978: Patricia Starr
(Last known address for Patricia was Irving, Texas)

1979: Jo Ann Turner
(Jo Ann moved out of the country; no address is available.)
1980: Linda Thomason  
(Deceased)

1981: Jewel Igo

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: 1) Patience – patience – patience. 2) You are never too tired to go to one more meeting. 3) Efficiency and kindness are a necessity. I still try to keep these “pearls” into play every day as I go about my daily chores. However, the only meetings that I attend are mine and my husband’s doctor’s appointments. (We have the pleasure of going to the physicians that I have credentialed!). It takes patience to sit and wait your turn in the doctor’s office. Also, I am guilty observing the office staff for efficiency and kindness. I am proud to say that so far so good! To be honest, there have been several occasions that I thought the office staff and/or other professionals could be a little more efficient. (grin)

Changes: I am sure there are significant changes in Medical Staff Services industry, but I have been retired since 1996, and I am not aware of the changes. I am enclosing two pictures of myself. One is me in my office typing minutes or an agenda getting ready for another meeting at Northeast Medical Center in Humble, Texas in the ‘80’s. The other picture was taken a couple of months back. This one is of me and my only grandbaby, Makayla. I couldn’t find a picture of me and my plants, but had plenty of me and Makayla. So this is what I do now. Play with the baby, plant flowers and take care of my husband who has Parkinsons. Yes I love retirement! Thanks again for your thoughtfulness in calling me and sending me correspondence. Medical Staff Coordinators are a special group! My love and respect for them is indeed very deep. I also learned, while I was working, they were always just a phone call away when you needed a little help and/or support.

2017: We did not receive a response from Jewel for our 40th anniversary – if you are in contact with her, please have her reach out to us.

1982: Colette McGinley

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: I want to remind you it is hard but rewarding work, exhausting but uplifting, confusing but interesting. It is not a job but a mission, we loved it as I know you do. Best wishes and thanks for the invitation and the memories.

Changes: I do have some great memory-pictures: laughing, talking, sharing. What a relief to be able to talk to other people in my situation; or somewhat in my situation as our job descriptions were so varied. Administrative assistants, clerks, people like me, with a medical record background, and "others" were assigned the responsibility of credentialing. There were few written policies and procedures though most of us did a pretty good job by reading and talking with a hospital or THA attorney.

I was the "person in charge of checking applications" at Harris Methodist HEB. The first meetings of "people in charge of applications" were held at HEB because it was between Dallas and Fort Worth and therefore accessible to more people. We began by studying medical terminology. We quickly discovered our kindred minds were needy and the phones began ringing; to share expertise, problem solve, to tell a horror story or a joke, or just to bounce ideas around. Soon, with the help of Dr. Dewey Johnston, an Administrative Physician from Saint Joseph's Hospital, we began to tackle bigger issues. Recognition of the need for an identity (i.e., NAME) and an organization to validate the expertise and tools required to fulfill the Medical Staff Coordinator position became critical. Cindy Orsund (name at that time) was an irreplaceable part of this process; she gave direction, support, and vision to a floundering group of ladies.
TSMSS has fostered and been successful in ensuring that quality physician-oriented procedures are in place. The Coordinators I knew also served a vital roll in assisting with physician communication between physician groups and also with Hospital Administration. I assume the support system remains intact, the procedures and organizational manuals are updated.

2017: We did not receive a response from Colette for our 40th anniversary – if you are in contact with her, please have her reach out to us.

1983: Rae Dowdy Smylie, CPMSM

2017: 40th Anniversary:
What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader?
TSMSS membership gave me the opportunity to serve on the board, on numerous committees, and ultimately, President. The leadership skills I picked up were invaluable but the single biggest lesson learned was that leaders inspire, not dictate. This realization took me on a career path that included President of the state healthcare quality services organization, on to several Vice Presidencies in hospitals and on to the CEO position I held in SE Texas.

What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
The networking and camaraderie. We knew we could rely on one another for help in any arena.

What is your first memory of TSMSS?
Taking my first flight in a hurricane situation - to Brownville, Texas, no less.

What did the organization do for you?
So very much, when I contacted Cindy Orsund-Gassiot in Dallas, she told me about the early stages of planning for TSMSS. When I accepted the positive of Director of Medical Staff Services, I had no idea of what I was getting myself into and no where to turn to for help. Cindy set the stage for TSMSS and TSMSS was the catalyst for my successful completion of my first JC survey in medical staff services. I went on to many such successes and even had the opportunity to serve as a speaker for JC educational programs. Gilbert Cardenas, the JC surveyor who authored the first safety standards for hospitals, was a great mentor and often insisted I share the podium with him. TSMSS provided me with many great mentors over the years but none as great as Cindy and Gilbert.

What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
Wow! This is a hard one to narrow down. My introduction to the position of DMSS, was a JC survey just three weeks away from when I accepted the position. The person I replaced was reassigned to another area but had not done anything with MS credentials for over six months...and she had a huge backlog of committee meetings on tape that had never been transcribed or presented to committees for approval. Furthermore, one of my medical staff leaders took the opportunity at survey time to tell the survey team what he thought of the survey team in general and JC in particular. My predecessor had poisoned the medical staff with her opinions of JC and convinced them that JC was a waste of time and money. The first complaint survey they underwent from the state, however, helped me change their minds!

What would you tell new MSPs?
Attend every TSMSS and NAMSS conference you can, network all you can and get involved. Find a mentor and stick with her/him, soak up information like a sponge, then share that knowledge with others. Don't try to go it alone but be brave in the face of adversity - you have friends out there, utilize their skills - including for coping with difficult/ toxic folks.

1984: Gail (Cooper) Neas, CPMSM
(Last known address for Gail was Houston, Texas)

1985: Gloria Madewell
(Deceased Fall, 2006)

1986: Joanne Jeffress, CPMSM

2007: When I retired in 1990, my husband and I sold our house and bought an RV. We traveled these United States for about six years and what a time we had! We met wonderful people (who became dear friends) and we saw such beauty in this country of ours. Most of the doctors that I worked with have either retired or are deceased. I am so sad when I see one of there names in the obituary column. I have enjoyed retirement and developed a new hobby which is quilting. I have made quilts for weddings, new babies, all members of my family, etc. I also work with the ladies at our church who did strictly hand quilting and every year we make a quilt for one of our missionaries. Health has been a problem the last few years, but now I am a "bionic woman" with two new hips and new lenses in my eyes. I have to be out of town during the TSMSS meeting. I sure hate to miss it. Give my love to all and best wishes for a wonderful time. I wish you all the best and have a wonderful convention.

2017: We did not have contact information for Joanne for our 40th anniversary – if you are in contact with her, please have her reach out to us.

1987 and 1988: Madeline Schneikart, CPMSM

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: Run, Forrest, RUN!

Changes: Things that have changed since I started in medical staff services industry....the light bulb was invented.

2017: 40th Anniversary:
1. What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader? BUILD IT, AND THEY WILL COME
2. What was your fondest memory of TSMSS? ALL THE WONDERFUL TALENT, MOTIVATION, HARD WORK AND SUPPORT OF THE ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP
3. What is your first memory of TSMSS? CHARLOTTE COCHRAN SPEAKING AT TSMSS IN CORPUS CHRISTIE TSMSS CONFERENCE IN 1982 (I THINK)
4. What did the organization do for you? TAUGHT ME TO THINK OF OUR JOBS AS PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS
5. What were / are some of your struggles in the industry? ENSURING THE PROFESSIONAL STATUS FOR THE NEXT GENERATIONS OF MEDICAL STAFF PROFESSIONALS
6. What would you tell new MSPs? IT'S A GREAT PROFESSION WITH MANY OPPORTUNITIES. YOUR ONLY LIMITATION IS IN YOUR OWN HEAD.
1989 and 1990: Pat Boydston, CPMSM

(Last known address for Pat was in Georgetown, Texas)

2017: We did not receive a response from Pat for our 40th anniversary – if you are in contact with her, please have her reach out to us.

1991: Lynne Humphrey, CPMSM

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: One thing I’ve learned along the way is... always be open to learning new things and be willing to share those things with others. It’s good to find your niche in the Medical Staff Services Professional world but don’t restrict your learning to just one area.

2017: We anticipate that Lynne will join us for our 40th anniversary celebration.

1992: Nancy Hale, CPMSM

2007: Nancy is currently teaching pre-school in the Houston area, and noted that it is a job that she feels highly qualified for! She was not able to attend, but wished to tell everyone hello!

2017: We did not have contact information for Joanne for our 40th anniversary – if you are in contact with her, please have her reach out to us.

1993: Lynn Buchanan, CPMSM

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: 1. Never stop learning!!! No matter how long we've been in the business, how much education we have, many CEUs we’ve collected, how many articles we’ve read or how much networking we’ve done with colleagues, there is always something new we can learn - something new we need to know. If you think you finally "know it all", you've just stopped listening. 2. Never stop growing!!! Complacency is our worst enemy. Opportunities present themselves every day to grow professionally and personally, but we have to be willing to leave the comfort of our "every-day", be flexible, and sometimes be downright daring! There is no pinnacle of success - it’s a constant journey.

Changes: I’ve been in medical staff services since 1984, and the changes are too numerous to mention -- but the most significant change in my opinion is the scope of opportunities that our profession now has to expand our roles and our departments. No longer boxed into a hospital setting, there are numerous types of healthcare organizations who benefit from our expertise. No longer boxed into just credentialing and medical staff management, many Departments of Medical Staff Affairs encompass a variety of additional responsibilities, including quality management, peer review, physician recruitment, graduate medical education, and the list goes on.
Changes in TSMSS (even though you didn't ask): TSMSS has always been a strong organization that has nurtured, supported and propelled the profession. The most significant change I've seen has been during the past 10 years has been in obtaining and maintaining independence in the management and growth the organization. I was fortunate enough to be involved in the initial move from THA's governance structure to an independent governance structure and contracted management services. TSMSS’ leadership has maintained that independence and continues to make appropriate adjustments to provide the best possible management structure to best serve its members.

2017: Lynne passed away June 21, 2014

1994: Rachel King
(Deceased; 2000)

1995: Sally Boesdorfer, CPMSM

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: I really don’t consider myself very wise, I just try to follow the rules and meet the expectations in all the accrediting standards. I guess if I have one “pearl” to pass on, it would be that each time a physician or an employee questions why we do something the way we do, I say, “just picture yourself in the Witness Chair in a courtroom and tell the jury why you chose not to follow your Bylaws, or policies or the JCAHO standards”. Our patients are first and foremost in our thoughts when any decision is made. It’s easy to do the right thing when you picture your child or spouse or parent as the patient.

Changes: The advances in healthcare are making it possible for all of us to live healthier and longer lives. The ever changing patient-safety initiatives over the years have brought our role as credentials and privileges guardians into view as one of the most important in the organization. I suppose the biggest change for me as a person has been my evolution from typist to coordinator to administrator. Over the years a number of physicians have asked for my direction and advice on a variety of issues, organizational, professional and personal. The mutual respect and friendships I enjoy with members of the medical community are sources of personal fulfillment and pride. Having our field nationally known and respected has helped us all achieve much higher than many of us dreamed. I owe much of my success to those who taught and inspired me in this organization.

2017: Sally was unable to join us for the 40th anniversary – I would like to THANK YOU and TSMSS Leadership for extending the invitation to join you at the 40th TSMSS Conference next month. The organization was fantastic and a great help to me while I was in the field and I enjoyed my affiliations with the organization, including the leadership teams I worked with. It was rewarding in many ways, professionally and personally to be a member of TSMSS.

Now that I have been retired almost 8 years, I don't think I have any Words of Wisdom to impart to today's leaders in the field (or in the trenches) haha. I have not kept up with industry changes in the past 8 years; and have so many new loves during retirement, I don't have any advice to the current members other than to work hard and pay yourself first so that your retirement is as enjoyable as mine is to me.

Thanks again for the invitation to join you; but I send my "regrets" that I will not be attending next month. Please pass on my congratulations to those who do attend. I think of many of my TSMSS friends and colleagues fondly; and enjoyed knowing and learning from them for many years. Please pass on my best wishes for continued success of the organization for many years to come.

1996: Becky Cochran Hahn, CPMSM, CPCS
2007: Pearl of Wisdom: Always credential to the highest standard, which is, “We are the gatekeepers to patient safety”; “We are the ‘Time out’ to assure that the practitioner has current clinical competency to provide the privileges requested.”

Changes: 1) The Internet! This tool has added excellent capability to investigate and verify information about a practitioner. 2) The respect and recognition that is afforded Medical Staff Professionals has increased ‘100 fold.’ In a large part, I give credit to state medical staff professional organizations, and our National organization for bringing our status to where it is today through education and recognition.

2017: 40th Anniversary:
2. Professional friendships with other TSMSS members that have lasted through the decades.
3. Attending small, intimate local TSMSS meetings and learning with other TSMSS members.
4. TSMSS gave credence to my chosen profession. Being in a large organization (Texas) supported my endeavors to grow in knowledge and enhanced my reputation as a medical staff professional who knew what I was doing, honing my skills in leadership.
   a. TSMSS brought me in contact with professionals such as Cindy Gassiott who sat me down and mentored me on how to be an expert witness in malpractice cases from which I had a successful 25+ years.
   b. Propelled me into administrative positions in the hospital setting....Director of Medical Staff Services.
   c. Afforded me the opportunity to be published and speak at learning opportunities for my colleagues.
   d. TSMSS was the gateway to NAMSS. With the offerings of these two great organizations, I was awarded the ICON Award from NAMSS for “BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING” by becoming the first Medical Staff Professional to appointed as a public member to a state medical board (New Mexico) and on to being the Vice Chairman of that Medical Board.
5. Coming out of the shadow of my profession being a “clerk” type position to one of being a professional position that was sought after for expertise and decision making.
6. Network, Network, Network!!! Open yourself to every learning experience: Conferences, legal workshop opportunities, formal education settings and...... read, read, read.

I have enjoyed a long and full career as a medical staff professional and truly owe my success to TSMSS and NAMSS. My sage advice: Get Involved, Stay Involved and Network, Network, Network.

My mantra is that of Angela Mayalou: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

1997: Sarah Daughety (Maddox), CPMSM

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: Always treat others with the same dignity with which you would want to be treated.

Changes: The technology now available is incredible. When I first learned that paperless offices were possible I thought “no way.” Having been retired for three years now there is no telling what technology is now available and in use that I’m not aware of.

2017: Sarah is excited to be building a new home in Colorado and is unable to attend this 40th celebration.
Here are my thoughts of TSMSS and what it has meant to me:

When one is a leader in an organization they can't lead alone. They have to get input from members as well as past leaders and professionals in their field. Don't try to be a "do it all yourself" leader or you will soon lose your backers and be in a sinking boat in a big sea.
My fondest memory of TSMSS was a conference we had in Corpus Christi. One of our speakers, Ken Osean, was scheduled to speak first thing in the morning. However, Ken’s flight was canceled the night before. But being the trooper that he is, Ken rose early, drove the long distance from Dallas to Corpus Christi to speak to our conference and made it right on time.

My first memory of TSMSS was a conference in San Antonio. I didn’t know a soul there and was befriended by a Medical Staff Coordinator from Bedford, Texas. Debbie was a dear friend for many years. I don’t know if she is still in this profession, but if she’s here today, thank you Debbie. From that first conference I attended every conference until I retired in 2003. Over the 18 years I was a Medical Staff Professional I made many friends in the TSMSS organization as well as NAMSS with whom I still stay in touch. We shared information, forms, and other tidbits as a way to help each other out. I miss the comradery with other MSP’s and would like to take this time to say hello the Nancy, Jana, Sally, Cindy, Becky, Debbie and the many others who may or may not still be in the profession whose names I forgotten in my old age.

TSMSS gave me the encouragement to reach for higher status in my hospital hierarchy. TSMSS allowed me to meet so many others in the organization and offered the ability to share knowledge with others in the organization.

One of the struggles I encountered toward the end of my employment was the fact that I didn't have a college degree. I understand that now most MSP's are required to have a college degree or be working on one. The work experience we acquired was not thought to be as valuable or as recognized as a college degree. My advice would be to get a degree and obtain all the knowledge you can. Sally Boesdorfer and I were instrumental in the process of setting up the Associates Degree program at El Centro College, part of the Dallas County Community College District. If it’s still available, TSMSS should promote the program so many as need can take advantage of it. Many past presidents and leaders of TSMSS and NAMSS participated in the development of the curriculum for the program and taught the on-line program.

New MSP’s should remember they can gain an astounding amount of knowledge if they open their minds to all they hear and see. Being an MSP was the most interesting and fulfilling job I ever had.

I would like for TSMSS to do as much as it can to continue to promote the profession of MSP’s and the important job they have in patient safety. Even though they are not involved in direct patient care, they are doing what is necessary to ensure the physicians and allied health who practice at their hospitals or in their managed care programs are truly competent and able to perform their requested privileges.

It was a true pleasure to serve as President of TSMSS.

1998: Jan Knott, CPMSM, CPCS

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: Always look to the future but never lose site of who you are and mean to others e.g. family, peers etc.

Changes: During the year of my Presidency:

- Provider Credentialing Professional certification became effective
- TSMSS had input into the statutory language on clinical privileging for APN’s & PA’s in association with legal counsel at THA
- TSMSS website was established with the help of Association Headquarters and one of our own Beth Thornton
- The slogan was "Everything is Better with a Blue Bonnet on it" for the NAMSS conference in San Francisco
- Total membership was 496 representing 73 CMSC; 34 CPCs and 16 CMSC/CPCS
- Association Headquarters was the first management company in Austin with message 2000 capability - forms, conference registration, information sheets, resource library forms
- Input into the development of a Standard Medical Staff Application in conjunction with THA, TAHP and TSMSS

The "Stayin' Alive" theme for this years’ conference pretty well says it all. TSMSS has been a great part of my career and so many others. The networking, knowledge and true friendships that you build are what it is all about. Even though we do not see each other on a day to day basis we always know our TSMSS family is available if each of us has a need. Back in the olden days (1998), we were strictly Medical Staff Secretaries (ugh!) but were opening our eyes and hearts to the managed care professionals. Take a look at how far we have come in our ongoing relationship with peers that have the same areas of expertise.
2017: Please keep Jan in your thoughts. Her husband has recently passed and she regrets not being able to attend this 40th anniversary celebration.

1999: Sue O’Connor, CPMSM

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: I have a simple Pearl of Wisdom that I have on my desk. Thomas Edison says, “the three essentials to achievement are hard work, stick-tu-it-iveness and common sense.” It’s simple, but I guess I like it, because it was words like these that I was raised with applying yourself to your work.

Changes: Oh boy, biggest change in my career. Here I go showing my age, but I guess the biggest change is that we used to credential verification manually and now that we have the INTRANET and on-line verification! How did we work without email and the intranet?

2017: We did not have contact information for Sue for our 40th anniversary – if you are in contact with her, please have her reach out to us.

2000: Bonnie Conley, CPCS

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: Your career is only one important part of your life; give your all to succeed but allow time for your personal interests, keeping an even balance between the two at all times.

Changes: I started my career in medical staff services when there were no software or computer systems to assist us in all the tasks we manage. Thus, technology has to be the biggest and most welcomed change for medical staff services over the years.

2017: 40th Anniversary:

1. What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader?
   I have learned a lot of lessons in my career and I still have many to learn. The biggest lesson I learned is to listen to the advisement of others who have experience before you. That advisement may not apply today, or be hard to accept today, but someday you will find you are ready to put this advisement to use.

2. What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
   When I got the extreme privilege to present to Cindy Gassiot the establishment of the “Cindy Gassiot Scholarship” by the TSMSS Board. Cindy has been and is still an inspiration to all of us and we are all so fortunate that she had the foresight to write the first Medical Staff Services Handbook and initiate the formation of the TSMSS. We would not be where we are today as an organization or profession if it were not for the vision of Cindy Gassiot.

3. What is your first memory of TSMSS?
   I believe it was in San Antonio. A member named Rose received the CMSC of the Year. I wanted to be just like Rose. She was very professional and knowledgeable. I wanted to know everything that she knew and someday be good enough to receive the recognition of the CMSC of the year.

4. What did the organization do for you?
   I am a quiet person who would rather not get up in front of a crowd of people and talk. I was invited to present an educational topic at a TSMSS conference on Managed Care Credentialing. Through that presentation, to a packed room including many national consultants, I started to gain my confidence. Had I not had this opportunity, the ice may not have been broken for me to have the confidence to go on to be the President of TSMSS and improve my leadership skills.

5. What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
   Current struggles in the industry are:
   - The rate at which healthcare and our industry is changing
   - Working with the 5 very different generations that are in the workforce today
What would you tell new MSPs?

Always be open to learn new things because you never know where that knowledge, experience or the people that you meet along that journey will lead you later. Volunteer for TSMSS or your Chapter. Establish relationships and build a strong network of peers in and outside of TSMSS.

Changes: I have witnessed many changes in this field in the 24 years I have been a medical staff coordinator. The most important one to me is the change in attitude toward MSSPs – we have progressed from “secretaries” to experts and professionals in the field of Medical Staff Services. Hospital administrative staff as well as physicians respect the opinion of medical staff professionals and look to them for guidance in areas of credentialing, bylaws and policies, and strategic planning for the medical staff.

2017: We anticipate that Lynn will join us for our 40th anniversary celebration.

My biggest lesson learned is that credentialing is never ending when it comes to education. You can never learn too much to help you with unique and unusual circumstances that might arise. Networking with your peers can be a big help.

My fondest memory of TSMSS was when I received the outstanding CPMSM award and my sister was there to surprise me.

My first memory of TSMSS is when I had been hired on as a medical staff coordinator and at three weeks of employment they sent me to a TSMSS conference. WOW, I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

The organization gave me a network of peers and education to help me move forward in my career.

Probably one of the biggest struggles is staying abreast of current changes.

My advice to new MSPs is if you are willing to invest in this career, to know that it has many challenges and heartaches. But at the same time you know you are making a difference.

“You can be what you want to be!” I had the benefit of hearing a presentation by the Zig Ziglar Corporation early in my career, and was given a “bee” pin as a thank you, which I still have. The presentation came at a particularly poignant time in my life, and I shared it with my daughters many times over the course of their lives. One of them wrote me a card at the time of
her wedding thanking me for always believing she could be what she wanted to be. Surprisingly, my oldest grandson has since named me “B”. The other pearl of wisdom is that nothing happens by chance. Be all you can be – then just B!

Changes: Everything changes – and that includes Medical Staff Services! When I started in 1988, medical staff services was far different from a technology and regulatory standpoint. It was also very different in terms of the choices that were available to us and the perceived importance of our functions. To be acknowledged now for the role we play and to be sought out as an expert is different than in the early days due to the ever changing standards in healthcare, but also to changed perceptions as hospital and physician leadership began to receive the same message about the importance of the work done on the front end of a physician’s relationship with any healthcare entity. I have enjoyed working with physicians, and enjoyed the unique ‘liaison’ relationship. It is a great testament to the job we do when physicians seek us out for advice, as a trusted sounding board or to even offer a suggestion ‘behind the scenes’ - not to mention the “challenge” turned into a friendship. It is the relationships with the people that I have encountered in this field that I cherish the most, and the most important are the relationships formed through this professional organization. In many ways this field is still the same because of the people who have chosen it (or in my case, like many of you, it chose me!), stuck with it, and consistently continued to learn and grow in it. We have a network of great people who offer to help each other at every opportunity. What one of us hasn’t developed, another has; what one of us hasn’t learned or experienced, another has – and we all gain from those experiences. What a testimony to the power of networking and getting involved in your local chapter, your state and your national organization.

What can we do in the next thirty years?

2017: 40th Anniversary
What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader?
In this field, the biggest lesson I learned was that dotting all the i’s and crossing all the t’s ALL THE TIME would keep me out of trouble! As far as leadership, the biggest lesson was that to be a leader, I had to have people who wanted to follow. This meant setting the best example I could, holding myself and them accountable to high standards, showing integrity in the face of adversity, being willing to work hard every day, and having their back no matter what. And of course, “dance moments.” Our dance moments kept the stress in check.

What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
In general, my fondest memory in general is serving on the TSMSS Board of Directors. It was wonderful to come together as a team to serve the organization we all loved. The fact that we left there as such good friends was a huge plus! Of all the things I missed when I left the medical staff services field, the people and those friendships were the hardest to leave.

What is your first memory of TSMSS?
My first recollection of TSMSS was stumbling across a newsletter from TSMSS at my first credentialing job. It came across my desk and contained a lot of information I was searching for as a “newbie” in the field. Just knowing there were people out there who had answers gave me such hope and inspiration to grab hold and hang on to this crazy career!

What did the organization do for you?
Oh wow. TSMSS gave me so much. For starters, a career I could finally sink my teeth into; friendships that continue to this day; a touch stone over the course of a 20-year medical staff services career; a place to aspire to greater things and to help benefit a larger community and an organization’s future. Finally, a lifetime of memories that I think about routinely.

What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
Back in the day (ha), most of my struggles seemed to follow the theme, “the a race against time” – or the seeming lack of it. I wanted to do my very best, but even being super organized didn’t always seem to help the weeks when 40 hours was just not enough. At TSMSS, some of our struggles were making sure we could offer the right education to as many in the field as possible. Managed care was just getting a foothold, so blending the needs of managed care and hospital credentialing staff was huge. Understanding the common, and not so common ground on both sides, then turning that into educational and other opportunities including a new certification was a struggle for our industry at the time.

What would you tell new MSPs?
This is a very rewarding and demanding career. You will either love it or hate it. If you hate it, save yourself and get out. But if you love it, the sky is the limit in terms of what you can accomplish personally and professionally, and the value you will add to any organization and the people it serves.
2004: Janet Wilson, CPMSM

2007: Pearls of Wisdom - In my 23 years as a medical staff professional I have seen a marked change in the perception of us as individuals and the profession. For many years, the medical staff office was perceived as the administrative support staff for any process or project in the hospital related to physicians. However, through the hard work of many of our colleagues, I have seen a shift in this perception. We are hearing of more and more peers being promoted to Directors and Managers with increases in salaries beyond our expectations. I would advise any of my colleagues, who are still encountering the “secretarial” perception from Administration and Human Resources, to contact some of the senior leaders in the state and national organizations, to request guidance and direction as to how to advance your position.

One of the ways you can help improve your position is to achieve CPMSM or CPCS certification, if you have not already done so. There are many resources available to help you be successful in this area through the state and national associations. Certification adds tremendous value both to yourself and the organization you work for. Studying for the certification test and participating in the ongoing required continuing education assures that you maintain a high level of knowledge needed for this profession. This knowledge sets you apart from other individuals in your institution and allows you to be viewed as a valuable “expert” in the area of medical staff.

I also would advise everyone to get involved in a local medical staff services organization. This involvement will provide you with invaluable networking resources, whenever you need advice, friendship, guidance, and even assistance with interpretation of regulatory standards. Networking also helps when you are trying to develop policies and procedures or privilege forms. Invariably someone else may have already developed the document you need and it would save you a lot of time in your very busy life to just access and revise their document.

2017: We anticipate that Janet will join us for our 40th anniversary celebration.

2005: Brooke Bell Huseman, CPCS

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: Look towards the future, but not so far you can’t see today.

Changes: I am sure that we can all agree that the biggest changes in our field have been networking and technology.

2017: 40th Anniversary:

1. What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader?
   Listen to all details first and don't be too quick to make decisions.
2. What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
   It is so hard to pick just one as there are so many….target practice on the Dude Ranch in San Antonio, hanging out with the clowns in Ft. Worth, disco dancing at the 30th Anniversary just to name a few. Of course, I also recall having to cancel our conference on 9/11 and how everyone (Board members, Chapter presidents, and other members) assisted in ensuring every detail was covered including calling attendees to let them know.
3. What is your first memory of TSMSS?
   Attending a TSMSS Board meeting as a Chapter President and realizing the Board was made up of my peers that volunteered their time to ensure the success of our organization.
4. What did the organization do for you?
   TSMSS has given invaluable resources and friendships that have lasted many years.
5. What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
   Learning of all the changes or upcoming changes in a timely manner to ensure compliance.
6. What would you tell new MSPs?
Don’t give up, your local chapters and State organization provides you with unlimited resources. Don’t try to re-invent the wheel, you have so many peers ready to help and answer questions.

2006: Nancy English, CPMSM

2007: Pearl of Wisdom: You can place square pegs into round holes. Just make adjustments with whatever tools you have available to you and make it happen!

Changes: I have been in health care for more than 20 years and most of that time has been in medical staff services. Some of the changes taking place during this time have been: Medicare DRGs impacting physician reimbursement; HCQIA’s major affect on peer review and establishment of the NPDB; EMTALA regulations that describe ER coverage guidelines and responsibility; Managed care influence on physicians and hospitals; State law (Texas) enacted to equalize osteopathic and allopathic education; Legislation involving timelines for application and notification; Re-engineering of Medical Staff structures to streamline and redesign committees and functions; State-mandated physician applications; Technology used to improve response times for primary source verification and communication; Growth in TSMSS as an organization; Growth through the professionalism of our membership.

2017: 40th Anniversary:
What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader?
Probably the biggest lesson that I have realized as a leader and Medical Services Professional is the absolute importance of developing a strong network of MSPs for both learning and sharing. I have learned – and continue to learn - so much from the MSPs with whom I have connections. And, I have had the opportunity to share with them what I have developed/learned. I do not believe that I would have survived some of the stormiest days of my career without the encouragement and assistance from my network. The support they provide is priceless and immeasurable!

What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
My fondest memory of TSMSS is being instrumental in designing a new TSMSS logo that incorporated the State of Texas in it. During my term as TSMSS President, one of my goals was to update the logo so TSMSS would be readily recognizable as a professional organization from the Great State of Texas. The Board worked through several renderings before selecting the one that we agreed would reflect our society in that light. There was much accomplishment realized when the Board approved the new logo and the TSMSS members applauded it!

What is your first memory of TSMSS?
My first TSMSS experience was in 1990 when the TSMSS Fall Conference was held in Dallas. (Back then TSMSS had two conferences per year.) Sandy Martin and I were working together at a Fort Worth hospital and we were allowed to attend the conference since it was local to us. I remember feeling like such a “babe in the woods” since I had only been working in the Medical Staff office for about six weeks when the Conference was held. There was so much knowledge in those rooms! It was quite comforting to know that there were so many people to learn from and network with, and a lot of them worked in close proximity to our hospital. It was also good to learn that we weren’t the only “newbies” attending the conference!!

What did the organization do for you?
TSMSS has been instrumental in helping me develop as a professional in Medical Services by providing programs geared to each level of my experience throughout my career. The TSMSS organization provides educational opportunities to help members and others achieve their personal and professional goals. As a volunteer, I began working with TSMSS as a Chapter President for the Fort Worth-Dallas area, then by serving on the Board as a Member, Treasurer, President-Elect, and President. TSMSS is a great organization that provided for me an avenue for education and an opportunity for personal and professional development.

What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
The work of an MSP is always greater than the resources allocated to support it. It goes with the territory, as they say. Struggling to stay current with timelines and deadlines is an ongoing issue for myself and many of my cohorts industry-wide.

What would you tell new MSPs?
I tell people all the time that either you love this business and stay with it, or you will leave it within a year of starting in it. Anyone starting out needs to understand that this business is a growing segment of healthcare, and we play a vital role in the
work we do. Regardless of whether we work for a hospital, managed care, physician group, CVO or provider enrollment, the information we manage is significantly important to the provision of quality care. As “gatekeepers” of patient safety, our work must be done with integrity, courage and excellence. So new MSPs should be willing to work hard, to take advantage of educational offerings, to seek out mentors for guidance, and to establish robust networks for support as early as possible.

2007: Marie Cruthirds, CPMSM

2017: 40th Anniversary:
I owe my career to TSMSS and its pioneers. I left my first TSMSS conference in the Fall of 1984 with eyes wide open to what we can and what we should be doing—that is: protecting patients by ensuring that Practitioners are thoroughly vetted before they are presented to the Medical Staff and Board for membership and privileging decisions. That experience sparked a passion for our profession and a desire to convey the “why” behind our mission to my peers, as well as to Physicians and Administrative Leaders and other stakeholders that I am fortunate enough to meet. Every TSMSS conference or TSMSS sponsored education opportunity that I have been fortunate enough to attend since then have met and exceeded my expectations – I can’t over emphasize how important it is for us MSPs to grab every bit of information this wonderful organization affords us.

2008: Carolyn Hurt

2017: We did not hear from Carolyn for our 40th anniversary – if you are in contact with her, please have her reach out to us.

2009: Debbie Marre Streusand

2017: Deb is spending this week with her family and is unable to attend our 40th anniversary celebration.

What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader?
Delegate! As members of a profession that somehow seems to collect the OCD among us, we all tend to be perfectionists. This frequently leads us to try to do everything ourselves. You can’t! We all work too hard - take a deep breath and let others do their part. It helps them grow - and that’s what leadership is about - helping others grow and realize their potential.

What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
The friends! such great people - all suffering the same issues together. Also, the educational opportunities - goodness, where would I have been without all that I learned at TSMSS conferences.

What is your first memory of TSMSS?
I was very fortunate that my first MSSP job I had a CEO that immediately sent me to my first TSMSS Conference and then to NAMSS. I immediately saw how BIG the job was, the awesome opportunities, and the very significant responsibility as well.

What did the organization do for you?
My goodness - it taught me everything! I never missed a TSMSS or NAMSS Conference - I was very fortunate that, particularly in those days (Oh my goodness it makes me sound ancient!) hospitals were willing to pay for these valuable
educational opportunities. I think the most significant thing I learned from my first TSMSS Conference was when a speaker asked if we were credentialing for the purpose of meeting JCAHO. I, of course, was sure that was right. She emphasized to me that our primary objective was patient safety. I remember the question as if it were yesterday - and I carried it with me always. It became my rallying cry for nearly 30 years.

What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
My biggest struggle was always my need for clear, coherent policies and procedures that defined and fostered an objective credentialing process and an administration that frequently wanted more gray area - their objectives for flexibility in their recruiting programs were not always mine. Their need for a "waiver" of criteria occasionally tied me in knots!

What would you tell new MSPs?
It's all about patient safety! What you do has nothing to do with paperwork and everything to do with protecting patients. What you do is important. Enjoy it - take pride in it - use well written policies and procedures as your guide and apply them consistently. If you don't have any policies - write them - but don't start from scratch - everyone is willing to share theirs for you to edit to fit the needs of your medical staff - use those contacts you make at TSMSS!

2010: Dee Crawford, CPMSM, CPCS

2017: 40th Anniversary:
1. My biggest lesson was learning how to listen to others and think before opening my mouth.
2. My fondest memory of TSMSS was all the fun we had at conferences.
3. My first memory of TSMSS was when I attended my first board meeting as the President of PAMS. I was so nervous because I was among the industries top MSS leaders.
4. The organization helped me to become connected with others in the field. It is always good to have others you can contact so you don’t have to recreate the wheel.
5. My biggest struggle in our industry is undervalued we are. If you are not clinical or a revenue generated department, then you’re not at the top of the list for obtaining resources.
6. I would tell a new MSP "hang on it’s a wild and exciting".

2011: Theresa Buck, CPCS

2017: 40th Anniversary
What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader?
Having to identify one thing is difficult, I learn something new almost every day. Accountability is probably my biggest lesson learned. Providing clear communication and/or requesting clear instructions can easily impact accountability. It’s like trying to nail jello to the wall. If you don’t understand the expectations it’s going to be difficult to achieve.

What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
I have many fond memories of TSMSS. My first conference, meeting people I’d only spoken to or communicated with via email, giving away TSMSS Cookbooks to name a few. However, my fondest memory is the 2013 TSMSS Conference in Austin. After line dancing at the restaurant, having a golf cart race back, we pretty much took over the lobby of the hotel. My son, Taylor, who lived in San Marcus was going to Boston to present his research project & (of course) was stopping by the hotel on his way to the airport to get $$ from me. All of the ladies knew & said they’d keep an eye out for him. Every male who walked into the
hotel was greeted with a loud ‘Taylor’. At one point I was talking to someone & looked up to see this young man having dollars stuffed in his shirt & pockets. I began shaking my head no, & saying that’s not Taylor. I believe he was too shocked to say anything but his wife thought it was hilarious. Taylor eventually arrived & him & his friend were greeted with the same enthusiasm.

What is your first memory of TSMSS?
I attended my first conference in 1998 or 1999. I had only been in the professional a year or so & attended the conference alone. I didn’t know anyone & I probably looked like a Freshman at college; wide-eyed & full of wonder. There was this connection everyone seemed to have & I wanted to be a part of it. Being the shy person I was at that time (yes, it’s true!) it was difficult for me to take the initiative to reach out to speak to people or ask questions. I was very blessed to have several people who reached out to me, invited me to sit with them & go out to dinner. I’m not sure they’ll ever realize how much their small gestures impacted me. It’s probably the main reason that I give out crazy things at conference, it’s a conversation starter. Not just with me but between attendees & it generally makes them laugh & smile.

What did the organization do for you?
Do you mean besides the plethora of education that has enabled me to grow in our profession? TSMSS has enabled me to grow personally as well; my shyness (clearly) has evaporated, my fear of speaking in front of groups has diminished, & my love of our profession deepened.

What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
Sometimes it is difficult to keep up with the industry changes. The information does not always arrive from the primary source or you don’t learn of it until it is happening. For example, the DPS Narcotics Certificate change was a bit of a challenge. While we understood the change in management of the certificate no one was able to definitively state that hospitals & managed care organizations would no longer have to verify.

What would you tell new MSPs?
Join TSMSS & your local chapter (if available). Ask for help, even if you don’t know anyone – we’ve all been there. Once you become comfortable in your role, pursue certification. If not for your job, for yourself! You will learn so much by studying for the exam. Become involved in your professional organizations! Volunteer!!!

What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
My first board meeting in Dallas. I met Theresa Buck for the first time at Love Field, as it was her first board meeting too. She is now a friend for life. It’s so funny when we argue about something –board or work related (since we are now co-workers), because people think we are really mad at each other. At the end we just laugh and talk about where we are going for lunch. They just don’t understand that are both passionate (outspoken and opinionated too) and we live the saying “It’s not personal, it’s just business.”

What is your first memory of TSMSS?
The first TSMSS event I ever attended was a one-day event in San Antonio with my then Director almost 20 years ago.

What did the organization do for you?
TSMSS has given me so many friendship and experiences but mostly a sense of community and support that we don’t always get in our facilities.

What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
Always been seen as a “non-revenue generating department,” instead of the first and potentially most important step in patient safety.

What would you tell new MSPs?
Find a mentor. It doesn’t have to be a formal relationship, just someone whose “been there, done that” you can go to with your questions, concerns, etc.

2013: Kendra Townsend Zepeda, CPCS

2017: 40th Anniversary:
What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
There are so many!
What is your first memory of TSMSS?
My first TSMSS Conference – it was in Houston and I was very new to the field (less than a year). I remember TSMSS felt so big and overwhelming, but each individual I spoke to was warm and welcoming.
What did the organization do for you?
TSMSS helped develop my career. It helped me to understand that what we did was bigger than my spot in my hospital. That it was not just paperwork, but a call to action; to protect those that didn’t even know they needed protection. To ensure that when people are their most vulnerable they are receiving the best care available.
What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
While I believe the profession has come a long way, I still believe there is a lack of knowledge for what we do and the importance of that work.
What would you tell new MSPs?
Get involved – get involved in your local, state, and national associations. Find a mentor.

2014: Victoria Barney, MBA, CPCS

2017: 40th Anniversary:
1) Do the RIGHT THING for the RIGHT REASON! I have watched many people in leadership positions mask this character standard by doing a combination of the right thing for the wrong reason, the wrong thing for the right reason, and even the wrong thing for the wrong reason. On the outside looking in, these people seem to achieve success and advance their career by ill-contrived results. In reality, although they may continue operating in this manner for years, the truth WILL come to light and resulting consequences dealt!
2) Getting to know some of the other MSPs across the State by spending time together at TSMSS events has created A LOT of fond memories! If I had to choose one, I believe it would be the year I served as Conference Committee chairperson, which was the first year TSMSS took ownership of the operations and functioned without a management company. Members of the TSMSS Board and Conference Committee spent MANY hours throughout the year running the organization and putting together the Conference. Once the Conference started, the rewards of watching attendees interact with speakers during the courses and HAVE FUN at the after-hour activities far outweighed the time and energy spent preparing throughout the year. The success of the Conference was considered an accomplishment we were all proud of.
3) My first memory of TSMSS was having the opportunity to attend the Conference held in Addison. I worked in Dallas and could attend sessions during the day but did not stay overnight in the hotel. The first fond memory of TSMSS was during the conference at Corpus Christi when I actually participated in the after-hour events (or at least tried to—that is a completely different story!).
4) TSMSS has certainly allowed me to gain more knowledge about the MSP profession, as well as provide me with WONDERFUL resources in the people I have gotten to know or have access to around the State. SO MANY people are willing to share their insight, templates, or processes when you need assistance. There is no doubt, I have also gained friends. Working closely with people to achieve such a goal as the TSMSS Conference draws you together—I consider many of the people that served with me on the TSMSS Board to be my friend—I know if I needed them for anything, I could call, and vice versa.

5) One of the greatest struggles in our profession (for me, anyway) is time-management! No matter what the priority may be for the day, it is OFTEN over-ridden by a more-urgent priority! There is always more to accomplish, or more you want to accomplish, than is physically possible.

6) My advice to new MSPs is to understand that we DO NOT have to like everyone. We are taught we should all love one another and we often confuse love with like. No doubt there are many people (yes, that includes physicians and bosses) that are not likeable; however, we CAN CHOSE to treat everyone with courtesy and respect. The other part to that is to accept: it’s business, not personal. I consider myself to be an emotional and thoughtful person; I take things people say to heart whether it is praise, criticism or somewhere in between. Many days (many years ago), I walked myself to the car EVERY DAY telling myself, “it’s business, not personal; it’s business, not personal; it’s business, not personal” because a physician may have said or done something that I allowed to hurt my feelings. I came to recognize their intent was not to hurt me (I made it all about ME) and, perhaps, I should consider what issues they may be dealing with at the time. Of course, many people consider that “putting up a shield” to my emotions, or “compartmentalizing” my life, but that works for me in the business world.

7) TSMSS has already done a tremendous job augmenting the Conference with educational webinars throughout the year. I look forward to hearing how the Virtual Conference goes—what a great way to provide access to up-to-date knowledge by allowing MSPs to participate in conference sessions where ever they are in this great State!

2016: Kelsey Goughnour, CPMSM

2017: 40th Anniversary:
What has been your biggest lesson learned in your career or as a leader?
That many people are qualified to do the work but only a few are "called" to do the work we do. I think it takes a special type individual to stick to our work and make sure that it is done properly and appropriately.

What is your fondest memory of TSMSS?
The many friends I have met across the state and seeing them each year at Conference...and, knowing I can call on them if I have questions or issues with world and they can offer advice and knowledge!

What is your first memory of TSMSS?
Attending an East Texas Chapter meeting with Mrs. Bobbie Fry. I had only been in the position for about two weeks. She became a close friend and a wonderful mentor!

What did the organization do for you?
Helped me learn a new world and gave me so many resources that I did not know existed.

What were / are some of your struggles in the industry?
I didn't even know there were two facilities in the town when I accepted the position of Medical Staff Coordinator. I had no idea there was such a job either. And, it had never crossed my mind that someone would want to pretend to be a doctor or that a doctor might let their license lapse...I think a big struggle for me was just simply awareness. Now I find it humorous when people try to explain to other people what we do but then I correct it and explain the importance of it because what we do is so valuable and I feel it important for others to know about it!

What would you tell new MSPs?
Attend your local Chapters and join TSMSS as soon as you are able so that you can have the resources available and a multitude of individuals with knowledge so you don't have to re-invent the wheel...there are others out there who have paved the way...you just have to follow it!