

Happy Retirement to a

Pharmacy Icon



After nearly 35 years at the Texas State Board of Pharmacy, Executive Director/Secretary Gay Dodson will retire. Prior to becoming executive director of the Texas State Board in 1997, Ms. Dodson held various positions with the Board, including senior compliance officer, senior enforcement officer and director of compliance. Ms. Dodson also practiced as a community pharmacist in the Dallas area for 13 years. Ms. Dodson earned her Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy from The University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy and is a hardcore Texas Longhorn fan.

Her awards and recognitions are many and include: 2016 Legend of Pharmacy Award from The University of Texas College of Pharmacy, 2016 Pharmacist of the Year Award from the Texas Pharmacy Association, 2014 National Association of Boards of Pharmacy Honorary President, 2013 Kappa Epsilon Career Achievement

Award, 2012 State Agency Council to the Governor's Commission for Women's, Outstanding Women in Texas Government, 2010 Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists Distinguished Service Award, 2007 National Association of Boards of Pharmacy's Lester E. Hosto Distinguished Service Award, 2006 Texas Pharmacy Association's Distinguished Service Award, 2000 University of Texas College of Pharmacy William J. Sheffield Outstanding Alumnus Award, 1997 Recognition Award from the Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists in "recognition of her commitment, leadership, and dedication in advancing the practice for pharmacists and the patients they serve," 1993 award for Outstanding Service from the Texas Pharmacy Association, and the 1989 Linda T. Rodgers Memorial Leadership Award from Kappa Epsilon.

We had the pleasure to spend the morning with and interview Ms. Dodson a couple weeks ago. When asked what she'll do after she retires Ms. Dodson replied "Anything I want to!" as she laughed. She also said she plans to spend time with family, her great nieces and nephews that live outside the state.

What led you to a career in pharmacy?

"I don't know if I have a magic story, in high school I went to a career day." Ms. Dodson goes on to say that she did well in math, science, chemistry and subjects like that so pharmacy presented itself as a career option. She was also impressed by the passionate, enthusiastic pharmacist that came to career day to speak to students. She knew after her orientation class at UT Austin that pharmacy was a good choice and the more she learned the more she got excited about the profession.

What is your greatest professional achievement?

“I have totally enjoyed working for the state board of pharmacy.” Ms. Dodson goes on to say that I’m a pharmacist, I love the profession and want to see it move forward and I want to work with pharmacists to do that. Our job at the board is to protect the public and pharmacists are there to protect the health of patients. I wanted to change the perception of the board. Working for the board allowed her to get very involved in the legislative process and make recommendations for changes in the profession.

What has been your greatest source of inspiration?

“People, I’m a people person.” Especially younger people that are excited about what they are doing. To watch them be so excited fires me up again.

What piece of advice did you receive that you wish you hadn’t ignored early in your career?

Ms. Dodson answered that she wouldn’t change anything about her career. She grew up in a family of leaders (mother and father) and that upbringing had a big positive influence on her life.

What is one thing you wish the general public knew about pharmacy professionals or the profession?

“I wish they knew pharmacists are passionate professionals with a wealth of knowledge, education and care about the health and well-being of the people they serve.”

What do you wish you could have seen changed in the pharmacy profession before you retired?

“I would like for the general public to have a full understanding of the value of pharmacists and the important role pharmacists play in a patient’s health care”. Now I can’t say that this is not changing, it is changing but it seems it is changing very slowly as patients are able to interact personally with a pharmacist and pharmacists are able to not only explain how to take a prescription medication the pharmacist has just dispensed, but also able to assist the patient in resolving a patients’ medication problems by reviewing all of the medications the patient is taking. There are still far too many consumers who believe that pharmacists only take pills from a large bottle and put them in a smaller bottle to be dispensed to the patient. Now, having said that, I have to admit, some of the problem is “us.” Not all pharmacists have embraced the role of a counselor for their patients – some pharmacists don’t do this because they believe they don’t get paid to counsel their patients, they believe they only get paid for dispensing. I guess this is true to some extent, but I don’t believe these pharmacists are helping the profession to move forward if they hold on to this attitude. Pharmacy still has a way to go to make this the standard of care for all pharmacists to provide to every patient. Hopefully, the profession will soon be successful in convincing the federal government and insurance payers that pharmacists will improve a patient’s health by managing a patient’s drug therapy and that pharmacists should be compensated to provide this service to patients.

Ms. Dodson, we can’t thank you enough for your invaluable contributions to the profession and to the health and safety of the citizens of Texas!