



# SunTimes - Fall 2017



## Florida Cancer Registrars Association

... furthering cancer care and research ...



### Happy Fall

#### FCRA

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### 2018-2019 ELECTED OFFICERS

##### President

Jennifer Sanky, CTR

##### President-Elect/Secretary

Heather Burner, CTR

##### Immediate Past President

Elizabeth Elrod, BS, RHIA, CTR

##### Treasurer

Dinah Merrill, CTR

##### Chairman Nominating Committee

Charla Carter, CTR

#### STANDING COMMITTEES

##### Membership

Elizabeth Elrod, BS, RHIA, CTR

##### FCDS Liaison

Joyce Allan, MPH, CTR

##### Bylaws

Mayra Espino, BA, RHIT, CTR

##### Historian

Anne Auguste, CTR

##### Education

Vonetta Williams, Ph D, MPH, CTR

##### FCRA Education Foundation Liaison

Jamie Suarez, RHIT, BS, CTR

##### Public Relations/Editor

Janet Vogel, CTR

##### Web Master

Fred Furner, CTR

Bobby Reynolds

##### Physician Liaison

Pedro Heinz Diaz Pow Sang, MD, CTR

##### 2018 Program Chairs

Joyce Allan, MPH, CTR

Vonetta Williams, Ph D, MPH, CTR

##### Presidential Advisor/Web Master

Walter Sanford, CTR

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jennifer Sanky, CTR

Jrsanky2@gmail.com



To my Fellow Cancer Registrars of Florida, thank you for the overwhelming support you have been providing me since I stepped into this chair. I am truly humbled.

Having had the opportunity to observe the talent and professionalism of this group over the years, and understanding the difficulties involved in executing every challenge in the ever-evolving profession, I learned some important lessons. I learned that it takes patience, wits, confidence and hard work as well as kindness to succeed in this profession, especially when one is serving in the role of a mentor for registrars as well as non-registrars. Most of you know this from experience as I have personally observed these qualities in this group.

Let me use my first message to issue a challenge: Be an inspiration to someone so that they will want to join our profession and/or be a mentor to someone to enable them to maximize their full potential. I am asking you to do so, because I was fortunate to have been inspired by one individual, who truly loved the profession, and mentored by another, who gave me wings and allowed me to fly.

My **inspiration** came from Shirlana Gabriel, who introduced me to the Cancer Registry profession, and made it look so "cool". For me this was exactly where I need to be to fulfil a promise. I joined the registry in 2006, working part-time. Two years later, I was hired full-time with the contingency that I had to become certified in eighteen months. I received my certification in *six* months. While I do admit that I was highly motivated, and did work hard, I still could not have done so without the intense mentoring provided by Jennette Cox. Both these women showed me the patience and understanding that were needed by someone who was new to the field, and having to learn the vocabulary, process and multidisciplinary team members with whom I would need to interact.

Currently I volunteer with NCRA Mentoring Committee as a State Mentoring Representative for Florida. It is my goal to try and mentor anyone who is interested in becoming a cancer registrar, from assisting in exam preparation to maintaining high quality work after becoming a CTR. I invite you all to join in the mentoring program and assist in the preparation of students and cancer registrars to earn their CTR credential

As most of us complete abstracting our 2016 cases and start on 2017, we cannot help but think about the myriad of changes that will take place beginning



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Message from the President Continued from Page 1.

with 2018 cases. I want to encourage everyone to make an effort to attend some kind of training on AJCC 8<sup>th</sup> Edition that is being provided by NCRA and other training entities.

This is an overwhelming task that is set for us in the coming months, expectations are high and the workload is tremendous.... But, we can do this. ***We are Cancer Registrars.***

*With Great Hope for Our Future,*

*Jennifer*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Membership

**Elizabeth Elrod, BS, RHIA, CTR**

**[elizamelrod@gmail.com](mailto:elizamelrod@gmail.com)**

ATTENTION MEMBERS and ASSOCIATES - Your membership and support is important!!

Please take a moment and renew your membership online at [www.fcra.org](http://www.fcra.org) - Go to the "Member Login" area, follow the prompts and renew by check or credit card. Don't be hit with a late charge.

Please remember the due date for the 2017/2018 fiscal year is August 31, 2017, and is delinquent after October 31, 2017. Remember dues received after October 31st will be charged a \$10 late fee. You may pay your dues anytime by logging on to the FCRA Webpage, click on Pay Dues and you can pay your dues either by Credit Card or check. If you choose to pay by check, please mail the check to **Elizabeth Elrod – 3970 Bedford Ave. Winter Haven, FL 33884** - I will e-mail you confirmation and update your membership status.

If you have any questions or need help navigating the FCRA Web Page please e-mail me and I will be happy to help you – [elizamelrod@gmail.com](mailto:elizamelrod@gmail.com)





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## REGISTRARS – WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO Marcia Hodge, CTR

As Registrars, we are dedicated to our profession and strive for excellence. We believe in the value of our work, yet rarely see the impact of our efforts. Society promotes quantity, we endorse quality. However, with large volumes of work attached to stringent deadlines, we often feel frustrated and overwhelmed. We find ourselves wondering if we, as Registrars, are really making a difference in this fight against cancer. Is there value in the cases we abstract?

Some cases tug at our heart for a time, however reminded of the number of cases yet to be completed, we move on to the next case, and then the next. In our effort to comeingle quantity with quality, we risk rushing through our cases, depending on our memory and drop-down boxes, rather than our manuals, and include the barest of details in our text. We remain passionate about the work we do, yet often are unaware of the impact we make. Recently, I had the opportunity to witness firsthand the value of our work, and see that we really do make a difference.

I sat in clinic with my father-in-law listening to the results of his most recent CT scan. Having progressed through surgery, two rounds of radiation and chemotherapy, as well as an experimental treatment, additional options were limited. Finally, his physician asked if he'd be willing to consider a clinical trial.

In reading over the information regarding the clinical trial, I recognized the name of the Principal Investigator responsible for this particular protocol. I commented that I recognized the name and recalled completing a data request for him in the past. The coordinator smiled, "This is the study based on the data you pulled. Your father-in-law will be the first patient enrolled on this protocol."

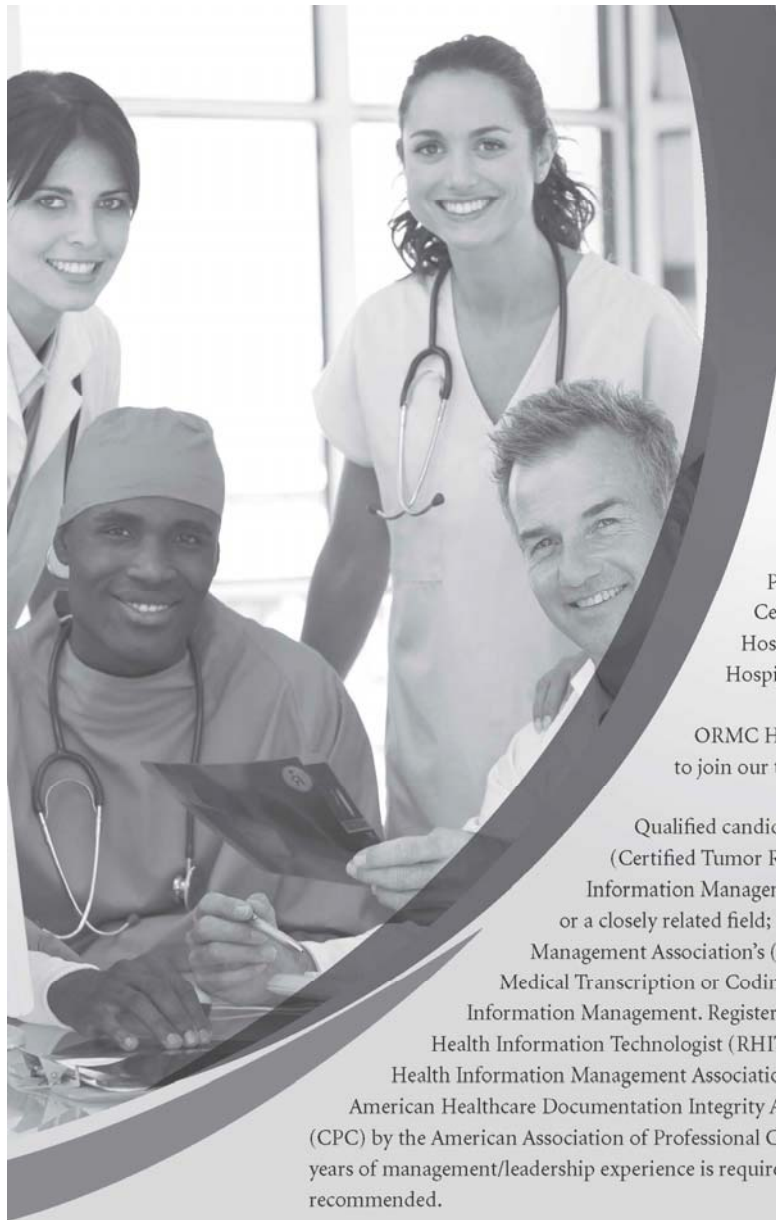
I immediately thought back to a couple of years prior when I'd received a request to pull Registry data on a particular group of lung patients. These criteria requested was very specific. It was not a routine data request, it was very detailed requiring multiple steps to pull the data accurately. After working on the study, myself for some time and not achieving the results I needed, I put in a portal request with our vendor to seek help. As always, I promptly received a call from Janet Vogel and we spent another couple of hours working to pull the exact data needed for the study. We were both a little frustrated with the process, but eventually, we had the data pulled and I could return it to the physician.

Although I have always understood the value of Registry data, and our contribution to cancer research, I saw this come full circle. I understood even more the importance of complete and accurate data. I understood why well documented text fields are so vital. More than ever I realized that every chart has a name, every name has a story, and every story matters. That is why we, as Registrars, do what we do.





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## Practice your Passion

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ORMC HIM Cancer program is seeking an **Operations Manager** to join our team.

Qualified candidates must meet the following requirements: CTR (Certified Tumor Registrar) preferred, Bachelor's degree in Health Information Management (HIM), Business, Healthcare Administration or a closely related field; or completion of the American Health Information Management Association's (AHIMA) Independent Study program, or an approved Medical Transcription or Coding Program or two years of college courses in Health Information Management. Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA) Registered Health Information Technologist (RHIT), Certified Coding Specialist (CCS) by the American Health Information Management Association or Certified Medical Transcriptionist (CMT) by the American Healthcare Documentation Integrity Association (AHDI) or Certified Professional Coder (CPC) by the American Association of Professional Coders is required – renewed every two years. One (1) years of management/leadership experience is required. Experience in management of a cancer registry is recommended.

For more information or immediate consideration visit us online at [orlandohealth.com/jobs-ormc](http://orlandohealth.com/jobs-ormc) (Job ID# 110007).

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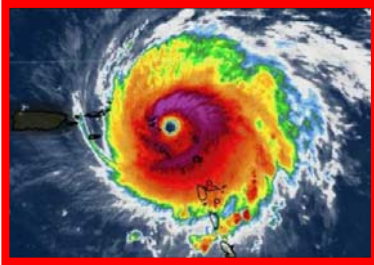
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## \*MY FRIEND 'NOT' IRMA

By: Sally Kruse, CTR



**It was a dark and stormy night. Little did I know how long the darkness would last.** The wind was howling and it sounded like a firehose was aimed at my front windows. The phone rang and startled me, it was Ethel my sister who lives in Unit 1, calmly telling me that the telephone pole had fallen next to her house and live wires were sparking on the street.

I immediately called Duke Energy and let them know it was an emergency. The person that answered the phone was calmer than Ethel. I blurted out that the pole fell and was on the street with live wires sparking. The Duke representative said I will report this, but we will have to wait until Hurricane Irma passes. I emphasized that the live wires were very dangerous (I think she was reading her canned response, because I got the same reply).

I jumped in my car and hurried to rescue Ethel through the squalls of the driving rain. It took a little coaxing to make her come home with me (okay, I threatened to stay in the driveway in the hurricane if she didn't get in the car).

Now we were safe at my house, we had electricity, phone and cable. What else could you ask for – that is until 10:30 p.m. There was a large “**BOOM**” and then darkness. In Florida, it's not unusual to lose power, but it only lasts for an hour or so. Not this time – that night wasn't bad, the strong winds kept it fairly cool.

The next morning “**Irma**” had moved on and we went to check on Ethel's house. The pole and wires were still on the ground, but the second house behind Ethel's had burned all the way down to the ground. There were still flames in the garage and water shooting up in what was the kitchen. Thank God, the owner was not home.

Riding around, we saw many palm trees uprooted and the tops were seared off. Huge trees were downed blocking the back roads out of Mainlands, but most of our complex only had minor damage.

We had one minor problem - “**NO POWER**” – this meant – no lights, A/C, fridge, phone, cable, or Internet. It was seven days before it was restored. The nights were the worst part - high humidity made it impossible to sleep, but cold showers in the morning would wake you right up.

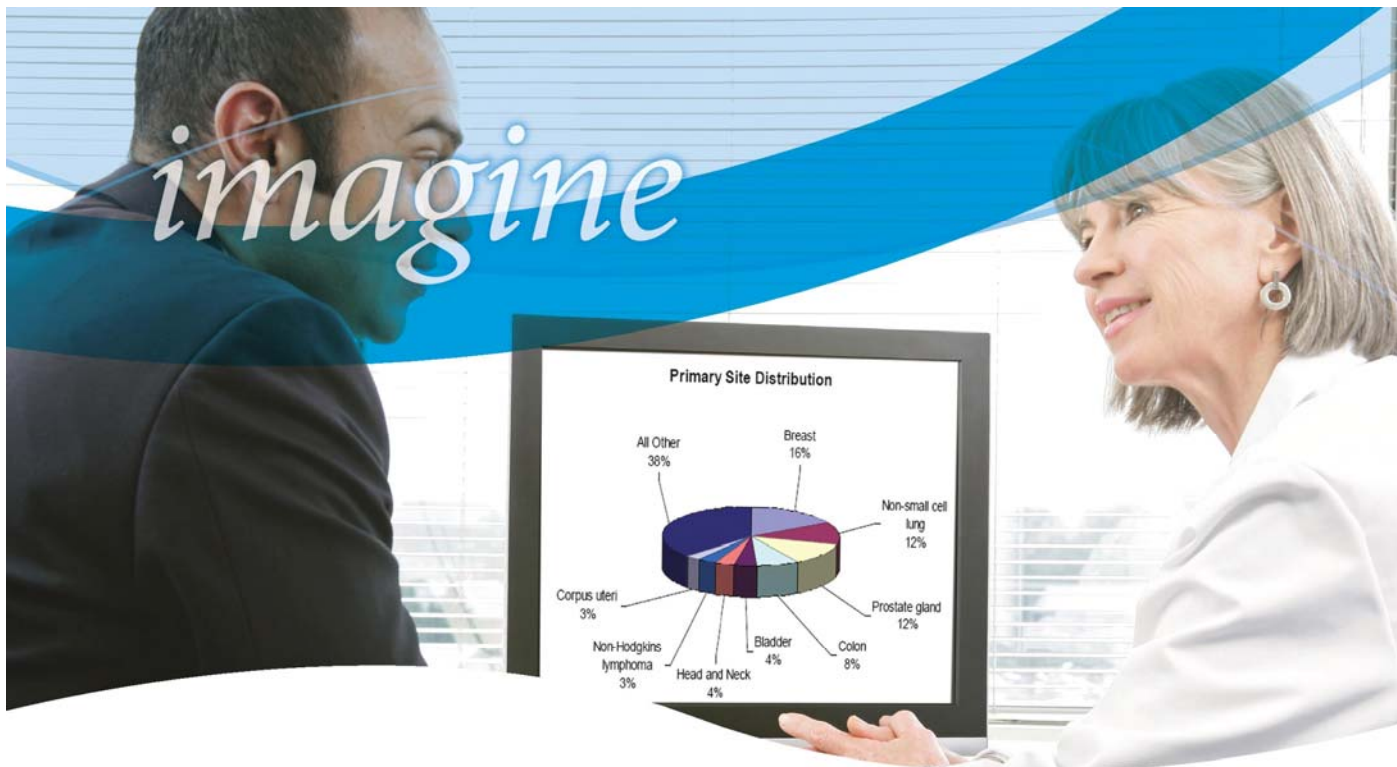
The good news was that we wouldn't get food poisoning – as all the food in the refrigerator/freezer had to be thrown away. Now if the grocery stores would only restock their shelves.

Many thanks go out to the Mainlands' office for keeping us informed of the hurricane and where to go if we had to evacuate. We also found out that *our maintenance crew* is the best – all the debris and down trees were cleaned up before most of us had our power restored.

Most important was the kindness and generosity of people wanting to help. I heard that Publix had ice, but by the time I got to the store - the last three bags were sold. I started searching for a bag of ice that may have been missed. Dejected I walked over to the dairy case (it was cooler there) and began talking to a woman I didn't know and told her about my search for ice. She had power and a bag of ice that wasn't needed. Her name was Sue and lives in Unit 6 - I picked up the ice at her house. This is but one example of the many good deeds that were done for us. It didn't matter that she didn't know me, what mattered is I needed help.

**Special thanks to Unit 2** for letting us use the Clubhouse with A/C and TV during the day. Also for providing us with water. We could have spent the night, but no dogs allowed and we wouldn't leave our Andy alone. Finally, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day at 1:05 a.m., we were awakened out of a sound sleep by the printer starting and the refrigerator running – all the lights in the house came on. We ran from room to room, turning off lights, shutting the refrigerator doors and closing the windows. It felt like Christmas and New Year's – what a great feeling.

\**My Friend Irma* was a radio situation comedy that began broadcasting in April of 1947 on CBS. *Marie Wilson* was cast as the *dumb blonde*.



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## DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD 2017



This year's distinguished member has provided leadership to both FCRA and NCRA in her roles as Treasurer, President Elect, President and Immediate Past President. In addition to the elected positions, she has served on enumerable committees and Chairs for FCRA and seventeen NCRA committees. She is now retired, but still volunteers as Treasurer of the FCRA foundation. Her accomplishments and awards are too many to mention.

She is my friend as well as to everyone she has ever met. Cancer registrars historically have overcome adversity to achieve respect and recognition, but nothing like what she went through. She was a political prisoner in Cuba. She had all her belongings taken, her career and dignity stripped. She was arrested and spent time in solitary confinement - a one room concrete brightly painted pink dungeon. The only light was coming from a crack under her cell door. They attempted to brain wash her and her only crime was rejecting communism.

She finally gained her freedom and could come to the United States. She kissed the ground in Miami, knowing she was finally free to speak, learn and be an individual. Something, we have all taken for granted.

She managed to find a job at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, but wasn't satisfied until she could communicate in the language of her new country. She learned English by watching TV and became proficient in her new tongue. She didn't stop there; she was the coordinator of the cancer program at Jackson and volunteered her time at the League against Cancer in Miami. When I say volunteer, I don't mean a couple of hours a week, she was there every night.

She is eternally grateful to her new country and profession. She was the treasurer of NCRA and FCRA board member when both associations hit their low point. She not only gave her time, but also helped financially. She believes in giving back what she received and she has given and given and given. Her CV is 12 pages and you can't help but wonder how she did it. She is an inspiration to everyone she has ever met and was given the Distinguished Member award by NCRA in 2002.

FCRA at that time did not have a Distinguished member award and everyone on the current board believed she was one of our Distinguished members. We are here today to rectify that mistake. **It is with great pleasure and honor to introduce this year's FCRA's Distinguished Member – Martha Oliva.**



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## DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD 2017



Forty years in any profession is a long time and as a Cancer Registrar it goes back to the start of the profession. FCRA was just getting started and FCDS didn't exist. It wasn't until 1981 that the State of Florida mandated that all cancer diagnosed and/or treated would be reported to the state. There were a few tumor registries in hospitals and some even were approved by ACoS (there wasn't a Commission on Cancer yet).

SEER books are where we learned how to do the job, but the rules were constantly changing. FCRA began in 1978 with a group of dedicated registrars, ready willing and able to share their knowledge. NCRA had also begun to share their talented registrars and provide education, but many of us "tumor registrars" didn't even know these associations existed when we started in 1980.

We were taught by other tumor registrars in other hospitals. They were more than willing to answer the most basic questions. These were our mentors and many of us would not have stayed in the profession without them.

This registrar was there for anyone that called her and made time for them. She has been a Cancer Registrar for over 40 years and has volunteered to FCRA for over 30 years - as past-president of FCRA, program chair and liaison to the Foundation.

I'm pleased to announce as the FCRA Distinguished Member for 2017 – **Jamie Suarez**.

\*\*\*\*\*

## HONARY MEMBER AWARD 2017

Amanda Turner-Gibson may not be a familiar name to most of you, but you have all benefitted from her volunteer hours. Amanda is 15 years old and the Grand-daughter of Walter Sanford and is his personal assistant.

Amanda is the one that does most of the typing on the annual programs and even copies the handouts from the speakers on over 135 thumb drives. She has done this for at least three years and this year her duties were too numerable to list.

FCRA is proud to present this plaque to Amanda making her our youngest ever Honorary Member.







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## ONCOLENS

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With OncoLens, you avoid the hassles of data collection on each case, through our workflows that **automatically route data requests to pathology, radiology, clinical trials and genetics**. The case is instantly available for you to present during meetings or for providers to review and discuss online.



### Benefits of OncoLens

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#### Clinical Research

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**IN MEMORIUM**  
**APRIL GRAHAM FRITZ**  
**November 19, 1949 – September 12, 2017**



April Fritz passed away at her home in Reno, Nevada on September 12, 2017.

April Christine Graham was born in Rochester, Minnesota on November 19, 1948. She grew up in Moline, Illinois and attended local schools there. In high school, she participated in debate, the literary magazine, and the school orchestra. She was an accomplished cellist.

April graduated from Knox College in 1970 with honors in English literature. She was also inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. At Knox, she met Bob Fritz. They were married in October of 1971. April spent 28 years as an Army spouse after Bob was recalled to active duty in 1976.

While living in Milwaukee in 1972, April was accepted for a position in the medical records department at Columbia Hospital. She soon came to specialize in tumor registry and earned certification as both a registered health information technician (RHIT) and as a certified tumor registrar (CTR). She is a past president of the Wisconsin Cancer Registrars Association and the National Tumor Registrars Association.

She eventually went to work for ELM Services where she traveled around the country training customers on the company's cancer data software system. In 1995, she accepted a position with the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program at the National Cancer Institute where she focused on data management and training. She was also the lead author of the International Classification of Disease for Oncology when the World Health Organization published a new edition in 2000.

Upon retiring from the NCI, April founded her company, A. Fritz and Associates and began offering training courses for registrars. April excelled in the classroom where she was able to organize and convey complex information to hundreds of students over the years. She had a wonderfully wry sense of humor. She published several books, including a two-volume desk reference for tumor registrars, which is also being used as a textbook at a number of colleges in their cancer information management programs.

April was a sought-after speaker for state and national tumor registry conferences. She also participated in training events around the world, including Australia, Japan, Singapore, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Kingdom.

Cancer was more than a matter of classification and statistics to April. She was a 25-year survivor of breast cancer and had been fighting pancreatic cancer for the last three and a half years.

April enjoyed travel, ballet, classical music, reading, cooking for and entertaining friends, and spending time with her rescued dogs. She also was on the Board of Directors of Golden Retriever Rescue, Education and Training (GRREAT) in Maryland for many years and edited their newsletter.

She is survived by her husband, Col. Robert G. Fritz and her sister, Robin Graham of East Moline, Illinois. In lieu of flowers, it is requested that memorial donations be made to the NCRA Education Foundation. The family is working with NCRA to create a scholarship or educational program in April's name with the details being announced at the NCRA Annual Meeting in May.

Checks with "April Fritz Memorial" in the memo line may be sent to the NCRA Educational Fund, 1330 Braddock Place, Suite 520, Alexandria, VA 22314 or you may make an online donation in April's memory at <https://tinyurl.com/April-Fritz-Memorial>. Be sure to type April's name in the "in memory of" block.



## Maximize the potential of your cancer registry

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Cancer Registry Software & Services





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## Just "What Is" a Cancer Registrar?

Cancer registrars are passionate about quality data and committed to patients they never meet.



Cancer registrars can work in very small places with books on their laps and papers on the floor. Sometimes the office is the size of a closet!

Cancer registrars are fighting the war on cancer one patient at a time.



Cancer registrars' are conscientious and disciplined.

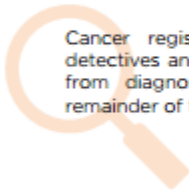
Cancer registrars know about body parts people don't even know they have!

Cancer registrars can pronounce long words with ease and actually know what they mean: Thrombocytopenia, glioblastoma multiforme, oligodendroglioma, or leiomyosarcoma.



Cancer registrars can pronounce prostate correct; not pRostRate!

Cancer registrars use their creativity to create charts and graphs with shapes and colors to display their data.



Cancer registrars often are detectives and follow patients from diagnosis through the remainder of their life.

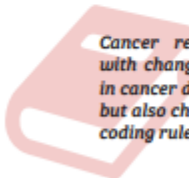


Cancer registrars are organized, meticulous and use numerous manuals. If you take away their manuals, there will be an uprising!

Cancer registrars' are one of the first to learn about new tests and treatments for cancer patients.



Cancer registrars network with their counterparts at other hospitals. Registrars become friends with their neighbors even if the hospitals are competitors. If they ever meet, no one ever looks like they expect.



Cancer registrars are familiar with change. Change in advances in cancer diagnosis and treatment but also changes in standards and coding rules.

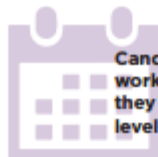


Cancer Registrars are required to know all of the diagnostic tests and modalities of treatment for each cancer site and each stage of disease. Registrars often feel like part of the medical team because they know what is expected.

Cancer registrars can resurrect an expired patient, at least in their database. Who knew they had special powers!



Cancer registrars must be able to use several different computer applications and be patient with computer problems. Often, they have become good friends with the IT Help Desk staff.



Cancer registrars often have more work than can be completed but they come back the next day! Their level of commitment is profound.



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## PICTURES FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

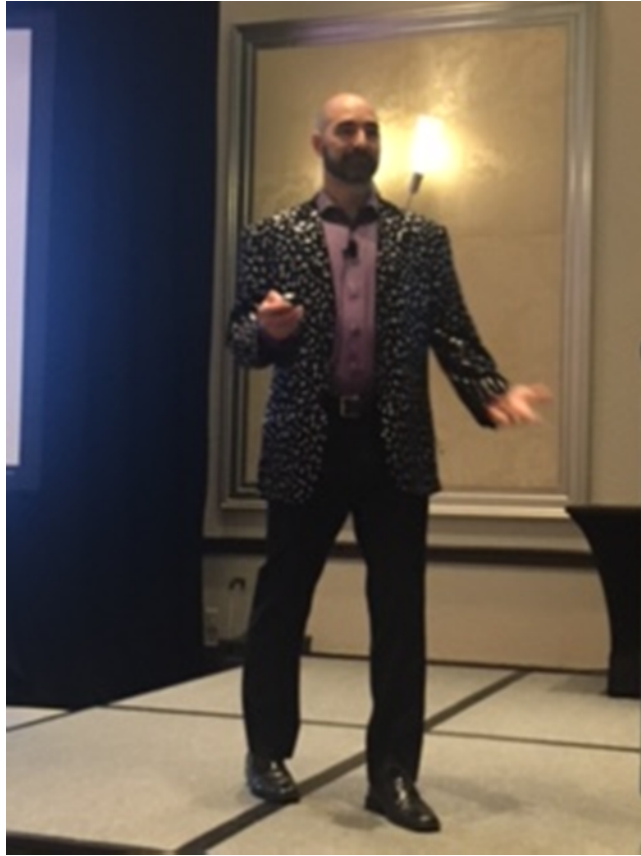
Historian

Anne Auguste, CTR





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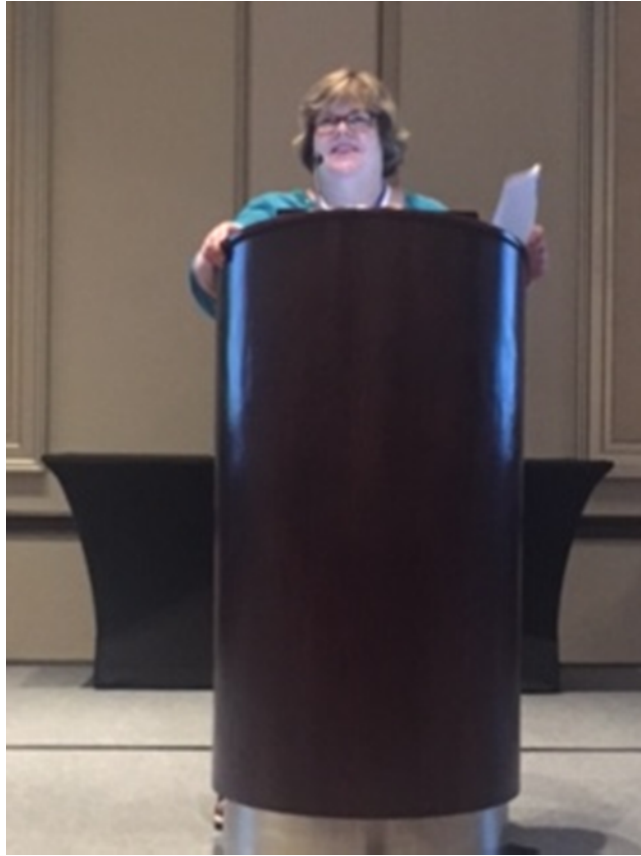


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