



## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF GASTROENTEROLOGY NURSES AND ASSOCIATES HISTORY

“History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings tidings of antiquity”.

Marcus Trellius Cicero

### The First Decade:

A Southern California group of unique professionals whose common denominator was that they worked in the field of Gastroenterology met with others from across the country at the 1974 Digestive Disease Week in San Francisco. In May of 1975 the first organized meeting of the “Society of Gastrointestinal Assistants” was held in San Antonio. At that time the Southern California contingent was encouraged to form a Regional Society. The Southern California Society of Gastrointestinal Assistants was formed on April 8, 1976 by a steering committee, under the guidance of Lenna Welling who served as Chairperson. The committee consisted of Trish Plack, Ann Sitko, Gail Fischer, Dawn Henry, Harumi Higashigawa, Gina Jensen, Joyce Stanworth, and Irene Zerebko. Word was sent to all GI Units in the Southern California area for a meeting to determine if enough people were interested in forming a Region. On June 9, 1976 the first official meeting was held at Brotman Memorial Hospital in Culver City with approximately 40 GI assistants attending.

Dr. Melvin Shapiro, a mentor and “inspirational” advisor during these early stages, was instrumental in securing a generous gift of \$500 from the Southern California Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. By December 1976, there were 61 members.

By March 1977, the steering committee presented a Constitution and Bylaws setting up quarterly business meetings on week nights of designated months which included educational programs that covered all aspects of GI, some offering CEUs. At the SGA Educational Course in Toronto, Canada in May 1977, Southern California was awarded its first charter as a Regional Society. That September, with a membership of 77, SCSGA held its first election of officers.

President	Lenna Welling
Vice President	Trisha Plack
Secretary	Ruth Ann Sitko
Treasurer	Dawn Henry
Directors	Joanne Radcliff and Gail Fisher

At the SGA Course in Las Vegas, Jean McGee and Linda Hagle were Co-Chairmen for the Hospitality and Educational areas and with help of Nancy Baptie, Winnie Brooks, Rene Ann Tyler, they distributed the first national membership booklet as an effort to promote communication and networking within the National Society.

By that September with a membership of 95, a second slate of officers was elected.

President	Trisha Plack
Vice President	Sondra Kenney
Secretary	Nancy Baptie
Treasurer	Winnie Brooks
Directors	Jean McGee and Linda Hagie

Meetings on week nights presented some problems because of time and distance for many members, so in March 1979 the first “all day” seminar was presented at Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation in La Jolla with BRN approval for 6 CEUs. It received such a great response that the Board decided to present a combined Business and Educational Seminar on Saturdays.

By this time a new look and name was given to the newsletter. “The Inside Tract” was the contest-winning name suggested by Jean McGee for the newsletter. An elongated “star” designed by Phyllis Taveres became the SCSGA’s logo.

In May of 1980, many of our leadership participated in the SGA 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Course in Snow Bird, Utah. SCSGA had obtained a California Board of Registered Nursing provider number for educational programs and this number was used for registrants of this national course to obtain CEUs.

The September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting was a presentation on “Legal Accountability in the Nursing Process” that really shook us from our lethargy since we all assumed we knew everything about putting a tube down or up a patient. We began to ask for more information – informed consents, standards of practice and give more attention to legislation affecting nursing.

Southern California is fortunate to have so many knowledgeable speakers and our diligent Education Committees always worked hard at presenting our programs. As an example, on March 6, 1982, Nancy (Baptie) Evans presented “Understanding GI Surgery” at Daniel Freeman Hospital. We heard such nationally renowned surgeons as Drs. Edward Passaro, William Longmire, Eric Fonkelsrud, Ronald Busuttill, and Micheal Peter. Even though we gave only very small honorariums (\$50) all those prestigious physicians consented to speak to GI Nurses. The registration fee was low (\$5) and we received 5 CEUs. What a bargain that was, even our own GI doctors were amazed.

October of that year our Fall Education Meeting was held at the Bahla Hotel in San Diego and our membership had grown to 167. Many members from the San Diego area felt that the traveling involved impeded their attendance at meetings in the Los Angeles area so there was a vote to amend the Bylaws to formalize San Diego as a Division of SCSGA. They would continue under our SGA Charter and elect a chairperson to serve on SCSGA’s Board. Carolyn Whaley was elected as the Division’s first chairperson. This arrangement allowed the Division to meet separately during the year, but jointly at the fall Business Seminar.

Over the next four years our education at Saturday seminars continued with our annual fall meetings in San Diego or Palm Springs.

In 1986 with a membership of 249, SCSGA looked forward to SGA’s Certification Exam where so many in the GI profession were awarded recognition for our specialty.

On Saturday, April 4, 1987, a “10 Year Anniversary Celebration” was held at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. Reunion and nostalgia were the order of the day with four members of the original steering committee and four members of the First Board to talk about “I remember when”. Dr. Shapiro, who had provided the impetus in our formative years, gave a historical review of Endoscopy and the role of the GIA – past, present, future-showing our advancement and growth.

In 1988 the National SGA name was changed. Now we are called the Southern California Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates with 308 members.

Our potential as an outstanding Society lies in the present and the future. By reviewing the First Decade of our history one can see that a strong foundation has been laid and it is up to all of us to uphold the professionalism and standards of quality that our history so proudly displays.

Past Presidents:

1978	Lenna Welling
1979	Trisha Plack
1980	Sondra Kenney
1981	Nancie Baptie (Evans)
1982	Jean McGee
1983	Karen Martines
1984	Judy Parker Howell
1985	Teri Derimanoczy
1986	Phyllis Taveres
1987	Lynn Whaley
1988	Trisha Plack
1989	Karen Crothers
1990	Mary Voll-Fisher
1991	Sherriday Wiggett
1992	Marcella Rupp
1993	Kim Mendoza
1994	Janet Lemon
1995	Sonja Wentzel
1996	Debbie den Boer
1997	Jean Naugle
1998	Joan Each
1999	Barbara Wagstaff
2000	Barbara Darby
2001	Terrie Stevens
2002	Kathy Kroll
2003	Terrie Stevens
2004	Barbara Darby
2005	Nan Carder
2006	Mary Clark
2007	Cathy Dye
2008	Betsy Tyler
2009	Catherine Wulff