

An MD Anderson Story About: **Learning Leadership**



Barbara L. Summers, PhD (ret.)
Chief Nursing Officer, Head of the Division
of Nursing (2003- 2015)

Types of Leadership Power

I started to see the potential for having an impact if you were in a management position.... [M]y boss at the time was JoAnn Duffy She was the director of Critical Care ... and she taught me a tremendous amount about being a leader. I learned from her about how to use the various types of power and authority that you have to ... to achieve good, I guess, for lack of a better word, and learned about the fact that there's legitimate authority that comes from your title and your position, but that really is a very limited type of power and authority, that, yes, you can boss people around and make them do things because you're the boss. "You do this because I tell you you have to do it." But that's really a weak type of leadership, and if you have to resort to that, then you probably need to be brushing up your CV and getting ready to go someplace else.

[E]xpert power ... comes from having expert knowledge in your area, and the referent power that comes from the way that you interact with people and the reputation that you build....

I learned ... about the process of developing plans for achieving improvement, if you will, and not only setting the objectives and the timelines, but also being very clear in your mind what is the evidence going to be that will demonstrate that I've achieved the goal, you know, causing you to have to be concrete enough to be able to say, "Okay, here's the evidence that I've gotten to this place," or that this staff has moved to this place.... [I]t was just great.

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About This Content

This interview clip was taken from an in-depth interview conducted for the Making Cancer History Voices Oral History Project. This ongoing project currently contains almost 400 interview hours with MD Anderson institution builders.

The transcript has been edited from the original.

The content is available for all uses.

To explore the full interview go to: <http://mdanderson.libguides.com/SummersB>

About the speaker:

Barbara L. Summers, PhD served as Chief Nursing Officer and Head of the Division of Nursing from 2003 until 2015, when she retired.

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