EON

A New Chapter

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Everybody looks forward to retiring someday, right? I always figured I'd do it when I turned 70. That seemed far off when I made that decision many years ago.

It has been a long road. I didn't start out in scholarly publishing. Let's see...I've been a waitress, a substitute teacher, a telephone caller for a discount club (hated that!), a nurses' aide, a bank teller, a day care worker, purchasing agent for a bank, a stay-at-home mom, and a substitute teacher again, in another state. They told me at that high school that even though I had my BA in English Education, if I ever hoped to teach full-time in Missouri I needed two classes to qualify, so I went back to school to take them. I fell in love with being an older student and stayed until I got my Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in writing.

I got my MFA in 1997 and started to look for a job. By that time I knew I'd rather not teach high school, but the professor of my copyediting class did some freelance work for Mosby Publishing, so I looked into that company. I got a job there and worked as Editor on several journals before the Manager called me into her office and told me they were making me the Mosby Editor of *GIE: Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*. She told me this with a worried look on her face; *GIE* was notoriously a difficult publication because of its demanding editorial office. I was willing to give it a try. Some time later, I became a Department Manager. *GIE* was always one of the journals I managed; no one else wanted to manage it.

Around 2003, Elsevier bought Mosby. That seemed like a lucky break at the time; they gave us all raises and talked about bringing more periodicals to our office. Then, in January 2005, they announced they were closing our department in St. Louis. All of our journals would be sent to New York and Philadelphia over the course of the coming year, so we had one year to find another job. I clearly remember all of us trudging back to our cubicles and offices that day with broken hearts. But in July of 2005, the Managing Editor of *GIE* quit, and I applied for the position. I've been there ever since, working remotely for *GIE*'s society, the ASGE.

When I started at Mosby in the nineties, most authors sent their hard-copy manuscripts to the Editor-in-Chief by snail mail—or, if the authors were computer savvy, they mailed it on a floppy disk. If the Editor-in-Chief was interested in the manuscript, the Managing Editor would make copies and mail it out to people who

agreed to peer review it. Email was starting to be more popular then, so some journals worked their magic with that. The *GIE* Managing Editor, though, refused to use it, so we worked old school. Every day at Mosby, the US mail would bring me floppy disks with *GIE* papers that I copyedited, then walked over a few aisles to Production, where they typeset the articles on their computers. If I needed information from the Managing Editor faster, it came via the fax machine in the back room.

In 2004, we saw a demonstration of an amazing product that had recently been developed. It was called Editorial Manager, and it allowed journal offices to complete the entire process from author submission, through review, to acceptance, and finally transmission to the publisher, all through that one program. At the end of the demonstration, we stared at each other, our mouths hanging open. Could that possibly work? Had we just gotten a glimpse of the future?

In the fall of 2004, *GIE* got a new Editor-in-Chief, and he embraced technology. The journal went from prehistoric processes to being an early adopter of that amazing software, Editorial Manager (EM). When I applied for the Managing Editor position in the summer of 2005, the fact that I was aware of what EM could do and had seen it demonstrated definitely helped me to get the job. The ASGE started sending me to the annual EM conferences, run by Aries, and in the summer of 2007 I attended a session where I heard a man named Jason Roberts talking about an incredible new society that he was helping to form: the ISMTE. He promised it would be coming soon. It did, and I joined immediately. Over the years, I served as *EON* Editor-in-Chief, creator of *EON*'s "Grammatic Fanatic" comic, ISMTE Secretary and Board member, and Chair of the Ethics Committee.

That retirement age of 70 still seemed far away when I started working on *GIE*, but time has played funny tricks on me. In May of 2021, I turned 70, and as of January 1, 2022, I am retired. For the final year, I did a countdown on a white board, and as I changed the slate each day and watched the number dwindle, I had an unexpected reaction: along with anticipation has come a kind of dread. I can't say that my childhood dream was to become a Managing Editor of medical journals, but I have always loved words and the magic they can weave when organized and punctuated correctly, so this job has been a perfect fit for me. I have been proud to tell people I am "Senior Managing Editor of Clinical Publications for the ASGE" and am always happy to talk about my job and how much I love it. I'm not sure how I will react when that huge part of me is gone. If I'm not an Editor, then what am I?

Deborah's retirement party.

As my final year ticked down to the closing weeks, I found myself saying almost the same thing in two very different ways: "I will never have to do that again!" with happiness when it was a task I didn't like, and "I will never get to do that again!" wistfully, when it was something I enjoyed. I am extremely proud of the work I've done with the ASGE and all the innovations I've helped bring to life: podcasting; author interviews; QR codes; social media; a second, open access journal named *VideoGIE*; our blog, [Endoscopedia](#); our reviewer mentorship program; graphical abstracts; and our Diversity and Inclusion initiative, to name a few.

I've heard it said that if you do things right, no one will be sure you've done anything at all. I suspect I will miss the work a lot. I hope that I am missed, at least a little bit. We are all unreliable narrators of our own lives; it is likely that I will copyedit my memories and keep only the good parts of the past 24 years. I've dreamed of retirement as a time when I can read whatever I want; write poetry, novels, essays, blog posts; spend more hours with family; sleep later; get more exercise; and do more

volunteer work. It's a new chapter. I hope it becomes part of a book that I love and can recommend to others.