

Transcript of Marion Rawling's Career

Former President Marion Rawlings discusses her early life and career

Interviewer: Mr John Hunt

MR: I was born on September 3rd 1924 in Cardiff. Primary education I went to Barber Road School and then I went to Cardiff High School for Girls – for girls I should say as it was in those days. From there I went to the School of Pharmacy in the technical college which ultimately became part of the University of Wales but it was a technical college in my day. The head of the school was R Vernon Lloyd and he was, I think, the youngest head ever to be appointed to be a head of a school; he was 28 I think. His comments to the students were the things that formed my views of how pharmacy should be and he said the time will come when the doctor will write on the prescription measles and the patient will take that prescription down to the pharmacy or to the chemist shop and you will dispense the appropriate medication and I've always remembered that and that was the thing really that sort of formed my idea of ultimately what pharmacists ought to be about. I registered in 1952.

JH: So, what did you do when you got this...

MR: I had a son and a husband, I did locums because I mean child care provision at that time was not what it is now, so I did locums in and around the area for about five years and I went on doing locum like that 'til my second son was about three and at that point we bought my first pharmacy – my only pharmacy ever - and that was in 1957 when Rick was three and Hugh was seven. I had been doing locum for this pharmacist and it was a branch shop. It was on a crossroads and it was in an absolutely enormous building; there were three floors, six bedrooms, two kitchens, two bathroom which I subsequently rented for 30 shillings a week on an on-reviewing lease for 21 years, and this pharmacy which was a branch of a main shop, came on the market and I suppose because of the accommodation there, it's the only one I would ever have bought and it was in a rather upmarket residential area so we bought that one. We had 14 years, I think, to run on the lease there. As I say, I rented it, I rented the living accommodation for 30 shillings a week and the shop accommodation was 210 – we lived there.

My parents, to my eternal gratitude, gave up their house and moved into the middle part of that house so that my husband and I and our children lived on the bottom and the top; my mother and father lived on the middle floor and next door because it was part of a...there was another building the other side of it, lived my grandmother and my mother's step-father so we were a total family unit and I never had to have babysitters. My mother ran the house for me, you see. We went in 1957, my father died in about 1964 so it wasn't so long. My daughter was born in 1961 so she was born then but you see I was never out when the children came home from school. I was on the premises. Well I have to be perfectly honest and say the customers would have waited if there had been a family crisis because that was the priority and that's the way it went.

In 1970, my lease ran out and there was a development across the road where the old school had been. We tried to move our business across the road to the new development and the difference between working in the pharmacy that I had come from and the pharmacy that I went to, which I designed, was the difference between driving down a country lane and driving on a motorway. I had a friend who was and remains my best pharmaceutical friend. I'd met him in college and a number of others and he was very active in the sort of pharmaceutical politics area and he said to me, "Why don't you come to the NPA, NPU meetings?" you see, which he was very keen so I walked in to the NPU meeting one day and of course once you show a new face you find yourself on the committee before you can look round and secretary of it in due course. I think I became secretary of it in 1962 but I did serve for a bit on the NPU committee and then I became the secretary and then I became the chairman for a year so I had done that and then when Les Kaye became the chairman of the Cardiff Area Contractors Committee, which was the forerunner of the LPC, he asked me if I would join that Committee and when I joined the Committee he asked me if I would be secretary. All my work, until I came onto Council, was up the advisory machinery through the LPC, onto the FPC and then onto PSNC; it was all up that side and it was only when I came off PSNC I found that I had withdrawal symptoms from agendas because I had spent hours doing agendas and when they weren't there to do, I didn't know what to do with myself - I mean, apart from the business and the children and all the rest of it - so I stood for Council.