



Safety on the Frontline: Thoughts shared from Rose A. McMurray

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How has occupational safety changed in your lifetime?

Unlike 50 years ago when workplace injuries and deaths were considered an unfortunate byproduct of a robust economy and steady national growth, today, there is much broader citizen support and demand for setting limits and standards for worker safety.

Tell us about a safety incident you witnessed and what safety improvements were made as a result.

When I was 8, one of my neighborhood friends was killed in a bicycle crash with a speeding car. As a result, my parents and a few others were able to get the speed limit reduced and stop signs placed at intersections. Before the age of speed bumps and other traffic calming devices to curb speed, this was a successful remedy from an outraged and concerned group of adults. I learned from this action that things can be made better to prevent future tragedies if you are willing to fight for it.

What advice would you leave to the next generation of safety professionals?

There are solutions to every problem. Don't be deterred in your efforts to fix a difficult one. Look for alternative strategies to remedy the issue and remain steadfast in finding possible new solutions. Search out other champions and build other stakeholders. Remember that it often takes decades for seemingly intractable problems to make progress.

Why have you dedicated your life to keeping other people safe?

Other than being a medical professional, helping save lives and keeping people safe is a cause that is worthy and exceedingly fulfilling. Knowing that I have been involved in putting into place competent and effective measures that protect the travelling public from impaired drivers, speeding vehicles, medically unfit bus and truck drivers makes me feel that my life's work may have helped save lives.

What hope do you have for safety in the next 100 years?

I hope that intolerance for risky behavior grows among the citizenry and that they continue to demand reform of institutions and laws that work counter to safety. Greater insistence that solutions are found for drug abuse, aggressive drivers and workplace risks among many issues would be ideal. Finding ways for technology to assist in these goals should be actively and aggressively explored and applied.

What role has NSC played in the safety movement?

I recall in elementary school the Green Cross logo and the safety messages I learned through the Council's efforts. At that time, NSC was the most visible advocate for trying to keep my classmates and I safe, whether it was the swimming pool, bicycle or playground. Through the years, NSC has continued to offer evidence-based and sensible strategies with a focus on worker safety. Branching out more in recent decades to other safety venues, NSC has elevated personal safety and responsibility and provided employers with the right tools to advocate workplace, home and roadway safety. While many more advocates have sprung up since my school age experience, NSC is still the leader in reminding the public that accidents are preventable and personal acceptance of that responsibility is fundamental to our welfare.