

Candidates' responses to the Q&A are presented in their entirety without changes, edits, or corrections.

PRESIDENT-ELECT CANDIDATE

Vangie Dennis, MSN, RN, CNOR, CMLSO

1.) Surveys of members indicate the most common reason they don't vote is that they feel that they "don't know the candidates." To help the members get to know you better describe something you are passionate about or enjoy doing in your free time.

When I was young, my passion was pursuing my journey as an artist, but on a visit to DePaul Medical Center in Norfolk, Virginia, I fell in love with nursing. I can't think of a time in my life that I've ever regretted going into nursing. I never gave up my desire to be an artist and redirected that passion for music and playing the guitar. A secret I do not share with many is I was in a hospital band with surgeons and anesthesiologists. Still today, music helps me to unwind beyond myself as a nurse.

I have three children and a husband. Richard is a CFO, Nichole a nurse, Christian is the drummer and music director for Maren Morris, and Kathryn is a schoolteacher. Those that follow me on Facebook know my best buddies are three poodles, Gabriel, Chrissy, and Luka, and a Himalayan cat named Icarus.

I am often asked when I will retire? I don't think we're made to retire, and I believe if you enjoy what you do and feel relevant in what you do, you will be self-fulfilled. Love what you do, or no matter what happens in the end, you'll never be unhappy.

2.) Describe your most meaningful day in the OR, or the office, and how it has impacted your current practice, or work, as a nurse.

There are many influential moments in my career. A recent event reminded me of why I am a nurse. While in my office, a patient's family rushed in needing a wheelchair for her distressed daughter. Her husband was a level one trauma patient on life support from a motorcycle accident, and he donated his organs for procurement. Before procurement, our hospital provides the family a bear with the recipient's heartbeat. The bear was given to his little girl so she could be close to her daddy.

There is a full circle of life with the story. The wife was connected to a dear friend of mine 750 miles away. I called my friend so she could speak to the family. During the conversation, the wife was holding the bear, and you could hear her husband's heartbeat. I was holding her hand and listening to the beat of her husband's heart as she spoke to my friend. The wife stated, "having Vangie there in the room with her was the same as having her friend with her." It is a small world, and our purpose and connection to this patient was a reminder of why I am a nurse.

3.) Describe what makes you the most qualified candidate for the office of President-elect.

I completed a recent self-awareness assessment and my strongest characteristics are belief, communication, positivity, and connectivity. Belief is a theme of core values that define a purpose in my life. Communication is a trait where I can put my thoughts into words. Positivity is my enthusiasm about where we are going, and connectivity provides a theme of faith in the links between all things. There are few coincidences, and almost every event has a reason.

My nursing career has given me a great breadth of experience and has always promoted my passion for perioperative nursing. My experience as an executive director, educator, and staff nurse gives me a perspective to know people. I embrace our varied cultures, beliefs, and values and strive to ensure they are acknowledged and honored, not judged or ignored.

I welcome the daily challenges and focus my transformational leadership style with an emphasis on empowering our team through collaboration. My strength is my commitment to my responsibilities through open and honest communication. In a world filled with uncertainty, we can control how we positively impact the organization. I want to be that person of change.