



# Eleanor Hooley



What professional designations do you have and what school and city did you attend for your Medical Laboratory education?

- After being trained on the job as an MLA right out of high school in Australia, I fell in love with Lab Medicine and decided to go to school to become a Technologist. I received a BSc MLS, MLT, from the University of Alberta, in Edmonton.

After you graduated and started working, what surprised you most about your profession?

- How quickly things change in our field and how the range and number of lab tests keeps growing through the years.

In 4 sentences or less, please describe what your role at Vancouver Community College was and the accomplishments you are most proud of?

- In 1989 I set up the first MLA Program in BC in consultation with MDS, BCBio and Hospital Labs. Up to this point in time MLA's were trained on the job. My first class at VCC started in January 1990. Since then I taught and graduated over 1,200 MLA's. I graduated my last class on March 31, 2021.

What did a typical day look like for you?

- Teaching in the classroom and more recently teaching theory online, developing laboratory skills with students in labs, organizing practicums, liaising with many dynamic and caring people in our industry.

What did you like most about your position?

- Very few people who come into the MLA Program have blood collection skills. I love using the principles of neuroplasticity to help them grow into the skill and eventually excel in it. I also love hearing about how taking the VCC MLA Program enabled the graduates to get a job in our fascinating field.

You're not ready to hang up your lab coat, what are you looking forward to doing next?

- I want to eventually look for contract, part time or casual work in our field. I am also hoping, post-Covid, to look for ways to help in labs in developing countries. Up until Covid-19 came along I was able to send donated lab supplies that couldn't be used in

Canada to organizations that ran lab services in poorer areas of Haiti and Uganda. I would love to continue this or even visit and help out myself.

Tell us about your BCSLS contributions and experiences?

- I was BCSLS Vice President for 1 year, as they needed someone to fill this position for the short term. I spoke at various BCSLS Congresses and MLA Days. I was very involved with bringing to life the first BCSLS Phlebotomy Symposium for MLA's in 2017. The keynote speaker was Dennis Ernst who is considered the world's leading expert in phlebotomy. I was delighted to receive a BCSLS Honorary Silver Award in 2018 "in recognition of your significant contributions to the Medical Laboratory Profession". Being involved with the BCSLS is a pleasure! I've always thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the people I meet and work with through the BCSLS.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

- I really enjoy cycling both for the exercise and to enjoy nature.

If you could go back 20 years to visit yourself, what advice would you give?

- Really pay attention to self care. At times life gets very busy between one's career and family. If you don't take care of yourself first then it becomes very challenging to help others.

If you could live anywhere, where would that be?

- It would be enjoyable to live part of the year somewhere warm in a place like Hawaii, or Australia.

What is the funniest thing that happened to you at work?

- When I worked on the bench in the hospital in Jasper before I started teaching, a fellow came in who had to provide a semen sample for infertility. He did not speak or read a word of English, nor did we have instructions in his language, so it was a challenge trying to give him instructions for proper specimen collection. Trying to figure out sign language instructions for a specimen like this in a discreet way is challenging. A few days later he came in with a sample that was collected, but was in the specimen container in a condom. I'll never forget the moment when he was still there and the realisation came that I needed to explain that he needed to recollect the sample, but without a condom. (Note: It wasn't funny in front of the patient, but afterwards when I thought back, the whole thing was quite funny).

What is your favourite holiday and why?

- Christmas, with all the preparations, the lights decorating homes, the meaning of Christmas and the delight of children at all the festivities and gift openings.