

**NOMINATION – DR. SUSAN RAPPOLT
OSOT HONOURARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD**

May 17, 2019

To the OSOT Board of Directors:

We are writing to nominate Susan Rappolt for the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists Honourary Life Membership Award. Susan's career demonstrates a sustained and outstanding contribution to the profession of occupational therapy in Ontario. We describe her contributions in five areas: Client Programs/Clinical Practice; Academic Endeavours; Management; Team/Task Force Involvement; and Leadership.

Client Programs/Clinical Practice

Following graduation from Queen's University in 1978, Susan practised occupational therapy for a decade in Kingston, Hamilton, London, and Toronto. During this period, she was a staff therapist, a senior therapist in neurorehabilitation, an acting manager, and a community-based occupational therapist. These experiences provided her with an understanding of practice with various populations and different treatment settings within Ontario. Her interest in neurorehabilitation continued with her research into areas that included stroke outcomes, and vocational assessment in acquired brain injury. Her broadly-based clinical background has helped to keep her work as an academic relevant to practitioners. For example, her most recent collaborative research has addressed capacity building in private practice, and, as a doctoral thesis supervisor, the ethics of discharge planning with older adults.

Academic Endeavours

Susan joined the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Toronto (U of T) in 1996 after having completed a PhD on the sociology of the health care professions. Her teaching and research activities have helped to shape the development of occupational therapy in Ontario. For example, Susan developed the three Professional Issues courses for the MScOT Program, incorporating new content on professionalism, practice processes, health and rehabilitation policy, and research utilization. She also incorporated College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario PREP modules into the Professional Issues courses, making U of T the first program to include these modules in entry-level programs. The Professional Issues courses remain central to the formation of students' socialization into the profession, shaping their evolving professional identity, making a lasting impression on students irrespective of the areas in which they practice following graduation.

Many of Susan's research publications demonstrate her ability to promote the profession in various milieus: for example, "Positioning occupational therapists to do their best work: Reflections from the 2014 Occupational Therapy Canada Forum", and "Translating research into practice: when do care programs make sense?", Keynote presentations such as, "Best Evidence to Best Practice" for the Insurance Bureau of Canada or "Conceptualizing Knowledge Translation in Rehabilitation Research" for the Ontario Rehabilitation Research Network Annual Workshop, have reached diverse stakeholder groups. Another example comes from her article in the Toronto Star, published in Doctor's Notes in which she described how occupational therapists can help with transition from hospital to home (see

https://www.thestar.com/life/health_wellness/2016/10/17/doctors-noteshow-occupational-therapists-can-help-with-transition-from-hospital-to-home.html) Susan's research endeavours include a strong publication record, ongoing funding, and a dedication to knowledge transfer. She is currently a co-investigator on a CIHR funded grant examining patient care ("Evolution of evidence-based practice: Evaluating the contribution of individual and contextual factors to optimize patient care"). In addition to her own research, she has supervised a large number of graduate students who have, in turn, made significant contributions to the knowledge base of the profession. For example, her supervision of Evelyne Durocher's PhD resulted in their coauthoring (along with committee member Barb Gibson) two papers now considered globally as key publications critiquing the concept of occupational justice. Evelyne, who is now an Assistant Professor at McMaster University, is but one of the many former students whom Susan has mentored.

Management

As Chair of the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy (OS&OT) since 2009, Susan manages a very large and important portfolio. She oversees the oldest and largest program of occupational therapy in Canada and ensures its ongoing development, including its recent enrolment expansion to the Mississauga campus of U of T, which will be detailed below under the section on Leadership. As Chair, Susan is responsible for the MScOT program, faculty appointments, tenure and promotion, Faculty of Medicine and University commitments, as well as provincial and national professional relations. The 2018 Report of the External Review of the department stated that "the Department and the MScOT program have well-deserved reputations for excellence". Reviewers found the program to be "in the top tier of programs in Canada and North America."

Another program under Susan's management is the Advanced Standing Option designed for occupational therapists with an undergraduate degree in Occupational Therapy who wish to obtain an MScOT degree. The program was seen in the External Review as not only meeting an important need for clinicians to upgrade but also as "a transformative learning experience since the students' newly developed knowledge translation skills were immediately applied to their real-life practice issues". While the program is currently on hold, it will soon continue to provide established occupational therapists with research training to create new evidence for occupational therapy practice.

In addition to her management of OS&OT, Susan has had responsibilities within the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute (formerly the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science), as Director/Chair, as well as the Executive Chair of the U of T's Rehabilitation Sciences Sector. Finally, as one of 26 Department Chairs in the Faculty of Medicine at U of T, Susan is a strong and passionate advocate for occupational therapy within a highly competitive academic and clinical environment.

Team/Task Force Involvement

Susan has been involved with the development of the profession of occupational therapy in Ontario in several ways. As an active member of OSOT during her years in clinical practice, she was a member, or the chair, of Continuing Education Committees in the OSOT branch societies in Kingston, Hamilton and London. She has served on the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario in a number of capacities: as the Academic Lead for the Occupational Therapy Ontario Collaborative Task Force on Scope of Practice; as Academic Member of Council; and as a member of various committees such as Registration, Continuing Education, Patient Relations, and Fitness to Practice. As a member of the Ontario Council of

University Programs in Rehabilitation Science (OCUPRS) she is involved in the ongoing issues regarding occupational therapy education in the province. She served as the chair of OCUPRS from 2016 to 2017, and as the chair of the Ontario Universities' Application Centre Advisory Board, from 2017-2018. In these roles, and as a member of the Occupational Therapy Ontario Collaborative, Susan has focused on advancing the attributes and roles of academic occupational therapy in shaping the development of the profession.

Leadership

In Susan's capacity as chair of U of T's Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy she has had a great impact on the development of occupational therapy in Ontario. The respect of faculty members and others in the university was evident in her being offered a second term as Chair in 2014. As Chair of OS&OT, she has led the faculty in the development of its theoretically based pedagogy and scholarship. She has helped develop new faculty positions which will support research and teaching in areas important for the growth of the profession; for example, she led a new partnership with March of Dimes Canada, resulting in the endowed March of Dimes Paul J.J. Martin Early Career Professorship, and collaborated in a second endowed early career professorship for the Department, this time established through a gift from an alumna, focusing on Workplace Mental Health.

Susan has also supported the development of fieldwork education which affect students' education across the province. For example, a new fieldwork catchment sharing agreement maximizes fieldwork placement utilization, and a new Private Practice Fieldwork Model that builds competencies for private practice, will benefit all occupational therapy programs in the province.

Among Susan's most significant achievements is the expansion of the occupational therapy program at U of T to include a cohort of students on U of T's Mississauga (UTM) campus. Similar to the program for medical students already in place, the occupational therapy program at UTM provides an opportunity for learning in a smaller setting, in a fast-growing geographical area where there is a clear need for more health professionals. The aim of the enrolment expansion at UTM has been for the Department to work with its hospital and community partners to build occupational therapy capacity in established and evolving roles across Peel, one of the fastest growing regions in Canada. Expansion of the MScOT program to UTM has been embraced by Trillium Health Partners as well as other hospital and community organizations in the region, thus expanding the influence of the profession in the province. The program has now completed a successful first year with 40 students at UTM, in addition to the 90 students on the St George campus. A second cohort will be entering the program in September 2019 with the same numbers. By all accounts, MScOT students at UTM are proud of their program and enjoy a strong sense of community.

During the planning stages of the expansion, Susan successfully argued the need to rectify the underrepresentation of occupational therapists in Ontario compared to other provinces in Canada. According to the 2015 Canadian Institute for Health Information workforce database, Ontario has the third lowest number of occupational therapists per capita in the country. This increase in the number of occupational therapists per capita in Ontario will also enhance the profession's visibility – and that, in turn, should help with jobs. (It should also increase membership within OSOT!) The expansion to UTM is an important initiative with considerable potential to influence the development of occupational therapy in Ontario. It must be noted, however, that the difficulties in seeing the initiative through were considerable. It was Susan's perseverance in the face of these difficulties, and her resilience in dealing

with setbacks along the way, that saw the project through. Not least of the issues was the matter of securing a budget that would meet the department's needs. Susan's leadership skills were required to negotiate and communicate with a wide range of stakeholders throughout the process, and to persevere in dealing with constantly changing conditions and requirements.

In summary, it is our view that Susan Rappolt has rendered distinguished, longstanding, and exemplary service to the profession of occupational therapy in Ontario. We believe that she is most deserving of OSOT's Honourary Life membership Award.

Sincerely,

Judith Friedland, Jill Stier, Donna Barker, Deirdre Dawson, Barry Trentham, Rachel Devitt, Siobhan Donaghy, Rosalie Wang, and Heather Colquhoun