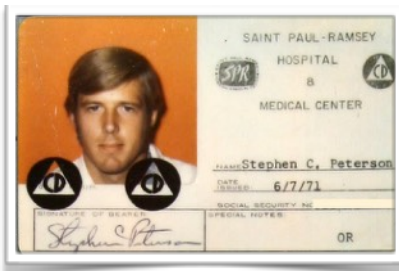


BEYOND THE PUMP

There is a lot going on behind the pump, and some very special people overseeing it.

Stephen C. Peterson CCP

There is almost a universal understanding that those who have been in a field for a long time have gained immeasurable experience over the course of their careers. However, it is not often that one can say that they were witness to the infancy of the profession in which they are still working decades later. One such person who can relate to this is Stephen Peterson CCP, who has been a certified clinical perfusionist for 45 years and is still actively practicing. Peterson currently works at Terre Haute Regional Hospital and has for the last 23 years. To fully appreciate Peterson’s career longevity one must take a look at some of the significant milestones of the perfusion profession that he has experienced firsthand.



One of Peterson's first OR badges.



Current badge.

Peterson attended perfusion school at Hennepin College, became a member of AmSECT in 1974, and was a part of the inaugural “class” of American Board certified perfusionists in 1975. To give our readers some context – formal perfusion education was just getting off the ground in the 1960’s with the first program at Cleveland Clinic (hospital based - 1963) and THE Ohio State University (university based - 1968). AmSECT was formed in 1963, the ABCP was created in 1975.

A Space for Perfusionist Profiles, News, and Current Events.

In the News

Coming Soon!

CCP Profiles

Additional profiles coming soon!



AmSECT Membership Certificate - 1973



ABCP CCP Certificate - 1975

Peterson's journey into healthcare started in 1965, after graduating high school, when he worked as an orderly at Swedish Covenant Hospital in Chicago, IL. Exposure to the healthcare setting peaked his interest in patient care, and he decided to pursue training as an operating room technologist. But, as Robert Burns wrote, "The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry," and Peterson was drafted into the United States Army in 1967. "I served served in Korea during the Vietnam War. At 13 months I was a Sergeant E-5. Graduated from a Guerrilla Warfare School. My reserve duty was with the 73 Combat Support Hospital where I made the rank of Surgical Specialist 6th class."

When Peterson returned from military duty, he found himself back in St. Paul Minnesota taking courses at Bethel College during the day and working at a trauma hospital in the evening as a Surgical Technologist and Surgical Assistant. This is when his first exposure to the field of perfusion occurred. "I had the opportunity to visit Ed Berger who was a perfusion pioneer, and he allowed me to watch open heart surgery. Immediately I liked the job. He encouraged me to go to the new perfusion school starting up in Minneapolis at North Hennepin College." And so he did.

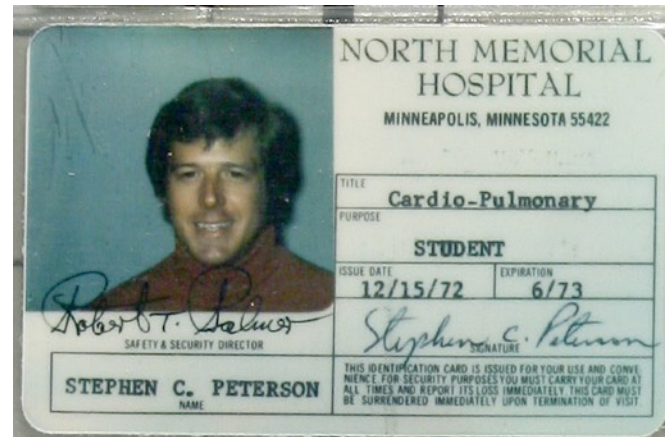
Peterson graduated from Hennepin College's Perfusion Program in 1973 and his first job as a clinical perfusionist was at the University of Iowa, which had the only heart program in the state at the time. He often held dual or even triple role responsibilities, maintaining his surgical skills by carrying vein harvesting and/or first assistant privileges at several of the hospitals he worked at during his perfusion career. In another first, he was also in the inaugural class of certified ultrasound vascular technicians. In his tenure he has also been a clinical instructor for University of Nebraska perfusion students.



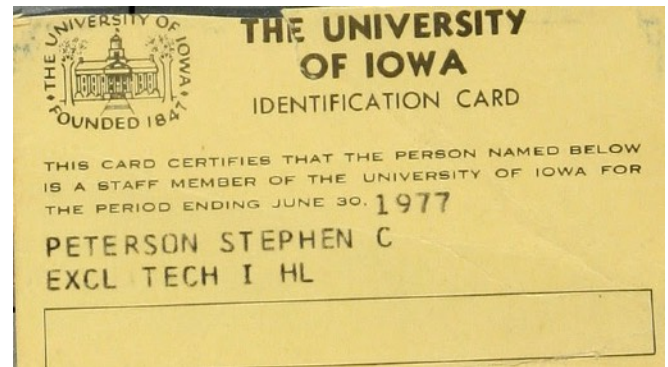
US Army photo - Stephen Peterson

Not only has Peterson been part of the formal perfusion profession since its inception, he has also been witness to the development of many different perfusion technologies over the decades. From piecing together individual circuits and washing bubble traps, to watching the birth of the IABP, Peterson has been there each step of the way. While he generally prefers to keep his CPB circuits and cardioplegia delivery simple yet safe, that does not mean that he is one to avoid or disavow the ever evolving technologies of our field. In fact, his very first perfusion job in Iowa City sparked his interest in electronic charting, which has been one of his passion projects throughout his career. In addition to his daily life in the OR, Peterson is the president/CEO of PDS Medical Solutions, and developed the Perfusion EMR system, PerfusionPro., which he uses today.

Throughout his long career Stephen Peterson has seen many changes and much evolution within the perfusion profession. While each generation of perfusionists has had and will continue to have unique challenges, it is really important to see how far we have come and have an appreciation for those that have paved the way. One piece of advice Peterson offers is to hang on to what works, but always keep questioning. Regarding his career Peterson said, "I love to save lives which we as perfusionist's do every day. If my contribution as a clinical perfusionist and a database designer makes life easier and safer for the patient and be able to do a better job...I will feel blessed".



1972 perfusion student ID



The University of Iowa ID badge - first perfusion job.



Do you have suggestions for a Beyond the Pump profile or article? Email: abcp@abcp.org