



Janelle Yates: Author, editor, women's health expert

A tribute to the legacy of long-time OBG MANAGEMENT Senior Editor, a celebration of life from her colleagues and friends

Lila O'Connor, Editor

As readers of OBG MANAGEMENT, you are very familiar with the name Janelle Yates. Janelle was an editor and writer for the journal for more than 15 years. Her byline has graced articles on, among other topics, obstetrics, liability, menopause, and tissue extraction. You may recall the 3-part series on endometriosis she authored beginning in April 2015.¹ She worked with several expert surgeons to deliver an in-depth look at diagnosis, treatment, and related infertility. She interviewed presidents of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)² and worked with ACOG staff, including Lucia DiVenere, MA, on legislative articles for OBG MANAGEMENT, helping to bring new policies and practice changes to the forefront for readers.^{3,4}

One topic that was of particular, personal interest to Janelle was breast cancer. She lived on and off with, but always under the shadow of, breast cancer for more than 8 years. This past December, Janelle developed a rare and incurable cancer of the nervous system, which took her life in January.

Janelle's contributions to OBG MANAGEMENT

Janelle worked closely with Robert L. Barbieri, MD, and the OBG MANAGEMENT Board of Editors on writing and editing projects. In fact, Janelle began as Senior Associate Editor with the journal in 2000, only a few

months after Dr. Barbieri was inaugurated as Editor in Chief.

"Janelle was exceptionally skillful in polishing a rough manuscript into a superbly crafted article," says Dr. Barbieri. "The physician authors with whom she collaborated were in awe of her talent and recognized the value of her contributions to advancing women's health care."

"Janelle approached the craft of writing like an artist, always searching for an additional layer of deeper meaning and insight. Her strength of character and myriad life experiences gave her unique skills in exploring, questioning, and improving the content that was brought forth."

"She and I had an ongoing conversation on the pros and cons of being concise," says Dr. Barbieri. "I would ask her the hypothetical, 'If an author could effectively deliver his or her core message in a 1-page article, why take 3 pages to do so?' As a counterpoint, her perspective was that if you could concisely make your point in 3 pages, it might be even better for an author to expand their article to 9 pages to help the reader achieve a deeper level of understanding and insight."

In May 2013, Barbara S. Levy, MD, after serving for 17 years as an OBG MANAGEMENT Board of Editors member, assumed the position of Vice President for Health Policy at ACOG, and resigned her position on the journal's editorial board. Janelle collaborated with Dr. Levy on an article commemorating her

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In 2011, seeking a change of pace and quality-of-life move, Janelle Yates relocated from the metro New York City area to Asheville, North Carolina. By her account, she settled in quickly and comfortably. She enjoyed the lifestyle, spending much time outdoors. She also attended writing workshops, enjoying poetry in particular. “There’s more to life than the climb. There’s the view,” states an Asheville tourism website. This is a photograph of Asheville, as seen from Janelle’s camera lens.

lifetime of service to women.⁵ Dr. Levy recalls that article, and the numerous others she partnered on with Janelle:

“She was the quintessential professional. We are professional doctors, but Janelle was a professional writer and editor. She had an ability to, when speaking with us, get the best out of us, and take what we said and translate that into a cogent, crisp presentation that was really meaningful to readers. Having her perspective as a partner in writing helped me reach a core in readers that I believe I otherwise would not have been able to reach.”

Andrew M. Kaunitz, MD, Board of Editors member since 2006, describes Janelle as “a wonderful colleague and person.”

“My early perceptions of Janelle,” he says, “relate to her tremendous skills as a medical writer. Over time, however, I recognized that, in addition to her wonderful talents as a writer, she brought what I can only call a sense of grace to each interaction that I had with her. I continue to find it hard to imagine a world without her.”

“During my 15-year excursion as the Editor in Chief of OBG MANAGEMENT,” says Dr. Barbieri, “Janelle was the perfect guide

and travel companion. She will always be in my thoughts and heart.”

Janelle’s memory endures

Janelle’s colleagues at the journal office and the Board of Editors honor her dedication to OBG MANAGEMENT, and truly to women’s health in general, in a permanent way in the pages of OBG MANAGEMENT. Janelle’s name has been added to the journal’s staff masthead with the title, “Editor Emeritus.” We feel this is a small but sincere gesture from those of us who have had the immense pleasure and incredible honor to work with Janelle over the years.

John Baranowski, who served as Editor of OBG MANAGEMENT from 2008 until mid-2012, eloquently states: “As her supervisor for several years, I was the initial recipient of tens of thousands of her well-ordered, well-chosen, and insightful words. At this time, it is hard for me to find words to offer on her behalf. Her outsized skill, her easeful manner, and her certain success at improving the care that physicians provide—those are humbling, silencing remembrances; things of such great value that words just do not work as tribute.”

Dianne Reynolds, Publisher of OBG MANAGEMENT, has known Janelle since 2008 and says that she feels blessed and fortunate to have had Janelle in her life on more than just a professional level. “I will cherish her memory forever,” she says.

OBG MANAGEMENT Managing Editor Deborah Reale joined the journal staff in 2010. “Words connected Janelle and I not only in our editorial work but also personally, through our shared love of poetry,” she says. Unbeknownst to many, Janelle was a published poet. She also wrote two biographies, of Woodie Guthrie and Zora Neale Hurston, while working many years ago as an editor for Ward Hill Press.

Like so many others, I feel privileged to have worked with Janelle. Her work was fearless. Whether it was an audio interview with gynecologic oncologist Eva Chalas, MD, on preserving minimally invasive approaches to gynecologic surgery⁶ or a Q&A article on liabil-

ity claims in obstetrics,⁷ Janelle did it brilliantly. She applied her years of knowledge and experience to each piece she wrote or edited, always bringing an expert's best voice forward. In fact, Dianne Reynolds says, "Janelle once told me that she had dreamed of being a doctor, and she imagined herself pushing through hospital doors on her way to treat patients. Instead, Janelle used her acquired medical knowledge in women's health and writing acumen to assist physicians in explaining their techniques for the benefit of their colleagues."

Janelle's siblings Diana and Kent Yates, and her daughter Adrienne Cano, say they have been aware of how supportive the OBG MANAGEMENT extended team has been to Janelle. In speaking with Board of Editors member, Cheryl B. Iglesia, MD, Diana says, "This was such a blessing in her life. It was a rare thing, the kind of relationship she had with all of you. We appreciate so very much

your nurturing of her talents and of her as a person."

Janelle meant a great deal to her colleagues, of course because of her superb work and wise perspective, but also because of her warmth and gentle ease. Simply put, Janelle was a wonderful person to be near.

"She was absolutely amazing and will be greatly missed both personally and professionally," says 10-year OBG MANAGEMENT board member JoAnn V. Pinkerton, MD.

Dr. Iglesia asserts, "Janelle never will be forgotten. She truly has left a legacy of very important articles for many generations."

Janelle, we can only hope that with your name on the masthead, readers of OBG MANAGEMENT in future generations will have the privilege of your touch. May that touch bring them the gift of journalistic accuracy, professional integrity, spot-on syntax and, above all, compelling reading. 📖

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