

# Passing the Torch

By Evelyn Sutton, Past-President, Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA)

When I wrote the Presidential Address two years ago, I shared my experience of an April 2020, COVID-restricted wedding in Nova Scotia. Those were early days of the pandemic, before vaccines were developed, and public health was doing their best to stop the spread of a killer virus. So, the venue was outdoors, only five people total could be included (including bride, groom and officiant!), and there was no post-wedding reception/dinner celebration allowed. There had been some discussion about postponing the wedding until a time when restrictions eased and their families (Ontario-based) and friends could attend, but given no one could predict when that would be, the young couple decided that they would proceed as planned, and not let COVID derail their life plans. Since then, they have bought a house, given birth to a beautiful baby boy, and been able to visit, and be visited by, their Ontario-based families, navigating isolation protocols and even contracting COVID themselves (fortunately, the illness was mild, thanks to being fully vaccinated).

Kathleen Edwards, author of the book *Resilience*, writes “Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it’s less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you’ve lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that’s good.” The CRA has embodied this definition of resilience and I suggest, together, we created something that is better than



good. Individually and collectively, we had to change how we worked, played, relaxed and planned for the future. We have learned with and from each other, communicated evidence-based guidelines, shared strategies and developed new goals. Like the young married couple, we have kept our eye on what matters to us and worked together to plan a better future for current and future members.

I am delighted to hand the tiller over to Dr. Nigil Haroon who needs no introduction. He will be well supported by the hardworking CRA staff who, under Dr. Ahmad Zbib’s superb guidance, supported our entire organization and me. I used to tell my children that we won the lottery by being born in Canada. I still believe

that and being a member of the CRA is part of that prize. Best wishes to all of you and, once again (fourth time wishing this), I hope to see you in person in Quebec City next year!

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