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Nurse's 50-year milestone of care and compassion

One of Campbelltown Hospital's most inspirational nursing leaders is celebrating her 50th year in the profession she loves.

Macarthur Cancer Therapy Centre's Nursing Unit Manager Denise Burns has many wonderful memories of her nursing career, including starting work at Prince Henry Hospital in January 1970 and moving on to cancer care in 1976.

"I could not imagine doing anything else, I absolutely love it. The longer I have stayed in nursing, the more I enjoy it," Ms Burns said.

"It is one of the most rewarding professions."

As one of the foundation staff members of the Macarthur Cancer Therapy Centre, Ms Burns said her involvement in the establishment of the specialist unit in 2003 was one of the highlights of her career.

"It has been a privilege to care for our patients and to work with so many outstanding health professionals over the years," she said.

"The work here is so rewarding - we feel like we are part of an extended family. There is a lot of laughter and compassion."

Ms Burns, who worked across Sydney including roles at Prince of Wales, St Margaret's, Canterbury, Lidcombe and Liverpool Hospitals during her career, said nurses had many admirable qualities but several stood out.

"You need a calm, friendly personality," she said. "You need to show compassion and empathy, be a good listener and be patient-focused. You also need to maintain a good sense of humour and a positive attitude."

"Our nurses show these qualities every day."

The dedicated nurse, who has been recognised with awards for her commitment to patient-centred, high-quality care, plans to continue nursing for as long as she can.

"I can't imagine doing anything else," the dedicated leader said.