

Loving to learn

Judy Roever believes learning should be a lifetime endeavor

By Bill McClellan

It's 7 in the morning and Judy Roever is already in her office at Scenic Mountain Medical Center, preparing to make her rounds. As chief nursing officer, Roever has a lot of responsibility, and she makes sure she begins each day by visiting with nursing staff, physicians and patients.

Once that's done, she returns to her office to handle paperwork. Then, it's back to the halls, tending to various details, helping out where she can, and doing her best to make sure everything is going smoothly.

"I'm not an office person at all," she says with a laugh. "I have to get out and get around."

Roever is anything but a "sitter," as her educational experience attests. She is always wanting to expand her horizons, learn new things, whether in a classroom, or exchanging experiences with colleagues.

"There's something about learning and growing and not sitting still and being stagnant," she said.

Roever became interested in the nursing field years ago when her sister was diagnosed with cancer. Unfortunately, her sister — 29 at the time — did not win that battle, but the ordeal left Judy with a positive outlook toward medicine and a desire to give something back.

She trained as an emergency responder and volunteered for the ambulance service in Borden County and worked for AMT ambulance service out of Big Spring, as well as the ED (emergency department) at Scenic Mountain.



Judy Roever, DNP, MSN, RN, CEN, Chief Nursing Officer at Scenic Mountain Medical Center, is pictured with her husband, Bobby, after she received her doctorate of nursing practice from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

In 1994, she received her associate's degree in nursing from Howard College and in 1995 was a charge nurse in the ED.

In 2000, she decided to take the position as director of staff development, but immediately knew it wasn't a good move for her.

"I really missed the ED," she recalled.

She stayed on as director of staff development for a year, but then went back to the ED. Almost immediately, she was named director of the department.

"I decided as director I needed more education, and so I returned to school," Roever said. "I applied to the BSN program at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing and was accepted."

"It was such a wonderful experience that I decided to go on and pursue my masters in nursing with a focus on executive leadership. I applied again and was accepted."

While working on her master's, which she re-



ceived in 2006, Roever was named interim chief nursing officer at SMMC. A short time later, she was named chief nursing officer.

"I thought at that time I was finished getting my education. I thought I was just going to enjoy my life, enjoy my husband," said Roever.

But in 2007, she was sent a brochure from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center inviting her to apply for a new doctorate of nursing practice.

"I told my husband that if I were going back for a doctorate, this would be the ideal degree for me. He said, 'Well why don't you do it?' and I was saying 'no, no.'" she said. "But he encouraged me to apply 'and see what happens.' One day my husband, Bobby, was in my office and this big, thick envelope arrived and I said to him, 'Well, I'm sure I didn't get accepted' and he said 'Oh, you got accepted. If you hadn't been accepted, they would have sent you a very thin envelope.'"

"I opened the letter and really felt like the wind was knocked out of me. It was such an honor to be accepted."

She joined the inaugural class of 20 and in May



2010 graduated with her doctorate of nursing practice degree.

"It was another great, wonderful experience. I learned so much, not just from my studies, but from those in the program with me," said Roever. "It was definitely the highlight of educational career."

Taking every step with her was Bobby, a community supervision officer in the Community Supervision and Corrections Department,

118th Judicial District. "My husband has truly been the wind beneath my wings," said Roever. "He's encouraged me and supported me in every way possible."

She and Bobby are members of Alive in Christ Lutheran Church, where he is an elder and vice president of the congregation and she is on several boards, among them — not surprisingly — the board of education. The Roever's have two children and

four grandchildren.

Roever said education as made her life more enjoyable and interesting.

"Before I got my bachelor's degree my focus had centered on the ED. But that opened up so many other opportunities."

"Yes, it added more responsibility, but it has given me the opportunity to grow as a person. I feel like I can make a difference in the lives of others," she added.