My name is Toni Lynn Quilty. I am an infusion nurse at Dana Farber Cancer Institute. On May 20, 2022, I will be graduating from Simmons University in Boston with a Master of Science in Nursing. Just 10 years ago, I would have laughed at the thought of earning my master’s degree in anything much less nursing. Nursing was not my first choice when I was in high school deciding my educational and career path. As a matter of fact, becoming a nurse never even crossed my mind. My family owned several businesses, so I decided to get a degree in business. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration a long, long time ago. My first job out of college was for a pharmaceutical company in a management position. After 18 years of hard work and dedication, I realized this career wasn’t what I really wanted to do. I literally woke up one day and decided to change my career; from business to medicine. It didn’t make sense to my family at the time, but it all made sense to me. So, more than 10 years ago, as my son was graduating high school, I was getting ready to go back to school. I started all over again to earn my Bachelor of Science in Nursing. I didn’t realize it at the time, but it was the best decision I have ever made. Upon graduation, I landed my first nursing position as an inpatient nurse on a hematology/oncology floor. I was so lucky to get a position in oncology and find my true calling right from the start. I love being a nurse.

I realized early in my nursing career that education was so important. Unfortunately, COVID put a damper on my participation in some activities over the last two years, but I have otherwise always tried to attend conferences and classes that would advance my nursing knowledge. I have especially enjoyed attending educational offerings at Dana Farber. I just recently attended a very informative four-hour Advance Practice Providers Grand Rounds Session. I have already added additional educational events to my calendar in the fall. Again, at Dana Farber, I was an active member of the Magnet Committee while we prepared for and received our fourth ANCC designation. I was lucky to be able to celebrate this achievement in October of 2019 by attending the Magnet Conference in Orlando, Florida. And the highlight of my career was to be awarded The Daisy Award in February of 2021. It was truly humbling and rewarding to be acknowledged for making a difference in the life of one of my patients.

I also try to give back to my patients by participating in and raising money for the Boston Marathon Jimmy Fund Walk as a team captain. I try to increase my fundraising goal each year. I was proud to become a Jimmy Fund Walk Star Pacesetter in 2021. I have also volunteered for the Pan Mass Challenge organization at their Gillette Stadium checkpoint. This event raises so much money for cancer research and the riders are truly an inspiration to me.

I actively participate in professional organizations to enhance my career and take advantage of the many educational offerings they have. I have been a member of the Oncology Nursing Society since 2017 and have completed several courses online through ONS. In fact, I am currently studying for the OCN exam and hope to have an exam date within the next few weeks. I am also a member of the American Nurses Association, the Massachusetts Nursing Association, and The American Association of Nurse Practitioners.

And finally, as far as my educational journey is concerned, my undergraduate and graduate nursing school accomplishments have earned me an invitation and membership to the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. As you can see, education is very important to me.

It has been a long journey to become a nurse, but I am so glad I took that first step. I am only looking to the future, and I am far from done learning and developing as a provider. After all, I am only six years into my young nursing career. There is so much more to learn and accomplish. At some point, I would like to help the next generation of nurses.

A scholarship from the Boston Oncology Society will certainly help me reach my educational and career goals. I would be so grateful if you would consider my application for the BONS educational scholarship.