

## **Harper Talks – Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

**[00:00:01.400] - Brian Shelton**

I'm Brian Shelton. And you're listening to Harper Talks, a coproduction of Harper College alumni relations and Harper Radio today on Harper Talks. I'm excited to speak with Genevieve Frey-Moylan. Genevieve is a graduate of the Harper Nursing program and is now director of the cardiac care unit at the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. Genevieve joined me for the Harper Talks podcast over one.

**[00:00:29.320] - Brian Shelton**

Thank you so much for being here with us on Harper Talks today. Genevieve, how are you doing today?

**[00:00:34.120] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I'm great. Hi, Brian. How are you?

**[00:00:36.350] - Brian Shelton**

I am just dandy. It's a nice fall day here at Harper College. It's nice to be on the campus. So you are in Chicago, correct?

**[00:00:43.450] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I am. I am right now sitting in my office at Lurie Children's Hospital.

**[00:00:48.020] - Brian Shelton**

So you are having a great career, and you found what you're supposed to do with your life, which is fantastic. But doing a little research on you, I found out that things did not start out this way for you. You did not start your career at Harper College. What did you do after graduating from high school?

**[00:01:04.770] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I graduated high school when I was 17 years old.

**[00:01:09.360] - Brian Shelton**

Oh, wow. How did that happen? Tell me, how does that happen?

**[00:01:12.650] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

A birthday cut off with the November birthday early on led me to to graduate at that age. And maybe that has something to do with it. Maybe it was just me, but I was not very mature and not in a place, probably where I was prepared for the kind of independence required to attend University and stay focused and disciplined enough to actually go to class and do what is required to achieve a four year degree. And since I didn't actually go to class all the time, I was put on academic probation after the first semester, and then I was actually not invited to come back after the first year.

**[00:01:56.520] - Brian Shelton**

Wow. How did that make you feel?

**[00:01:58.660] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Oh, I mean, that felt terrible and very I would say just very embarrassed. You know, when you are in high school and everybody is going off to do what feels like bigger and better things and you attempt to do the same and you fail. You know, it's a very humbling experience to come back and have to figure out how to sort of redirect your life. I did have an advertising major with a marketing minor when I was at Whitewater, and when I came back, I figured I had to for to take my life in a new direction.

**[00:02:28.630] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

And that gave me a little bit of time to reevaluate what I was doing while I was doing it. And actually, that was the period of time where I switched gears and decided that I was going to pursue a career in nursing.

**[00:02:40.200] - Brian Shelton**

You shouldn't be embarrassed by that story. And I think it's very good as an alumni of Harper College for you to tell the story to students I tell my students all the time that I had a .98 GPA my first semester of College, and now I'm a professor. So see, you can do anything as long as you put your mind to it.

**[00:02:56.640] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Part of your journey. It's part of I was embarrassed about it at the time, but obviously, I'm telling you and everybody else about it. Now. It wasn't on a moment that I was proud of, but I am very proud of what I did when I fell down, that I got back up again. And I think that that is probably something a lot of people can relate to.

**[00:03:16.740] - Brian Shelton**

Absolutely. It's okay to make mistakes and to fall down. But you do have to get back up, right. And figure out what you're going to do. So I do want to talk about your great career in nursing, but I'm curious. You started at Harper around 2001. Is that correct?

**[00:03:30.480] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Correct.

**[00:03:31.470] - Brian Shelton**

So what was the campus like at that time? I wasn't here. So what was it like, the.

**[00:03:36.060] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Oh, my gosh. It seems like it was so long ago, but I remember the campus just being busy and thriving, and I remember no one was wearing a mask, and that was really nice. (laughs) So I had a lot of great friends there and a lot of really incredible professors. And honestly, the nursing program at Harper is so rigorous. I just remember parking my car, going to nursing classes to parking my car, going to nursing classes, studying, studying, I mean, I didn't spend a lot of time probably doing a lot of extracurricular activities on campus because the nursing program is so rigorous.

**[00:04:10.750] - Brian Shelton**

Yeah. So no clubs and things like that. While you were here.

**[00:04:14.530] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

No, I probably missed out on some of those things. I wish I would have done a little bit more, but it was helpful in the moment to stay focused, especially for me, bouncing back from what I had bounced back from to stay very laser focused on showing up for class, being fully engaged and following through with what was asked of me.

**[00:04:32.380] - Brian Shelton**

Yeah, you've gotta do that. So that brings me to a question I always like to ask the nursing students and especially nursing faculty and such as. Well, faculty at every campus that have a nursing program. They know that nursing students are obsessed with their grades. Were you one of those students or are you gonna bother me for a point? Is that you?

**[00:04:52.440] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Yes! Absolutely. The nursing program at Harper is so rigorous, but that is part of what drew me to the program is that it had a really strong reputation. My dad actually worked in healthcare for the entirety of his career, and it's shared with me that they had such great reputation. But, yes, it was extremely competitive, and I would fight someone an arm wrestle for one more point on an exam.

**[00:05:18.970] - Brian Shelton**

It's so true. It's so true. Every time I have a nursing student in my class. I'm like, all right. You just make sure you come and talk to me before we get in an argument about this, okay? Because we're going to chat. Yeah, it's fun. I appreciate it. But it's also the nursing students are really good students because of that. But it's it's fun. That's cool. So when you finished Harper, you went on to where what was next for you?

**[00:05:40.020] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I went to a bachelor's. Well, before that, I got my first job, and I got my dream job actually was to be a pediatric intensive care unit nurse. What was formerly Children's Memorial Hospital is now Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. But I started as a new graduate nurse in the PICU, which was for me, a dream. And I had to pinch myself because I couldn't believe that I was working in one of the premier children's hospitals in the country. And I had the privilege to take care of some of the sickest patients in children in Illinois.

**[00:06:15.910] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

It was amazing. And it was really rewarding to have worked so hard at Harper and to get my dream job when I was done. And that was definitely I mean, this was the springboard for my entire career and has been such a huge part of my trajectory ever since I was in the PICU for about eight years as a bedside nurse.

**[00:06:36.500] - Brian Shelton**

What's that like is that that's gotta be hard. I mean, I imagine it's rewarding as patients get well, but it's gotta be hard when patients don't. Well, I mean, not to be depressing. But that's got to be...

**[00:06:46.290] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

That's part of nursing. I mean, depending on what type of nursing you go into, I like and still enjoy the ability to be in a critical care environment because I think that the challenge just sort of mentally and emotionally is one that is really unlike anything else you can do. And I thought and I still think it was a privilege to be there for patients and families during the most critical and most vulnerable times, perhaps in their entire lives, and to see so many children overcome whatever terrible obstacle was in front of them because most of our kids thrive and go on to do well.

**[00:07:26.520] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

And being in an ICU means you were having a hard time for a period. And I think as I got further in my career, and maybe it wasn't very far because there are patients who don't leave an ICU. But my focus shifted to making end of life as peaceful and painless as possible as I could for the patient and the families. And I felt like that was rewarding in a very different way.

**[00:07:50.660] - Brian Shelton**

Yeah. I interviewed Harper distinguished alumni who runs a Hospice program and her story. I mean, it was just so moving and her dedication to end of life care. I think that everyone should just hope that they find somebody like that when it comes that time, it's depressing to think about. But yeah.

**[00:08:09.390] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

We need those people. And those are some of the most important times in your life where you meet people who are passionate about what they do and as compassionate as someone like that is and what they have to offer and how that helps with those really difficult times.

**[00:08:24.080] - Brian Shelton**

So you went back to school while you were working full time?

**[00:08:26.780] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I did. I started again when you start as a new graduate nurse, just like when you start nursing school, you have to have a laser focus on what you're doing. Because even though I had gone to Harper, I had my associates degree, I still had to go through a six month orientation program after school because there's so much to learn about a sub specialty, like pediatric ICU. So I focused on what it was doing and just getting off of orientation and starting to get some solid footing. And, um, Children's Memorial now Lurie offers some tuition reimbursement Lincoln Park, and I did a bachelor's completion program at DePaul, and then I actually did my Masters in Nursing administration at DePaul also.

**[00:09:05.920] - Brian Shelton**

So tell me about the Masters of nursing administration. How is that different? I know that a lot of students do a Masters degree in nursing, but not in the administrative site. So tell me about that. What's the what's that about?

**[00:09:17.430] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I had a feeling that I really always wanted to go into leadership. So my dad, like I mentioned, was health care. He was in health care. He was an administrator. And I remember, you know, just watching him work and hearing him on the phone and watching him really exemplify servant leadership and having so much respect for other nurses and sort of being an awe and inspired by what they do. I felt like it would really be an honor to be a leader. And so I knew that pretty early on.

**[00:09:50.050] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

And just to be sure. I looked at the curriculum for a nurse anesthetist, advanced practice nurse, and someone who is pursuing a master's in nursing administration. And I said I looked at all the classes and I said, I don't want to take any of those classes, and I want to take any of those classes. And I want to take every single one of these classes, maybe plus or minus statistics. But I knew for sure that that's what I wanted to do, because I told you my embarrassing parts of my story, the the parts that I wasn't most proud of.

**[00:10:24.310] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I actually did graduate as a valedictorian of my nursing class both times with my bachelors and my Masters. So I am proof that you can make a lot of mistakes and turn it around and really excel if you put your mind to it.

**[00:10:38.040] - Brian Shelton**

That's fantastic. I love what you're saying, though, about looking at the curriculum and saying, I don't want to do that. But I do want to do this. And somebody said it to me a long time ago. I can't remember who said that you should follow, maybe not follow your dreams, but follow what you're good at. And if you find something that you're good at, that's what you should do, that you should strive for and what you should go after, right?

**[00:11:00.340] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Yes. My friends who are advanced practice nurses and nurse anesthetists. They are gifted in the area of anatomy and physiology. And for me, I was good at it, but I wasn't great at it. But I loved leadership. I still love, for fun, reading leadership, books on leadership, and I still so enjoy that. And if you're going to pursue knowledge, it has to be something that you love.

**[00:11:27.500] - Brian Shelton**

Did you have a mentor that you were able to or do you still have a mentor that you're able to bounce ideas off of and get advice?

**[00:11:34.240] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Yeah. So I would say that Joni Rothblume, who was one of my professors when I was at Harper, has always been an inspiration and a mentor to me. She was extremely encouraging to me, even when I felt very discouraged, because like I said, it was a challenge. She's someone I've stayed in touch with and appreciate very much. She's just recently retired from Harper, but she was great for anyone listening who had her. They probably feel the same way. And then I was also fortunate to have some mentors within Children's Memorial who I also stay in touch with.

**[00:12:07.190] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

And then I still call my dad because he worked in health care administration for so long, and he faced so many challenges during his career. It's still nice to be able to call him and say this is my thought process with this very complex issue. Do you think I'm on the right track or do I need to be thinking about this differently? Because I'm working full time in a very demanding job. I'm also a wife and a mother of two small children. I don't always have time to sift through all of the news and find a good, meaningful articles.

**[00:12:42.550] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

And my dad sends me my brother and my sister articles from The Wall Street Journal and from a number of other sources almost every day. I can almost not keep up with how many articles he sends us, but it's really nice to have somebody who can bounce ideas off of. And also we'll send you meaningful information that they've had some time to sift through and give you the good stuff. It's been really helpful.

**[00:13:06.080] - Brian Shelton**

That's great. I always encourage students and colleagues to find somebody like that. Find that mentor that you can go to and ask questions. And sometimes it's the quote, unquote, stupid question that you don't feel comfortable asking anyone else. But, you know, you can ask that person and they're going to give you the straight answer on it and not laugh at you for asking that question.

**[00:13:26.330] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I'm fortunate to the people I work with here are so unpretentious, you can ask anything and you're going to get support. And I'm really fortunate. I have such an amazing leadership team. I have four managers, two educators and a quality coordinator that I work with, and they all would not hesitate to tell me that I was wrong or that I was potentially thinking about things incorrectly or pointed in the wrong direction. And I think that surrounding yourself with people who are going to give it to you straight.

**[00:13:54.050] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

It's almost like a reverse mentorship, right? They might report to you, but also they're mentoring you at the same time by telling you what their perspective is. So it's pretty great when you're surrounded with people like that. I feel very fortunate.

**[00:14:07.100] - Brian Shelton**

Yeah, it's always good to have smart people who you disagree with.

**[00:14:10.170] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

That's always a good way to we're not all supposed to agree that's right.

**[00:14:15.480] - Brian Shelton**

That's right. The best way to learn is about having those disagreements sometimes. So you mentioned where you work. I stated in the show's introduction what you do, but tell us what it is that you do there. What is your job? What is your day like?

**[00:14:29.840] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Well, my day has varied, actually, over the years. So I've been at Lurie for almost 18 years, and right now, my official title is Director of the Cardiac Care Unit and ECMO, which is extracorporeal membrane oxygenation. And it's a very long way of saying sort of heart, lung bypass for prolonged periods of time to stabilize a patient. So I'm responsible for those two areas. The cardiac care unit is a 44 bed inpatient unit that takes care of of both children who are critically ill with heart disease and acutely ill with a cardiac issue.

**[00:15:07.420] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

And I was actually fortunate enough to be a part of building the model that is an acuity adaptable model. I believe it was the first in the country because usually you have ICU patients isolated to one unit, and you have acute care patients who are quite as sick in another area. But when you have to go between the two, that can be really challenging for the families and for the patients because it's sort of like, oh, I just got to know these nurses and these doctors, and now I have to go to another floor and get to know new people.

**[00:15:31.090] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

So instead of having the children and the family shift from one place to another, we now adapt to them. And that has been such an exciting thing to be a part of building because it was novel. And I got to work with really brilliant people who came together to build something like that. So it's been really rewarding. So day to day, I talk about the national nursing shortage every day.

**[00:15:55.800] - Brian Shelton**

Every day?

**[00:15:56.900] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Every day. And so if you you are at Harper and you're in the nursing program, thank you. We're looking forward to graduating, and the world needs more nurses now more than ever.

**[00:16:08.670] - Brian Shelton**

Let me ask you that question, why is there a nursing shortage?

**[00:16:11.700] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Oh, well, there was a nursing shortage before the pandemic, and now that we're in the middle of or I don't know what part of the pandemic we're in, we're still in the pandemic. The number of nurses required to meet the needs of the country has so far exceeded what we have. If you think about it, think about if you are in a restaurant and I worked in a restaurant for a long time, you prepare for your busy during breakfast, you're busy during lunch, you're busy during dinner.

**[00:16:43.480] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

You don't prepare for being busy from open to close because you're not thinking you're going to have a full restaurant at maybe 3:00 in the afternoon because it's not really lunch and it's not really dinner. So why am I full right now? I'm not prepared for that. I have the people for that. So when the hospitals are almost 100% in capacity, they don't staff for that. They weren't prepared for that from the beginning. And we were always sort of looking for more nurses. Since the day I graduated, I have been reminded that there was a nursing shortage, and the pandemic has really exacerbated that challenge.

**[00:17:20.170] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

And there were also nurses, I think that became so overwhelmed with the demands of having to work so hard for so long that some of them have retired or decided just to get home. It's been a significant challenge everywhere in the country. It is not unique to one part or another.

**[00:17:36.950] - Brian Shelton**

Yeah. So nursing is a good career. It pays well generally in the non pandemic world that has some flexible hours. Right? You kind of work some heavy duty couple of days in a row, and then you have time off, right. Because I have nurses in my family so I know what their schedules are like. But why the shortage? Why you would think that that would be something that there would be so many people trying to get into? Or is it just because the curriculum is so darn hard that people try to get in but can't do it? What do you think?

**[00:18:05.140] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I think it's such a complicated, multi layered answer to that question. I think it's challenging, and I hope that people have a perception of what nursing is. But quite frankly, I didn't have an accurate perception of what nursing was. I think I thought that nurses were sort of task driven and I didn't realize what a critical role nurses played as a part of a multidisciplinary team, helping focus the trajectory of a patient and influencing their outcomes in such a profound way. So I wonder often if there's a misperception of what nurses really do, I think yes, it is rigorous.

**[00:18:50.610] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

And also, I think without getting into anything political, I think that this has been extremely taxing for nurses, and they think that people have really questioned and like every industry, I haven't talked to anyone who said that their job is a piece of cake right now. It's a really challenging time to do anything. And I think that a lot of nurses ask themselves, especially if they were close to retirement, do I want to keep doing this. I'm exhausted. But I'm really grateful for the ones who are still here.

**[00:19:20.720] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

They're working so hard. We're all working really hard, and we're trying to still provide the very best for every patient, even though we wish we had more nurses all the time. And hopefully there are a lot of really wonderful people in school right now getting ready to come out.

**[00:19:34.120] - Brian Shelton**

Yeah. I just can't imagine you've got the physical demand of the job, and then, of course, with the pandemic, with it being basically a 24/7. But the emotional and mental demand of the job as well got to be hard. It's got to be a tough ask. I guess that you've kind of answered this question already, but I wanted to ask you directly how the pandemic has affected your work, what's it been like for you and your administrative capacity, I guess. And then what are you watching your nurses and doctors go through and patients as well?

**[00:20:05.760] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

You know what I think anyone who works in Pediatrics would say if we are thinking about our adult colleagues and other hospitals, we are so humbled by what they're going through because we're not going through exactly the same thing. And I'm not saying that COVID is not affecting children because it is, but it is not affecting children in the same way for the same amount of time that it has for the adult population. So it's been a little bit different for us, but we definitely went through a phase where we were canceling elective surgeries.

**[00:20:37.410] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Everything was shutting down. We were slow. And now with kids, we have ramped up to almost full, and it's not full of kids who have COVID so I think we're really trying to focus on how we take care of our staff so our staff can take care of our patients.

**[00:20:54.940] - Brian Shelton**

That's great. So you became a Harper College Distinguished Alumni in 2016. What was that like for you?

**[00:21:02.600] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Oh, my gosh. It was such an honor. It was so, so nice. And I don't think I'm important. I think I am out here trying to make a difference, and I hope that I work hard, and I am making a difference in some way, shape or form. And I'm sure there are a lot of people who were probably more deserving than I was, but I was just so honored, and it was so meaningful to be recognized in that way. And I don't know what to say. I was just really surprised and I was I was really honored.

**[00:21:33.540] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I think you're just trying to make a difference and go through your day and hope that it's making an impact. And when someone says, yeah, it is. And I think that you're pretty special. And you did something pretty great. Sort of like I wasn't expecting that recognition, and I really appreciate it. It was pretty exciting.

**[00:21:51.160] - Brian Shelton**

Yeah. It's a great thing to be recognized for it. I've had the opportunity to talk to so many of the folks who have been nominated and received that award, and it's always great to hear from them because they've played such an important role, an integral role in this College. And even if you don't think that you have, you have because you are an example for the students who are coming into the nursing program in particular at this College because you are talked about at this College for what you're doing now.

**[00:22:16.160] - Brian Shelton**

And other students look at that and say, I want to be her one day. I want to be like that. And so you're a role model, you know it or not, right.

**[00:22:22.550] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

So that's really nice. All I can say to everyone who's in school right now is everything feels hard. I think now probably more than ever because people are so worried about their physical health and their mental health and all of the demands that people have been placed on them. And I think now more than ever. I hope that, you know, students at Harper know they can do it if they didn't know that they could do it before, even if you have faced adversity or you have some odds stacked against you or you thought that you were on one path.

**[00:22:57.890] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

You can change the course of that and you can do you can do more than you think you can do.

**[00:23:03.240] - Brian Shelton**

That's fantastic. That was my next question. You already answered it for me. I always like to ask everyone what advice you have for current Harper students because I think it's good for them to hear. And that's a fantastic answer. I appreciate that. That's great.

**[00:23:15.760] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I'm glad I read your mind.

**[00:23:18.450] - Brian Shelton**

Well, I want to thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to talk to me today for Harper Talks. It's so fantastic to meet you and to learn about what you do and to be able to help share your story with the greater Harper community. And I wish you the best at the hospital and your patients. And I hope that things hopefully this pandemic will end sometime soon.

**[00:23:37.880] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

I hope it ends too. Very soon. And I thank you so much for having me. It was really nice to be able to chat with you.

**[00:23:44.760] - Brian Shelton**

Thank you so much.

**[00:23:46.040] - Genevieve Frey-Moylan**

Take care.

**[00:23:51.190] - Brian Shelton**

Genevieve Frey-Moylan is the director of the cardiac care unit at Lurie Children's Hospital and a 2016 recipient of the Harper College Distinguished Alumni Award. If you're enjoying Harper talks, please subscribe and while you're at it rate and review us so that others might find us. Harper Talks is a coproduction of Harper College Alumni Relations and Harper Radio. Our show is produced by Shannon Hynes. Our technical on is Eric Bonilla Sanchez. This episode was edited by Ashley Rosenthal and Brian Diaz. Our theme music was created by Aidan Cashman.

**[00:24:25.520] - Brian Shelton**

I'm Brian Shelton. Thanks for listening.