

## Nursing Rings as a Powerful Symbol of Achievement

Embedded within the history of Canadian nursing has been an emphasis on the hierarchy within the profession. Caps and bibs indicated the various status levels of a student nurse, whereas the graduate nurse not only wore the white uniform and black band on the cap but was entitled to both a pin and a ring.

While uniforms and caps have been almost eliminated entirely in lieu of casual street clothing, the ring has remained an integral symbol of graduation to a higher degree of sophistication and credentialism within the profession.

Over decades there are no doubt hundreds of designs of rings from various schools of nursing in Canada. The pictures presented here are but a few from the Yarmouth School of Nursing, once known as the Yarmouth *Training* School for Nurses.



Mrs. Dorothy Allan's ring from the class of 1934, showing the face and ring side.

Mrs. Dorothy Allan, graduate of 1934, kindly submitted pictures and information regarding how the designs of the rings emerged.

The blue onyx ring idea originated from Mrs. Alan herself who told me that it was the graduating classes who presented their design to Hood's Jeweler in Yarmouth.



The thistle design was used in 1913 and continued for years.

There is also a picture of the ring from 1925 which was owned by Maude Carter, my aunt, now shown in the Yarmouth Regional Hospital foyer museum display. The skull and cross bones design is extremely unique.



1925

Also shown is a ring from the Lying-in-Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island, where Yarmouth students spent three months.



Apparently, after completing this affiliation training in obstetrics the students were entitled to purchase a ring. It is likely that the affiliation with Rhode Island Hospital was because Miss MaryAnn Watson, the first Superintendent of the Yarmouth Hospital was a graduate of the Rhode Island Hospital School of Nursing.

It isn't known when the design of the rings (& pins) became standard. The picture of the thistle on both the pin and ring were those which I myself, a graduate of 1959, wore as a symbol of my own achievement.

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