

## 2019 Barbara Knothe Burn Therapist Achievement Award

Beth A. Costa, OTR



Beth Costa has been a keystone clinical therapist in the burn community for over 28 years and an American Burn Association member for the last 27 of those years. She has been a critical component at the University of Washington Burn Center at the Harborview Medical Center in Seattle Washington since first arriving in 1991. Like Barb herself, Beth also graduated from the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas in 1990 – and from those very humble beginnings, the foundation was cast upon which Beth pioneered a hard-nosed, clinical practice in burn rehabilitation. She always supplies a definitive answer with a simple, common sense explanation, example or technique for almost every rehabilitation challenge in burns. Her fundamental roots in burn therapy can be traced back to her early upbringing working childhood summers with her grandfather on a Nova Scotia farm repairing or building anything that required maintenance or just need to be improved.

Beth brought those “MacGyver” type qualities to the burn team and transformed the role of the clinician to be an essential strut in the constantly churning rehabilitation wheel. Beth has been a contributor to the American Burn Association Annual Meeting as a presenter since 1995 and has been an outspoken addition to the meeting in both professional presentations and as part of a host of symposia, workshops or post-graduate courses – all with a definitive emphasis on utilization of sound clinical skills and reasoning to address the unique challenges of the burn survivor. Moreover, she has an uncanny ability to relate and motivate the most difficult burn survivors with compassion, empathy and drive. Beth also is an active, routine volunteer on burn missions to low resource countries including Nicaragua, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka – her knack for using a hacksaw and PVC pipe to create prosthetics is well known and is often envied by many commercial made manufacturers.

Beth is an instrumental educator – she is an adjunct lecturer for both the University of Washington and University of Puget Sound however, her greatest asset is her role as a clinical instructor and educator for Occupational Therapy Students. She has a zeal for shaping the young minds and furthermore pushes them to advance their clinical reasoning well beyond the textbooks. Her ability to uniquely look at a burn rehabilitation challenge as nothing more than a “problem that has yet to be fixed” makes her a fantastic clinician and provides a clear example of her significant clinical skills and leaves a legacy to the burn community at large.