



## Local *Landmark*

**Editor's Note:** "Profit Pearls" is an occasional series of articles focusing on various specialties, offering tips and advice for improving patient care and creating a healthier bottom line. This month focuses on improving efficiency to enhance patient care.

Pharmacists Nancy Showalter and Peyton Harvey stress the importance of balancing work and family.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ROY SHOWALTER

## Community fixture Scotts Drug is on call around the clock

By Aakash Patel

**T**hrough more than 83 years of service to the community, Scotts Drug Co. has become an institution in Searcy, Ark. Scotts is the oldest retail business in Searcy, about 60 miles northeast of Little Rock. It's still in the same location and owned by the same family. Nancy Showalter, a third generation pharmacist, is the current owner. Showalter was born in Searcy and has spent her entire life there, except for attending pharmacy school at Northeast Louisiana University (now the University of Louisiana at Monroe), in Monroe, La.. After graduating from pharmacy school in 1985, she came back intending to stay for about six months and then moving to a bigger city. However, the small community atmosphere pulled at her, and she decided to put down permanent roots in her home town.

### **Providing Patient care**

Showalter says that Scotts is dedicated to providing patient care, while at the same time increasing the bottom line. Some of the services it provides are in-house charge accounts, free delivery (in Searcy), blood pressure screenings, and medication therapy management (MTM).

In the winter of 2010-11, Scotts began a flu vaccine program, with word of mouth being the only

form of advertisement. This year, the program has been expanded by advertising through bag stuffers and brochures mailed with the monthly charge account statements.

Showalter also says that personal service is an effective ally allowing Stotts to compete with the retail chain stores. It may be a cliché, but she says that employees at Stotts truly try to go the extra mile to help the customer.

“My customers know that they have a 24-hour pharmacy because I will come any hour for them if they need it,” She says. “Patients value the personal service, and many continue to use Stotts as their only pharmacy. Many times patients just need someone to lean on and listen to their issues. The compassionate service is priceless to many patients and they will not use any other pharmacy.”

Keeping prescription prices competitive is another key to Stott’s success. Showalter says the store can provide quicker service compared to the chain pharmacies, and “business continues to grow because of the customer satisfaction.”

Along with its health services, Stotts also has a large offering of holiday gift options and jewelry for sale.

Stotts employs two full-time pharmacists, one part-time pharmacist, four clerks, three pharmacy techs, and two delivery personnel. A hallmark of Stotts’ staff is loyalty and commitment. Two of the clerks have been employed there for more than 20 years. One of the technicians has been with the pharmacy for almost 20 years. Another clerk retired in 2010 after working at Stotts for more than 35 years. The lack of turnover is a reflection of Showalter’s

managerial style. “I try to be good to them and they are to me also,” she says.


### Helping Future Pharmacists

Stotts accepts students from Harding University College of Pharmacy, also in Searcy, for clinical rotations. It started out accepting four students per semester, but discovered this was too much for the pharmacists to effectively precept. It now takes two per semester to have more one-on-one time with the students. Showalter says, “We learn as much from them as they do from us.”

Showalter strives to be a good mentor for the NCPA student chapter at Harding. She was present at the inaugural NCPA student chapter induction dinner, and contributed funds to help the chapter get started. Showalter says she enjoys watching the students grow over the semester—with both knowledge and common sense. She teaches them the practical and “real” side of community pharmacy. Pharmacists at Stotts are passionate about the profession and enjoy helping students get the most out of it.

### Family Atmosphere

Showalter married her husband Roy in 1993, and she says that raising a family has been easy because she and staff pharmacist Peyton Harvey work so well together. Both Showalter and Harvey stress the importance of family, and give each other time off when needed. Showalter believes that family-owned independent pharmacy allows for more flexibility compared to a chain pharmacy where it may be too busy. She says she is fortunate to be a pharmacy owner in a setting where it is easy to raise children. The Showalters have a 9-year-old daughter, Anna Claire, and a son Parker who is a fireman in Magnolia, Ark. They are active in their local church, and in her spare time, Showalter enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, and reading.

Showalter is also heavily involved in professional activities, as she never misses an opportunity to help pharmacy organizations. Showalter is a member of the Arkansas Pharmacist Association and has served as district president for four years. Most importantly, she understands the importance of being involved with associations such as NCPA, and continues to be active while encouraging student pharmacists to do the same. 

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

As a student at Harding University, I had the opportunity to intern at Stotts my first semester in pharmacy school, and I enjoyed being there as I gained valuable knowledge about community pharmacy. Both Nancy Showalter and Peyton Harvey, a staff pharmacist, always took time to answer my questions. Peyton went over clinical aspects of pharmacy-diabetes related issues, how to counsel patients on inhalers, and counseling methods in general, while Nancy explained the business side of pharmacy. I am grateful to have met these mentors early in my pharmacy career, because they have been supportive throughout pharmacy school. I will remember to pass on what I have learned from these great pharmacists to the students when I am a pharmacist.

—AP

Aakash Patel is a 2012 PharmD candidate at Harding University.