



*Donna Cardillo*

# *A Jersey Shore Woman You Should Know*

In 1995, Donna Cardillo, RN fulfilled a long-time dream of starting her own business when she launched Cardillo & Associates Professional Development Seminars. Shortly before presenting her first seminar, her husband was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, a chronic and debilitating disease. Donna considered scraping her business plan to seek a more traditional job but decided to take a chance on herself, believing that she and her family would be better off in the long run. Within a year, her husband was no longer able to work and she became the sole support of her family. Because her husband had no disability insurance, was initially denied social security benefits, and her business was still in the start-up phase, a personal financial crisis ensued – not to mention the devastating health and emotional crisis occurring in the family.

In spite of these challenges, Donna was determined to make the business succeed and to better herself. She enrolled in graduate school seeking out scholarship money to finance most of it. Donna became active in the National MS Society becoming a volunteer lecturer, helping those newly

diagnosed and their families to cope. She also started a support group for family members and friends of people with MS because none existed in the area. Over the next 5 years, Donna completed her master's degree, wrote her first book, became president of a 140-member association, was named Business Woman of the Year in NJ, and built a successful speaking and writing business that continues to thrive – all while her role as family caregiver continued to expand.

Today Donna is author of 3 books: *Your 1<sup>st</sup> Year as a Nurse 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, *The ULTIMATE Career Guide for Nurses*, and *A Day Book for Beginning Nurses*. She also writes a monthly column for Nursing Spectrum and NurseWeek magazines and a daily online advice column at nurse.com. Donna is an online “Expert” at DoctorOz.com and the former “Healthcare Expert” at Monster.com. She travels the world helping nurses and others to be happy in their careers and to reach their full potential. She does that as a keynote speaker, writer, columnist and consultant. Donna is known as the Career Guru for Nurses and is also the country's foremost authority on non-traditional career

opportunities for nurses. She is creator of the Career Alternatives for Nurses® seminar and home-study program.

Donna lives in Sea Girt, NJ with her husband Joe, who in spite of his disability, manages to enjoy life. They recently celebrated 27 years of marriage (a second marriage for both of them) and live life to the fullest everyday. They have 3 children and 2 grandsons. Donna plans to eventually write a motivational book about her experiences and all that she has learned in the last 20 years and would love to someday host her own TV show.