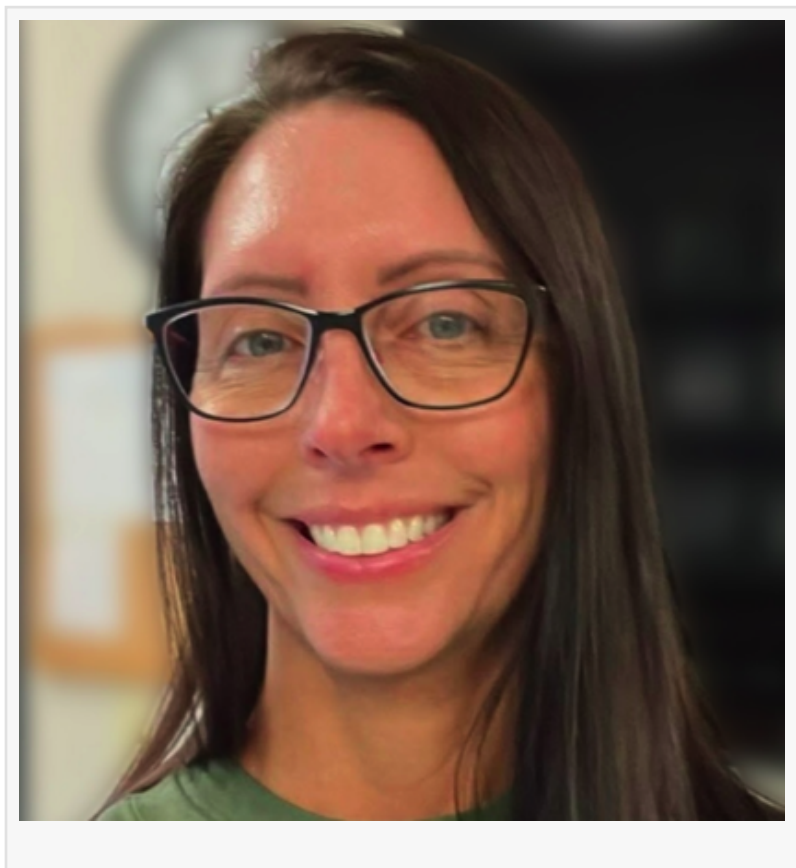


Influential Women Highlights LeAnn Ploeger, CST, CSFA: Advancing Surgical Excellence And Patient Care

COOKEVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, July 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Surgical First Assist and Educator Combines More Than a Decade of Operating Room Experience with a Passion for Mentoring the Next Generation of Healthcare Professionals
Cookeville, Tennessee – LeAnn Ploeger, CST, CSFA, AAS, is a dedicated surgical professional, educator, and author whose career reflects resilience, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to serving others. With more than a decade of operating room experience across multiple specialties, she has built a reputation as a skilled Surgical First Assist who brings precision, confidence, and calm leadership to some of the most demanding moments in healthcare.



Before entering the medical field, LeAnn began her professional journey in corrections, working in both a state penitentiary and a county jail. While that chapter of her career provided valuable insight into human behavior and resilience, she was drawn toward healthcare by her fascination with the human body and the complexity of surgical procedures. Inspired by the intensity, teamwork, and life-changing impact of the operating room, she made the decision to transition into surgical technology, beginning a path that would ultimately lead her to become a Certified Surgical First Assist.

Through dedication, education, and hands-on experience, LeAnn steadily advanced her expertise and developed the technical skills necessary to support surgeons during complex procedures. Her career has included experience in orthopedics, OB/GYN, bariatrics, robotics, and advanced spine surgeries, allowing her to develop a broad understanding of surgical care across diverse specialties.

As a Surgical First Assist, LeAnn serves as a critical member of the surgical team and works directly alongside physicians during procedures. Her responsibilities require advanced technical knowledge, attention to detail, and the ability to anticipate the needs of the surgeon while prioritizing patient safety. Her experience ranges from assisting with deliveries and total joint replacements to participating in complex spinal procedures that may last several hours or extend across an entire shift.

Known for her versatility and composure under pressure, LeAnn has built her career around precision, endurance, and a deep commitment to positive patient outcomes. Whether assisting during routine procedures or highly complex surgeries, she approaches every case with preparation, professionalism, and a sense of purpose.

For LeAnn, her work in healthcare is more than a profession—it is a calling. Guided by her faith, she believes she is serving in the place where she was meant to be. Her dedication extends beyond the operating room, as she has also committed herself to educating and preparing future surgical professionals.

For several years, LeAnn has expanded her impact as the Lead Instructor for a Surgical Technology program at Fortis College. In this role, she teaches lectures, leads hands-on laboratory training, and prepares students for the realities of clinical practice. Drawing from her own experiences in surgery, she focuses on ensuring students develop not only technical skills but also the discipline, awareness, and responsibility required to succeed in the operating room.

LeAnn is passionate about creating realistic educational experiences that prepare students for the challenges they will encounter in healthcare. She designs simulations that reflect real surgical environments and provides opportunities for students to better understand the full scope of their future responsibilities. Through experiences such as forensic center visits, including observing autopsies, she helps students develop a deeper understanding of life, death, and the emotional responsibility involved in caring for patients.

Her goal as an educator is to ensure graduates enter the workforce with confidence, competence, and respect for the seriousness of their profession. She believes surgical technology requires more than technical ability—it requires compassion, teamwork, accountability, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

In addition to her clinical and educational roles, LeAnn is also the author of *The Redemption Letters: From Death Row to Heaven*, sharing her perspective and experiences beyond the healthcare environment.

LeAnn attributes her success first and foremost to her faith and what she describes as a blessing from Jesus, which serves as the foundation of everything she does. She also credits self-discipline, dedication, and a strong commitment to serving others. She believes success requires

preparation, continuous learning, and the willingness to show up consistently, especially in a field where the responsibility directly impacts human lives.

Her approach to both surgery and education is guided by trust in God's plan and a desire to give her full dedication to those she serves. Before every surgery, LeAnn takes time to pray and carries with her the message of Esther 4:14: "Perhaps this is the moment for which you were created." She believes this reflects the purpose behind her work and motivates her to provide the same level of commitment to her patients and students.

One of the most influential figures in LeAnn's career has been Dr. Christopher Willkomm, whose mentorship played a significant role in her professional growth. His support helped her strengthen her surgical skills, build confidence, and recognize the value she brought to the surgical team. Through his guidance, LeAnn learned the importance of stepping into her role with confidence, continuing to refine her abilities, and trusting the knowledge and experience she had developed.

That mentorship continues to influence how she approaches her work today. As an educator, she strives to provide her students with the same encouragement and belief in their potential that helped shape her own career.

LeAnn encourages young women entering the surgical field to understand that mistakes are part of growth. She believes challenges and setbacks are opportunities to learn, improve, and develop greater confidence. She encourages aspiring professionals to trust the process, maintain faith during difficult moments, and understand that growth often comes through perseverance.

At the same time, she emphasizes the seriousness and responsibility of surgical careers. Working in surgery means being part of life-changing and sometimes life-and-death situations, requiring focus, accountability, and professionalism. However, she also believes it is important to find joy within the profession, build relationships with colleagues, and maintain a positive outlook despite the challenges.

A major focus of LeAnn's work is increasing awareness of the surgical technology profession. She believes many people do not fully understand the important roles surgical technologists and first assistants play within healthcare teams. While television and movies often portray hospital environments through the perspective of nurses, LeAnn emphasizes that healthcare relies on many specialized professionals working together toward the same goal.

She hopes to inspire greater recognition of surgical technology as a rewarding and meaningful career path. By sharing knowledge about the profession, she wants future generations to understand the opportunities available within the field and appreciate the behind-the-scenes professionals who help make successful surgeries possible.

Service remains one of the strongest values guiding LeAnn's personal and professional life.

Beyond caring for patients and educating students, she gives back through her church's security and medical team, college ministry, and volunteer work with veterans programs. She believes her blessings come with a responsibility to serve others.

Compassion, integrity, discipline, and responsibility are also central to how LeAnn approaches every aspect of her life. Whether she is standing beside a surgeon in the operating room or guiding students in the classroom, she provides the same level of attention, care, and commitment.

Inspired by Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters," LeAnn views her career as an opportunity to honor her faith through service. Through surgical excellence, education, and mentorship, she continues to make a lasting impact on patients, students, and the healthcare profession as a whole.

Learn More about LeAnn Ploeger:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/leann-ploeger>

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