

Presentation of the 1st Annual Margaret Comerford Freda Award for Editorial Leadership in Nursing Publication

Presented by Peggy L Chinn on behalf of the INANE Award Committee*, August 2, 2012, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

It is my distinct honor to be here today to introduce the founding of this award, and its first recipient for whom it is named – Margaret Comerford Freda.

This award came about in the finest of INANE non-traditions. First, someone had an idea that would benefit the group. Second, they made it happen! The “someone” in this case is Shawn Kennedy, who is the Editor of the esteemed *American Journal of Nursing*. Shawn asked a number of us what we thought of the idea, and found enthusiastic support for the idea. She recently recounted to me her motivation for pursuing this award:

“It dawned on me that there were no awards for nurses who excelled or made significant contributions as an editor, or who “raised the bar” in editing nursing publications. And while INANE likes to think of itself as “not an organization”, it’s the only organization where nurses involved in publishing nursing work and scholarship gather as peers and promote best practices.”

Shawn gathered together a group of INANE members - Mickey Dougherty, Jan Fulton, Kathy Schoonover-Schoffner, Leslie Nicoll and me. We exchanged a number of emails, and had a couple of conference calls – and today we are sharing the outcome of our deliberations.

From the outset of our discussions, we were in agreement that the first recipient of this award should be Margaret Comerford Freda, and we also concurred that this award should be named in her honor. To be fair, we did step back a bit to consider if there were other options that we should consider, and while we put several ideas on the virtual table, in the end we did not waver from our early desire to establish this award in Margaret’s honor. But in stepping back, we also considered at length the foundation that we wanted to establish – the basis upon

which this award would be given in the years to come – characteristics we recognized in Margaret's achievements. We have provided on a handout a statement of the purpose, and the criteria upon which we base this award now, and in the future.

So now I will share a brief summary of Margaret Comerford Freda's specific achievements, and why we had no hesitation in presenting this award to her, and also naming this award in her honor. Margaret is Professor Emerita, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Women's Health, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Montefiore Medical Center. She has been the voice and presence of *MCN: The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing* since 1998 and has developed this journal as a vital professional resource. Its success today is a testimony to her efforts.

Margaret is well known in the world of MCN nursing for her leadership on behalf of mothers and children. In her editorial role her influence reaches nurses practicing in perinatal, midwifery, neonatal and pediatric specialties. She played a key role in developing the March of Dimes Foundation nursing program, and was recognized for her service with the "Save the Babies" award.

INANE has benefited from Margaret's search for excellence through her leadership in research on Editors' roles – research that addresses many issues related to the editorial community that had never before been addressed and that provides a vital source of information for all of us and those who follow us. We have the publications that came from this work listed in the "Resources" section of our INANE web site. She and Leslie Nicoll wrote and published the extremely valuable "The Editors Handbook: An Online Resource and CE Course" that is available on NursingCenter.com; we also maintain a link to this resource on our INANE web site.

Less visible, but very important to all of us as Editors, was Margaret's tireless and courageous work to assure that the ISI Web of Knowledge include, in their Journal Citation Reports, the number of nursing journals that our discipline deserves and demands. Margaret

described her efforts in *Nursing Outlook* a few years ago in a column she appropriately titled “Don Quixote, David and Me” (Freda, 2006). Armed with the support of many individual nursing journal editors, librarians who work with nurses seeking evidence upon which to base practice and to guide future research, facts about our discipline world-wide and the importance of nursing literature for health care, she courageously challenged the assumptions embedded in the early selection of only 33 nursing journals. She describes the challenge involved by recounting one of the meetings she engineered with the ISI personnel:

“ . . . when it became clear that a comprehensive understanding of the nature of nursing research was necessary for the ISI personnel, Dr. [Judith] Lewis and I seized the opportunity. We explained how nursing research is different from medical research, the genesis of NINR and what it has accomplished, the necessity of evidence-based practice for all practicing nurses, the nature of translational research, the scholarly work of visionary groups [in nursing], and why the compression of nursing knowledge into so few journals is detrimental to our profession.” (Freda, 2006).

As a result of this groundbreaking effort, today there are over 95 nursing journals included in the report, and the number continues to grow.

For those of us who know Margaret, there is still much more, beyond her professional accomplishments, to say in honoring her today. Her portrait we have before us today conveys much about her warmth and her engaging persona that wins over hearts and minds. Here are a few quotes from members of our self-assigned committee:

- Margaret is a “go to” person... she is knowledgeable and engaging. Tactful yet candid. (Jan Fulton)
- When I attended my first INANE in 2004 she reached out to me, was extremely friendly and encouraging. As a brand new editor and INANE attendee, her encouragement was valuable. I’m thinking that’s Margaret, an encourager. (Kathy S-S)

- She is generous - always helping other editors in any way that she can. She is a gracious and generous author willing to share sources and insights that will help others with their work. (Mickey)
- Margaret has been a significant force in pushing/pulling/promoting quality practices and she should be recognized by her peers. (Shawn)

And I add my own comments – Margaret Freda represents, for me, exactly the very best of what INANE stands for – a common concern for the excellence and well-being of nursing literature, an abiding conviction that nursing has a vital role in promoting health around the world, and a hefty helping of collegiality that surpasses the boundaries of corporate or national entities.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the support we have received from Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins in providing financial support for the award.

Without further ado, I hereby present the 2012 Margaret Comerford Freda Award for Editorial Leadership in Nursing Publication to Dr. Margaret Comerford Freda. We regret, as does Margaret, the fact that she could not be with us today to accept this award. Accepting the award on her behalf is Dr. Margaret Kearney, who has worked closely with Dr. Freda in their research on the editorial role.

[Reference:](#)

Freda MC. (2006). Don Quixote, David and Me. Nursing Outlook 54(1):58-59.

*2012 INANE Award Committee: Shawn Kennedy (Chair), Peggy Chinn, Mickey Dougherty, Jan Fulton, Leslie Nicoll, Kathy Schoonover-Schoffner