

AMIA President's Awards

The AMIA President's Award recognizes individuals who have devoted unusual personal effort to the development of the association and the field of medical informatics.

The recipients for 1996 are:

William R. Braithwaite, Head, Section on Medical Informatics, University of Colorado Medical School, leased to the US Department of Health and Human Services, for his leadership in public policy related to patient privacy and confidentiality, and providing a framework within the government by which we can build electronic patient records; and for his service as Chair of the Clinical Computing Working Group.

Don E. Detmer, Senior Vice-President, University of Virginia, for being a champion of the electronic patient record, serving as Chair of the Institute of Medicine Committee on Improving the Patient Record in Response to Increasing Functional Requirements and Technological Advances; for his dedicated work in public policy related to patient privacy and confidentiality; and for his service as Chair of the AMIA Public Policy Committee.

Harriet H. Werley, Distinguished Professor Emerita, School of Nursing, University of Wisconsin, for pioneering work in Nursing Informatics, introducing nursing information systems as a research priority, and nurturing the idea of a nursing minimum data set; and for service to AMIA.

Tributes to Harriet H. Werley on the Occasion of the First Annual Werley Awards Luncheon at the AMIA Fall Symposium, October 30, 1996

Judy Ozbolt, PhD, RN, FAAN

First, Harriet, thank you, for more reasons than I can enumerate.

I come from the University of Virginia, where we begin every occasion with a quotation from Thomas Jefferson. Here is my favorite, from a letter to William Roscoe on December 27, 1820. Mr. Jefferson was writing about the University, the founding of which he considered to be his crowning achievement.

"This institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it." These words exemplify your career. Many of us here today have followed truth down paths we would not have known existed, except that you, Harriet, were there before us, lighting the way.

Like Florence Nightingale, Harriet, you recognized the value of data in changing health policy and health care, for the ultimate benefit of the patient. You were the first designated nurse researcher at the Walter Reed Army Hospital. It was at your insistence, in 1962, that the American Nurses' Association included

in its list of priorities for nursing research studies of nursing information systems. You were perhaps the only nurse in the country who understood what you meant by that. Later, you were a co-founder of the journal *Research in Nursing and Health*.

Harriet, you were the first nurse to do a great many things, and you always made sure you were not the last. You were the first nurse to serve on the Health Care Technology Study Section of the former National Center for Health Services Research (now the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research). When your term was over, you passed the torch to Margaret Grier, and later you and Margaret nominated me, making me, in a way, your professional granddaughter. It was while serving on that study section that I got to know Jerry Cohen, who passed away earlier this year. Jerry put me to work on some service projects for SCAMC and eventually nominated me for the SCAMC Board of Directors. Thus the door that you opened for me has led to many other opportunities for professional growth. And you have done similar kindnesses for so many of us. For example, when our Working Group Chair, Patti Brennan, was a graduate student on a limited budget, you used to invite her to

share a hotel room at the SCAMC meetings, making it possible for her to afford to be here.

My colleagues will review some of your many other accomplishments and contributions to nursing informatics, Harriet, including your insights on information systems and your pursuit of the Nursing Minimum Data Set. What I want to do is to express my appreciation not only for the substance of your work but also for your untiring efforts in exhorting us, and helping us to pursue our own searches for truth. Sometimes you express frustration, Harriet, that your skeletal structure has not stood up so well as the rest of you. Please allow me to say that if you sometimes feel a little bent, it is because so many of us are standing on your shoulders.

Again, thank you.

Rita D. Zielstorff, RN, MS, FAAN

Dr. Harriet Werley is truly a pioneer in nursing informatics. In the earliest days of government-funded research in hospital information systems almost 30 years ago, Harriet served on study sections that reviewed proposals and recommended funding. As she reviewed the projects of early researchers such as Dr. Larry Weed, Dr. Homer Warner, Dr. Clem McDonald, and Dr. Octo Barnett, she began to ask why there were not nurses on their research teams, and why nurses were not coming up with proposals of their own. Far earlier than other nurses, Harriet recognized the power of computers to structure, store and facilitate analysis of nursing data. She believed that, armed with data, nursing would be in a much better position to improve practice, control costs, and advance the profession.

She began to survey nurses' work in informatics, and she convened the first national conference on the subject in 1977. At this meeting, nurses presented papers on nursing projects in data and information systems. Out of this meeting came the first book of original papers on nursing information systems published in the United States.

Harriet's belief and interest in the need for comparable, essential, core nursing data led to the national invitational Nursing Minimum Data Set Conference, held in May 1985 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Out of that meeting and its post-conference came the Nursing Minimum Data Set, which now serves as a guidepost in developing information systems that deal with nursing data.

Harriet has mentored dozens of nurses in the area of structured nursing data and the application of tech-

nology to accumulate data. She was the founder and first chairperson of the American Nurses Association's Council on Computer Applications in Nursing. Under her leadership, that group published four widely quoted summary documents on the use of computers in practice, in education, in administration and in research.

Harriet's contributions are so fundamental and far-reaching that it is hard to think of nursing informatics without thinking of her work. We are honored to celebrate that work today.

Virginia K. Saba, EdD, RN, FAAN

It is indeed an honor to pay tribute to Dr. Harriet Werley today. She had the vision and foresight to create and shape the field of nursing informatics. As we heard from Rita Zielstorff, Harriet pioneered this new nursing specialty for over thirty years.

As a colleague and friend of Harriet, it is only appropriate to describe my first encounter with her. Dr. Werley came to the MU office in Division of Nursing, PHS, in 1976 to discuss hosting a conference on the state-of-the-art in defining and using nursing information systems. She wanted knowledgeable nurses to share experiences and plan for future development of information systems.

Harriet was soliciting my assistance in finding experts involved in the development of management information systems for community health nurses. She wanted to discuss their work as well as others who should be invited to participate.

We instantly had a common bond regarding computer technology and nursing information systems. Harriet's goal was to promote this new field that she led until recently. Harriet has been involved in almost every event and milestone that advanced the field of nursing informatics. She introduced nursing informatics concepts in the nursing profession; and more specifically in: nursing practice, education, research, and administration. She solicited professional support from the American Nurses Association (ANA) and founded the ANA Council on Computer Applications in Nursing (CAIN). She kept the field in the forefront at all nursing conferences, helped it expand, and promoted its advance to its present state.

Harriet supported my involvement in the CAIN and other nursing informatics activities. Her contributions are an integral part of its history. I am proud to be present today, her day, to initiate the annual AMIA Harriet H. Werley nursing award.