**2019 IFNA Award for Excellence in Family Nursing**

**Nomination of Catherine (Kit) Chesla, PhD, RN**

It gives me great pleasure to nominate Catherine (Kit) Chesla for IFNA’s Excellence in Family Nursing Award. Kit is the personification of excellence in our field. Her accomplishments span her career, and are most marked in three areas: Research, Education, and Leadership.

**Research**

Dr. Chesla’s program of research has always been focused on family processes and relationships, usually in the face of caring for a family member with chronic illness. Her earliest efforts illuminated parental and family caregiving relationships in mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and Alzheimer’s disease. In the late 1980s, when these studies were conducted, this was pioneering work, illuminating challenges and bonds that had not yet been fully described. Over time, Dr. Chesla’s work came to be centered on families coping with Type 2 Diabetes, and she led several studies with Chinese American couples, developing and testing innovative interventions to assist families to cope and thrive when lifestyles, diet, and routines were severely disrupted by a parent’s or spouse’s chronic illness. A recurrent theme in Dr. Chesla’s research is the deliberate focus on understudied groups, particularly ethnic minorities who have seldom been the focus of either qualitative or intervention research. This focus continues in her current NIH funded study of an online support intervention for caregivers of persons with dementia in rural settings. She serves as the qualitative and family methods expert for this project. Dr. Chesla’s research has been widely disseminated through publications in high quality journals and by numerous invited keynotes, presentations, and workshops. Dr. Chesla is recognized as an expert in Interpretive Phenomenology, and has taught this method extensively. Her impact is global and she has been invited to lead research-focused presentations in Norway, Korea, Switzerland and other sites around the world.

**Education**

Besides her own exemplary career as a family scientist, Dr. Chesla has strengthened the field of Family Nursing through her education and mentorship of future generations of nurses and physicians. At the University of California at San Francisco, which has a graduate School of Nursing, Dr. Chesla has consistently taught family-related courses to both Master’s and PhD students in theory, research methods, communication processes, and clinical care. She receives excellent teaching evaluations and has been nominated or won multiple teaching-related awards. She has been nominated by both Master’s and PhD graduates to serve as Marshall at graduation. In addition to coursework, Dr. Chesla has provided direct mentorship to numerous PhD students, post-doctoral fellows and other faculty. She has won the Excellence in Teaching for Research Mentorship Award from colleagues at UCSF. Her educational efforts on behalf of family nursing have global and cross-disciplinary reach as she has been invited to present educational workshops internationally. She words with K Scholars (NIH funded early career mentored grants) from multiple health fields in a UCSF-wide initiative, and provides both group and individual mentorship to budding scholars in nursing, medicine and psychology.

**Leadership**

An important and consistent theme in Dr. Chesla’s career is leadership, much of it in Family Nursing. Currently serving as the Interim Department Chair for the Department of Family Health Care Nursing (for the second time in recent years), Dr. Chesla has also provided strong leadership to numerous academic bodies at the University of California. For example, she has recently served as Chair of the PhD Program Council, is a past Chair of the Budget and Academic Planning Committee, and has led several taskforces and work groups formed to respond to current issues or challenges at UCSF.

Critically, Dr. Chesla’s leadership efforts have had global professional impact, particularly her efforts with the International Family Nursing Association. While active in the International Family Nursing Conferences led for many years by the preeminent leader Dr. Janice Bell, Dr. Chesla envisioned a formal organization for Family Nurses that would assure the continuity of the conferences and serve the field between meetings. Dr. Chesla called together a group of Family Nursing leaders, and planted the seed that became the current IFNA. She wrote the group’s initial bylaws, which include the provision that the group is international and seeks to assure membership is affordable and accessible to nurses globally. She served on the first Board of Directors and was the group’s President from 2013-15. Importantly, as IFNA reaches its ten year anniversary, it continues to grow and associate with other Family Nursing organizations, including several new Chapters of IFNA that have formed or are in the process of organizing. The International Family Nursing Conference, now formally affiliated with IFNA, remains strong and is a worldwide gathering place for family scholars. The group has met in diverse sites around the globe and the legacy of Dr. Bell and Dr. Chesla continues to thrive.

Other professional leadership has included serving on the Editorial Board of the high impact Journal of Family Nursing. Dr. Chesla has performed numerous consultations with Family Nursing Scholars in locations from Canada to Hong Kong, providing clear leadership in skill development, research methods, and family nursing science.

**Conclusion**

Family Nursing is the thread that unites these three areas of high accomplishment in Dr. Chesla’s career: research, education and leadership. The cumulative impact of Dr. Chesla’s excellence in Family Nursing is evidenced by the multiple awards, research grants, publications, and requests for mentorship and speaking engagements that have characterized her career. Dr. Catherine Chesla is truly a family nursing luminary and I hope her visionary and life-changing work on behalf of families, students and colleagues will be recognized with the high honor of an Excellence in Family Nursing Award from the International Family Nursing Association.

**Nominated by:**

**Roberta Rehm, PhD, RN, FAAN**

**Professor, University of California, San Francisco**

**Department of Family Health Care Nursing**