December 1, 2018

Dear IFNA Awards Committee Members,

I would like to enthusiastically nominateMarcia Van Riper RN, PhD, FAAN for the **Excellence in Family Nursing Award.** **Dr. Marcia Leigh Van Riper** is a full professor in the University of North Carolina (UNC), Chapel Hill, School of Nursing and has a joint appointment in the Carolina Center for Genome Sciences. She served as Chair of the Family Health Division from 2007-2017.  She is a highly regarded colleague whose scholarship is greatly respected. Dr. Van Riper has a distinguished record of international scholarship and leadership related to the intersection of family life and genetic conditions.

Dr. Van Riper’s global, lifetime achievements in practice, research, and education regarding genomics and family nursing provide unparalleled support for her nomination for this award. Dr. Van Riper’s pioneering research has focused on the family experience of living with Down syndrome through addressing the implications of non-invasive prenatal testing in different cultural contexts. By taking an international perspective, her work has made important contributions to our understanding of the ways in which culturally grounded norms, beliefs, and expectations shape families’ experiences. The recent widespread availability of non-invasive prenatal testing has resulted in varying national initiatives and social policies, some of which present families with difficult decisions and challenges. Substantial evidence exists that health care professionals feel unprepared to support families in making informed reproductive decisions based on test results. Dr. Van Riper is providing health care professionals with the information they need to better support families.

Dr. Van Riper’s program of research and commitment to developing curricular content related to the ethical, legal, and social implications of advances in genomics are contributing to the evidence base for family-centered health care and leaving a remarkable legacy for family nursing. Since her first study of families with a child with Down syndrome in the late 1980s, she has focused her attention on family strengths and resilience in the context of chronic conditions and how systems can support family adaptation and family management. She published over 50 articles and chapters in a wide variety of journals as well as many invited and refereed presentations to interdisciplinary and international audiences.

Dr. Van Riper excels at being a cultural ambassador. Her first international trip was to Canada, to attend the first International Family Nursing Conference. Since then, she has traveled extensively internationally (Brazil, Canada, England, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Finland, Germany, Greece, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand). She makes a practice of seeking out and visiting families of individuals with Down syndrome and connecting with colleagues to promote the International Family Nursing Association (IFNA). She encourages families to share with her their experiences of having a child with Down syndrome to enrich her teaching and research. Families of individuals with Down syndrome hold her in high regard and are pleased that a leading researcher and professional in the field has taken the time to seek them out and to convey to others through her writing and talks the challenging journey they face. Dr. Van Riper was an investigator on a 5-year U01 interdisciplinary examining the Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications (ELSI) of applying a DNA sequencing technology to identify rare but clinically significant genetic variants in the general adult population (NC Clinical Genomic Evaluation by NextGen Exome Sequencing; 2012-2016). She also participated in a project examining evidence for screening for Lynch-associated mismatch repair gene mutation. Dr. Van Riper also recently published an article in the American Journal of Medical Genetics comparing family management in 571 children with chronic conditions and 539 children with Downs syndrome. Finally, she just received a research grant from the Dhillon Jordan Shah Innovation Fund to study family adaptation to three groups of families: families of children with Down syndrome, with and without congenital heart disease, and families of children with congenital heart disease and she plans to expand this study to be a multi-national study.

Dr. Van Riper’s scholarship informs both her teaching and mentoring. At UNC, Dr. Van Riper teaches a required undergraduate course on Family-Centered Genomic Health Care annually, a PhD elective entitled Families and Health Research, and an interdisciplinary graduate-level elective on Genomics and Society, which draws large numbers of students from many disciplines. In recognition of her mentoring of faculty she won the Faculty Mentoring Award for Junior Faculty – Women’s Leadership Council in 2018.

She has been honored by nursing and interdisciplinary organizations. Within the past 10 years, she has been named a Fulbright Specialist (2015) at the University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain; given a Founders Award for Outstanding Nursing Education in Genetics and a Founders Award for Outstanding Genetic Research Scholar by International Society of Nurses in Genetics; named a Visiting Professor at multiple universities (Glasgow Caledonian University School of Health and Life Sciences; the Escola Superior de Enfermagem do Porto, Porto, Portugal; University of São Paulo at Ribeirão Preto, College of Nursing Department; and, the National Defense Medical Center, Taipei, Taiwan); named a Fulbright Scholar at the University College Cork in Cork Ireland; inducted as a Fellow by the American Academy of Nursing; and received an award for distinguished contribution to family nursing at the 9th IFNC (Conference).

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I also want to stress her outstanding contributions to the IFNA and INFC. Serving as President during a formative time of the organization (2009-2013) her dedication and selflessness were pivotal to establishing a firm foundation for our organization. In addition, she has served on the Conference Planning Committee for the 12th and 13th International Family Nursing Conferences, initiating the popular, fund generating raffle. Dr. van Riper also is a member of the IFNA Foundation Board. As detailed above, she literally has traveled the world strengthening the reach and influence of IFNA.

In sum, Dr. Van Riper, serves as a cultural ambassador for family nursing, genomics, and the global influence of family nursing. Therefore, it would be fitting to acknowledge her many contributions to family nursing with this Award. For all the reasons noted above, Dr. Van Riper meets and in many ways exceeds the qualifications for the **Excellence in Family Nursing Award**. Her contributions to practice, education, and research regarding genomics and family nursing are considerable and make her a pioneering leader in the field. I would also like to add that Drs. Garcia-Vivar, Knafl, and Østergaard, and Knafl approved this letter and endorse this nomination!

Sincerely,

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| JDJanet A. Deatrick, PhD, FAAN (nominatorProfessor Emerita of NursingUniversity of Pennsylvania School of Nursing | Cristina Garcia-Vivar, PhD (Supporter)Professor, Depart of Nursing, University of Navarra, Spain |
| Kathleen A. Knafl, PhD, FAAN (Supporter)Frances Hill Fox Distinguished Professor University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA |

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| Birte Østergaard (Supporter) |
| Associate Professor  |
| Institute of Clinical Research University of Southern Denmark |
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