**Excellence in Family Nursing Award 2021**

**International Family Nursing Association**

**Nominee: Maureen Leahey, RN, PhD**

I am delighted and honored to be nominating my colleague and friend of some 40 years, Dr Maureen Leahey, for the ***Excellence in Family Nursing Award, 2021***. Maureen is an international nursing leader, consultant, author, educator, and clinician in the area of family nursing and family therapy. Dr. Leahey served as an adjunct professor in both the Faculties of Nursing and Medicine, University of Calgary for more than 25 years. The College and Association of Registered Nurses in Alberta recognized Maureen’s significant nursing contributions by bestowing her with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015. She is also a Fellow of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy where she has a long history of service and awards (refer to CV). In 2005, Dr. Leahey was honored by the International Family Nursing Conference and the Journal of Family Nursing, Sage Publications with the Distinguished Contribution to Family Nursing Award.

Dr. Leahey has distinguished herself by developing many new ideas for nursing assessment and intervention with families experiencing illness, especially two generalist clinical models. She helped coined the term, “Family Systems Nursing” to distinguish generalist from advanced practice with families. She is an expert clinician who provided models of live supervision for growing the practice skills of nurse clinicians and other health care professionals. Dr Leahey was one of the first family nursing clinicians to show the value of demonstrating her own clinical work in her teaching, workshops, and conference presentations.

One of my great professional joys was to collaborate with Maureen in the development of our two generalist practice models known as the *Calgary Family Assessment and Intervention Models* which we introduced in our book *Nurses and Families: A Guide to Family Assessment and Intervention* in 1984*.* The theoretical and clinical ideas and models in our book, which is nowin a seventh edition (2019), has been widely integrated into nursing curriculums. Specifically, the models have been adopted in some 26 countries and cited in some 250 journal articles and books. Our book has also been translated into eight languages including Japanese, French, Portuguese, Swedish, German, Icelandic, Spanish, and Korean with some 150,000 textbooks having been sold worldwide.

To illustrate how to apply family nursing skills in actual clinical practice, Maureen and I also wrote and produced the *“How to” Family Nursing DVD Series* which consisted of 8 educational videos. Each video demonstrated actual family interviews with either Maureen or me conducting the therapeutic conversations. These DVD’s have been distributed and utilized worldwide. It was always a pleasure to write and produce these educational DVD’s with Maureen as she brought a wealth of seasoned clinical practice and supervision of families suffering with serious physical and/or mental health problems. In her administrative roles within Alberta Health Services, Calgary, Canada, her in depth knowledge about caring practices with families experiencing illness was utilized by nurses and a variety of health care professionals (family physicians, social workers, psychologists, medical family therapists, etc.) who sought her knowledge and clinical supervision of how to include families in their clinical practice.

Dr Leahey has published five co-authored books, as well as eight book chapters and nineteen refereed articles. She has consistently presented at all the International Family Nursing Conferences since 1988 bringing forward her cutting edge evidence and practice based clinical knowledge. She has delivered her expertise at over 70 presentations at national and international conferences and workshops related to family nursing, family therapy, and family health.

In addition to Dr Leahey’s scholarly achievements, she also excelled in initiating and implementing mental health programs within Alberta Health Services, Calgary, Alberta where a focus on individuals, families, and larger systems was prioritized. It is to be emphasized that Dr Leahey’s scholarly achievements were not required in her administrative roles which makes them even more impressive. Her scholarly achievements are an indication of Dr Leahey always rising above expectations as she was keen to have the practice of caring for families be implemented within clinical settings with relatable, useful, and effective clinical models.

From 1996-2011, Dr. Leahey served as Manager of all Outpatient Mental Health Programs in the Calgary region of Alberta. The responsibilities in this position were daunting but Maureen shone with her incredible ability to manage multiple programs and staff. From 1985-2010, she co-founded and directed the Family Therapy Training Program, which was western Canada’s only accredited training program. In the early 1990’s, long before knowledge translation research in nursing was popular, she received research funding to conduct a ground-breaking study where family nursing was translated into the daily clinical practice of nurses on a busy medical-surgical unit; both family and nurse outcomes were evaluated.

Dr Leahey’s masterful ability to cross disciplinary boundaries related to family focused practice, while leading the delivery of mental health programs in Calgary, Canada, enabled her expertise to have a sustained positive impact for more than three decades. Hundreds of families in Alberta, Canada have benefited from her clinical mentorship, supervision, and knowledge about skilled practice to families experiencing illness. Over these years, Dr Leahey has shown an outstanding ability to create, disseminate, and teach about caring practices with families experiencing illness.

In her roles within the Alberta Health Region, she was successful at being able to engage with many different professions. Therefore, it was not surprising that every discipline wanted to claim her as their own (including family nursing, marriage and family therapy, and psychology) and also evidenced by receiving awards from family therapy associations. Now it is time for our International Family Nursing Association lay claim to this exceptional colleague and acknowledge her immense contributions and pioneering efforts for the advancement of family nursing knowledge and skills over many decades. We can readily do this by conferring her with an Excellence in Family Nursing Award 2021.

Lorraine M Wright, RN, PhD