



From Your ANA President

Funding the future of nursing

WHAT DO ANA MEMBERS Pamela Mitchell, Elaine Larson, Ann Rogers, and Dorothy

Brooten have in common? Early in their careers, each received a research grant from the American Nurses Foundation (ANF). And each has had a lasting impact on nursing. ANF was founded as the educational, scientific, and charitable arm of the ANA. Over the years, it has played a vital role in providing support for some of the major scientific studies of the profession.

When ANF was founded in 1955, nursing leaders had the foresight to recognize how important it would be to support nursing research. That turned out to be a wise decision. Now we can see the paths taken by the researchers funded by ANF, how their studies have shaped nursing practice, and the value of ANF for all nurses.

Let's examine just one aspect of ANF's work—the funding of these researchers and the trails blazed in nursing by four of these extraordinary leaders.

Pamela Mitchell, PhD, RN, FAAN, examined the effect of nursing activities on the intracranial pressure of intensive care unit (ICU) patients. Mitchell has a distinguished research career conducting numerous studies informing the care of critically ill neurologic patients. More recently, she has played an important role in influencing policy related to the quality of care for ICU patients. Mitchell is the new president of the American Academy of Nursing.

Elaine Larson, PhD, RN, FAAN, CIC, focused her original ANF research on the transmission of hand-carried gram-negative bacilli by hospital personnel to patients. Larson's research career focuses on preventing and controlling infectious disease, skin antisepsis, and healthcare-associated infections. Her research was an important contribution to the revision of the CDC's hand hygiene guidelines. She has recently expanded her research to include home hygiene and antimicrobial resistance.

Ann Rogers, PhD, RN, FAAN, began her research career with ANF to examine memory and attention problems in narcoleptic patients. She expanded her focus by examining fatigue related to hospital staff nurse work and its impact on errors and near errors. Her findings, reported in *Health Affairs*, contributed to the Institute of Medicine's recommendation that nurses work no more than 60 hours per week or 12 hours per day. Rogers's research provides strong evidence for the

improvement of staff nurses' working conditions.

Dorothy Brooten, PhD, RN, FAAN, received ANF funding to examine the effect of high caffeine intake on pregnancy outcomes. Her subsequent research focused on improving outcomes for women with high-risk pregnancies and preterm infants. Brooten demonstrated that very low-birth-weight infants could be discharged home safely under care directed by advanced practice nurses (APNs). The cost-effectiveness of this model has also been demonstrated for patients with heart failure, women with unplanned cesarean births, high-risk pregnancies and hysterectomies, and elderly patients with cardiac medical and surgical diagnoses. Brooten's work provides strong evidence for the role of the APN in improving patient outcomes.

These extraordinary leaders stand alongside more than 950 researchers who have made extraordinary contributions to our science, providing a foundation for our future practice. They have given back to us, mentored new researchers, and helped us improve our patient care. Where will the researchers we fund today be 5, 10, or 20 years from now? What paths will their research take? What trails will they blaze in nursing?

Let us think about our responsibilities and what we must do to ensure nursing's future—for all 2.9 million of us and for the 65,000 new nurses joining our ranks each year. The ANF is there for us and was created to help ensure our future. At this holiday season, let's think about how we can continue this legacy of research leadership.

During this time of year, we think of friends and families. Last year, I was deeply touched when the ANA board members generously gave to the ANF in my honor. Consider creating your own legacy by adding a gift for ANF—a gift that, when regifted, won't sit in a box but will create the future in the form of a grant to an emerging scholar. For details, please visit www.ANFonline.org.

Nursing has been good to us. Let us be good to nurses and nursing, and plant the seeds that will benefit tomorrow's nurses.

Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR
President
American Nurses Association