

Boston College Professor Marjory Gordon Named 'Living Legend' by American Academy of Nursing

Gordon served on connell school of nursing faculty for 23 years

CHESTNUT HILL, MA (12-8-09) – Boston College Connell School of Nursing Professor *Emerita* Marjory Gordon was named a "Living Legend" by the American Academy of Nursing at its annual meeting in Atlanta last month.

A faculty member in the Connell School for 23 years, Gordon is internationally renowned for her visionary development of the Eleven Functional Health Patterns (FHP), an assessment framework that has provided generations of nurses with a format for patient diagnosis. Her groundbreaking work in clinical reasoning and nursing language development has helped give nurses a voice in patient care outcomes and has led to the adoption of nursing language in the emerging area of electronic medical recordkeeping.



Marjory Gordon (Photo courtesy of Maria Müller-Staub)

Gordon has published four books, including the *Manual of Nursing Diagnosis*, which is in its 12th edition and has been translated into some 10 languages. Her books can be found in more than 40 countries in every inhabited continent. She has lectured to nurses and educators on nursing diagnosis and FHP in Japan, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Singapore, Australia, Brazil, and throughout Central America.

The American Academy of Nursing (AAN) serves the public and the nursing profession by advancing health policy and practice through the generation, synthesis and dissemination of nursing knowledge. Its 1500 members, called Fellows, are nursing's most accomplished leaders in education, management, practice and research.

Each year since 1994, the AAN has named select outstanding Fellows as "Living Legends," recognizing them for their extraordinary lifetime achievement.

"This is a tremendous honor," said Gordon, who has been a member of AAN since 1977. "I was so happy that my area of scholarship was being recognized."

Gordon was nominated for the honor by Kay Avant of the University of Texas and her CSON

colleagues Professor Sr. Callista Roy and Professor Dorothy Jones.

Sr. Roy, herself an AAN Living Legend, first met Gordon in 1973. She offered this testimonial of Gordon at the awards ceremony: "She began this work [of creating a common nursing language] when computers were just starting. And, now this is the basis for the nursing component of the electronic medical record. I think she's a role model for all us. She is constantly raising the standards and the clarity of nursing diagnosis so as to give nursing a voice and visibility in health care." She called Gordon a "perfect candidate" for the Living Legend award because her work "that started 40 years ago is even more relevant today. Nursing as a discipline is stronger in the U.S. and around the world because of her efforts."

In her letter of recommendation Jones called Gordon's work "timeless." Jones and Gordon were invited to Mexico many times in the 1980s when that country was beginning to implement the FHP assessment framework and nursing diagnosis in clinical practice and education. "At first, the challenges of this endeavor seemed overwhelming. But, with each visit to the school and community sites, faculty and clinical staff gradually began to integrate a nursing framework into their work. [Later that decade] Mexico officially inaugurated the first Mexican Nursing Diagnosis Association," wrote Jones. "Marge is a charismatic leader and a mentor."

Gordon earned bachelor of science and master of science degrees from Hunter College, City University of New York and a doctoral degree from Boston College. In 1982, she became the first president of NANDA, the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association.

Gordon is busy at work on her next book which is about clinical judgment. "It is critical that nurses are taught the thinking skills and cognitive reasoning that can help them translate their observations into clinical judgments. Knowledge in health care can change over the course of a few years, but cognitive abilities last for a lifetime."

The AAN Living Legend award is the most recent in a number of honors for Gordon. In 2008, Gordon received the Mentor's Award from NANDA-International. She also is a recipient of the Massachusetts Nurses Association Education Award; Japanese Society for Nursing Diagnosis' Distinguished Service Award, and the Massachusetts Association of Registered Nurses Living Legend Award, among other awards.

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