



2025 Episteme and Tribute Award Recipients' Biographies

EPISTEME AWARD

Lilian Nuwabaine, MScN, BScN

Educator | Seed Global Health at the School of Midwifery Makeni
Sierra Leone, Africa

Lilian Nuwabaine has dedicated her career to researching, innovating, and educating with an aim to providing the best care for mothers and children in Rwanda, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and her native Uganda. Over the course of her career, she has published more than 20 articles in high-impact scholarly journals, focusing on reproductive health, nutrition, and wellness in underserved communities.

Her signature initiative, The Nutrition and Wellness Hub, has supported thousands of individuals by delivering evidence-based nutrition education, assessments, and interventions in resource-limited settings. A trained midwife, Lilian has also dedicated herself to mentoring the next generation of nurses and midwives—serving as an accredited continuous professional development provider through Aga Khan University and leading training programs across Uganda. Through “Your Nurse and Midwife on Air,” she further advocates for elevating the visibility of nursing and midwifery via social media, partnerships, and policy engagement.

RESEARCH DISSERTATION AWARD

Michael Joseph S. Diño, PhD, MAN, RN, LPT, FAAN, FFNMRC SI, ANEF

Understanding the Impact of Humanoid Technology (HT)-Driven Health-Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA) Program Among Community-Dwelling Filipino Older Adults

Postdoctoral Researcher | University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida, USA
Director | Our Lady of Fatima University
Valenzuela City, Philippines

Dr. Michael Joseph Diño is a nurse leader, educator, informaticist, and scientist with two decades of nursing experience. He earned a PhD Degree in Nursing from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, USA. He serves on numerous research journal editorial, advisory, and review boards. His research areas encompass gero-technology, education, health informatics, and advanced technologies, including robotics, human-computer interaction, mixed reality, and artificial intelligence. He is the Past President's Director of Phi Gamma, Sigma's only virtual Chapter, the Director of the Research Development and Innovation Center at Our Lady of Fatima University, Philippines, and a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the School of Nursing, University of Central Florida, FL, USA. He is the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission's 2023 Outstanding Professional of the Year.

CAPSTONE INTERNATIONAL NURSING BOOK AWARD

Jayne Jennings Dunlap and Julee Briscoe Waldrop

Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice and Quality Improvement for Professional Nursing Practice: A Competency Based Approach
Cognella Academic Publishing (USA)

The research-to-practice gap remains locked at 15-17 years despite evidence-based practice (EBP) and quality improvement (QI) methods being used for decades. This book was written to provide nursing students and practicing nurses with needed guidance to integrate the paradigms of research, EBP and QI using an innovative framework, the Mountain Model. This model was developed by nurses for nurses. As the largest workforce in healthcare, nurses are well-positioned to impact this persistent problem widely.

HELEN HENRY EXCELLENCE IN INTERPROFESSIONAL CARE AWARD

Vascular Access Team

Care Medical Al Rawabi
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

To overcome the persistent challenge of unsuccessful intravenous access, the team at Care Medical Al Rawabi developed and implemented the Vascular Access Team to provide 24/7 support for IV insertions. An inter-professional collaboration and multidisciplinary

approach have been key to the team's success, reducing the infiltration rate from 4.8% to 0% and minimizing the failed insertion attempts from 2.5% down to 0.1%.

DANIEL J. PESUT SPIRIT OF RENEWAL AWARD

Jeanne Bryner, RN, BA, CEN

Retired Staff Nurse | Insight Hospital & Medical Center Trumbull
Newton Falls, Ohio, USA

Throughout her career, Jeanne has incorporated reflective writing and the arts to facilitate healing. She advocates for the healing power of language. Her most rewarding journeys have been workshops with children, cancer survivors, and elders in assisted living facilities.

Virginia K. Saba Nursing Informatics Leadership Award

Rebecca Schnall, PhD, MPH, RN-BC, FAAN, FACMI

Mary Dickey Lindsay Professor of Disease Prevention and
Health Promotion (Nursing)
Associate Dean of Faculty Development (Nursing)
Professor of Population and Family Health (Public Health)
Columbia University
New York, New York, USA

Dr. Schnall's research seeks to understand the health information needs of individuals to improve access to easy-to-use health-related information. Grounded in consumer health informatics, her work promotes health and disease prevention through tailored, evidence-based interventions.

AMY J. BERMAN GERIATRIC NURSING LEADERSHIP AWARD

Evelyn Duffy, DNP, AGPCNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

Florence Cellar Professor of Gerontological Nursing | Frances Payne Bolton School of
Nursing, Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Dr. Duffy directs the Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Program at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University. She provides primary care to underserved adults and older adults at University Hospitals Cleveland Otis Moss Junior Health Center. Dr. Duffy has played a pivotal role in advancing gerontological nursing education. She led the development of the Gerontological Nurse Practitioner program, engaging students in the Geriatric Interdisciplinary Team Training funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation. Her academic leadership emphasizes the importance of shared professional expertise to provide comprehensive care to older adults, advocating for collaborative approaches in healthcare.

CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

Jennifer Fellows, MBA

Director of Operations & Communications | University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

As a marketing and communications professional, Jennifer Fellows, director of operations and communications for the Recruitment and External Relations Department at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing, is passionate about sharing stories of amazing nurses and their accomplishments. Her work has highlighted research discoveries, clinical practice advancements, urban and rural healthcare initiatives, leadership roles, and numerous other areas during her 25 years at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. Ms. Fellows uses multiple platforms to create engaging and memorable stories that showcase the importance and impactful work of nurses.

LUCIE S. KELLY MENTOR AWARD

Oisaeng Hong, PhD, RN, FAAN, FAAOHN

Professor and Director | University of California, San Francisco
San Francisco, California, USA

Dr. Hong is an internationally recognized expert in occupational and environmental health nursing (OEHN), widely respected for her outstanding multidisciplinary intervention research aimed at preventing occupational diseases and injuries, promoting health, and reducing risks among underserved populations. The impact of her scholarship in OEHN and health disparities is evident through her active participation in scientific conferences,

policy development, and her longstanding commitment to research training and mentorship—particularly for underrepresented students and junior faculty.

DOROTHY FORD BUSCHMANN OUTSTANDING NEW MEMBER AWARD

Emma Bingham, MN, RN, CNN(c)

Staff RN | University Health Network

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Emma is a dedicated neuroscience nurse whose leadership, innovation, and commitment to excellence have made a significant impact in the care of patients with neurological disorders. She currently serves as a staff nurse on an inpatient stroke unit, an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Nursing, and a Clinical Facilitator for the Michener Institute's Critical Care program. She is a member of the Lambda Pi at-Large Chapter.

MELANIE C. DREHER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CHAPTER SUPPORT

Lisa G. Smith, PhD, RN, CNE

Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Care Professions | Grand Canyon University

Phoenix, Arizona, USA

Dr. Smith has been the College of Nursing and Health Care Professions Dean for over 8 years and has been leading the transformation and growth of the college and Sigma's Nu Upsilon Chapter since 2017. She has administrative oversight for over 25 nursing and healthcare programs with student enrollment of over 17,000. Before becoming dean, she taught nursing for 10 years and spent the majority of her clinical nursing experience in management and executive positions for almost 15 years. Dr. Smith is passionate about Sigma and the important connection of chapter membership to the profession of nursing and to the individual's professional growth.

AUDREY HEPBURN AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN

Christine Platt, PhD, DNP, FNP-C

Assistant Professor | Brigham Young University

Provo, Utah, USA

Dr. Christine Platt is a dedicated nurse leader, innovative researcher, and compassionate advocate whose work has transformed pediatric healthcare both nationally and globally. As the Director of the Family Compassion and Care Lab, she leads collaborative, cross-university research efforts focused on supporting families caring for children with chronic illness and complex medical needs. She mentors a team of students and partners with multiple institutions. Her leadership extends to clinical collaborations with Primary Children's Hospital in pediatric oncology symptom management and to governance work on healthcare transition for teens with chronic conditions. Her groundbreaking research on siblings as caregivers has brought new awareness to under-recognized family dynamics. Her international impact is equally profound—through her work in Guatemala, she delivered vital care and trained local midwives in neonatal resuscitation. She has presented her research globally, including at Sigma International Congresses and conferences across four continents.