

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are pleased to celebrate an individual whose dedication, innovation, and compassion have profoundly impacted the field of nursing and mental health. In the criteria for nomination for the Distinguished Alumni Award, it states that the individual should have a record of achievement in one or more of the following fields of nursing: Nursing practice, nursing service, nursing education, nursing research, or nursing teaching. Well, this year's nominee has ticked off every single one of those boxes. It is my distinct privilege to present the 2025 Distinguished Alumni Award to Dr. Maureen Neus Leahey, a proud graduate of the Class of 1970.

**Educational Background:**

Dr. Leahey's journey began with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Cornell University-New York Hospital School of Nursing in 1970. Maureen credits Cornell values and our education at Cornell as fundamental influences in her career. Her focus has always been on client/patient care, whether in direct nursing service, academic writing, or administration. "Stay close to the patient." Has always been her motto. Maureen furthered her education by obtaining a Master of Medical Science in Behavioral Medicine from the University of Calgary in 1978, followed by a PhD in Educational Psychology from the same institution in 1984. These academic achievements laid a robust foundation for her multifaceted career.

**Professional Contributions:**

In her extensive career, Dr. Leahey has excelled in various roles, including administration, research, teaching, clinical practice, and consultation. From 1985 to 2011, she managed several mental health outpatient programs for the Holy Cross Hospital, Calgary District Hospital Group, and Alberta Health Services. In these roles, she led over 35 interdisciplinary professionals, encompassing nursing, social work, and psychology, all dedicated to providing transformative therapy to adults facing diverse mental health challenges.

Dr. Leahey co-founded and led the Family Therapy Training Program, the sole post-degree program in Western Canada accredited by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Her responsibilities spanned teaching, supervision, and comprehensive program administration, reflecting her commitment to advancing family therapy education.

**Academic and Scholarly Achievements:**

As an Adjunct Associate Professor in both the Faculty of Nursing and the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Calgary, Dr. Leahey focused on integrating families into healthcare, emphasizing collaboration for positive patient outcomes. She co-authored "Nurses and Families: A Guide to Family Assessment and Intervention," now in its 8th edition, with over 175,000 copies sold in English and translations into eight languages. This seminal work is utilized in nursing curricula across 26 countries and has significantly influenced family nursing education globally. It was awarded the 1995 AJN Book of the Year Award.

Recognizing the need for practical educational tools, Dr. Leahey co-produced the "How To Family Nursing Series," comprising eight educational programs in DVD and streaming formats. These

resources are employed in family nursing education worldwide, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

#### **Private Practice and Community Engagement:**

Maintaining a private practice in couple and family therapy from 1984 to 2011, Dr. Leahey remained grounded in clinical practice, ensuring her academic and administrative endeavors were informed by real-world experience.

Her commitment to community service is evident through her involvement with various organizations, including the International Family Nursing Association and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. She has also contributed to numerous local boards and committees, advocating for marriage and family therapy.

#### **Honors and Awards:**

Dr. Leahey's contributions have been recognized with numerous accolades, including the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers from the Governor General of Canada in 2016, the Nursing Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award from the College & Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta in 2015, and the Excellence in Family Nursing Award from the International Family Nursing Association in 2021.

#### **Personal Reflections:**

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Dr. Leahey is cherished as a compassionate and kind individual. After graduation we went on our separate ways. But several years ago, thanks to the alumni newsletter, we discovered that life had brought us both to beautiful Nova Scotia, Canada, with our husbands for our retirement years. So, we reconnected after many years, and our friendship continues. Maureen is a very active member of her community, both academically and with her favourite Pugwash Communities in Bloom activities. She remains a sweet, dear friend, and I have such immense pride in her achievements.

#### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Maureen Neus Leahey exemplifies the ideals of our institution through her unwavering dedication to nursing, education, and community service. Her pioneering work in family nursing and mental health has left an indelible mark on the profession, benefiting countless individuals and families. It is with great honor that we present her with the 2025 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Leahey on this well-deserved recognition.