

Nebraska Nursing Hall of Fame



Madeleine Leininger

A “native daughter” of Nebraska, Madeleine Leininger was born in the agricultural town of Sutton. She left her rural community in the early 1950s to study at Creighton University where she received nursing education and completed graduate work in administration, curriculum development and teaching.

Leininger left Nebraska to pursue her Masters in Psych/Mental Health Nursing at Catholic University in Washington, DC. She envisioned a new field of nursing that would integrate the concept of care with the concepts of cultural diversity. This field would later become known as Transcultural Care Diversity and Universality.

In 1960, she traveled to the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea as a NLN Research Fellow to study the customs and culture of the native population. Subsequently, Leininger was the first nurse to earn a doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Washington in 1965. She later, (1970) published *Nursing and Anthropology: Two Worlds to Blend*, the first book to link nursing and anthropology.

As she continued to develop the nursing theory of Transcultural Care and Universality, she defined transcultural nursing as a field of study and practice, and coined the term “culturally congruent care”. Leininger developed the Sunrise Conceptual Model of Transcultural Care Diversity and Universality which is used globally as a visual construct of the theory and can be applied in practice, education, administration and research. In 1974, Leininger founded the Transcultural Nursing Society and in 1978 wrote the first nursing text: *Transcultural Nursing Concepts, Theories and Practice*. A later book, *Cultural Care Diversity and Universality: A Global Theory of Nursing* is used worldwide by nursing and other disciplines.

Leininger was a prime mover in launching the *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* and a pioneer in the concept of qualitative research in nursing. A strong advocate of the Care Theory, she wrote several books promoting “Care” as the essence of nursing and that nursing must be studied and practiced in relationship to specific cultures. The construct of “culturally congruent care” is used globally and is federally mandated for all US health facilities.

A “Living Legend of the American Academy of Nursing (AAN)” Madeleine Leininger was nominated to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her work. Now retired from academics and living in Omaha, she continues to be active in the Transcultural Nursing Society and the AAN. She writes mentors and consults for the globalization of transcultural practices and principles. As a “Living Legend” and a native daughter of Nebraska, the NNA is proud to induct Madeleine Leininger into the first Nebraska Nursing Hall of Fame.