

Nebraska Nursing Hall of Fame



Rosalee C. Yeaworth PhD, MSN

Rosalee has been a member of NNA ever since arriving in Nebraska 37 years ago, and for at least 25 of those 37 years, attended Convention and served as a delegate. It was Rosalee who initially proposed having the Nebraska Assembly of Nursing Deans and Directors when NNA was trying to do something about moving professional nursing education to the baccalaureate level. It was during her time as Dean that UNMC fought three different times to keep the Lincoln Division and added West Nebraska and Kearney as Divisions of the College of Nursing, and the doctoral program in nursing and the nurse practitioner program were added.

At the time Rosalee came, UNMC had the articulated AD/BSN program and 1/3 of the faculty did not have masters degrees. Within 5 years, that was overcome and she started the push for more doctorates. She proposed to the Regents the "Faculty Assistance for Doctoral Study Program," which amounted to providing one year at half salary for faculty enrolled in full time doctoral study. The Regents accepted it for the whole university. When enough Nurse Practitioners could not be recruited, especially doctorally prepared NPs, Rosalee went to the Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. William Berndt, to get permission to set up an NP certificate program for our own faculty. She enlisted Faye Whitney at the University of Wyoming to assist in designing the curriculum and serving as the evaluation consultant. Fifteen faculty resigned tenure or from tenure track to complete that program, and with faculty who had degrees from elsewhere, the nurse practitioner programs were off the ground.

Rosalee was nominated received an "Award for Outstanding Achievement toward the Advancement of Women in Higher Education" from the Nebraska State Committee of the American Council on Education. She also received the JG Elliott Award "for promoting nursing education to better serve the health-care needs of all Nebraskans." After arriving in Nebraska (in 1981) she was inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing and spent six years on the Board of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Without her guidance and vision, the advanced practice nursing in Nebraska would have been significantly delayed due to lack of educational opportunities in the state to become nurse practitioners.

Rosalee contributed significantly to the advancement of nursing nationally through her work with the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing and Health, active participation in AACN (board membership, membership committee chair, Secretary), NLN (accreditation visitor), MNRS (board member), Sigma Theta Tau, and secretary of the editorial board for the Journal of Professional Nursing.

Rosalee has been an enduring voice for the care of the elderly, first with her work to create and expand master's level education in Geriatric nursing at the University of Cincinnati, and later at UNMC. She has written and received numerous grants to support gerontologic nursing programs and individual student opportunities. For nearly two decades she has been an active voice for the scope of nursing practice in assisted living facilities, pushing for public policy and legislation to allow professional nurses to function to the full extent of their education in this setting, thus providing a higher level of care to seniors all across the state. This legislation is coming forward next year to the Unicameral, the work of a strong collaborative of nurses, administrators, facilities, the AARP, and legislators. Rosalee has been with this group, and other groups, as the voice of nursing and the NNA. She is a commissioned Faith Community Nurse/Parish Nurse.