

Leader to Honor

Marian K. Shaughnessy, DNP, RN



Nora E. Warshawsky, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, and
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Marian K. Shaughnessy was a nationally known nurse leader and philanthropist. She was the founder of the Marian K. Shaughnessy Nurse Leadership Academy at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University where she served as an adjunct professor. Dr. Shaughnessy held leadership board positions in a wide number of Cleveland non-profits and was a member of the board of University Hospitals Medical Center of Cleveland and served as vice-chair of the Quality and Professional Committee and a member of the Clinical Council, University Hospital Medical Group. She also served on the Advisory Committee for Notre Dame School of Nursing in South Euclid, OH. She helped launch the national Nurses on Boards Coalition for the American Nurses Foundation in order to present a nursing perspective to America's boardrooms. Her nursing career included leadership positions and consulting in perioperative care delivery at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and Lakewood Hospital, and Critical Care at Cleveland Metropolitan General Hospital. She was a member of the American Nurses Association, Association of Operating Room Nurses, Association of Nurse Executives and Sigma Theta Tau. This interview was conducted in September, 2019. She will be missed.





NW: How did you become interested in leadership?

MKS: I was always eager to accept a challenge and assume leadership roles in organizations. My leadership experiences began early in my career. While an undergraduate student at Indiana University School of Nursing, I served as president of the local student nurses organization.

Throughout my career, I always wanted to experience different things and challenge myself by taking on additional responsibilities. Although direct clinical care is what most people think of when they speak about the nursing profession, I always believed there was something more. I considered joining the Air Force but was not interested in making a 4-year commitment, so I became a travelling nurse working in hospitals that were in dire need of greater support. The challenges varied, and I had to figure out how to handle many difficult clinical and leadership situations. Travel nursing taught me to seize the opportunities to lead.

When my dad became ill, my mother asked me to return home. I was a critical care nurse, so I started working as a clinical instructor in critical care. It was during that time that I decided to return to school for an MSN in medical surgical nursing at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University. My first major leadership role was as an associate director of the operating room at the Cleveland Clinic. It

was the most impactful role of my career. It required assuming the executive role because it involved managing a large budget and over 400 staff members, including the physicians. This dynamic leadership opportunity required tremendous advocacy skills and political expertise. It was during that experience when I realized nurses at all levels, from the bedside to the boardroom, need more education in business skills, including finance and organizational management.

Nurses should not continue to be part of a patriarchal system, that is, we should do everything we can to change the physician–nurse hierarchy. We should not be the least educated profession. We must elevate our education and status, and contribute as well-educated and well-prepared team members. Now more than ever, nurses must seize the opportunity to be leaders in health care and beyond. Nurse leaders will be the agents of change responsible for providing others with a path for positive changes in the health care field and in society.

NW: How have your board experiences added to your leadership skills?

MKS: Over the years, I have volunteered for many organizations to help make an impact by serving to supporting the organizations mission. For example, a number of years ago, Notre Dame College in Ohio needed a nursing program. My husband Michael at



the time headed the governance committee at NDC, asked if I would consider joining the effort to create a school of nursing. It was a major undertaking, but with the strong support of a dedicated team, we made the dream a reality. Notre Dame school's motto is to serve the underserved, thus the students graduate with a strong foundation in ethics. That experience prepared me to serve and lead as a member of the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing Advisory Board.

All board experience, at any level, enhances your leadership skills. I started my experiences with board leadership by participating on smaller, local boards such as the Garden Club of America. As a member of that board, friendships were developed, and my board colleagues became a great resource for helping to fund meaningful projects and initiatives, and taking ideas for programs to key foundations for financial support. I learned to capitalize on my personal interests, such as riding horses and golfing, and joined the equestrian and golf club board of directors. I learned from each of these experiences to be goal oriented and resourceful.

Eight years ago, I joined the board of directors for the University Hospitals Medical Center of Cleveland. At the same time, I was working on my doctor of nurse practice (DNP) degree at the Frances Payne Bolton (FPB) School of Nursing. FPB School of Nursing's focus has always been to develop highly educated nurse leaders. FPB launched the nation's first doctorate in nursing practice, which is now the national standard as the highest degree for nurses in clinical practice. When I made my decision to earn an

advanced degree, I knew it had to be done at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing.

Several individuals were surprised to learn that I was seeking a doctorate that was not required for employment. However, I was *the* nurse on the hospital board, and the DNP gave me credibility, extra confidence, and a feeling of empowerment. Soon after, I joined the American Nurses Foundation Board. I created the questions for the survey to identify nurses' experience with board membership. We knew nurses were in positions to make change and lead but often not empowered or prepared to make changes. The survey was created to serve as a tool for understanding how prepared nurses were to serve on boards. My vision for an academy to prepare nurse leaders was born from my own experience as a nurse, which has spanned bedside to boardroom.

As I have worked on various national committees, I realize that the time has come for nurses to take a leadership role in redesigning and reforming health care to make it more patient-centered, cost-effective, accessible, and quality-driven. Today's health care landscape is continually evolving, and nurses are on the frontline. They see opportunities for innovation, increased efficiencies, and better outcomes.

Nurses are meeting the day-to-day challenges of improving patient care. Now is the time to empower them, especially at the executive level, to make those health care changes system-wide. They need to be given the best education and equipped with the best

leadership skills to *be the voice* for the patients and families they represent. When their united voice is heard in the board rooms and in the legislative halls, nurses can revolutionize our health care system.

Throughout my work, my main focus was to create a leadership track for preparation of chief nurse executives. I believe this preparation should include all of the necessary leadership skills to prepare the nurse executive for the role: executive presence, politics, policy. We will be launching a new initiative through the Marian K. Shaughnessy Nurse Leadership Academy in 2020. We have designed both a postdoctoral program and a track within the DNP program specifically designed to prepare system chief nurse executives.

I also have been working with the Ohio Action Coalition to change the legislation in our state for APRNs [advanced practice registered nurses] to be able to practice at the top of their license. All of this work requires nurse leaders who can articulate the need and navigate the political system to get the legislation and regulations amended. It is challenging! Because if we don't, who will? We are trying to uplift the profession so that we can increase wellness and safety, and decrease costs for patients. We need our nurse leaders at all levels to drive these changes.

As nurses, we know that the changes needed to improve health care are already well defined. The path is clear, but not enough progress has been made. Costs and inefficiencies continue to rise. Nurses are an untapped resource, and nurses at all levels can address these problems and make real change. My vision for the Marian K. Shaughnessy Nurse Leadership Academy at Case Western Reserve University is to meet the challenge for health care change. I want others to join the momentum. Together, we have a wonderful opportunity to advance health care delivery and improve patient outcomes.

NW: Tell us why you founded a nursing leadership academy at Case Western Reserve University?

MKS: I created the Marian K. Shaughnessy Nurse Leadership Academy to develop and support a new generation of leaders in nursing. The aim of the academy is to prepare nurse leaders to be involved in the design, planning, management, and delivery of care, and in the development and implementation of health policy. My vision is to transform health care for all populations and to improve the nation's health through leadership development of nurses at all levels.

Leadership skills include innovative thinking, inner strength, and organization skills. The Marian K. Shaughnessy Nurse Leadership Academy is key to

helping nurse leaders develop the necessary skills to understand the language and how to work smarter. My main goal was to advance nursing practice in leadership and partner with large organizations.

Our programs and goals are both national and global. For example, we know that 80% of the world's health care is delivered by nurses. As a patient, I can tell the difference. I don't understand why our leaders have not made changes. The purpose of the Academy is to ask these tough questions. For example, if we set a goal for everyone to have a BSN, why don't we have a deadline? Other professions would make the decision and then implement the change. Other professions are increasing their educational requirements. We need to increase our education standards because the roles are complex and demand higher educational levels.

The Marian K. Shaughnessy Nurse Leadership Academy has reinforced the nursing leadership focus within the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing. Through the Academy, we have engaged national and global nurse leaders, both as advisory board members and key adjunct faculty for our leadership offerings at both the continuing education and academic program levels.

One of the key programs we are launching in 2020 is a partnership with the American Nurses Association, the American Organization for Nursing Leadership, and the Healthcare Financial Management Association to prepare senior nurse leaders for executive positions. This partnership is unique and designed to add value to existing programs offered by each of the organizations.

Now more than ever, nurses must seize the opportunity to be leaders in health care and beyond.

NW: What advice would you give to nurse leaders about philanthropy?

MKS: We all have to understand what philanthropy is. Philanthropy is about relationships. Patients and families need to recognize the role of nurses in their care. Often they do not, and the funds are given to physicians rather than to the nurses who were responsible for the 24-hour care, for vigilance of their health status, and monitoring of their holistic care. It behooves nurse leaders to be cognizant of potential donors. We need to teach staff nurses that we have grateful patients and they can say wonderful things about the care. We should include how to seek donations in the education of nurse leaders. We need to recognize that we cannot get anything done without money. We also need funding to gain respect of senior hospital leaders. Individuals want to commit to a good cause. So it is important for nurse leaders to develop relationships with potential donors and understand philanthropy.



Marian K. Shaughnessy Eulogy

By Joyce J. Fitzpatrick, PhD, MBA, RN, FAAN

Elizabeth Brooks Ford Professor of Nursing,
Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing

Director, Marian K. Shaughnessy Nurse Leadership Academy

I first met Marian in the 1980s when she was a graduate student in the master's program at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University. I was her dean.

But our missions merged at a fateful dinner in 2011 when Marian and I talked at an annual Thanksgiving event hosted by the School of Nursing. Marian had joined the Board of University Hospitals Medical Center, and was interested in pursuing a doctorate.

As a board member of a medically dominated health care facility, she knew a doctorate would open doors and break down barriers for her as a trustee.

I convinced her to take 1 course in our doctoral program in nursing.

Marian joined my leadership class in January 2012 following that fateful dinner...and she fell in love with learning about the vast leadership knowledge in nursing.

As many of you who are former students of mine know, the classic final assignment at the end of my leadership class is to write a letter to me, dated 1 year after the class ends, articulating how you have grown as a leader in the profession, and how you will be different as a leader in nursing.

For when you finish the doctorate, you will be part of the 1% of nurses with doctorates, destined and compelled to lead.

Marian's letter was visionary ...

She described that 90% of leadership is based on relationships. And she charted the course for a Leadership Academy that would become the premier training facility for preparing leaders in nursing, and empowering all nurses as leaders in care delivery, from the bedside to the boardroom. She believed that "now more than ever, nurses must seize the opportunity to not just be facilitators of health care but leaders in their own right...they will be the agents of change responsible for providing others with a lighted path for positive change..."

Marian believed in health promotion, for herself, her friends and colleagues, and the community. She wanted us all to have access to quality health care. She fought relentlessly for expanding the role of advanced practice nurses in delivering much needed primary health care in rural and underserved areas.

Marian and Michael Shaughnessy created the Marian K. Shaughnessy Nurse Leadership Academy to fulfill Marian's dream.

In a very short time, through Marian's vision and relentless generation of important projects to instill leadership into everything that nurses learn and do, we have made great progress. We have launched key national initiatives, and we have a vision that the Shaughnessy Leadership Academy will go global. Marian was always the inspiration.

We will continue to teach nurses to embrace Marian's vision. Her dream will live on through the Shaughnessy Leadership Academy.

Final message: As nurses and nurse leaders, we have the same end game. We want better health care for all citizens. We just need to pull together a large, diverse team to change practice and make a meaningful impact.

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