

Judith Dempster In Memoriam



Dr. Dempster was the first Executive Director of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) and a charter Fellow of AANP.

Dr. Dempster, a Vietnam War Veteran where she served as an Army nurse reaching the rank of Captain, will be interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii with military honors during a private family ceremony in March 2017. Oahu held a special place in Dr. Dempster's heart and her final resting place will be only a short distance from where she taught at the University of Hawaii. Dr. Dempster received her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from Arizona State University and her doctorate in nursing science from the University of San Diego. She practiced clinically as a family nurse practitioner. Dr. Dempster was a pioneer in her field, becoming one of the first nurse practitioners licensed in the state of Arizona in the early 1970s. She was an advocate of NP-delivered health care for more than 40 years. Dr. Dempster developed and ran health centers and graduate level NP programs around the country (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Missouri) and educated many NPs currently in practice. She was the first executive director of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Foundation from 1996 until her retirement in 2010. The Dempster Practice Behaviors Scale (DPBS), a research instrument she developed over 25 years ago, has been translated into several languages and is still being used by graduate students and practicing clinicians both nationally and internationally. The DPBS will continue to be available for use, administered by her family. Dr. Dempster's many commendable efforts contributed to improvements and advances in nurse practitioner practice and quality of care. Her professional awards, publications, and accolades are too numerous to mention. Although Dr. Dempster was extremely honored to serve the nursing world, her greatest accomplishments were her roles as daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, friend, and mentor. When she retired professionally in 2010, Dr. Dempster began her most cherished job of all, that of full-time granny-nanny to her beloved granddaughter.

Abstract

This was an early interview of the charter fellows conducted by Judith Lynch. In the interview Dr Dempster discusses the fellowship as a place where expert practitioners join in a threefold mission. It is the opportunity for the fellows to debate and discuss healthcare policy and reform and level the playing field. It provides for credibility in recognizing nurse practitioner experts in practice, policy and education and it provides the opportunity for experienced nurse practitioner leader to mentor new nurse practitioners to assume leadership roles.

Keywords

Advanced practice nurses, nurse practitioners, AANP, FAANP, leadership

Transcript

Judith Dempster

AANP Oral History Project

Celebration of our Charter Fellows

Judith S. Dempster, DNSc, FNP, FAANP

Dr. Judith Dempster considers herself to be one of the many faces of AANP leadership during its formative years of development. As an active AANP member, Dr. Dempster was Region 9 Director on the AANP Board from 1989-1991; the first two-year term president of AANP from 1992-1994; the first Executive Director/CEO of AANP from 1996 until her retirement in 2009; and, senior Adviser and the first Executive Director of the AANP Foundation until February 2010. She actively worked with and guided the development, implementation, and growth of multiple AANP strategic initiatives including international activities, the AANP Certification Program, the corporate partner council, the Foundation, and the Fellows Program. Prominent positions in AANP and the Foundation led to her representation on many boards, steering committees, and special initiatives with other organizations, corporate partners, and agencies.



Dr. Dempster, in addition to her Academy achievements, was a DHHS Primary Care Fellow, past Chair of the National Alliance of Nurse Practitioners and Steering Committee, and member of the NIH/CDC National Diabetes Education Program. Further achievements include extensive experience as a family nurse practitioner delivering community-based primary care in culturally and socio-economically diverse rural and urban settings; planning, developing, directing, and teaching in several NP programs including the University of Hawaii; and, consultation in clinical and educational program development nationally and internationally.

Dr. Dempster's research focused on autonomous practice behaviors of nurse practitioners. Her research instrument, the Dempster Practice Behaviors Scale (DPBS), is still used today and has been translated into several languages for international use.

The following interview took place at her home in Phoenix, Arizona, where she is happily retired and busy supervising the construction of a swimming pool.

JSL: Congratulations on your retirement. Doing the background work about your achievements was overwhelming. How tired are you?

JSD: Surprisingly, not at all. I am thoroughly enjoying my new life. Wait until you interview Loretta Ford!

JSL: That will be my honor. How did you feel about your inclusion into the charter class of AANP Fellows?

JSD: I was extremely honored and saw it as a step forward for the Academy. I felt that it had the potential to provide a platform of "movers and shakers" that would help to clarify the emerging nurse practitioner (NP) role. I hoped that it would be a forum to recognize nurse practitioner achievements and I was excited to be part of a program that would develop the mentoring of new NPs.

JSL: What were your initial hopes for the Fellowship?

JSD: I believe that the Fellowship has evolved and developed in those ways envisioned by the Charter members. By that, I mean that the group process has recognized that mentoring new Fellows will develop new NP leaders. Also, the Fellowship has assumed an active role in the rapidly developing conversation and debate on health policy and health reform. It has also helped to "level" the playing field, as there is now more communication and cooperation among NP organizations. Finally, it is viewed as prestigious among nursing leaders which gives it increasing credibility.

JSL: What focus should the Fellowship take for the future?

JSD: The NP role, started in the „60s as primarily clinical and academic, has evolved and advanced in the health care arena to a place where NPs are in a perfect position to assume an important place in the delivery of primary care. There are still barriers as physicians continue to have a strong hold on practice. Although change is slow in coming, there have been recent advances in favor of future NP roles at all levels of government and the health care reform movement. I hope that the Fellowship will continue to offer a stronger mentoring program to help others achieve these leadership roles within the nursing community and will contain a group of individuals who will speak out strongly for NP issues. Finally, I believe that a “think-tank” approach has the potential to achieve more thinking “out-of-the-box” in the future.

JSL: Tell me about your new life and the swimming pool.

JSD: I am having a wonderful time in retirement. I spend as much time as possible with my 7 year-old grand- daughter, Rileigh, and am building the swimming pool so that she and the rest of my family are going to have a place to come and relax. I still enjoy traveling, believe it or not, and have upcoming trips planned to Hawaii, Florida, North Carolina, and California. My new interest is identification of family ancestry. I had interviewed my ma- ternal grandmother 30 years ago and recently found the audio tape. She emigrated from Hungary as a child in 1905. Using that as a starting point, I am attempting to reconstruct the family. It is fascinating work.

JSL: This has been a wonderful trip through time today. Thank you so much for spending the time with me. We have known one another since those early Board of Director days in Jan Towers” kitchen and it pleases me to see you making the transition from work to retirement so effortlessly.

JSD: I always loved my career and I equally love and appreciate this time in my life.