



Margaret (Peg) A. Fitzgerald, DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP, FAAN, is the founder, president, and principal lecturer with Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc. (FHEA), a national provider of NP Board Certification Reviews and Practice Preparation and Continuing Education. Fitzgerald Associates (FHEA). Most nurse practitioners are familiar with Dr. Fitzgerald as she offers NP certification review courses with a 99% pass rate and provides numerous presentations at most national NP conferences. Her book, *Nurse Practitioner Certification Examination and Practice Preparation*, is a very popular book for NP students and received the American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Award for advanced practice nursing. She is a much sought after speaker nationally and internationally. She continues to practice as an FNP at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

#### Interview abstract:

Dr. Fitzgerald is a well-known among nurse practitioners. As an entrepreneur, she founded the Fitzgerald Health Education Associates (FHEA). Initially, she focused on nurse practitioner certification review courses and books, but now presents on a wide variety of topics, particularly pharmacotherapeutics. Over 140,000 nurse practitioners have taken one of her NP certification review courses. She is a Charter member of the Fellows of American Association of Nurse Practitioners. She views the role of Fellows as mentors for new nurse practitioners and leaders promoting the nurse practitioner profession. She has numerous articles, chapters, books. She travels extensively presenting on nurse practitioner related topics nationally and internationally. She has taught pharmacotherapeutics at several universities is an adjunct professor at Case Western University. She continues to work as an FNP at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center for over 35 years.

#### Short Biography:

Margaret A. Fitzgerald, DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP is the founder, president and principal lecturer with Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc. (FHEA), an international provider of nurse practitioner certification preparation and continuing education for healthcare providers. More than 140,000 nurse practitioners have used the Fitzgerald review course to successfully prepare for certification.

An internationally recognized presenter, Dr. Fitzgerald has provided thousands of programs for numerous professional organizations, universities, national and state healthcare associations on a



wide variety of topics including clinical pharmacology, assessment, laboratory diagnosis, healthcare and nurse practitioner practice. For more than 20 years she has provided graduate-level pharmacology courses for nurse practitioner students at several of universities including Simmons College (Boston, MA), Husson College (Bangor, ME), University of Massachusetts Worcester, Pennsylvania State University, La Salle University (Philadelphia, PA), and Samford University (Birmingham, AL). In addition, she is a family nurse practitioner at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Lawrence, MA, and adjunct faculty for the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center Family Practice Residency Program. She holds a Doctor of Nursing Practice from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, where she received the Alumni Association Award for Clinical Excellence.

Dr. Fitzgerald is the recipient of the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties Lifetime Achievement Award, given in recognition of vision and accomplishments in successfully developing and promoting the nurse practitioner role, the American College of Nurse Practitioners Sharp Cutting Edge Award and the Outstanding Nurse Award for Clinical Practice by the Merrimack Valley Area Health Education Council. She is also a charter fellow in the Fellows of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. Dr. Fitzgerald is a Professional Member of the National Speakers Association and is the first nurse practitioner to earn the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation in recognition of excellence and integrity as a speaker.

Dr. Fitzgerald is an editorial board member for the Nurse Practitioner Journal, Medscape Nurses, Lexi-Comp, Inc., American Nurse Today, and Prescribers Letter. She is widely published with more than 100 articles, book chapters, monographs, and audio and video programs to her credit. Her book, Nurse Practitioner Certification Examination and Practice Preparation received the American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Award for Advanced Practice Nursing and has been published in English and Korean. She has provided consultation to nursing organizations in the United States, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom. Dr. Fitzgerald is an active member of numerous professional organizations at national and local levels.

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Margaret “Peg” Fitzgerald

Interview

AANP Oral History Project



Margaret (Peg) A. Fitzgerald, DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP, FAAN, Interview by Judith S. Lynch  
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Margaret (Peg) A. Fitzgerald, DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP, FAAN, is the founder, president, and principle lecturer with Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc., national provider of NP Board Certification Reviews and Practice Preparation and Continuing Education. Fitzgerald Associates (FHEA) has grown tremendously over the past 12 years and now employs 24 people and has 22 speakers. She has assisted thousands of entry level NPs to successfully make the transition into an advanced practice role. At the end of 2012, 66 thousand NPs will have completed the certification course. She has also provided continuing education programs in 47 states, 10 countries, and 4 continents. Dr. Fitzgerald has written four books and many articles. Her review book was named an American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year for clinical practice.

In 2007, Dr. Fitzgerald completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at Case Western Reserve University. Sponsored by Drs. Loretta Ford and Sheila Davis, she was recently inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN). She also passed the national examination of the American Board for Comprehensive Care, a certification for NPs who hold the DNP degree. Dr. Fitzgerald was a consultant for Minute Clinics, a national retail health organization. She currently is the sole NP serving on the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee of the Neighborhood Health Plan, a large HMO. Dr. Fitzgerald has held several academic positions at both undergraduate and graduate nursing programs. She provides her FHEA Pharmacology course to six universities through courseware that she and her faculty have developed. In addition, she remains in clinical practice at the Greater Lawrence (MA) Family



Health Center where she was recognized in October 2011 as their first clinician to practice at that site for 25 years. She also continues to precept NP students and recently precepted a young woman whose fiancé's grandmother had precepted Peg!

The following interview took place at her condo near the North End of Boston.

JSL: Congratulations, Peg, on your achievements. You have literally started thousands of NPs on the road to successful practice.

MF: It gives me great pride to see how far our profession has come in the past 40 plus years and I am happy to have been a part of this growth.

JSL: How did you feel when you heard that you were included in the Charter class of the FAANP?

MF: I felt that it was an overwhelming honor to be voted a member of the best and brightest of the NP profession at the very inception of the Fellowship. I think that I was recognized for my work with students transitioning into practice and for my speaking at AANP and other conferences, beginning in the mid 1980s. Until that time, the majority of speakers had been MDs and I was not only able to give presentations, but to bring with me other NP professionals who were able to present the NP perspective on clinical issues.

JSL: What has the Fellowship meant to you personally and professionally?

MF: I feel that this Fellowship marked a turning point in the profession as we matured enough to reflect on our leaders and give ourselves legitimacy. We should remember that we are still a young profession and we have truly come a long way. The Fellowship allows leaders to be recognized but also provides a mechanism through which young NPs may gain mentors and establish networks. I often use my professional initials as a strategy to inform those outside the health professions about NPs and their value to the health care system.

JSL: What focus would you like to see the Fellowship take in the future?

MF: I think that the mentoring program is terrific and would like to see it more widely disseminated. I co- mentored an NP with Dr. Judith Berg and found the entire process delightful and helpful to all involved. I would also like to see the development of white papers on health care services that are distributed at the



highest levels of the health care bureaucracy to increase NP influence as we progress through health care reform. We need to elbow our way to the table to influence future health care decisions. I also hope that the Fellowship will continue to recognize clinical practice along with academics and research as an important criterion for inclusion.

JSL: How do you find time for a personal life with work that takes you all over the world?

MF: My husband, Marc Comstock (CEO of FHEA), and I sold our family home a few years ago and purchased a condo in Boston. This makes it easier to access the airport for frequent travel. We also purchased a home on Cape Cod that has become the family gathering place. This is where I enjoy my 7 grandchildren (ages 4 to 13), and their parents as well. I absolutely love to cook! I am a cook, not a chef, but my goat cheese and yogurt are quite wonderful. I make family a priority as I find time with them to be a true respite from my travels and work. We have long been the family gathering place for Thanksgiving with 20 plus people in attendance. Since we have moved to Cape Cod, the day now includes a dip into the Atlantic Ocean!

JSL: Peg, it has been a pleasure to talk with you today. You have made a great contribution to the past, pre- sent, and future of our profession.