Looking Back and Looking Forward

After 13 years as Editor of the *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* (JGN), I have decided to retire and am writing my final editorial. I assumed the editorship in 1998 after the retirement of JGN founder and long-time (23 years!) Editor, Dr. Edna Stilwell. As a member of the editorial board and a frequent contributor to JGN (having published 22 articles in the journal between 1983 and 1998), I continually pestered Managing Editor Donna Carpenter about new ideas I had for JGN. Perhaps I just wore her down, and Donna and the SLACK staff decided it was time for me to “put my money where my mouth was.” Whatever the reason, I was invited to serve as Editor, and with some trepidation, I accepted.

Shortly thereafter, Donna was replaced by Melissa Long (now Daddona). Missy and I worked together for 9 years—an effective and enjoyable partnership that has continued with the current Executive Editor, Karen Stanwood, despite my love of space-hogging special issues, ongoing struggles to reduce the backlog and time to publication, and my penchant for revision versus rejection of manuscripts—all of which are headaches for any publisher.

I also want to reflect a bit more about those “new ideas” for JGN that I mentioned above. In my first editorial, I outlined my hopes and vision for the journal and proposed new content areas and columns—some of which have endured (e.g., Geropharmacology, Public Policy) and others which have not (e.g., Historical Aspects of Gerontological Nursing, a point-counterpoint forum on controversial topics). Some, such as Interdisciplinary Issues and Global Aging, are timely yet today, although they were not sustained as columns but rather as areas of interest for regular articles. Another change that was introduced at the beginning of my tenure as Editor (and which seems a bit unbelievable now) was to provide feedback and rationale for rejection to authors whose manuscripts were not accepted for publication.

Throughout my tenure, I have been committed to helping move the field of gerontological nursing forward. An important early aspect of this commitment was to develop and support novice authors, so in the beginning, I was heavily involved with all submissions and frequently worked with new authors through numerous revisions to see their manuscript to publication. As the number and quality of submissions grew, this approach was no longer sustainable, and I came to rely on an outstanding and expanded cadre of reviewers and assistant editors. Another significant undertaking in advancing the field was to publish more theoretically grounded, evidence-based articles in JGN, while continuing to honor the interests and needs of our largely practice-based readership. That is why, to this day, even the most sophisticated scholarly article must include a section on clinical implications. I could go on and on recounting the many changes I have seen in JGN during the past 13 years, but that would be self-indulgent and boring, so I will simply say that I am honored to have served as Editor, proud of what the Journal has become, and confident that under Dr. Donna Fick’s leadership as my successor, JGN will rise to new heights of excellence.

Most important, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of those who have supported me and have really made JGN what it is today: the SLACK Incorporated and Wyanoke Group family (and outstanding editorial staff) for their ongoing support; my friends and colleagues who served as assistant editors, with special acknowledgement to Kay Geguzis, whose expertise as editorial coordinator helped keep us in line and on time; the dedicated members of JGN’s editorial advisory board and review panel (including members of the emeriti board), whose guidance and thoughtful and timely reviews have sustained high standards of quality content and unbiased reviews; and of course, JGN’s many contributors, whose articles created a tradition of excellence in gerontological nursing publication that will continue to grow under Dr. Fick’s leadership.

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