Laurie M. Gunter, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor emeritus of nursing and human development at The Pennsylvania State University (PSU) and one of the early pioneers in gerontological nursing, died peacefully, surrounded by her loving family on June 15, 2015, in Seattle, Washington. A nationally respected researcher and educator, Dr. Gunter was a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing, an elected member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, a former member of the *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* editorial board, and a stalwart champion of older adults.

Dr. Gunter is widely credited with developing the curriculum for the delivery of expert care to older adults; she and Carmen Estes wrote the classic (and first) text on the topic, *Education for Gerontic Nursing* (Gunter & Estes, 1979). Dr. Gunter was also among the first to argue for professional specialization in gerontological nursing; it was during the early 1970s that she led the American Nurses Association (ANA) certification process in that area. It is hard to imagine a time when gerontological nursing was so marginalized as to be virtually invisible within the profession. Graduate schools were often closed to African American individuals. In typical fashion, she was undeterred by these discriminatory practices. Rather, she took full advantage of opportunities that became available to her. One such opportunity was pivotal in the formation of her thinking and the subsequent development of gerontological nursing. The University of Chicago accepted her into its prestigious doctoral program in human development on a Rockefeller Fellowship, and it was here that she was introduced to the eminent psychologist Bernice Neugarten’s ground-breaking work on adult development and aging. Dr. Neugarten’s influence can be seen in the many papers authored by Dr. Gunter where she advocates for interdisciplinary collaboration to advance the science of gerontological nursing and the education of those who use this knowledge in practice. Dr. Gunter’s ideas are as visionary and relevant today as they were in the 1970s.

Over the span of her career, Dr. Gunter held faculty positions at Indiana University, University of California Los Angeles, Meharry Medical College, and the University of Washington before joining the faculty at PSU. She spent 16 years at PSU prior to her retirement in 1987. A long-time friend, Margot Allen (personal communication, July 1, 2015), summed up Dr. Gunter’s life and spirit in these very apropos words: “…a source of inspiration, joy, and wisdom...a great woman, full of ‘guts’ and humility who forged her way through uncharted territories everywhere she went. No bullet-proof vest for her…no excuses, just hard work.”

Those who knew Dr. Gunter would say “amen” to that!

**REFERENCE**


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