

Remembering Doris Schwartz



1917-1999

Doris Schwartz's contributions to the literature of nursing were immense and include landmark research, curricular innovations, and a strong philosophical framework for community health and her pioneering work in gerontological nursing. Her writings reflected a pragmatic and visionary approach to practice problems of genuine concern to nurses and reflected the needs of her patients.

Following graduation from New York University, Division of Nursing, Doris started her career as a staff nurse with the Visiting Nurse Association of Brooklyn in the Red Hook tenement district. At the start of World War II, she joined the Army Nurse Corps, serving in the US and aboard a hospital ship in the Pacific. Released from her military nursing duties, Doris returned to her nursing education and continued her public health nursing work in Brooklyn. She excelled at forging relationships with people in the community who could bring patients to her for help.

She then started a long and distinguished career as a faculty member at Cornell University-New York Hospital School of Nursing and Public Health Nursing Consultant to the Cornell Medical College. On one project, she served on a Navajo Reservation and taught public health nursing. For the rest of her life she continued to receive holiday cards from the children she had cared for there. While at Cornell, she started one of the earliest Geriatric Nurse Practitioner programs, influencing the careers and contributions of her students and faculty colleagues.

Doris was a member of the ANA's first Committee on Research, and the first gerontological nurse to receive funding from the NIH. Her gerontology study of 1961 was one of the first research projects done by a nurse on the effects of aging. Her study resulted in the publication of many widely cited articles and a book, *The Elderly Ambulatory Patient: Nursing and Psychosocial Needs* (1964).

Doris authored or co-authored six books and more than 50 articles and book chapters. But perhaps her most treasured writing is in her notes, interviews, addresses, and diaries, part of the Center for the Study of the History of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, as well as in her book, *My 50 Years in Nursing: Give Us to Go Blithely* (New York: Springer Publishing Co., 1995).

Following a stroke in 1980, Doris retired from Cornell and went to live in the Foulkeways residential community in PA, where she worked with other residents and ran a program for residents with Alzheimer's Disease. She continued to write and consult and became a Senior Fellow with the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, researching the overuse of restraints on older adults in hospitals and nursing homes, documented in *Geriatric Nursing*. Calling on her colleagues, Neville Strumpf and Lois Evans, to "do something," she was the motivation behind groundbreaking research, policy, and legislation in restraint use on older adults.

In 1997, Doris Schwartz was recognized as a Living Legend by the Academy of Nursing.

The legacy of her body of work in community health and gerontological nursing and her extraordinary contributions to the patients she served and to the profession she loved is celebrated in the GSA/Hartford Institute Doris Schwartz Gerontological Nursing Research Award.