

## Plant a tree



Barbara Jones Warren

### ANA's 2016 Hildegard Peplau Award recipient discusses the importance of giving back to her profession.

**“YEARS AGO,** someone planted a tree that provides shade for us today,” said Barbara Jones Warren, PhD, RN, PMHCNS-BC, FNAP, FAAN, when asked about her commitment to mentorship and leadership in the field of psychiatric nursing. Phrased another way, Warren acknowledges that she stands on the shoulders of others in the nursing profession and wants to provide that same foundation for those newer to the field. She credits her parents for encouraging her to give back to society as a whole.

Giving of her time and expertise is a large part of Warren's role as a professor of clinical nursing at The Ohio State University and director of its psychiatric mental health nursing across the lifespan specialty track program. “What's most rewarding about being the director of a program like this one,” said Jones, “is bringing students in, mentoring them, and helping move them along in their careers.” She also manages her own private practice with Central Ohio Behavioral Medicine.

#### What achievement makes you most proud?

I'm very proud of receiving the award named for Dr. Hildegard Peplau. She's the person who planted that tree for me years ago. I met her when I was just starting my doctoral program, and she helped me narrow the focus for my research. She kept in contact with me until I graduated and after. Connecting guidance from her with the progression of my career is wonderful.

#### How do you approach leadership roles?

I believe in shared decision making. It's the cornerstone of how I teach students and provide care to patients as well as the manner in which I approach my research. I want to work towards a goal that's compatible with everyone's concerns at every level. In the classroom, this belief is grounded in the thought that I

should be a mentor as well as an academic teacher of students, which helps them think about their goals beyond taking my course. Similarly, I can't deliver effective care to patients unless I get them on board, participating in their treatment. Shared decision making is effective for both of us.

This approach also helps me understand the cultural nuances of the individuals and organizations that inform my research, which is focused on providing care to vulnerable and diverse populations. I engage in participatory research by soliciting input from the community and getting everybody on board with my goals. If you don't do this with students, patients, and community members, people will walk away from you thinking this course, care plan, or research project doesn't apply to them.



#### You were president of American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) from 2001 to 2002. What was your leadership experience like?

This was one of the best experiences of my professional career. It helped me understand the scope and reach of a professional organization at both the state and national levels. If nurses want to serve on boards, they should start by identifying opportunities locally and then at the state level.

They need to understand that they might have to put aside their personal feelings to further the mission of that organization. Board service is not about your goals. My goal as president of APNA was to be a mentor and collaborator, while advancing the organization's mission, vision, and values.

#### Teaching courses, conducting research, serving on boards—all of this takes a lot of energy. How do you stay healthy?

No matter where I am, I dedicate 45 minutes at the beginning of each day to doing a combination of yoga, tai chi, cardio, weight lifting, and meditation. I have a room in my home dedicated for this purpose. This practice is integral to feeling my best and getting my day started in a positive way. As nurses, we often become therapeutic instruments for our patients. You have to be healthy to do that. ★

Interview by Apryl Motley, CAE, professional writer.