News

Former Dean
Mary Champagne’s Legacy Has Shaped DUSON

Mary T. Champagne, PhD, RN, FAAN, Laurel Chadwick Distinguished Professor, served as dean of the Duke University School of Nursing (DUSON) from 1991 to 2004. Under her leadership, DUSON created a number of innovative graduate programs and expanded its interdisciplinary research activities.

“Mary’s legacy is her leadership and mentoring of many generations of nurse leaders in education, practice and research and the nursing profession is better for it,” said Marion E. Broome, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean and Ruby Wilson Professor of Nursing, Duke University School of Nursing, vice chancellor for Nursing Affairs, Duke University and associate vice president for Academic Affairs for Nursing, Duke University Health System. “I have appreciated her support of me since my first day here at Duke so very much.”

It was also during Dr. Champagne’s tenure as dean that she implemented programs to improve health care in rural North Carolina through the education of family nurse practitioners for medically underserved areas, dramatically expanded the School’s Master of Science in Nursing Program, reinstated and revamped the School’s Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program and worked with faculty to develop new research projects and a plan for a PhD in Nursing Program.

“Long before I knew ‘Dean C’ as my colleague at Duke, I knew her as the dean of my alma mater. Mary Champagne will go down in history as the dean who breathed life back into my school. Her “can-do” attitude, so characteristic of Duke itself, lifted us with possibilities and turned them into realities. She is my hero,” said former School of Nursing dean Catherine L. Gilliss, BSN’71, PhD, RN, FAAN, Helene Fuld Health Trust Professor of Nursing.

More recently, Champagne’s work has focused on improving health in low income seniors living in subsidized housing in Durham, North Carolina. In addition, she has focused her attention on quality and safety and has chaired the Durham Regional Hospital Trustee’s Committee on Patient Safety and Clinical Quality and serves on the Duke University Health System Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Committee. She also collaborates with clinical nurse specialists in Duke University Hospital on research studies addressing wound and ostomy care and quality of life. Additional research has focused on the prevention of acute confusion in hospitalized elderly patients. She was also the clinical nursing research specialist on the Disseminating Nursing Research Project, funded initially by the National Center for Nursing Research and then by the Division of Nursing.

Champagne has extensive experience in research, and her funded work has focused on acute confusion in elderly patients and using research to improve the practice of nursing. She has co-authored six books and more than 60 research articles.

After receiving her BSN from San Jose State College, Champagne volunteered to serve in the Peace Corps and traveled to Afghanistan, where she taught, co-directed and later directed the Lashkar Gah School of Nursing. Following her return to the United States, Champagne earned her MSN and PhD from The University of Texas at Austin. She has taught at the College of Nursing at the University of Nebraska and then at the School of Nursing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she became the chair of the Department of Adult and Geriatric Health.

In addition to her role at DUSON, she has a secondary appointment as professor in the Department of Community and Family Medicine, Duke University School of Medicine, and is also a senior fellow of the Duke Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development.

We honor the contributions of Dean Mary T. Champagne.