



2018 NHCGNE Leadership Conference*

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What motivated you to become a gerontological nurse educator?

I loved working with older adults since I was in High School. After I graduated from my BSN program, I quickly realized that there was much more to learn about nursing and older adults. I was fortunate to start my nursing career at Rush University Medical Center when Dr. Luther Christman was the Dean of the College of Nursing. He encouraged nurses to continue their education and stressed that nurses had a responsibility to educate others. In graduate school, I worked with faculty members that were passionate about the care of older adults. I joined the Rush faculty after graduation teaching gerontology and medical and psychiatric nursing. Teaching students about the unique needs of older adults and sharing the enjoyment of getting to know older adults and their life experiences was very rewarding. Seeing the need for all nurses to become competent in the care of older adults motivated me to share my knowledge and love for older adults with others.

Favorite experience as a gerontological nurse expert educator?

Seeing students attitudes change as they worked with and learned about older adults is the best experience as an educator. The best experience is when a student says, "I never thought I would like working with older adults, but I really enjoyed it and want to work them when I graduate." Also having students acknowledge that caring for older adults is different from younger adults and that there is a lot to learn in this area is very rewarding. It means they understand the special needs of older adults and that gerontology is a specialized area of expertise

Who is a key person who supported you in becoming a gerontological nurse educator?

I had two key persons that supported and reinforced my learning and decision to become a gerontological educator. Valerie Matthiesen and Lynn Sivertsen were faculty members in my graduate program and later colleagues at Rush University. They encouraged me to join the Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA), where I meet many kindred spirits in gerontology. .



Joanne M. Miller
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Everyone in GAPNA was devoted to improving the care of older adults and educating nurses and students about gerontology

About Joanne

Dr. Joanne Miller is an Associate Professor at Rush University, College of Nursing in Chicago in the Adult Health and Gerontological Nursing Department. She is a Distinguished Hartford Educator in Gerontological Nursing and a Fellow in the Institute of Medicine Chicago. Her PhD in Nursing Science was from the University of Illinois at Chicago and her Master's degree was from Rush University. She is a Geriatric Nurse Practitioner at a Chicago Senior Center and coordinated the interdisciplinary Wellness Program at five senior centers for over 10 years. Dr. Miller had a four-year Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to provide interprofessional education to Rush University students. Dr. Miller also had an earlier HRSA grant to increase gerontological course content and to increase the number of advanced practice nurses in gerontology. She is currently the co-director for the Interprofessional Patient-Centered Teams course, educating onsite in-coming students to all four Rush University Colleges about collaborative practice. This course has 700 students from 17 professions working together in 127 interprofessional teams over two terms. Dr. Miller is also active in the Geontolgical Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA) and is Vice-chair of the GAPNA Foundation. Research interests are interprofessional education, health promotion, and fall prevention with older adults in the community.