



# navigating the changing tides

46<sup>th</sup> annual ACNL conference

February. 4-7, 2024 Monterey Convention Center

## 2023 Recognition Awards

The ACNL is at the forefront of nurse leadership in California, shaping the future of healthcare. Comprising diverse and highly-educated members, ACNL promotes active participation to drive healthcare innovation. These passionate professionals are dedicated to nursing excellence and improving the health of our communities.

Each year, ACNL recognizes the outstanding contributions of nurse leaders in various areas, including healthcare delivery, leadership, fostering healthy work environments, and advancing education and research in nursing.

This year's award winners are remarkable leaders who are serving our profession with distinction. ACNL recognizes them as a subset of California's exceptional nurse leaders, applauding their efforts to enhance healthcare statewide. Through sharing these achievements, ACNL aims to inspire further creativity, innovation, and excellence in all healthcare settings.

## 2023 Scholarship Program

In pursuit of our mission to cultivate nurse leaders and encourage lifelong learning, ACNL sponsors several scholarships. These include academic scholarships for nurse leaders engaged in research or pursuing graduate degrees; leadership scholarships for concentrated healthcare studies; research scholarships for nursing practice advancements; and the Nurses Float Scholarship for outstanding RNs pursuing nursing degrees.

This year's scholarship program is offered through generous contributions from Bare Root, Inc., Catalyst Systems, LLC, and ACNL's members through the Circles of Giving program.

## Thank You to our Scholarship Sponsors!

A special thanks to the companies and individuals who support ACNL's commitment to lifelong learning through contributions to our organization's philanthropic program:

**Bare Root, Inc.**

**Catalyst Systems, LLC**

And thank you to our members who support ACNL scholarships through donations to the Circles of Giving! In addition to funding scholarships, your generous support generates critical funds to further ACNL's work and actualize our vision of positioning nurse leaders to create and influence the future of health care.

# EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Awarded to a nurse leader who has made a significant contribution to nursing leadership.

Susan is an exemplary nurse leader who has made significant impacts in nursing locally and internationally. She has driven professional governance at her facility by elevating staff involvement and working to revise the current shared decision-making model into a new and improved professional governance model.

Susan is a steadfast supporter of formal mentoring programs, implementing MentorLead and other programs so that there are now nine active mentor programs at her facility. Susan herself has been a mentor to nurse leaders at home and abroad.

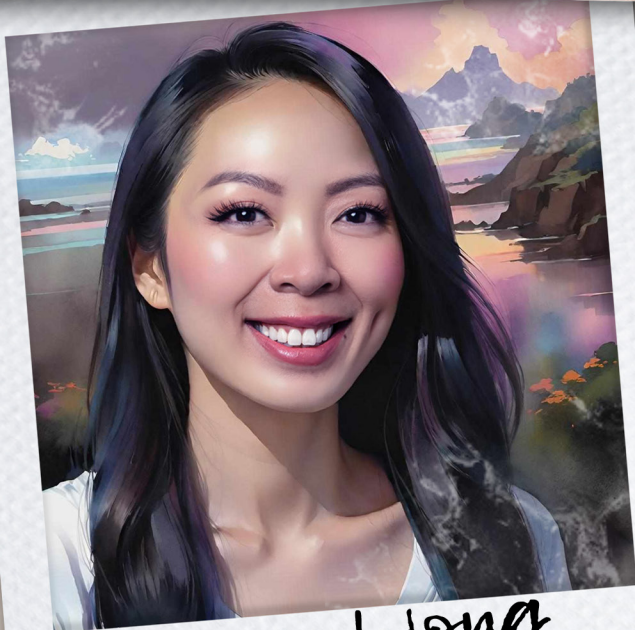
She co-led her facility's COVID response team and collaborated with medical staff to ensure continuity of care during a record-breaking number of staff sick calls. She also initiated the Nursing Coalition for Equity, Diversity and Social Justice in June 2020, serving as its co-chair for the first two years and contributing to the development of the charter, roles, and responsibilities.



# OUTSTANDING EMERGING NURSE LEADER



Awarded to a nurse leader in a formal leadership role for less than two years who has made a significant contribution to nursing leadership.



Valerie Wong  
MSN, RN, ONC, NPD-BC

Valerie's outstanding commitment to nursing leadership over the past 18 months has been truly exceptional. Her journey reflects dedication and innovation, evident in her role as Magnet Program Manager alongside her responsibilities as the Orthopedic Program Coordinator, showcasing effective management of multiple high-level tasks. As the Director of Shared Governance, Valerie revitalized the program, garnering over 50 nurses from diverse areas, reinstating faith among the staff. Her passion for nursing is evident in fostering professional growth and collaboration, resulting in the successful launch of the revised Daisy Nurse Recognition Program. Valerie's self-reflective approach, commitment to personal growth, and involvement in the Association of California Nurse Leaders highlight her as an emerging leader.

The following awards are presented to recognize, document and communicate outstanding accomplishments in specific areas of nursing.

2023 EXCELLENCE AWARDS



## EXCELLENCE IN NURSING RESEARCH

**Linda Y. Kim**  
PhD, MSN, RN, PHN, CPHQ

Linda's contributions to nursing research have significantly improved patient outcomes and cost-effective care. Linda collaborated with the NIH-funded Cedars Sinai EMBARC Research Study, and her own focus on nurse well-being and integrative health showcase her commitment to the healthcare workforce. Additionally, she implemented an evidence-driven practice model, elevating the quality of care. Her commitment to mentoring nurses, especially in leadership programs, has empowered individuals to contribute to nursing research. Linda's outstanding achievements, dedication to evidence-based practice, and mentorship make her a prime candidate for the Excellence in Nursing Research Award.

## EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

**Jennifer Astasio**  
MSN, RN, CPXP, Caritas Coach®, Reiki Master Teacher

Jennifer shows a commitment to improving nursing practice and enhancing outcomes. Her innovative programs have improved staff competency and evidence-based techniques in Labor and Delivery. Jennifer is also a key member of a research study team investigating the impact of reiki training on nurse wellness. Jennifer's has streamlined processes, delivering integrative practices to staff and reducing barriers for nurses. Her dedication to mentoring new staff, integrating holistic practices, and implementing retention strategies have dramatically reduced staff turnover. Her contributions to nursing practice make her an ideal candidate for the Excellence in Clinical Practice Award.

## EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

**Margo B. Minissian**  
PhD, ACNP, NEA-BC, FAHA

Margo is a trailblazer in women's heart health. Leading the Minissian Research Lab, she focuses on improving outcomes for postpartum women at risk for cardiovascular disease. With over 14 mentees and innovative projects, including a Shared Leadership Council, Margo is committed to nursing excellence. Recognized with awards like Outstanding Advocate of the Year and the ACC Distinguished Associate Award, Margo is an influential figure in cardiovascular nursing, paving the way for future leaders. Her programmatic expertise enhances nurse satisfaction, retention, and professional development, making her a stellar nurse leader deserving of the highest recognition.

2023 EXCELLENCE AWARDS



# EXCELLENCE AS A GROUP

Awarded to a group that has demonstrated exceptional leadership and teamwork, and a commitment to ongoing professional development and quality improvement.



# ACNL Los Angeles Coastal Chapter

The ACNL LA Coastal Chapter excelled in fostering nursing leadership over the past year. Their forward-thinking approach included establishing a succession plan with chair and vice-chair positions, showcasing a commitment to leadership development.

The chapter achieved a remarkable 90% member retention rate, with a 20% increase in membership. Noteworthy social events, each at max capacity, reflected their dedication to community engagement. The introduction of weekly recognition spotlights highlighted their celebration of members' unique contributions.

The chapter organized dynamic events addressing critical nursing leadership issues, featuring speakers on DEI, leadership self-care, nursing development, and innovation. An innovative move was the creation of the inaugural board position of chair of Diversity and Inclusion. The chapter actively participated in various organizations, solidifying their commitment to nursing leadership and mentorship. In summary, the ACNL LA Coastal Chapter embodies excellence in leadership succession, professional growth, diversity and inclusion, and active involvement—making it a beacon for the future of nursing leadership.

## EXCELLENCE IN RECRUITMENT/ RETENTION/OUTREACH

Trarina has been instrumental in addressing nurse burnout and driving long-term improvements in clinical practice. Notably, she significantly increased nurse retention rates from 85% to an impressive 95% through a shared governance model. Her commitment to mentorship is evident in a transformative DNP project that promoted continuous learning. Trarina's advocacy extends to national platforms, participating annually in the American Nurses Association's efforts. Her exceptional qualities in recruitment, retention, and outreach have strengthened clinical practice and laid the foundation for transformative change. Her visionary leadership and innovative strategies make her a deserving candidate for recognition, as her impact transcends routine tasks, influencing both the nursing profession and patient care. Trarina's legacy extends beyond the present, shaping a brighter future for healthcare.



*Trarina Jerome Harris*  
DNP, RN, NE-BC, CPHQ, PHN



# CONTRIBUTIONS AS A HUMANITARIAN

Awarded to an ACNL member who has made significant contributions to the advancement of humanitarian efforts through research, service, and/or education.

Leah's dedication to fighting indifference, intolerance, and injustice, coupled with her impactful contributions in promoting health equity and supporting individuals and systems, positions her as an exemplary candidate for recognition. As an advocate for legislative change and active participant in community outreach, Leah makes a profound impact on patients, providers, and communities, committing to improved outcomes for diverse populations. By engaging with underserved communities, she bridges care disparities, offering essential medical services to those most in need and empowering individuals to take charge of their health. In her role as a leader in the mentorship program and active participant in hospital-wide groups, Leah plays a pivotal role in developing future healthcare leaders and addressing systemic disparities, embodying the spirit of ACNL's contributions as a Humanitarian award.



Leah Bailey



# FRIEND OF NURSING

Awarded to an individual or organization demonstrating significant contributions and support for the nursing profession



Elidia V. Tafoya

Elidia stands out as an exceptional advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the nursing community, leading impactful initiatives and securing funding for crucial equity projects while nurturing an inclusive culture. Notably, she played a key role in securing and awarding nurses funding for groundbreaking DEI projects through research grants, resulting in 14 innovative initiatives receiving vital seed funding and driving health equity within her organization. Beyond financial support, Elidia was instrumental in launching a design sprint workshop that amplified belonging among diverse nurses, creating an environment where all voices are heard. By valuing diversity, she spearheaded a cultural shift felt throughout the organization, leaving ripple effects that touch countless nurses and patients.

# FRIEND OF ACNL

Awarded to an individual who has demonstrated significant contributions and support for the Association of California Nurse Leaders

Pat has been a part of the ACNL team for over 20 years. During this time, she has worked closely with the Program Coordinator and other staff in order to secure locations for both the Annual Program and Foundation for Leadership Excellence programs. She is always onsite at the Annual Program to handle any and all hotel accommodation concerns. Attendees will also often see her at the registration desk checking in attendees and at the door of the Tuesday party handing out drink tickets. She goes above and beyond for ACNL and is an invaluable asset to the organization. It is with great pleasure that we award Pat the Friend of ACNL award.



**Patricia E. Zollman**

## NURSES FLOAT SCHOLARSHIP

Created by Bare Root, Inc., with surplus donations for the Nurses Float at the 2013 Rose Parade in Pasadena, CA.

### Andrea Bogardus

Registered Nurse  
UC San Diego Health

**School**  
Eastern Michigan University

**Degree**  
Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)

## Barbara Brantley Memorial Scholarship

AWARDED BY CATALYST SYSTEMS, LLC

### Lisa Diaz

- REGISTERED STAFF NURSE
- POMONA VALLEY HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER

**School:**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LA

**Degree:**  
PHD IN NURSING



## ACNL LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS

**Dajanae Gresham-Ryder**  
Clinical Nurse III  
UC Davis Health  
School: Samuel Merritt University  
Degree: Doctor of Nursing Practice

**Jessica Ann Parks**  
Registered Nurse  
Sharp Healthcare  
School: California State University, San Marcos  
Degree: Master of Science in Nursing

**Cara Conley**  
Nurse Manager  
Stanford Health Care  
Tri-Valley Health Care  
School: Walden University  
Degree: Doctor of Nursing Practice

**Gregory Eichelzer**  
Associate Director of Clinical Operations  
-Sinai Medical Center  
School: Yale University  
Degree: Doctor of Nursing Practice

Support the vital work of nurse leaders!  
Contribute to



When you join Circles of Giving, you become an important partner in designing ACNL's future while helping us garner the critical dollars to expand core programs!

Your donation in any amount will further ACNL's work and vision!

**TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Help ACNL shape nurse leadership in California through:

*Education and professional development  
Mentorship • Research • Innovation  
Health Policy • Scholarships and Fellowships*

Whether you're a new or returning contributor to the Circles of Giving, ACNL thanks you for your support and generosity!



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