

## Tribute to Imogene King



Photograph Courtesy of the American Nurses Association

It is with a spirit of gratitude and pride that we remember in this issue the life and work of Imogene King, EdD, RN, FAAN, who died on Christmas Eve, 2007. Dr. King received her diploma in nursing from St. John's Hospital School of Nursing in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1945 and her bachelor and master of science degrees in nursing from Saint Louis University in 1948 and 1957, respectively. In 1961, she graduated with a doctor of education degree from the Teachers College of Columbia University, and in 1980, she received an honorary doctor of philosophy degree from Southern Illinois University. In 1996, Dr. King received the American Nurses Association (ANA)

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Jessie M. Scott Award for her contributions to demonstrating the interrelationships among nursing practice, education, and research. In 2004, Dr. King was inducted into the ANA Hall of Fame.

Dr. King's contributions to NANDA International span 40 years. She was a participant at the First National Conference on the Classification of Nursing Diagnoses in St. Louis in 1973, and a member of the team of theorists that famously met at a series of meetings at the St. Louis Airport in NANDA's early years. Her last article was published in 2007 in the *International Journal of Nursing Terminologies and Classification* (Table 1).

Memories of Dr. King are many and varied, but for Mary Ann Lavin, one stands out above all. "I remember," she recalls, "a day at Saint Louis University in 1973. Preparations for the Conference were being made. A woman appeared in the doorway. I introduced myself and she said, 'I am Imogene King and I am coming to your Conference.' I remember being excited because she was the first nursing theorist I met, she was coming to our Conference, but most especially because we were both from St. John's Hospital School of Nursing and Saint Louis University. In other words, I had attended the same schools as Imogene King! That really impressed me, so much so I think we took a break."

"My next memory is drinking coffee with Imogene and asking her to describe her theory to me and to tell me how it was derived. That, she said, was simple. Her theory is that nurse-patient transactions or interactions and the context within which they occur are essential to the attainment of a patient's health goals. A patient and a nurse form a team and agree on goals and then work out a mutually agreed upon contract on how to achieve the goals. Furthermore, she said she derived this theory from her experience as Director of the Outpatient Clinic at St. John's Hospital and more specifically, from reflecting upon her own interactions with patients and the successes she saw when patients were permitted to participate in goal setting processes. In effect, what she was saying is that her theory development, her research, her nursing pedagogy

**Table 1. List of Journal Articles Authored by Dr. Imogene King**

- Killeen, M. B., & King, I. M. (2007). Viewpoint: Use of King's conceptual system, nursing informatics, and nursing classification systems for global communication. *International Journal of Nursing Terminologies and Classification*, 18(2), 51–57.
- King, I. M. (2007). King's conceptual system, theory of goal attainment, and transaction process in the 21st century. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 20(2), 109–111.
- King, I. M. (2006). A systems approach in nursing administration: structure, process, and outcome. *Nursing Administration Quarterly*, 30(2), 100–104.
- King, I. M. (2001). The nurse theorists: 21st-century updates—Imogene M. King. Interview by Jacqueline Fawcett. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 14(4), 311–315.
- King, I. M. (2001). A nursing theory of personal system empathy: Interpreting a conceptualization of empathy in King's interacting systems. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 14(1), 80–81.
- Gold, C., Haas, S., & King, I. (2000). Conceptual frameworks. Putting the nursing focus into core curricula. *Nurse Educator*, 25(2), 95–98.
- King, I. M. (1999). A theory of goal attainment: Philosophical and ethical implications. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 12(4), 292–296.
- King, I. (1998). Nursing informatics: A universal nursing language. *Florida Nurse*, 46(1), 1–3, 5, 9.
- King, I. (1998). The Bioethics Focus Group report. *Florida Nurse*, 46(8), 24.
- Quigley, P., Janzen, S. K., King, I., & Goucher, E. (1999). Nurse staffing and patient outcomes from one acute care setting within the Department of Veterans' Affairs. *Florida Nurse*, 47(2), 34.
- King, I. (1998). Board profile. *Florida Nurse*, 46(7), 2.
- King, I. M. (1997). Reflections on the past and a vision for the future. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 10(1), 15–17.
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- King, I. M. (1991). Nursing theory 25 years later. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 4(3), 94–95.
- King, I. M. (1990). Health as the goal for nursing. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 3(3), 123–128.
- Gulitz, E. A., & King, I. M. (1988). King's general systems model: Application to curriculum development. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 1(3), 128–132.
- King, I. M. (1988). Concepts: Essential elements of theories. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 1(1), 22–5.
- King, I. M. (1987). Translating research into practice. *Journal of Neuroscience Nursing*, 19(1), 44–8.
- King, I. M. (1986). Case studies in nursing theory. King's theory of goal attainment. *NLN Publications*, June(15-2152), 197–213.
- King, I. M. (1985). Patient education: Barriers and gateways. *Florida Nurse*, 33(5), 4, 15.
- King, I. M. (1985). Collaborative relationships in nursing research. *Florida Nurse*, 33(2), 3, 15.
- King, I. M. (1984). Effectiveness of nursing care: Use of a goal oriented nursing record in end stage renal disease. *American Association of Nephrology Nurses and Technicians*, 11(2), 11–7, 60.
- King, I. M. (1984). Philosophy of nursing education: A national survey. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 6(4), 387–406.
- King, I., & Tarsitano, B. (1982). The effect of structured and unstructured pre-operative teaching: A replication. *Nursing Research*, 31(6), 324–329.
- King, I. M. (1978). U.S.A.: Loyola University of Chicago School of Nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 3(4), 390.
- King, I. M. (1978). How does the conceptual framework provide structure for the curriculum? *NLN Publications*, (15-1700), 23–34.
- King, I. M. (1978). The "why" of theory development. *NLN Publications*, (15-1708), 11–16.
- King, I. M., & Sugimori, M. (1977). [A special interview: Dr. Imogene M. King]. *Kango Kyoiku*, 18(10), 597–602.
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- King, I. M. (1970). [A conceptual frame of reference for nursing]. *Kango Kenkyu*, 3(3), 199–204.
- King, I. (1968). Toward the future in nursing research. *Community Nursing Research*, (1), 158–166.
- King, I. M. (1968). A conceptual frame of reference for nursing. *Nursing Research*, 17(1), 27–31.
- King, I. (1965). Nurses and physicians meet. *Chart*, 62(10), 11.
- Heller, M. P., & King, I. (1965). Team teaching: values and advantages. *Nursing Outlook*, 13(10), 50–51.

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**Table 2. Books and Book Chapters, Primary Sources by Dr. Imogene King**

### Books

- King, I. M., & Fawcett, J. (2005). *The language of nursing theory and metatheory*. Indianapolis, IN: Sigma Theta Tau International.
- King, I. M. (1986). *Curriculum and instruction in nursing: Concepts and process*. Norwalk, CT: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- King, I. M. (1985). *A theory for nursing: Systems, concepts, process* (M. Sugimori, Trans.). Tokyo: Igaku-Shoin.
- King, I. M. (1981). *A theory for nursing: Systems, concepts, process*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- King, I. M. (1976). *Toward a theory of nursing: General concepts of human behavior* (M. Sugimori, Trans.). Tokyo: Igaku-Shoin.
- King, I. M. (1971). *Toward a theory for nursing: General concepts of human behavior*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

### Book Chapters

- King, I. M. (2007). King's structure, process and outcomes in the 21st century. In C. L. Sieloff & M. A. Frey (Eds.), *Middle range theory development using King's conceptual system* (pp. 12–28). New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- King, I. M. (1995). The theory of goal attainment. In M. A. Frey & C. L. Sieloff (Eds.), *Advancing King's systems framework and theory of nursing* (pp. 23–32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Table 3. Selected Presentations by Dr. Imogene King and Others on Nursing Sensitive Outcomes and Technologies**

- Symposium: *Exploring new frontiers using King's theory of goal attainment*. STTI 38th Biennial Convention-Scientific Sessions. Indianapolis, IN, November 12–16, 2005.
- Killeen, M. B. (2001). *Extensions of King: Measurable outcomes and expanded nursing process*. 2nd KING Conference in Tampa, FL, January 6, 2001.
- Killeen, M. B. (1999). *King's contribution's to nursing outcomes*. 1st Educational KING (King International Nursing Group) Conference, Troy, MI, October 2, 1999.
- Killeen, M. B., & King, I. M. (1999). *King's interacting system framework and related theories for the 21st century. Linking nursing theory to nursing outcome research*. International Council of Nursing, London, UK, June, 1999.
- King, I. M., & Killeen, M. B. (1999). *King's interacting system framework and related theories for the 21st century. Evidence-based practice: The state of the science and the art*. International Council of Nursing (co-author of a panel presentation with Dr. Imogene King). London, UK, June, 1999.
- King, I. M., & Killeen, (1999). *Interactions, transactions, and new technology*. 1st Educational KING (King International Nursing Group) Conference, Troy, MI, October 2, 1999.

were practice driven. Nursing diagnoses were (are) practice driven, too. What a great way, I thought, of starting off the Conference. How grateful was I then and even more grateful now for the memory and the practice-driven and patient-centered life of Dr. Imogene King."

For Mary B. Killeen, "memories of Dr. King abound from dissertation days when Dr. King was an 'informal' member of my committee until the encounter we had together with students in late November 2007. As a

King devotee, I was asked by a fellow faculty member to present King's interacting system and theory of goal attainment to the first level nursing students in their seminar. Knowing how much Dr. King enjoyed interacting with students, I arranged with her to phone in to the classroom for questions and answers with the students. She was delighted to be asked, saying she did this for various nursing programs. The faces of 50 young students were engaged and enchanted as they

listened to her speak: a real live nursing theorist! She clarified in a concise paragraph, one that she used to email students and others, what she did regarding developing her theory of goal attainment. Years of experience with dealing with students of all levels was apparent as she fielded questions for 20 min and replied in basic terms to their queries. How sad I was to hear of her death a few weeks later! I attended the next class of the students to tell them of Dr. King's death. They were shocked and surprised. Together we took in the fact that they were the last group of students that directly benefited from her knowledge and wisdom at the end of a career spanning 65 years in nursing."

In my last email from Dr. King, she talked about plans for other scholarly work and ventures. She planned to go the university library downtown to get caught up with information relative to systems because she was working with an expert in evidence-based health care to bring systems up to date and also her conceptual system and theory of goal attainment. She said she planned to be with her niece in California for a week over the holidays since that was her first Christmas without her mother. I learned that Dr. King passed away in Pasadena.

Her long interest in nursing languages included an expansion of her comparison of her theory of goal

attainment with the nursing process steps by Yura and Walsh (1983) to include expected outcomes and measurable actual outcomes. She recognized the need to view goals as measurable outcomes with standardized terms as well as to link her nursing theory to nursing outcomes research. She embraced technology and nursing informatics and evidence-based practice, and had a vision for her theory to integrate new knowledge in these fields globally.

In memory to Dr. King, we are including a list of her journal articles (Table 1), books and book chapters (Table 2), and selected presentations (Table 3). Tributes to Dr. King will continue and endure among nursing scholars and practicing nurses in the future. Her passion for life and nursing will live on.

**Mary Ann Lavin, ScD, RN, FAAN, and  
Mary B. Killeen, PhD, RN, CNAA**

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#### **Reference**

Yura, H., & Walsh, M. B. (1983). *The nursing process: Assessing, planning, implementing, evaluating* (4th ed.). Norwalk, CT: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

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