



## American Academy of Nursing Designates Five Nurse Leaders as Living Legends

*Academy Will Present its Highest Honor at Annual Policy Conference in October*

**Washington, DC (July 30, 2019)**—The American Academy of Nursing will officially designate five exceptional leaders as Living Legends at the Academy’s *Transforming Health, Driving Policy* conference in Washington, DC on October 24, 2019. Change agents and champions, these individuals have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to transforming health care. Using their nursing knowledge, they have spearheaded academic, practice, policy, and social change with extraordinary impact.

“The leaders selected in this year’s class of Living Legends are highly-acclaimed, long-time Fellows whose accomplishments to health and wellness are profound and sustained,” said Academy President Karen Cox, PhD, RN, FACHE, FAAN. “The Academy is delighted to recognize these incredible nurses as Living Legends. Their legacies will be felt and celebrated at the Academy, as well as, by the public, for many years to come.”

Countless lives, families, communities, and systems have improved as a direct result of the tenacity, expertise, and passion demonstrated by the following leaders honored as the 2019 Academy Living Legends.

### American Academy of Nursing 2019 Living Legends:

**Geraldine “Polly” Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN**, is a powerful leader recognized nationally and internationally for her work to advance nursing education. Dr. Bednash served as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) from 1989 to 2015. Prior to serving as CEO, Dr. Bednash headed AACN’s legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts as the Director of Government Affairs. She is a visionary advocate known for advancing the education of the nursing workforce, quality and safety in health care, and diversity within the health professions workforce. Currently a Board of Stewardship Trustees Member for the Common Spirit Health, Dr. Bednash also serves as a visiting professor at the Australian Catholic University.



**C. Alicia Georges, EdD, RN, FAAN**, is a leader in academic nursing, health policy development, community engagement, organizational development, and healthy aging. For the past 17 years, Dr. Georges has served as the Chairperson of the Department of Nursing at Lehman College of the City University of New York, though she has over forty years of experience as a nurse educator. She currently serves on the AARP Board of Directors as the National Volunteer President. A former president of the National Black Nurses Association and current president of the National Black Nurses Foundation, Dr. Georges has been awarded many times for her continued work to increase minority representation in nursing and for her leadership in advancing health equity.



**Pamela Mitchell, PhD, RN, FAHA, FAAN**, is highly regarded for her work as a clinical nurse specialist and nurse scientist in neuroscience and critical care nursing. Dr. Mitchell has been a pioneer in the development of interprofessional education. Notably, she and her students were the first to document that ordinary nursing care activities can affect intracranial pressure in people with acute brain injury. The founding director of the University of Washington's Center for Interprofessional Education, Research, and Practice, Dr. Mitchell is a distinguished leader in interprofessional education nationally. Currently, she is Professor Emerita at the University of Washington, Associate Editor of the *International Nursing Review*, and consulting professor at various international nursing schools.



**Linda Schwartz, DrPh, RN, FAAN**, a decorated United States Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, has tirelessly dedicated her life to improving the health of veterans. Dr. Schwartz has testified on behalf of veterans over 35 times before Congress and has served as an expert on readjustment after combat, equality for women, homelessness, and mental health care to five Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretaries. Unanimously confirmed as VA Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning at the Veteran Health Administration (VHA), Dr. Schwartz oversaw the groundbreaking ruling to allow full scope of practice authority to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses across all VHA facilities. Currently, she serves as a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee's Women Veterans Task Force.



**Mary Wakefield, PhD, RN, FAAN**, is renowned trailblazer and advocate. Her career has produced tremendous impact on health policy through her role in several high-profile positions within the federal government. During her tenure as Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration from 2009-2015 and as Acting Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services from 2015-2017, Dr. Wakefield led key health policy initiatives with a particular focus on health programs for rural populations. Dr. Wakefield has overseen foundational work to strengthen the healthcare workforce, increase health equity, and provide care services to patients who are geographically isolated, or economically or medically vulnerable. Currently, she serves as a Visiting Distinguished Professor at Georgetown University and the University of Texas at Austin, as well as, serving as Co-Chair of the National Academy of Medicine's *Consensus Study on the Future of Nursing 2020-2030*.



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#### **About the American Academy of Nursing**

The American Academy of Nursing (Academy) serves the public and the nursing profession by advancing health policy, practice, and science through organizational excellence and effective nursing leadership. The Academy's more than 2,600 Fellows are nursing's most accomplished leaders in education, management, practice, research, and policy. They have been recognized for their extraordinary contributions to nursing and healthcare.

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