



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**American Academy of Nursing Recognizes Luminaries with Prestigious Awards**  
*Awardees will be Honored during the Academy's Health Policy Conference in October*

Washington, DC (September 29, 2021) – The American Academy of Nursing (Academy) will honor **Roy L. Simpson**, DNP, RN, DPNAP, FAAN, FACMI, **Ernest Grant**, PhD, RN, FAAN, **Antonia Villarruel**, PhD, RN, FAAN, **Catherine Alicia Georges**, EdD, RN, FAAN, and **Louise Woerner**, MBA, FAAN, during the [2021 Health Policy Conference](#), *Healthy Lives for All People: Advancing Equity, Science, and Trust*, being held in a hybrid format October 7-9, 2021 for their outstanding contributions to improve care, advance health equity, and promote the nursing profession.



The **President's Award**, which recognizes an individual who has made extraordinary, lifelong contributions to improving the health of individuals, families, or communities, will be presented to **Roy L. Simpson**, DNP, RN, DPNAP, FAAN, FACMI, Professor, Assistant Dean for Technology Management, Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing Emory University. This is the highest individual achievement award given by the Academy and only awarded when someone has been identified as being truly fitting of the honor. Dr. Simpson's trailblazing informatics work has made a critical impact on health care delivery and organizational change, especially through his innovative development of the Nursing Minimum Data Set, which has allowed for the standardized collection of essential data, a linchpin for systems optimization. A strategic thinker and executive, his excellence has been recognized through leadership positions in corporations, hospital systems, and academia as well as through appointments such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice.

"Dr. Simpson is a brilliant, tech and business savvy, health care expert who is known internationally for his ability to bring different groups and ideas together," said Academy President Eileen Sullivan-Marx, PhD, RN, FAAN. "We are pleased to celebrate him as the recipient of this year's President's Award and recognize his remarkable success in transforming our profession's data systems."

**Ernest Grant**, PhD, RN, FAAN, the first man to be elected President of the American Nurses Association (ANA), will be presented with this year's **Civitas Award**. The award recognizes an individual who exemplifies extraordinary dedication to excellence in promoting quality care. Dr. Grant has over 30 years of nursing experience and is an internationally recognized burn-care and fire-safety expert who received a Nurse of the Year Award from former President George W. Bush in 2002 following his work to treat

burn victims at the World Trade Center, among other accolades. He has utilized his training in emergency settings to advance the important role of nursing in promoting wellness and guide the ANA's priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, he has led the ANA in its launch of the National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing to examine the impact of racism on nurses, patients, communities, and health care systems.

"Dr. Grant has been a tremendous advocate for all of our nation's nurses and a steadfast promoter of equitable access to care, vaccines, and resources throughout the COVID-19 pandemic," said Dr. Sullivan-Marx. "He is incredibly deserving of this year's award for his courageous and visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to the nurses he serves."

The Academy is pleased to present **Antonia M. Villarruel**, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor and Margaret Bond Simon Dean of Nursing, Senior Fellow, Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, University of Pennsylvania, with the **Health Care Leader Award** in recognition of her incredible impact in shaping health policy. Created in 2008, this award recognizes an influential national leader dedicated to improving the health of the nation through contributions to organizational excellence. Dr. Villarruel is a bilingual nurse researcher and academic leader who has committed her career to improving the health of under resourced Latino communities. This year, she was selected for the prestigious Ohtli Award from the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Mexico for positively affecting the lives of Mexican nationals in the U.S. and for advancing nursing education in Mexico. This includes her research in designing, testing, and disseminating a CDC-implemented program, ¡Cúdate!, designated an Academy Edge Runner, which aims to reduce risky sexual behavior among Latino adolescents. In addition, Dr. Villarruel co-chairs the National Academy of Medicine Culture of Health Program and co-chairs the AARP/RWJF Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action.

"Dr. Villarruell is an invaluable leader who understands how health is achieved and the pivotal role nurses play in promoting it," said Dr. Sullivan-Marx. "Her career has demonstrated her profound dedication to improving community wellness by launching programs and centers for research, as well as serving as a leader and advisor to the federal government and countless organizations. I am thrilled to present her with the Academy's Health Care Leader Award."

The Academy will present **Catherine Alicia Georges**, EdD, RN, FAAN, Chairperson of the Department of Nursing at Lehman College of the City University of New York, with the **Lifetime Legacy Award**, created in 2019 to recognize an extraordinary individual who has dedicated their life to advocating for positive health system changes. A formidable leader and Academy Living Legend, Dr. Georges is selflessly devoted to eliminating disparities and improving the health of minorities and the disadvantaged in the communities around her – especially those in New York, in particular her hometown borough of the Bronx, during the COVID-19 pandemic. A testament to her leadership, she has served as President of the National Black Nurses Association and National Volunteer President of AARP. A staunch advocate for community health, Dr. Georges continues to mentor and urge the next generation of nurses to be changemakers for a healthier, more equitable future.

"It is an honor to present Dr. Georges with the Lifetime Legacy Award on behalf of the Academy," said Dr. Sullivan-Marx. "She is a vocal advocate for family caregiving having testified before Congress and serving on the National Family Caregiving Advisory Council. Dr. Georges is a genuine and inspirational community leader whose mentorship has supported countless nurses."

Additionally, the Academy will present **Louise Woerner**, MBA, FAAN, Chairwoman, and Chief Executive Officer of HCR Home Care, with the **Outstanding Leadership Award**. This distinction recognizes an Honorary Fellow for exemplary service and perseverance as a champion of nurses and the profession. Ms. Woerner's entrepreneurship led her to found HCR Home Care, which has provided patients high-

quality care while employing interdisciplinary teams and led to her receiving the Presidential Award for Entrepreneurial Excellence from former President Ronald Reagan. She distinctly understands the critical role of nurses in interprofessional teams and is steadfast in elevating the nursing profession, evidenced through her leadership as a founding member of the Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Leadership.

“It is a distinct privilege to name Ms. Woerner, one of the first individuals to be selected as an Honorary Fellow of the Academy, the recipient of the Outstanding Leadership Award,” said Dr. Eileen Sullivan-Marx. “Her devotion to advancing the patient care experience while streamlining care services through interprofessional teams is admirable.”

These incredible individuals will be recognized during the American Academy of Nursing’s Health Policy Conference, [\*Healthy Lives for All People: Advancing Equity, Science, and Trust\*](#), taking place in a hybrid format October 7-9, 2021.

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

[The American Academy of Nursing](#) serves the public by advancing health policy and practice through the generation, synthesis, and dissemination of nursing knowledge. Academy Fellows are inducted into the organization for their extraordinary contributions to improve health locally and globally. With more than 2,900 Fellows, the Academy represents nursing’s most accomplished leaders in policy, research, administration, practice, and academia.

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