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January 26, 2012

A Note of Remembrance, Jeanne Quint Benoliel, DNSc, RN, FAAN

Dear Fellows,

I regret to inform you of the death of yet another extraordinary nursing leader and Fellow - Jeanne Quint Benoliel, DNSc, RN, FAAN, an Academy Living Legend who was a pioneer in palliative care, oncology nursing and women's health. Dr. Benoliel's research on living with chronic illness and patients' acceptance of terminal illness and impending death provided ground-breaking models for hospice and palliative care. It was through her nursing and research career that she built an extensive legacy with both national and international impact.

After graduating from St. Luke's Hospital School of Nursing in San Francisco, Jeanne Benoliel received her B.S. from Oregon State University in Corvallis, her M.S. and postmasters study in Physiology and Statistics from the University of California in Los Angeles, and received her DNSc from the University of California, San Francisco. She also served as a nurse in the United States Army Nurse Corp.

Along with a lifelong commitment to her own education, Dr. Benoliel dedicated herself to educating and mentoring students at the University of Washington while developing an extensive national research agenda - - all while raising a family and remaining active in her community. Past students from a wide range of disciplines credit her with not only helping to shape their focus on caregiving issues but also helping address and tackle their personal concerns about death. Throughout her career Dr. Benoliel worked closely with colleagues on numerous research grants, including one developing an Oncology Transition Services Program responsible for preparing nurses for leadership in the creation of community based services for advanced cancer patients and their families.

In addition to her transformative research surrounding advanced illness and end of life care, Dr. Benoliel remained committed to researching women's health issues, specifically breast health, after an early diagnosis of fibrocystic disease. In 1961, she was funded by the National Institutes of Health to study the adjustment process of women during their first year after mastectomy. She continued to publish multiple articles and present at conferences nationally throughout her life.

Dr. Benoliel received many honors throughout her lifetime, among them honorary degrees from the University of San Diego, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale, and induction into the Washington State Nursing Association's Hall of Fame in 2004. She was the first registered nurse to be president of the International Work Group on Death, Dying and Bereavement, and is recognized as one of the founders in the field of palliative and hospice care. While we do mourn the loss of such a scholar, colleague, friend and mentor, we can acknowledge and celebrate her 92 years of life, her numerous accolades, and her extensive achievements.

Sincerely,

Joanne Disch, PhD, RN, FAAN
President, American Academy of Nursing