



Dr. Charon Pierson PhD, GNP, FAAN, FAANP is the former Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (JAANP)*. She was editor when the Journal moved from print to an online format. She earned a PhD in Medical Sociology in 1999 from the University of Hawaii where she taught in the School of nursing and the Geriatric Education Center in the School of Medicine until 2005. She then became the Director of the Center for Aging at the University of Texas, El Paso, College of Health Sciences from 2006 until 2012. During her tenure at Texas, she worked to integrate geriatrics into the curriculum. She developed the Virtual Dementia Tour where students from a variety of disciplines were placed in situations where they were incapacitated in ways common to the older adult. Dr. Pierson was also a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the first cohort of the John A Hartford Foundation Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity. Through this fellowship, she worked with faculty and researchers on issues related to care of frail older adults at the University of California at San Francisco. She has been a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). She semi-retired in 2013 but remains active in discussing strategies with educators regarding ethical issues and encouraging students to publish. She is a charter Fellow in the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and has been a member-at-large and has served on the selection committee for the Fellowship.

Interview Abstract

Dr. Pierson's interview primarily addresses her selection and participation as a charter member of the Fellows of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. Dr. Pierson been innovative

and relentless in her efforts to incorporate care of the older adult and older frail adult. She developed the Virtual Dementia Tour, a simulation that provides students and providers to experience audio and visual distortions that often affect older adults with dementia. Her post-doctoral fellowship with the John A Hartford Foundation provided the opportunity for Dr. Pierson to work with faculty and researchers the University of California at San Francisco on issues related to access to care for frail older adults. In her role as Editor-in Chief, she published current laws and legislation regarding NP practice in each state. It was a valuable resource for students, NPs and faculty. Dr. Pierson expanded the editorial board and diversified to meet the demands of their readership. She also spoke positively regarding the merger of the American College of Nurse Practitioners with the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners to form the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. In retirement, she and her husband, Robert Pigors, moved to Gilbert, Arizona where she enjoys reading, yoga, swimming and water aerobics.

Biographical Sketch:

Dr. Pierson is a former Editor-in Chief for the Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and charter Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. She obtained her PhD in Medical Sociology from the University of Hawaii and is a gerontological nurse practitioners. She taught at the University of Hawaii School of Nursing and the Geriatric Education Center in the School of Medicine from 1989 until 2005. She then moved to the University of Texas, El Paso, College of Health Sciences from 2006 until 2012. Her primary role in El Paso was to obtain grants to support education within schools and communities and teach in the School of Nursing integrating geriatrics into the curriculum. She also has been a member of the Committee on the Publication Ethics. Following her semi-retirement in 2013, she continued to speak to various societies, journal organizations and groups about publication ethics.

Keywords: geriatrics, publication, education, ethics, frail elderly

Charon Pierson

Interview

AANP Oral History Project



Dr. Charon Pierson PhD, GNP, FAAN, FAANP

Interview by Judith Lynch 2014

Dr. Charon Pierson has been the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (formerly the Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners [JAANP]) since 2000 when she assumed the role from Dr. Jan Towers, the Founding Editor and also a Charter Fellow. She has witnessed the rapid technological changes in publication from a paper and pencil operation to a completely online journal – a “steep learning curve.” The journal will be published online-only as of January 2015; the trend toward online-only publications in the

scientific community has resulted in more timely publication of important information. Recently, Dr. Pierson has been focused on expanding the editorial Board, inviting scholars, clinicians, and expert researchers to participate, and generally expanding the publication to meet the demands of students, faculty, and our core members within the NP community. Because the JAANP has an Impact Factor, it is highly regarded, often cited in major publications, and attracts many more submissions than it can possibly publish; this results in a high rejection rate but improves the quality of the publication. She stressed the importance of having JAANP as an association member benefit; the only difference now is that issues will be delivered to the member's inbox, mobile device, or laptop, rather than a postal box. Online functionality for JAANP has improved greatly over the past few years; some of those enhancements have been highlighted in recent editorials in JAANP.

Dr. Pierson holds a PhD in Medical Sociology (1999) from the University of Hawaii where she also taught in the School of Nursing and the Geriatric Education Center in the School of Medicine from 1989 - 2005. She then moved to become the Director of the Center for Aging at the University of Texas, El Paso, College of Health Sciences from 2006-2012. Her main functions were to obtain grants to support education within schools and communities and to teach in the School of Nursing, primarily to integrate geriatrics into the curriculum. One project she implemented through a grant was the Virtual Dementia Tour, a simulation where students across the curriculum (nurse practitioners, social workers, physical and occupational therapists) were placed in a situation where they were incapacitated in ways common to the geriatric client. This allowed students to experience audio and visual distortions, confusion about tasks to be done, and difficulty with movement and sensation. Dr. Pierson feels strongly that this type of reality-based interdisciplinary education enhances providers' ability to empathize and provide better care for older clients. She also hosted this simulation in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Association for local television and news reporters in an effort to enhance public awareness of the needs of people with dementia, which resulted in widespread media coverage in

both English and Spanish news in Texas and Mexico.

From 2001-2003 Dr. Pierson held a post-doctoral fellowship in the first cohort of the John A. Hartford Foundation Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity. She worked with faculty and researchers at the University of California at San Francisco on issues related to access to care for frail older adults.

For many years, Dr. Pierson has been a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Founded in the United Kingdom, this international and interdisciplinary committee develops resources for editors and publishers to help them make decisions regarding ethical issues in publishing. Pertinent issues include authorship, ethical peer review, and the responsible conduct of research. A recent hot topic is the upsurge of “predatory publishers” who solicit manuscripts in deceptive and unethical ways in order to collect “article processing fees” from the author. In 2012 she was the second nurse elected to the 20-member Council.

In 2013, Dr. Pierson moved to Arizona for a life of semi-retirement. She continues to speak to various societies, journal organizations, and groups about publication ethics. She has created a video lecture series on publication ethics available through the AANP Continuing Education Department. She travels to many meetings to discuss strategies with educators about ethical issues of which they need to be aware when mentoring their students about publishing in books and/or journals. She also speaks about mechanisms to motivate students to publish in ways in which they will see themselves as successful.

In addition to her position on the JAANP, Dr. Pierson has been a Member-at-Large to the Executive Committee of the Fellowship and is currently on the Selection Committee (2012-2015).

This interview took place by phone from Dr. Pierson’s home in Gilbert, Arizona, where she lives with her husband, Robert Pigors, the managing editor of JAANP. He was responsible for co-developing and managing

the original electronic submission system for JAANP in 2000.

JSL: Charon, for someone who is semi-retired, you certainly remain connected in many ways with the Association and the Fellowship.

CP: I like the balance of personal and professional in my life. I still have contributions to make, especially in the field of ethics in publishing.

JSL: How did you feel when you were first notified that you would be included in the Charter Year of the Fellowship?

CP: I was absolutely shocked and said “Why Me?” I tend not to keep track of my accomplishments and was very surprised. It was only after my husband said “This is an honor you need to accept” and step forward to become one of the “movers and shakers” in the NP profession that I accepted.

JSL: I think most of us can relate to that initial shock. What has the Fellowship meant to you personally and professionally?

CP: Personally, I found my Charter colleagues awesome and amazing people to be around and I am proud to be associated with them. I find myself constantly growing and developing in both personal and professional areas. The networking connections are unsurpassed and the coalitions allow us to think outside the box as the NP movement becomes stronger and more recognized by the public.

JSL: What focus would you like to see the Fellowship take in the future?

CP: I would like the Fellowship to focus more on Outcomes Research and Strategies for reaching and better integrating clinically focused NPs (e.g., PhD nurse scientists with DNP master clinicians). The mentoring program has been successful with individual motivation but I am talking about small workshops or work groups in the context of the Annual Conference. I would also support a Research Academy (similar to the current Leadership Academy) to get faculty and students involved in learning outcomes and translational research. We need a very clear focus

to move the profession forward in terms of true evidence-based practice. Perhaps this could be one of the successful specialty conferences in the future.

JSL: How do you feel about the new combination of the Academy and College?

CP: We need to speak with one voice and not work at cross purposes. The Association is still in its implementation phase with two journals, many new programs, and a new administration. Our leaders will push the Association in the direction of individual and community growth but this will take time. It is up to the Fellows, as leaders, to have a strong voice as we go forward and to sponsor those colleagues as future members who are true “movers and shakers.”

JSL: What about a personal life?

CP: Since moving to Gilbert I have spent a great deal of time outside doing water aerobics and swimming, as well as enjoying yoga classes, and the fitness center for regular workouts. We live in an active community where we have many resources for both inside and outside enjoyment. I am a voracious reader and especially enjoy the new crop of Scandinavian mystery writers and the many excellent historical and political non-fiction books available. I truly feel that I have achieved the balance I need for this time in my life.

JSL: You certainly have a busy and full life. I thank you for sitting for this interview and for all your work in making the Fellowship a strong force for the future of all nurse practitioners.

