Ronnette Sailors BSN, RN, Faith Community Nurse 2016 Wilkerson-Droege Award

Ronnette Sailors has been a life-long developer, promoter and supporter of health ministry. She is a humble servant, ever gracious and practices servant leadership extensively. As a nurse, married to a United Methodist pastor, she naturally shared her gifts as a nurturer, educator, and advocator within her faith community. Then, in 1987, Granger Westberg came to Nebraska, and Ronnette was able to put a name and a framework to what she had already been doing for so many years…Parish Nursing!

She started the ﬁrst “Parish Nurse Service” in Nebraska in 1988, and was a charter member of HMA, attending the ﬁrst meeting in 1989. She and Charlotte Halverson, from Dubuque, Iowa put together the ﬁrst HMA brochure. She worked with a graphic artist from her local church, to develop the HMA logo, which was adopted at the second annual conference in 1991. She has held leadership positions on the HMA Board, including vice president and interim president, attended and presented at several conferences and also assisted in conference planning. Ronnette worked with the Rev. Thomas “Tom” Droege, PhD and Dr. David Hilton, MD, to promote multi-faith inclusion in HMA. She has said many times over the years that Dr. Droege was a great mentor, and often uses his books in her ministry.

As well as being a national leader Ronnette has been instrumental in the development of health ministry programs in Nebraska and Western Iowa. She is known as the “Mother of Parish Nursing” in Nebraska. She has worked in several capacities to develop and support the growth of health ministry regionally and locally. In the mid to late 1990’s she served as Health Ministries Consultant for Alegent Health in Omaha, providing education, consultation and collaboration for the development of whole-person wellness in congregations, and developed a health ministry training program for area congregations. In the early 2000’s, she was the coordinator for the Nebraska Health Ministry Network, through Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska. In 2005, she was recruited to lead and develop the Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) Health - Faith Community Health Network, which provides education, consultation, resources and support to approximately 100 network members.

Additionally, Ronnette has worked collaboratively with other networks on a national level to improve the practice of faith community nursing. According to colleague Sharon Stanton, Ronnette has worked closely with HMA Leadership over the past 28 years, always promoting the advanced practice of faith community nursing, as well as urging all HMA members to remember the ministry initiative of this movement. She has been a faithful servant leader, bringing skills of practice and compassion of ministry for the good of the entire community. Ronnette Sailors is a great leader and worthy recipient of the Wilkerson-Droege Award.