

Sharon Stanton, MSN, RN – The 2005 Wilkerson – Droege Award Recipient...

Many of you know Sharon Stanton for her deep dedication to the health ministry movement and her strong, committed leadership to the Health Ministries Association. Sharon became president of HMA in 1999 and served two terms during a time when the organization was struggling with its “adolescence”. Sharon again took over the role of HMA president in for a year (2008-2009), when her ser vice was needed. She has blessed all of those she has worked with her wisdom, humor and vision of health ministry as a transformational process.

It is for her dedication to HMA and legacy that she will leave, we honor her with this well deserved award. But there is so much more to Sharon that needs to be shared...her life experiences helped equip her with the tools and insight to be an incredible leader that she is...and will continue to be.

Sharon was a *Woman Religious* with the Sisters of St. Francis in Rochester, Minnesota for 24 years. During that time she worked as an OR nurse for the St. Mary’s Hospital, honing her nursing skills and looking for ways to further her ministry. She got the chance when she worked for Cesar Chavez. During the four years she worked with him, she opened the first migrant outpatient clinic for farm workers in Texas in conjunction with the Texas Department of Health.

It was during that experience that she grew in the understanding of what it was to be a change agent, and she knew she needed to further her education in order to continue that journey. She received her Master’s degree in nursing from Texas Women’s University in Houston and went on to more diverse experiences. She was the Assistant Director of Public Health Nursing for the state of Vermont, worked for the National Council of Churches monitoring television programming for violence against women, worked for the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs in Washington, D.C. and for the National Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry at Notre Dame.

In 1995, she started the Center for Health Ministry at St. Joseph Health System in Atlanta, Georgia and responsible for bringing untold numbers of parish nurses and health ministers into the faith health movement. In the fall of 2004, Sharon retired and moved to Arizona in hopes of developing a retreat cent for spiritual renewal.

It was not long before she was putting her gifts and talents back to work! In January 2007, she took on the role of Coordinator for Faith/Health Partnerships for Catholic Healthcare West - East Valley in Chandler, Arizona. She continues to lead and develop that program with her innovative style.

Sharon resides in Gold Canyon, Arizona with her beloved cat, Sophia. She is actively involved in her faith community and directs the children’s choir. Sharon continues to provide her leadership and guidance to HMA serving on the Board in the position of Past-President.