

# 2001 Triumph Awards Winners

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The Triumph Awards are national awards designed to recognize those special individuals who make a difference in the HIM profession. This awards program was developed as part of the Foundation of Research and Education (FORE) campaign to forecast future trends in HIM, envision HIM roles in the future, and focus on emerging HIM knowledge and skills. The Triumph Awards honor leadership in the HIM field, reward contributions that build our knowledge base, recognize excellence in preparing future HIM professionals, and encourage fresh talent and new leadership.

The Triumph Awards are made possible by a generous grant to FORE from Lanier Healthcare.

## Distinguished Member Award

### **Kathleen A. Frawley, JD, MS, RHIA**

AHIMA's highest honor is the Distinguished Member Award, which celebrates those who have made exceptional contributions to the HIM field over an extended period of time. This year's winner, Kathleen Frawley, has made more than a perceived difference in AHIMA through her role in our Washington, DC, office. There, she directed the advocacy, legislative, regulatory, and public policy initiatives of the Association. Her work with members of Congress and regulatory agencies raised awareness on confidentiality, privacy, data quality, and the value of HIM credentials. Frawley worked with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS, formerly HCFA) to eliminate the burdensome physician attestation requirement. Her leadership and tireless effort as an advocate for comprehensive federal legislation to protect the privacy and security of health information was highly regarded throughout the healthcare industry and promoted the awareness of AHIMA.

Frawley received national recognition for her leadership on HIM issues when she was appointed in 1996 to the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS) by the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. As a member of NCVHS and chair of its subcommittee on privacy and confidentiality, she had a significant impact on the privacy and security regulations developed under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Frawley also played a vital role in co-chairing the Workgroup on Privacy and Confidentiality for the Computer-based Patient Record Institute (CPRI). The seven guidelines published by this workgroup have been incorporated by reference into the HIPAA notice of proposed rule-making on information security. Frawley is an advocate for the patient and our profession. Her tireless contributions toward patient privacy and security standards have not gone unnoticed by her peers.

## Volunteer Award

### **Carmilla "Kelli" Marsh, RHIA**

The Volunteer Award recognizes leaders who make significant volunteer contributions on behalf of AHIMA. Carmilla "Kelli" Marsh demonstrated this with her proactive involvement on behalf of the Long Term Care Section (LTCS) membership with CMS (formerly HCFA). CMS is the branch of the federal government that promulgates rules and requirements used to survey Medicare and Medicaid long-term care facilities. This relationship also furnished an avenue for AHIMA and LTCS to offer input to HCFA.

Marsh's commitment to long-term care has led many professionals to the long-term care area of practice. In turn, she has emphasized the benefits of credentialed AHIMA professionals to long-term care facility owners and administrators.

Marsh's strong leadership qualities indicate that she deserves the Volunteer Award.

## Discovery Award

**Cheryl A. Gregg, RHIA, CCS-P**

Cheryl Gregg's outstanding contributions to the formulation and ongoing development of AHIMA's Communities of Practice have made the overall project a success.

Gregg has been instrumental in establishing and maintaining the Communities of Practice vision. She has served on the project's advisory task force and also on AHIMA's compliance task force, and she has chaired the Ambulatory Care Section. Her involvement on the national level has helped her keep HIM practice current, growing, and constantly meeting the changing needs of the members. Gregg was also instrumental in developing the protocol for all the Communities of Practice and making the Web site a greater tool for the membership.

Her dedication to her Ohio roots and to AHIMA members at large is evident in her enthusiasm, as illustrated by her monitoring and updating of the current practice forums. She is particularly devoted to the national Ambulatory Care Section, and it is because of her leadership and insight that its members have benefited so much from its inception.

**Legacy Award****Laurinda B. Harman, PhD, RHIA**

The Legacy Award honors a significant contribution to the HIM field's knowledge base through a recent insightful publication. This year, the award is presented to an individual with a deep interest in promoting ethical standards of conduct for HIM professionals and a long commitment to the advancement of health information.

Laurinda Harman is a true champion in her support of the HIM profession through presentations at the local, state, and national level; editorship of *In Confidence*, AHIMA's newsletter about privacy and security issues; and published articles. Her textbook, *Ethical Challenges in the Management of Health Information*, is an essential tool and a reliable resource that will help prepare HIM professionals to face multifaceted ethical challenges in healthcare today and tomorrow.

An HIM professional and educator for over 30 years, Harman is the chair of the HIM department at Temple University and has directed HIM baccalaureate programs at both George Washington University in Washington, DC, and The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH.

Harman has demonstrated a strong commitment to the education of both HIM practitioners and the public on the ethics and management of HIM issues and is deserving of AHIMA's Legacy Award.

**Visionary Award****Cindy M. Boester, MS, RHIA**

AHIMA's Visionary Award recipient is Cindy Boester. Boester exemplifies HIM professionals who pave the way for the field in the 21st century. She has explored visionary approaches to practice and has applied health information principles in new job markets.

Boester has undertaken an extensive career in HIM, consulting, and quality and risk management and has continued on to apply her knowledge and experience to complement her job. She is a pioneer in developing one of the first workers' compensation/no-fault managed care programs in the New York and New Jersey areas.

Boester is described as creative, imaginative, and intrepid. She has served on several state and national committees and has written many articles for professional journals. She shares her vision with others as a teacher, mentor, and leader. "Cindy is a great role model for new HIM professionals because she exudes enthusiasm, confidence, and excitement over what is possible, if only you have a vision and the determination to pursue it," one of her peers says. Boester has reached for the next level of insight the HIM profession needs in order to adjust to the changing healthcare environment.

**Educator Award****Joan T. Rines, PhD, RHIA**

This year's Educator Award honors that individual who displayed teaching excellence, quality education, and innovative program development.

As director of the first distance-learning program in health information administration (HIA), Joan Rines is a pioneer in developing a formal education that would meet the needs of students with families, employment obligations, geographical restrictions, and other barriers to traditional classroom education. The HIA program at Stephens College serves as a model for an academically sound program of instruction and professional practice.

Rines has an impressive list of presentations and publications in education and HIM. She is a dedicated volunteer and has served on numerous AHIMA councils, committees, and specialty groups. She has been elected twice as a director of the Assembly on Education.

Her high expectations for her students serves them and the HIM profession very well. Many of the graduates of the Stephens HIA program have made significant contributions to HIM practice and education. She connects personally with each student, identifies his or her learning strengths, then challenges the student to a personal best. Clearly, Rines presents the stellar educational leadership that develops the value compasses of AHIMA's future members.

## **Mentor Award**

### **Betty A. Hagedorn, MHA, RHIA**

The Mentor Award, for outstanding professionalism, exceptional leadership, unwavering encouragement, tireless dedication, and unparalleled guidance of HIM professionals, goes to Betty A. Hagedorn.

Hagedorn began her professional life as a "medical records librarian" and moved up to become a director of medical support, information system analyst, and information services senior system analyst. Her career has been marked by a long-term involvement with AHIMA, the Indiana Health Information Management Association, and the Southeastern Indiana Health Information Management Association.

Hagedorn demonstrated her mentor skills by encouraging many individuals to enter the health information field and to recognize that health information was a career they could do and enjoy. Her peers describe her variously as a stern taskmaster, patient teacher, and flexible friend. The people she mentored came from various areas and disciplines, including peers, employees, and bosses.

Being a good mentor requires time, sacrifice and a desire to better one's profession. We congratulate her on her own success and her contributions to the success of others.

## **Achievement Award**

### **Gail L. Graham, RHIA**

The Achievement Award honors significant achievements in advancing HIM practice. This year's recipient is Gail Graham, director of information assurance for the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC.

Graham is actively involved in the implementation of a sophisticated electronic medical record, creating an almost totally computerized patient record environment. She also has developed coding education via satellite broadcasts for the entire VHA system.

In 1999, Graham also created the VHA Health Information Management Coding Council, a group comprised of RHIA's, RHITs, and coding specialists from across the nation. The group is charged with responding to coding questions and concerns from HIM professionals within the VA structure.

Graham's dedicated professionalism and sincere enthusiasm cannot be matched. Her constant promotion of the HIM field and practices has brought awareness and recognition of the field to a new level within the VHA.

## **New Frontier Award**

**Erin J. Blume, RHIA**

The New Frontier Award honors one of "the best and the brightest," such as Erin Blume.

A recent graduate of the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, NE, Blume was instrumental in resurrecting the student HIM club and recruiting students to participate in campus activities. She developed and planned a range of activities to celebrate National HI&T week. These activities gained visibility for HIM on campus. She also chose to spend a portion of her internship as an educator, where she could have additional opportunities to share her enthusiasm for HIM.

Blume continues to excel in her position as health information and performance improvement coordinator at the Ambassador, a long-term care facility in Omaha. One of her former supervisors notes, "Erin Blume is indeed, without question, a future leader in the HIM profession. She has the professional leadership skills and vision that are necessary to keep moving the profession forward."

**Research Award****Valerie J. Watzlaf, PhD, RHIA**

The Research Award goes to the HIM professional who exemplifies unusual vision and leadership in understanding HIM philosophy and conducts or supports research. This year's winner, Valerie Watzlaf, is a dedicated researcher who has been principal investigator or co-principal investigator on numerous grants, such as breast cancer, ovarian cancer, disability issues, and quality assessment in long-term care. Her latest research effort is in the study of standards for the content of the electronic medical record and is funded through the FORE Grant-in-Aid program. Watzlaf is a mentor and inspires "budding" researchers. She is always supportive of her students and other researchers. She has been known to be a cheerleader when her students take that first bold step of presenting their results.

Watzlaf also made significant contributions to the HIM body of knowledge through her high standards as a researcher. She also is a member of the *Journal of AHIMA's* Editorial Advisory Board.

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**Thanks to the 2001 Awards Committee:**

Eileen M. Hickey, RHIA, Chair  
Julie D. Anderson, RHIA  
Jeffrey T. Butler, RHIA  
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Beverly A. Ellis, RHIT  
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