

Congratulations to the 1999 Triumph Award Winners

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Outstanding achievements and contributions to the HIM field head the agenda as AHIMA members honor their colleagues with the 1999 Triumph Awards.

Thanks to the continued support of Lanier Worldwide, Inc., AHIMA is proud to recognize the following special individuals who have made a difference in the HIM profession.

The Awards Committee, elected by the membership at large, has selected these recipients from nominations received from the members. The winners received their awards at AHIMA's 1999 National Convention in Anaheim in October.

AHIMA is proud to salute these outstanding individuals. Their accomplishments and commitment to HIM inspire us all.

Distinguished Member Award

Jennifer I. Cofer, RRA

AHIMA presents the 1999 Distinguished Member Award to Jennifer I. Cofer, RRA.

Cofer is truly deserving of this award. Throughout her distinguished career, she has demonstrated how determined leadership, combined with true charm, can help advance the Association and the profession. In whatever role she serves AHIMA, her unwavering commitment to the health information management profession and her understanding of member needs make her an outstanding leader.

Cofer served as AHIMA's president in 1991. She has also served as the organization's director of communications and professional practices and was editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Records Association* (now the *Journal of AHIMA*). In 1993, AHIMA presented her with the Edna K. Huffman award for her literary pursuits, a field in which she still shines as the editor of the 10th edition of the Huffman textbook *Health Information Management*. Most recently, she has served on the FORE Foundation Board of Directors and actively participated in the organization's redesign.

Currently, Cofer is executive publisher of Opus Communications, a company she began in 1986 with the newsletter *Medical Records Briefing*. Opus Communications is a publishing and online-based business that supports HIM practices through newsletters, books, and other media.

Cofer is a consummate HIM professional and is a fine example of the great things you can accomplish when you strive to be your best. In all that she pursues, Cofer maintains the highest level of integrity and quality.

Champion Award

Leopold G. Selker, PhD

For long-term and enthusiastic support of AHIMA, Leopold G. Selker, PhD, receives the Champion Award. Selker has distinguished himself as senior vice president for research at Evanston Northwestern Healthcare, chief administrative officer of ENH Research Institute, and as the former dean of the College of Associated Health Professions at the University of Illinois, Chicago, through his scholarly work as a researcher with more than 50 national-level appointments across the last decade. During his tenure as dean, he successfully guided the HIM faculty to obtain federal grant funding to underwrite the development of a model HIM graduate curriculum. It remains a conceptual guidepost for other academic institutions.

Selker has graciously and successfully given his valuable time to lead several initiatives on behalf of AHIMA's membership. He served as chair, convened, and facilitated the work of the Coding Futures Task Force, bringing together national experts to

consider the future and orchestrate recommendations to the AHIMA Board, volunteer groups, and membership on the future of coded clinical information in the next decade and beyond.

Selker, who joined the FORE Board of Directors in 1999, has already provided his valuable insight and expertise to strengthen the capabilities and scope of the Foundation. In addition, he appeared before the Assembly on Education's summer symposium as a keynote speaker to address the horizon of professional education in the new millennium.

Volunteer Award

Jeri G. Whitworth, RRA

AHIMA honors Jeri G. Whitworth, RRA, with the Volunteer Award for her outstanding commitment, unwavering support, and tireless devotion in volunteering her time to national, state, local, and international HIM associations.

In her 20 years in the relentless pursuit of excellence, Whitworth has spent time at all levels of AHIMA. Her tireless dedication shines in the many positions she has held and through the multiple honors she has received as a distinguished and outstanding member.

Currently, Whitworth is the central office coordinator for the Georgia Health Information Management Association, where she has spent the past several years enhancing that association. Whitworth has been a valuable leader and volunteer holding many positions. She has served as chair of multiple committees, advisor, secretary, president-elect, and president at local and state levels. At the national level she served as a director of the board and was founder of the first national celebration week for HIM professionals.

Whitworth's self-motivation, future vision, and willingness to volunteer her time and energy demonstrate her devotion to the HIM profession.

Legacy Award

Mary D. Brandt, MBA, RRA, CHE

An outstanding contribution to the HIM field through her published works earned Mary D. Brandt, MBA, RRA, CHE, the Legacy Award.

The extent of Brandt's published works on critical HIM issues has made her a recognized name in the profession and a sought-after author, speaker, and contributor. She is best known for her clear, concise writing style, which allows others to use her writings to educate, implement ideas, or support a position.

Brandt has published numerous articles in the *Journal of AHIMA* and *Healthcare Informatics* and more than 19 position statements and practice briefs on important HIM topics, providing direction and education on critical HIM issues. She has also authored three monographs, providing professional guidance across all practice settings.

Her peers recognize the impact of her writings, stating: "Mary is deserving of national recognition for her prolific writings, which will surely leave a legacy for other HIM professionals."

Visionary Award

Judith A. Conroy, RRA

AHIMA presents the Visionary Award, for groundbreaking work that will help lead the HIM field into the next century, to Judith A. Conroy, RRA.

Conroy developed a statewide independent medical provider network that offers professional services, including managed care, TPA services, claims review and auditing, physician credentialing, provider contracting, and client services. She coordinated a state-of-the-art claims review program that interfaces with both the claims processing and managed care

functions. As president and CEO, Conroy is directly responsible for the daily operations of the network services, marketing, budgets, and information systems.

Conroy is versatile, inspiring, intrepid, and enterprising. Taking her HIM knowledge from the hospital, she applied it to performing diagnosis related group (DRG) review for a peer review organization (PRO). She designed a DRG dispute-resolution program used by all payers and providers in New York. She also built a claims auditing and review system for a third-party administrator. She also started her own company to process, audit, and review claims.

Conroy has applied her HIM knowledge to such far-reaching projects as analyzing and developing provider fee schedules, conducting patient and provider satisfaction surveys, participating in payment contract negotiations with providers, customizing claims processing systems, and establishing geo-access maps of all the providers for a given membership group. She provides this nontraditional clinical site for students. She has taken AHIMA's Vision 2006 Strategy Plan and implemented new career opportunities within the changing marketplace of managed care.

Educator Award

Elizabeth Bowman, MPA, RRA

Elizabeth "Beth" Bowman, MPA, RRA, receives the Educator Award, which honors those who demonstrate excellence in preparing the next generation of professionals for their HIM careers.

Bowman, who is professor and assistant chairman of the department of health information management in the College of Allied Health Sciences at the University of Tennessee, Memphis, is the faculty member primarily responsible for computing courses in the HIM curriculum. She has overseen three complete reconfigurations of their dedicated computer laboratory, including repeated redesigns of the computer courses to change with the needs of the students and the marketplace. She has retained the teaching responsibility for these courses to ensure the pertinence and quality of course content. She spearheaded the use of computer-assisted instruction in coding for HIM students.

Bowman has taught numerous coding workshops to HIM professionals, physician office personnel, pharmacists, accountants, and other healthcare professionals. She has published extensively, including a chapter in *Health Information: Management of a Strategic Resource* and in *Comparative Records in Health Information Management*.

An AHIMA leader in several capacities, Bowman has been workgroup leader of the HIM Model Curriculum Project; chairman of the Committee on Professional Development, and a member of the Joint Committee on Education. She has been on the Board of Directors of the Assembly on Education since 1996 and is the 1999 chair. She has also served as president of the Tennessee Health Information Management Association.

Educator Award

Donna J. Slovensky, PhD, RRA

A pioneer in the development, implementation, and evaluation of creative teaching tools and methods, Donna J. Slovensky, PhD, RRA, receives AHIMA's Educator Award. This award honors those who demonstrate excellence in preparing the next generation of professionals for their HIM careers.

An associate professor and director of the bachelor's in allied health program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Slovensky has been active in researching, studying, and analyzing new developments within the HIM field. She has published often, including *Benchmarking Best Practices in HIM Education*, and she also enjoys mentoring students, who often seek her advice.

Slovensky is a current member of the Council on Accreditation and has served 14 years on the Panel of Accreditation Surveyors. She has been a member of the Research Review Panel, the Board of Directors of the Quality Management Section, the Item Development Committee, and the House of Delegates more than five times. She has also been very active in state and regional associations. She served as president of the Alabama Association of Health Information Management from 1985 to 1986 and was president of the Southeastern Health Information Management Association from 1989 to 1990.

Motivator Award

Mary B. Crossman, RRA

AHIMA presents the Motivator Award to Mary B. Crossman, RRA. For more than 40 years, Crossman has inspired and encouraged countless health information management and technical students and graduates while overseeing HIM functions for Mississippi State Hospital, a 2000+-bed residential, psychiatric, and skilled nursing facility. She is often called "the dean of medical records."

Crossman has been a clinical instructor for the University of Mississippi Medical Center's RRA program and the Hinds Community College ART program since their inception more than 30 years ago. She has served as a role model for many future professionals by motivating HIM students and encouraging noncredentialed employees to enroll in an HIM program. Her former students are scattered throughout Mississippi and many other states and hold positions in HIM, compliance, cancer registry, utilization review, and patient business services. Three members of the Mississippi State Health Information Management Association's (MSHIMA) 1999-2000 Executive Board are Crossman's former students or employees.

Crossman also encourages involvement with state and local HIM associations. She has been very active with MSHIMA, having chaired virtually every committee over the years. In 1981 she received the MSHIMA Distinguished Member Award and in 1996 was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award. She has also been active on the national level, serving on multiple committees for both AHIMA and the Southeastern HIMA. Crossman also received the Mental Health Section's Pioneer Award in 1993. Many of Crossman's students and employees have followed in her footsteps by volunteering on the local, state, and national levels.

Motivator Award

Joan Compton Hicks, MS, RRA

Joan Compton Hicks, MS, RRA, receives the Motivator Award for commitment, expertise, and excellence in clinical supervision.

Hicks has been a faculty member, professional practice preceptor, guest lecturer, and advisory committee member. Her "real-world" experience and enthusiasm for working with students in clinicals have made her a favorite instructor. She has hired students as part-time employees and graduates as full-time employees, giving them the chance to learn and grow as HIM professionals.

Hicks encourages involvement in state and local Alabama HIM associations. She is a member of both AHIMA and HIMSS and is involved with the state chapters of these organizations. On the national level, she has been a member of several committees for both AHIMA and the Southeastern HIMA. She has also served as president of both the Alabama Health Information Management Association (HIMA) and Alabama Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS). Hicks is the recipient of the 1997 Outstanding Preceptor Award from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Outstanding Graduate Award from the University of Alabama at Birmingham's School of Health Related Professions, and the 1994 Alabama HIMA Distinguished Member Award.

Mentor Award

Rebecca J. Yates, MEd, RRA

Outstanding professionalism, exceptional leadership, unwavering encouragement, tireless dedication, and unparalleled guidance of HIM professionals have earned Rebecca "Becky" J. Yates the Mentor Award.

Since 1986, Yates has served as chairman of the Department of Health Information Management at the University of Mississippi School of Health-Related Professions. During her 30-year tenure at UMC, she has made countless visits and presentations to high schools, community colleges, and senior colleges and universities to encourage interest and enrollment in HIM. During the admissions process to UMC, many students mention having heard Yates speak about HIM. From the time of their acceptance into the program and long after graduation, Yates encourages, mentors, and supports her students. She

encourages academic excellence, involvement in the state and local HIM associations, and pursuit of the career path to which the student is best suited.

Yates is a mentor not only to her students, but also to her fellow educators at UMC. She has encouraged coworkers to author and edit publications, develop the HIM-L listserv, further their own academic growth, and be involved with AHIMA and the Mississippi Health Information Management Association. She stays in touch with people who have graduated from UMC's program—as one reference stated, she can tell you where almost every graduate is employed and their married name.

Achievement Award

Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RRA, CHE

The Achievement Award, for creativity, innovation, forward thinking, and leadership in moving HIM toward fulfilling the Vision 2006 initiatives goes to Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RRA, CHE.

Currently, Gordon serves as director of operations for Shands Healthcare in Gainesville, FL. She is responsible for radiology, environment, food and nutrition services, laboratory, materials management, safety and security, health information and records management, telecommunications, patient financial services, pharmacy, admissions, engineering services, respiratory services, information services, gift shop, cancer care center, and rehabilitation services.

Her accomplishments at this 410-bed facility include development of a master facility model to outline future campus renovations; increased productivity and reduced salary budget; streamlined operations and greater efficiency through teamwork; reducing roadblocks; simplifying complex processes; improving role focus; and decreasing overlap throughout the organization while enhancing quality and service. She initiated laboratory consolidation efforts between sister hospitals and revamped the entire outpatient service division. Gordon initiated a Joint Commission preparation team, "Cruising to Commendation," and led the team. She represents community hospitals on a systemwide compensation team and is an advocate for the philosophy of patient-driven care.

Gordon also serves on the IM task force for the Joint Commission and is on the North Florida Regents Advisory Council for the American College of Healthcare Executives. She has served the Georgia state association as president and was recognized as a distinguished member.

CPR Breakthrough Award

Penny M. Bennett, RRA

For commitment, dedication, and perseverance in achieving enhanced information integration, access, security, and computerization of patient health records, Penny M. Bennett, RRA, receives the CPR Breakthrough Award.

Bennett has made significant contributions to advancing the state-of-the-art in computer-based patient records. She has accomplished this through her work as project manager in information system development of a computer-based record—first for St. Vincent Hospital and Health System and now for Community Hospital Corporation of Indiana. Bennett has worked extensively with American Management Systems, Inc., in the ongoing development and enhancement of their RecordLink (electronic medical record) application.

Consequently, in 1998 her facility, St. Vincent Health System, was nominated as an entry to the Smithsonian Institution for Technological Advancement and the Rheinert Group for IT Innovator. She also has contributed her expertise to the effective implementation and operation of workflow development. She has served on various committees and task forces, and presented her knowledge in various professional programs and presentations. Bennett has paved the way in information leadership and represented HIM abilities to hospital administration and within the information systems world. She has encouraged and motivated other HIM professionals to take an active role in information systems and given them guidance on how to be successful in implementing these programs at their institutions.

Rising Star Award

Karen A. Rosendale, RRA

The 1999 Rising Star Award, recognizing one of our promising new health information management professionals, goes to Karen A. Rosendale, RRA.

A 1994 graduate of Temple University, Rosendale began as founding director of medical records and information services at Mediplex Rehabilitation Hospital, a 70-bed facility in Marlton, NJ. She then relocated to Rockville, MD, and was manager of medical records from December 1996 to October 1997 at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, a 253-bed acute care facility. From October 1997 to June 1999, she was associate director of health information management at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, a 1,200-bed facility with numerous clinics throughout New York City. In July 1999, Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center named Rosendale senior director of health information management.

Rosendale's responsibilities include a \$7.4 million operating budget and the day-to-day direction and management of 205 employees, 25 management staff, and 180 non-management staff. She reduced accounts receivables by \$10 million so that unbilled accounts were under \$2 million. She installed an electronic signature application to expedite chart completion and improve patient care. She created an employee orientation packet and started quality improvement and statistics training for all management staff. Rosendale also implemented optical imaging for all peer review organization (PRO) reviews, loose sheets, and risk management records.

During these years, Rosendale found time to contribute to the HIM field through published articles in *In Confidence* and *Advance*. She also has been featured in interviews in *Advance* and *Medical Records Briefing*. Her willingness to challenge tradition, take risks, and think critically has made her a rising star in the profession.

New Frontier Award**Laura Herndon**

AHIMA presents the New Frontier Award recognizing the best of the new talent trained in health information to Laura Herndon. This award goes to a gifted student who embodies great hope as we look to the future of our field.

Herndon always finds a way to achieve her goal, regardless of the obstacles in her path. Her primary goal was to graduate from Santa Barbara City College's new distance learning health information technology program. Not only was she a new student in a new program, she also added distance learning to the mix, amplifying the challenge. Herndon boldly charged ahead and immediately took on the responsibility of student facilitator for her study group, rapidly becoming a mentor to other students.

Successful in her first year of studies, Herndon faced another challenge: she moved out of state. In her new home state of Washington, she located new HIM mentors, identified proctors for her exams, and secured an excellent facility for her professional directed practice.

She is described as a pioneering spirit possessing true leadership qualities. She also graduated with a 3.9 grade point average. Herndon is an excellent example of the HIM professional of the future—she stayed committed, faced challenges, took risks, and met her goals.

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