

Congratulations to the 2000 Triumph Award Winners: Honoring Those who Make a Difference

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AHIMA has a long and cherished tradition of honoring the excellence, dedication, and service of professionals whose efforts have bettered the HIM field. This time-honored celebration of outstanding accomplishment continues with the 2000 Triumph Awards.

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 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 2000 National Convention in October.

AHIMA gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Lanier Worldwide, Inc. A contribution from Lanier Worldwide, Inc. to AHIMA's Foundation of Research and Education (FORE) has made this awards program and other AHIMA leadership development programs possible.

Distinguished Member Award

Jean Clark, 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 recipient is Jean Clark, RHIA.

Clark is a born leader, having served as an active member in AHIMA, many local CSAs, and internationally for more than 30 years, including service as AHIMA president in 1995. She participates in various seminars and is a published author. Her personal commitment to our profession and its future is apparent.

Clark's work in the international arena made a positive impact not only on AHIMA but also the HIM profession as a whole. Through her work in the International Federation of Health Records Organization, Clark represents the best that the US HIM profession has to offer. She demonstrates a capacity for global thinking and has provided us with visions of the future and backed them up with the hard work of creating the future through participation in national and worldwide HIM activities. Clark is truly our ambassador-at-large, and there is no question that she is most deserving of this honor.

Champion Award

Ruby Nicholson, RHIT

For her long-term and enthusiastic support of AHIMA, Ruby Nicholson, RHIT, receives the Champion Award.

Her work has been instrumental in promoting the HIM profession at both the state and national level. Nicholson cowrote and edited the legislative manual currently used by most Rhode Island healthcare institutions. She has also testified before that state's legislature on several occasions, shaping major confidentiality legislation.

As a past president, board member, and chair of numerous Rhode Island Health Information Management Association committees, she encourages her fellow professionals to consider each task a new challenge. She has served as chair of AHIMA's Behavioral Health Section and as a speaker at various state and regional meetings. She was also invited to speak at the International Federation of Health Records Congress in Australia. "She constantly works for the betterment of patient documentation, education for her peers, and support of her national organization. She has a quiet way of instilling the need to

succeed in everyone she encounters," one of her peers writes. With these qualities and more, Nicholson exemplifies the qualities of a champion for the profession.

Volunteer Award

Viola Griffin, RHIT, CPHQ

Webster's dictionary defines a volunteer as a person who freely chooses to do or offer something. Since obtaining her credentials in 1968, Viola Griffin, RHIT, CPHQ, has freely served AHIMA for 30 years. In most of those years, she has served in more than one role, and in each role she accepts, she demonstrates her dedication and leadership abilities. One of her peers writes, "The most impressive aspect of her volunteerism is the altruistic nature of her contributions. She loves the profession, and it shows." Griffin's involvement at every level of the organization and at every opportunity demonstrates her dedication to AHIMA and its members.

Griffin's level of enthusiasm, commitment, and contribution to the goals of her volunteer group inspire all who work with her. She serves as a role model and mentor to those in the group and to those entering our profession. She gives unselfishly and protects the interests of the members she serves.

Professional organizations thrive on the talent and contributions of their members. Many members benefit from their organization, but few rise to the occasion to offer their time and energy in return. Griffin truly represents the best of what a volunteer can be.

Legacy Award

Bonnie S. Cassidy, MPA, FHIMSS, RHIA

The enduring tradition of the Edna K. Huffman Literary Award—the basis for the Legacy Award—honors significant contributions to the HIM field's knowledge base through insightful publications. Bonnie Cassidy, MPA, FHIMSS, RHIA, contributes to the HIM profession through her literary work, including a recent monthly column in the *Journal of AHIMA* focused on HIPAA. Her articles are extremely informative and provide excellent practice-related skills and methods. She demonstrates the highest level of achievement by offering guidance and assistance to others through her many publications and services. Her dedication to improving the practice abilities of our HIM professionals, while raising the image of HIM practice, is a key component of information management and technology strategies for a successful healthcare organization.

Cassidy's personal leadership is exemplified in her achievement and recognition as a fellow in HIMSS, a Certified Professional in Utilization Review, a diplomat of the American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians, certification by the National Committee for Quality Assurance as a Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality, and her master's degree with specialization in healthcare administration. A professional who is always several steps ahead of the rest when in representing and understanding our professional services, Cassidy indeed deserves AHIMA's Legacy Award.

Visionary Award

Deborah K. Green, MBA, RHIA

AHIMA presents the Visionary Award recipient to Deborah K. Green, MBA, RHIA, for paving the way to Vision 2006 and tomorrow's healthcare practice through leadership and professional practice. Since she was first employed in health information in the early 1970s, Green has rarely held a "traditional" health information position.

Specializing in operations management, quality, utilization, accreditation, data quality, and prospective payment, Green was nationally active with AHIMA and the American Hospital Association in translating manufacturing models for continuous quality improvement to the healthcare setting. Furthermore, she has a distinguished presentation and publication history. Whether working as an internal or external consultant or in corporate management, Green is respected for her ability to see beyond complex, multi-dimensional challenges and transform them into simplified sets of achievable tasks.

In 1996, Green moved to Mariner Post-Acute Network, where she serves as vice president of business systems strategy for a 400-facility, multibillion dollar organization. With these and other achievements, Green has truly helped broaden the horizons for health information practitioners.

Educator Award

Mary Alice Hanken, PhD, RHIA

Mary Alice Hanken, PhD, RHIA, receives the Educator Award for demonstrating excellence in preparing the next generation of HIM professionals.

Hanken has served as assistant professor and chair of the HIA department at Seattle University and as director and senior lecturer at the University of Washington's HIA program. Currently, she is a consultant, project manager, and part-time senior lecturer. Hanken has also acted as an advisor for HIA students and numerous prospective students each year. She oversees independent study students and assists with student internships and projects at locations throughout the northwestern US.

Hanken has coedited and coauthored several texts, raising standards with titles like *Electronic Health Records: Changing the Vision* and *Health Information: Management of a Strategic Resource*. She has written numerous articles and resources that inspire others to develop their own facility standards.

In addition, she is instrumental in bridging the informatics continuum with her leadership as chair of ASTM Subcommittee E31.17 on Confidentiality, Access, Privacy, and Security. Hanken also has served as a member of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the HealthCare Informatics Planning Panel and as chair of the ANSI HISPP Confidentiality Work Group. Clearly, she demonstrates the stellar educational leadership that develops the value compasses of AHIMA's future members.

Motivator Award

Sally Maguire, RHIA

For demonstrating excellence in supervised professional practice, Sally Maguire, RHIA, receives the Motivator Award. In her role as a clinical supervisor dedicated to the enrichment of the student experience at both the HIA program at St. Louis University and the HIT program at St. Charles County Community College, Maguire continues to instill enthusiasm for the profession in her students. She is known for her ability to involve students in all aspects of departmental activities.

Maguire serves on the advisory committee for HIM at St. Louis University and is a past president of the School of Allied Health's alumni board and of the Eastern Missouri Health Information Management Association and is a guest lecturer on mental health records in both programs. As one of her students puts it, "It's obvious that she loves her job and wants to get others enthused about working in the HIM field."

Mentor Award

Andrea Romero, RHIT, CCS, CPC

Outstanding professionalism, exceptional leadership, unwavering encouragement, tireless dedication, and unparalleled guidance of HIM professionals earn Andrea "Andy" Romero, RHIT, CCS, CPC, the Mentor Award.

Romero is recognized as a mentor not only for leading people but also for helping them develop will and courage. In a state that has the lowest number of credentialed HIM members in the nation, it is common for her to travel for hours to deliver an educational seminar to share her knowledge. Romero also serves as a mentor by working with the New Mexico state "welfare to work" program. She conducts classes for welfare recipients, showing them how to work in a medical records setting and taking them on site. Working with the New Mexico Health Information Management Association (NMHIMA) board, she brought classes and the RHIT program to New Mexico and is working toward developing an RHIA program at a local university. Romero, who has served on the NMHIMA board as a member at large, became president of the group in July 2000.

Mentor Award

Carol J. Barr, MA, RHIA, HRMC

Carol J. Barr, MA, RHIA, HRMC, receives AHIMA's Mentor Award. Since 1990, Barr has served as director of the HIM program at the University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando. She has demonstrated a long-term commitment to volunteering for regional, state, and national associations and encourages her students to do the same. She has served as a Florida delegate for several years and was state association president in 1988. She received the Florida Distinguished Service Award and the highest honor of the Distinguished Member Award.

Barr's peers and students say she is always there for prospective or current students, graduates, and colleagues. She is cited by many as a friend, confidant, and mentor, helping others believe in themselves and inspiring many to do their best. She has also helped many new graduates find their first jobs and mentored many others long after graduation. In addition to being a mentor to those at UCF, Barr is recognized for helping newcomers to the area. She has encouraged them to get involved in their local and state associations, helping to create many new friends and networks.

Achievement Award

Minnette Terlep, RHIT

A nationally recognized expert in the HIM field with more than 30 years' experience, Minnette Terlep, RHIT, receives the Achievement Award.

Terlep is currently senior vice president for United Audit Systems, Inc. (UASI), a national healthcare consulting firm. Her own company, MT Associates, merged with UASI in 1997. This merger enhanced UASI with Terlep's expertise in HIM, case mix analysis, and software development. She developed a suite of coding compliance products for UASI and is completing the development of a compliance tool for the new Ambulatory Payment Classification (APC) system and a tool to analyze hospitals' ambulatory service mix indices.

Her achievement in the development of software tools demonstrates her true commitment to quality in coding and to providing assistance to other HIM professionals. A frequent speaker at state and regional HIM association meetings, Terlep also has published many articles. She is truly dedicated to data integrity and further progression of HIM and deserves AHIMA's Achievement Award.

Rising Star Award

Laura N. Meier, RHIA

In her four short years as an HIM professional, Laura N. Meier, RHIA, has accomplished a great deal and proved to be a rising star. She is an energized, hard-working, gifted professional who embraced the challenges of the healthcare sales field and has quickly broken several sales quota records in positions held in Indiana and Illinois. She is a valued, trusted employee who won respect and recognition from her employers and brought a new level of respect for HIM professionals into diverse healthcare companies.

Meier is described by her peers as "a valuable asset to the company, an integral part of the management team, and a bright, energetic, positive, and fun person to work with." She has pioneered a niche in the nontraditional sales divisions of larger companies and frequently speaks as a guest lecturer to future HIM and HIT students, sparking their interest in the field and energizing them for their own future. She also broke ground in accepting students to her nontraditional clinical site. A 1996 honors graduate from the Indiana University School of Medicine, Meier is an active AHIMA volunteer and treasurer of the Indiana Health Information Management Association.

New Frontier Award

Bunnie J. Cobb, CCS

The future looks bright when viewed through the eyes of AHIMA's New Frontier Award winner, Bunnie J. Cobb, CCS.

Cobb's tenacity and natural curiosity have made her a recognized coding expert throughout the HIM community. She doesn't wait to be asked to share her knowledge—she frequently requests opportunities to educate. Through tutoring her classmates, writing articles for the Society of Clinical Coding publication, or making presentations on APCs, Cobb's outstanding service to her school and regional HIM association set her apart even during her first year as a student.

She continuously promotes professional quality by organizing student activities, such as forming a student network to work on coding skills during summer breaks, actively participating in open houses to encourage students to enter the HIM field, and serving as student liaison to her regional HIM association, a data quality and reimbursement council member, and a state level representative. Cobb works tirelessly to improve student attendance and participation at the regional HIM level, breathing new life into the organization. Her consistently bright and cheerful personality is always welcome as she generously shares her knowledge throughout the HIM profession.

Thanks to the 2000 Awards Committee:

Holly A.M. Ballam, RHIA chair
Jeanne M. Donnelley, RHIA
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Linda L. Lum, RHIA
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