

Mission: Dr. Eileen Ridgway Nursing Outreach Scholarship Story

Mission and Vision

To kindle and fuel leadership by encouraging nursing student development in community outreach, service, and civic efforts while supporting professional growth in research and scholarship.

Dr Eileen Ridgway, Dean Emerita, College of Nursing, Seattle University

Dr. Ridgway was a member of Sigma Theta Tau for 32 years. She was associated with the College of Nursing for approximately 20 years. From 1968-1977, she served as Seattle University's Dean of Nursing. Eileen Ridgway's character was evidenced in her daring and outspoken leadership. She relentlessly addressed the needs of our community's under-served population (e.g., served as the Project Director for the Hill Family Foundation for Curriculum Study.) She challenged others to speak out and take actions toward promoting justice in health care delivery and policy. Her support for others who focused their energy toward society's vulnerable was unflinching. Dr. Ridgway was a person of strong, traditional Catholic values. She believed that in order to be genuine – one needed to 'walk the talk'. She lived the Jesuit ministries of sanctity of life and social justice.

Dr. Eileen Ridgway Outreach Scholarship of Alpha Sigma Chapter/ Sigma Theta Tau

The Dr. Eileen Ridgway Outreach Fund was established in 1996 during the 30th anniversary of Seattle University's Sigma Theta Tau Chapter (Alpha Sigma). The selection of the anniversary banquet's keynote speaker, Dr. Eileen Ridgway, generated excitement about ways in which the chapter could become involved in justice issues, such as patient advocacy through community outreach. The chapter's board reflected on the relationships between Sigma Theta Tau International's mission, the chapter's history and mission, and Dr. Eileen Ridgway's contribution. The desire to foster excellence, scholarship and leadership in nursing through community outreach grew and the Eileen Ridgway Outreach Scholarship Fund was founded. The first scholarship was awarded in 1997.

In 2004, the Ridgway Scholarship Committee of the Alpha Sigma Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau gifted the balance of the fund to Seattle University. This created the Dr. Eileen Ridgway Endowed Scholarship Fund. The Ridgway Outreach Scholarship has continued to grow as part of the Seattle University Endowment. The Ridgway Outreach Scholarship Committee resides within the domain of Seattle University's Sigma Theta Tau Chapter (Alpha Sigma).

Inspirations

Memories of nursing alumnae who knew Dr. Ridgway provide an enhanced view of this remarkable woman.

"I am not sure that I would be in nursing without Dean Ridgway. I was impressed with her at the introductory information night that I attended – and believe now – as I did then - that she cared about nursing as a vocation, not just a job. She inspired personal responsibility for practice, never losing sight of the whole view of patient and family. I believe that many of the positive things in my own practice are directly traceable to the influence of Dean Ridgway."

"Dean Ridgway was 'ahead of the curve' in respect to nursing and its impact. In the 60's and 70's, schools of nursing focused on the art and science of nursing. Dr. Ridgway took the focus of nursing a step further. She challenged and inspired us to look beyond the clinical setting. She posed questions regarding economic and social inequity. Dr. Ridgway wove the words of poverty and injustice together. She modeled hands on patient advocacy – both in the clinical setting and the community. This sacred element of care delivery/sanctity of life was expected to be examined and practiced".