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EDITORIAL

On the Shoulders of Giants . . .

THE WORLD OF nursing has recently lost one of its most energetic scholars. Dr. Martha E. Rogers died in Phoenix, AZ, on March 13, 1994. Dr. Rogers was well known around the world for her contributions to nursing science and education. She wrote more than 200 articles, published in international journals, and gave several hundred presentations and professional papers around the world. In addition to her vast work in the United States, Dr. Rogers provided consultations and workshops in Brazil, Canada, China, Columbia, Japan, Egypt, the Netherlands, Italy, and many other countries. The most famous of her publications, "An Introduction to the Scientific Basis of Nursing," was translated into many languages. This publication was often referred to simply as "the purple book." The color purple was symbolically associated with Rogers herself, for it represented the expanding dimensions of what she taught.

Nurses throughout the world were influenced by Martha Rogers. She stimulated them to challenge the status quo in health care and to introduce new understandings from other sciences into the theoretical thinking in nursing. Her work led to the development of many others theories; she laid the groundwork for a new generation of thinking about the science and professional practice of nursing. Her contribution to nursing was in both the breadth and depth of her thinking about the scientific nature of nursing specifically and of health generally. She opened new avenues of thinking in and about

nursing, especially through concept development and analysis.

Rogers devoted her entire life to the development of professional nursing and was committed to spreading the knowledge about nursing throughout her life. Even in her last years, despite poor physical health, she continued to travel and speak to hundreds of nurses, encouraging them to think critically about their practice. Her message was challenging and exciting. It is best reflected in the following passage, written by Dr. Rogers in 1966 and published as the Preface to the Italian edition of her book.

Nursing's story is a magnificent epic of service to mankind. It is about people: how they are born, and live and die; in health and in sickness; in joy and in sorrow. Its mission is the translation of knowledge into human service.

Nursing is compassionate concern for human beings. It is the heart that understands and the hand that soothes. It is the intellect that synthesizes many leanings into meaningful ministrations.

For students of nursing the future is a rich repository of far-flung opportunities around the planet and toward the further reaches of man's explorations of new worlds and new ideas. There is the promise of deep satisfaction in a field long dedicated to serving the health needs of people.

As one of the most influential leaders in nursing, Dr. Rogers was the recipient of hundreds of professional and scientific awards and recognitions. She received more than 12 honorary doctorates from universities in the United States. In recogni-

tion of her work and symbolic of her theories of nursing as expanding the boundaries of contemporary thinking, a star in the galaxy was registered through the International Star Registry in her name. The star in Ursa Major numbered RA9h33m56sd 48 and named Martha Elizabeth Rogers is registered in Switzerland and in the U.S. Copyright Office. Also, in recognition of her contributions, the Society of Rogerian Scholars was founded in 1986. The focus of the society is to disseminate knowledge of nursing science through education, research, and practice in service to humankind.

Dr. Rogers' work is reflected in her many professional writings. She will remain an influence

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both through her publications and through the many students of nursing she influenced through her teaching and formal publications. All those who knew her are encouraged to keep her spirit alive, to study her work, and to derive meanings from her teachings and to explore the implications of her thought for contemporary nursing.

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