

# History

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## History: 1933-1996

*by Eula Sforza, NACN-USA President 1993-1996 and  
Mary Terese Pellizzari, NACN-USA Secretary/Treasurer 1993-1997*

### 1933

Ten delegations of professional national associations, conscious of the universal values of nursing, assembled in Lourdes, France and officially founded CICIAMS, the International Catholic Committee for Nurses and Medico-Social Assistants.

CICIAMS sponsors World Congresses every 4 years in different countries by invitation of the local (national/regional) member associations.

### 1970

The National Council of Catholic Nurses of the United States disbanded, but some local councils and chapters continued to meet including those in New England, New York, Chicago, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, and California. The councils/chapters in New England were the most numerous and also met regionally each year.

### 1977

Eula Sforza joined the Chicago Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Nurses. Mary Grisafe and Claire Lareau were already members.

### 1982

CICIAMS invited members of the Chicago Council to attend their XII World Congress in Australia. Eula, Mary Grisafe, and Claire attended this congress which made them aware of the need for a national council in the United States.

## **1983**

Eula attended the New England Diocesan Councils of Catholic Nurses 24th annual Regional Conference which was held in Providence, Rhode Island and was chaired by Jan Morrissette (RI).

## **1986**

CICIAMS held its XIII World Congress in Portugal. Eula and Claire attended and extended an invitation to have the next congress in Chicago.

## **1987**

In January Eula called Mary Ellen Durbin, Joliet Catholic Charities, expressing a desire to start a council in the Joliet Diocese. Mary Ellen suggested Eula contact Mary Terese Pellizzari who also had expressed the same interest. Eula and Mary Terese began organizing the Council of Catholic Nurses of the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois. Eula and Claire asked Cardinal Joseph Bernardin for permission to host the 1990 CICIAMS XIV World Congress in Chicago and began researching locations, professional conference planners, hotels and travel arrangements. They attended a CICIAMS XIV World Congress planning session in Brussels, Belgium. The Chicago Archdiocesan Council decided to withdraw as host of the 1990 World Congress. Eula and Claire returned to Brussels for a second planning session and offered to have the newly formed Council of Catholic Nurses of the Diocese of Joliet, IL host the XIV World Congress. CICIAMS President Liliana Fiori met with Cardinal John O'Connor in Rome, and he offered to host the XIV World Congress in New York City.

## **1990**

The XIV World Congress of CICIAMS was held in New York City. Fifty-eight United States nurses met informally with CICIAMS Vice President Richard Lai of Malaysia to discuss forming a national organization of Catholic nurses. Donations were accepted and volunteer officers were willing to accomplish this goal.

## **1993**

Eula and Mary Terese tried contacting the original volunteer officers, found that no progress had been made to form a national organization, and reached the volunteer treasurer who sent the donations collected at the 1990 meeting. April 16-18, a Midwest Catholic Nurse Conference was held in Lisle, Illinois. Twenty-one nurses volunteered at this meeting to support a national organization. They became part of the Formation Committee. Eula (IL) volunteered to become acting President, Marylee Meehan (MA) acting Vice President, and Mary Terese

(IL) acting Secretary-Treasurer. Bishop Joseph L. Imesch gave his permission to form the National Association Catholic Nurses - USA in the Joliet, Illinois Diocese and agreed to be our Spiritual Advisor. The Council of Catholic Nurses of the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois donated \$4,000 to help form NACN-USA. The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Quebec, Canada donated \$1,000 , and Sister Rachel Lafrance's Fall River Council (MA) donated \$100. Several other nurses contributed \$20-\$100 donations to get NACN-USA operating.

## **1993-94**

NACN-USA membership steadily grew as we continued to search for existing local councils of Catholic Nurses. In our search for existing councils and new members, we wrote to all the US bishops and put notices in many diocesan newspapers. October 1993, we attended the 34th New England Regional Conference held in Springfield, Massachusetts.

## **1994**

August 28-September 2, 1994, twenty US nurses attended the CICIAMS XV World Congress in Leeuven, Belgium. At this Congress the NACN-USA was voted a full member of CICIAMS with voting privileges. October 14-16, 1994, we had a NACN-USA business meeting during the 35th New England Regional Conference in Hartford, CT and began planning the first NACN-USA Conference with Evelyn Jacobs (AZ).

## **1995**

In January 1995, the first NACN-USA Conference was held in Tucson, AZ under the direction of Conference Chairperson Phyllis Ethridge (AZ) our NACN-USA Southwest Representative and Co-Chairperson Evelyn Jacobs (AZ) and was sponsored by the newly formed and growing Arizona Council which had 23 members. Father Bernard Kenny (RI) led us in prayer. Father J. Joseph Kierce (MA) donated \$100 for seed money to start new councils and continued to make \$100 donations for this purpose. October 1995, at the NACN-USA business meeting held during the 36th New England Regional Conference in Cape Cod, it was agreed by our members to keep the NACN-USA office in the Midwest because of its central location, and to continue the post office box address in Lisle, IL, because we had Bishop Imesch's permission to operate in the Diocese of Joliet, IL. We needed a permanent office location to keep copies of all records and correspondence, which were being shifted between the homes of Eula and Mary Terese. Eula offered permanent office space in her home and the use of her personal fax machine, word processor, and phone at no cost to NACN-USA, except for paper and ink.

## **1996**

In May 1996, with the help of Sister Judith Davies, Chancellor of the Joliet Diocese, we applied to the US Catholic Conference for inclusion in their Group Ruling and to be listed in the Official Catholic Directory, both of which were finally granted on October 30, 1996.

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## **History: 1996-1998**

*by Marylee Meehan, NACN-USA President 1996-1998*

The second NACN-USA Conference was held in Providence, RI and was hosted by the Rhode Island Council of Catholic Nurses and directed by Chairperson Jan Morrissette and Co-Chairperson Marylee (MA) who become the new NACN-USA President at this conference.

The growth and further development of the organization governed by the Board of Directors for the years of my presidency was as follows:

### **LEGAL**

Our organization was accepted by and included in the CATHOLIC DIRECTORY. The Illinois Department of Revenue declined our request of a sales tax number. We consulted the Joliet Diocesan lawyer regarding our initiation of local councils and the need for liability insurance, which was encouraged and obtained. All Board Members were encouraged to obtain their own liability insurance. We became incorporated in the state of Illinois. We also had concerns about giving ethical advice, confidential phone calls and written correspondence. The unauthorized logo use was another concern.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Our major means of meeting our objectives of this association regarding education in Catholic medical ethics, spiritual growth and being an umbrella for Catholic student nurses were met by holding yearly conferences (Lisle, IL and Washington, DC) and mailing three newsletters a year.

### **OTHER**

Publicity reached almost every state in the country. Seventy new members joined in one year. One new council was formed, The Greater Delaware Valley Council of Catholic Nurses, Aston, PA. Several inquiries were made with the intent of starting new councils. The number of states with members grew. By-laws were refined. Logo pins were made for the 1999 Conference to be held in Sedona, AZ by the Tucson Catholic Nurses.

## **SPIRITUALITY**

Catholic nurses were encouraged to promote White (uniform) Masses, participate in First Saturday Masses, and pray the rosary in their area. Plans were formulated for the JUBILEE YEAR 2000 PILGRIMAGE to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC for the World Day of the Sick, February 11, 2000.

## **STUDENTS**

Our student membership increased. A student survey was accomplished. Some of our members became mentors to our student members. Our two student Board Members participated in our teleconferences, and money was raised by the President for these two student members to attend the Board Meeting and Conference in Washington, CD. Monies were raised for scholarships and two scholarships were awarded.

## **EXPANSION**

We worked on the development of the five regions, new application forms, the need for a web page, and the need for new office space. Our standing committees were expanded. We worked within our budget and stayed financially solvent.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Our means of extensive communication were by correspondence, phone, fax and telecommunication. We were promoting the need for e-mail.

## **CICIAMS**

As members of CICIAMS, we were asked and it was approved by our association to take on the responsibilities of the proposed new NORTH AMERICAN REGION OF CICIAMS. I was voted President for the first two years and Marlene Rasmussen for the second two years. The new region and the two presidents were presented and accepted at the XVI World Congress of CICIAMS in Taipei, Taiwan, ROC in September 1998.

## **REPRESENTATION**

During my presidency, I represented NACN-USA at the General Council of CICIAMS and the EUROPEAN CONGRESS held in the Netherlands in 1996. I also represented NACN-USA at the opening ceremony of THE GREATER DELAWARE COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC NURSES in Pennsylvania in 1998 and THE WALK FOR LIFE held in Boston in 1997 and in Washington, DC in 1998.

# CONCLUSION

Every area of our national organization grew as did the members of the Board of Directors and standing committees. God blessed us abundantly with such dedicated members willing to do His work in this very important mission.

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## History: 1998-2000

*by Marlene Rasmussen, NACN-USA President 1998-2000*

Marlene Rasmussen, RN, MS, was installed as the third NACN-USA President at the 1998 Washington, DC Conference. The theme of her presidency was "This is the Day the Lord Has Made, Let Us Rejoice and Be Glad." Marlene started out by forming eleven committees with fifty-four members participating from all over the USA. During the two years, Marlene, the NACN-USA Board and Committees:

1. Changed the format of the newsletter and created a Web page
2. Wrote the criteria for the NACN-USA Student Nurse Award
3. Worked on a marketing plan
4. Wrote articles for Catholic newspapers, alumni associations and church bulletins
5. Sent letters to all Cardinals and Bishops in the USA
6. Answered ethical questions
7. Increased membership

In February 2000, the Spiritual Committee organized a NACN-USA pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, in Washington, DC, for the millennium, while other NACN-USA members went to Rome for the CICIAMS pilgrimage.

The NACN-USA annual conferences were held in Sedona, AZ in 1999 and Aston, PA in 2000. During this time some members worked on designing a brochure for our organization while others formed four new local councils in Buffalo, NY; Livonia, MI; Granger, IN; and Franklin, IN. Others expressed interest in starting councils in Washington, DC; Knoxville, TN; and St. Petersburg, FL. The Regional Representatives started to develop their own regions by writing letters to their regional members. A Membership Directory was printed by a firm in Wisconsin, and the Eula Sforza Membership Award of \$100 was established to honor the person who brings in ten or more new members.

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