

Oncology Nursing Society Member Receives Prestigious Nurse-Oncologist Award

Patricia S. Ault, MSN, RN, Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) member and nurse practitioner in the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center's Department of Leukemia, is the recipient of the 2008 Ethel Fleming Arceneaux Outstanding Nurse-Oncologist Award.

Funded by the Brown Foundation, Inc., since 1982, the Arceneaux Award recognizes exceptional nurses at M.D. Anderson who are selected by a committee representing M.D. Anderson's clinical faculty, patient care administration, and nursing staff. Ault accepted a cash award of \$15,000, a crystal plaque, and a commemorative pin.

"I was honored to be nominated for the Arceneaux Award, shocked to be one of the finalists, and elated beyond belief to know I was the recipient," said Ault, an acute, adult, and family nurse practitioner in the hematology division of the institution's leukemia department. "The award is an endorsement of my goal to treat each patient with compassion while providing expert nursing care at M.D. Anderson."

Describing herself as a "walking billboard for M.D. Anderson" and its public education and prevention services, Ault is eager to put her \$15,000 prize money to work benefiting others. She is establishing a prevention clinic through a Weight Watchers® group that meets at her church. To encourage participants to follow through on their weight loss and health goals, Ault will reimburse their fees after a year of successful completion. In addition, during each participant's year commitment, Ault will monitor blood pressure, check glucose levels and discuss cancer preventive measures with healthy lifestyle choices.



From left: Assistant Treasurer of the Brown Foundation, Inc., Walter Negley; award recipient Patricia S. Ault, MSN, RN; and President of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center John Mendelsohn, MD; photo by Karen Hensley

Ault came to M.D. Anderson at the beginning of her oncology career in 1992. "Soon after becoming part of the M.D. Anderson team, I became aware that this is not just a hospital—it's an enormous family that has provisional assistance groups to meet the needs of all patients," she said. "Nursing is at the very center of this family, and I'm fortunate to be a part of those whose dedication to the good of the patient is unrivaled."

In 1999, Ault began working with Jorge E. Cortes, MD, professor of leukemia. She credits his support and encouragement throughout her professional advancement.

"Dr. Cortes has always recognized, appreciated, and valued everything I did for the patients," she said. "He taught me how to write manuscripts and conduct research. More important, he entrusts our patients into my care. Mutual respect is his calling card."

Ault became a nurse in midlife, enrolling in nursing school when her youngest child was in high school. A two-year degree at San Jacinto College led to a bachelor of science in nursing from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHSC-H) and a master of science from Texas Woman's University, where she is an adjunct faculty member. She received her Family Nurse Practitioner Certification from Texas Tech University Health Science Center. Over the years, Ault has continued to further her education, most recently enrolling in the clinical doctorate of nursing program at UTHSC-H.

"I can only fully serve my patients by continuing to learn and prepare myself to provide the best care possible—that's the least I can do for my patients and M.D. Anderson," she said.

Ault is recognized among the medical community for her work in clinical research and patient care. In 2007, she was selected as an international ambassador delegate to South Africa for professional specialization in oncology nursing. She has made dozens of presentations and has published prolifically. Yet she says the Arceneaux Award is the "most humbling honor I've received in my professional career."

"I never believed I would receive an award for doing something I love," said Ault. "We get so close to our patients, and to be recognized beyond the day-to-day business—it's spectacular."

Ault says she's proud to be a part of M.D. Anderson and its mission to eliminate cancer.

"I know I'm only one small part of the whole group sharing this responsibility," she said. "But I also know that my contributions to each patient, at each clinic visit, can make

a great difference in the outcome and the well-being of each of them. I do not take this lightly, and I remind myself every day of the privilege it is to work here and to have the opportunity to help. I will use the honor of this award to feed my resolve to contribute to this greater cause."

ONS Member Appointed to the National Cancer Institute's National Cancer Advisory Board



Victoria L. Champion, DNS, RN, FAAN, ONS member, associate dean for research, Edward W. and Sara Stam Cullipher Endowed Chair, and Mary Margaret Walther Distinguished professor at the Indiana University (IU)

School of Nursing recently was appointed to the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB) by President George Bush. This is a six-year appointment, ending in 2014.

NCAB is an 18-member board that advises the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and the director of the National Cancer Institute with respect to the activities of the Institute, including reviewing and recommending support grants and cooperative agreements following technical and scientific peer review. Members include leaders from the health and scientific disciplines as well as the fields of public policy, law, health policy, economics and management and the environment.

Champion's program of research in behavioral oncology has provided a significant knowledge base from which to develop interventions that encourage primary and secondary cancer prevention activities, thus leading to the discovery of cancer at earlier and more curable stages. Her research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health for more than two decades, and she is using interactive technology to test format delivery and cost-effectiveness for breast cancer screening. Champion also is studying quality-of-life issues in breast cancer survivors and pilot testing interventions to increase patient and provider communication. Champion directs the Cancer Control Program for the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center, serves as Associate Dean for Research at the IU

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