

## *Editorial*

### FAREWELL

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As I begin my retirement, unpacking boxes from my office at The University of Alabama, I am finding many items that have led to reflections of years past. Many of the most poignant memories are those related to the *Online Journal of Rural Nursing and HealthCare*. The concept of an open access journal for rural nurses began to emerge as the Dean of Capstone College of Nursing at the University of Alabama, Sara Barger, DPA, RN, FAAN and I discussed strategies for positioning Capstone College of Nursing at The University of Alabama in a way that would enhance the Mission of the University of Alabama's focus on rural residents of Alabama as we looked forward to a new millennium. As a result of those discussions and our passion for rural nursing and health care, I began searching for any existing journal that was freely assessable by rural nurses that served as a resource for their practice. There were numerous journals on the topic of rural healthcare but none that were fully electronic in format that targeted rural nurses and other health professionals, and freely accessible to anyone who needed information.

I begin talking with anyone and everyone I knew that were involved in rural nursing about this idea and their willingness to serve on the editorial board for the Journal. Through those discussions it became clear that the Journal would be most useful if it could serve as a forum for related research, issues, concerns and practices of rural nurses around the world. The editorial board began its work as an international group and it continues to reflect the international foundation still. The review panel was developed to reflect the international nature of the journal as well. It too, remains internationally representative, thus providing the broad knowledge base of rural nursing and healthcare needed to critique manuscripts from around the world.

With the assistance of the Local Area Network Manager, at the University of Alabama Capstone college of Nursing, and Dr. Steven MacCall from the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies, who served as managing editor, I began accepting manuscripts for consideration by the review panel in preparation of publication of the first issue of the Journal. The first issue of the Journal was published in the Spring of 2000. Over the years since that first issue, the Journal's popularity has grown around the world with a readership that now spans over 90 countries. It is referenced in the CINAHL data base and available through EBSCO and other literature search organizations.

As the journal grew I came to realize that in order to continue to grow and offer all the features available for online journals that a larger more integrated base of operations was going to be needed soon. I began talking about this need with the Board of Directors of the Rural Nurse Organization, the official parent organization of the journal, about this need. After much discussion, the decision was made to move the journal operations to Binghamton University, the Decker School of Nursing in Binghamton, New York, under the editorship of Dr. Pamela Stewart Fahs, RN, DSN. This is her first issue and I am really excited about what she has done. I think you will agree that she has provided a high quality issue for us and that she will continue to do so as time goes on. I know she will facilitate the growth and enhancement of the journal in a way that will reflect the diversities and similarities of rural nursing around the world. I leave you in good hands and thank you for all your support over the years.