



Interdisciplinary Leaders in
Substance Use Education,
Research, Care and Policy



With great sorrow, the AMERSA Board of Directors shares the news of the gentle passing of another longtime member, leader, and inspiration: Marianne Marcus, EdD, RN, Professor Emerita, The University of Texas (UT) at Houston School of Nursing, who died on the evening of January 16, 2022.

Marianne was an AMERSA member since 1991 and touched the lives of so many of our

members during those 30 years. She served on the AMERSA Board of Directors as Secretary (1995-1997) and Member-at-Large (2007-2009). Dr. Marcus was the recipient of several awards from AMERSA including the John P. McGovern Award for Excellence in Education (1998), W. Anderson Spickard, Jr. Excellence in Mentorship Award (2016), and the David C. Lewis, MD Service to AMERSA Award (2019).

In a recent podcast ([AMERSA: People and Passion, 2021](#)) Dr. Marcus talked with Sid Schnoll, MD about her career as a nurse educator and researcher, and the role AMERSA played in developing her understanding of substance use disorders.

Before she retired in 2014, Dr. Marcus chaired the UT Nursing School's Department of Nursing Systems, directed its Master of Nursing Education degree track, and directed its Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Education, and Research. The John P. McGovern Distinguished Professor of Addiction Nursing was established for and held by Dr. Marcus until her retirement. Dr. Marcus' honors include a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN) and election to the UT Academy of Health Science Education.

Her career included sequential faculty positions in Herman H. Lehman College and Columbia University in New York and the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, Texas. A serendipitous opportunity to open a primary care clinic in a residential substance use treatment facility led her to increase substance use content in nursing curricula and research. She sought out the support of like-minded health care faculty through her involvement with AMERSA.

A pathfinder is a person who goes ahead and discovers or shows others a way. Dr. Marcus was a pathfinder for nursing and other professionals. She is well known for advancing interprofessional collaboration related to substance use-related education, practice, and research. She collaborated with colleagues to address the educational gap across health professions in the federally funded Project MAINSTREAM (Multi-Agency Initiative on Substance Abuse Training and Education for America). The goal of that project was to establish substance use-related content as a required curriculum of each discipline represented by the team (Madden et al., 2006). Dr. Marcus continued to lead curricular

change at UT and through her publications, inspiring others to follow suit.

Dr. Marcus led community-based participatory research projects, including Project SMART (Marcus et al., 2013), a mentored after-school health promotion program for school children in an underserved neighborhood. Dr. Marcus identified persons in recovery among her mentors. She documented her understanding of their experience in moving to recovery as “changing careers” (Marcus, 1998).

Dr. Marcus was an influencer in the addictions field and nursing. Over the span of her career, Dr. Marcus mentored countless students, practitioners, and scientists. While one of few nurses in AMERSA when she joined, she saw a growing number of nurses join as members during her tenure, thanks to her influence. In 2017, those nurses created the Marianne Marcus Award, established in her name, to honor her for her long-term contributions to AMERSA – and to recognize the next generation of nurses committed to clinical practice, research, policy development, and/or education related to substance use disorder.

We share with you all some words of respect, admiration and friendship from the AMERSA community. As we share our grief and sadness, we are also most grateful for all of the ways that Marianne has inspired each of us.

Tributes

From Jeffrey Bratberg, PharmD

My first memory of Marianne was in 2017 when the first ceremony was held for her namesake Nursing Award. I knew then, as a Director, that nurses were central to the expansion of substance use research, service and teaching and integral to AMERSA's mission. Her conviction, confidence, and pride in that ceremony inspired me to duplicate her efforts, recruiting pharmacists to AMERSA and educating pharmacy students in addiction science and practice.

From Gail D'Onofrio, MD, MS

Hard to fathom the loss of another bright light such as Marianne. She will be remembered for always smiling, her kindness, and astute intellect, often offering pithy and pragmatic

solutions. Of course, the supply of fun Zuni fetishes for auction was one of her many other contributions to AMERSA. Hard to imagine an AMERSA without her.

From Deborah S. Finnell, PhD, RN, CARN-AP, FAAN

I don't recall when I met Marianne but know it was at an AMERSA conference. We connected quickly and solidly around our mutual quest to address the gap in curricula related to nursing students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward persons with substance use. Marianne started beating this drum long before any others in nursing. She carried her ideas for curricula change to her colleagues in other health professions into what developed as Project MAINSTREAM. Recently, AMERSA changed the 'M' in AMERSA from 'Medical' to 'Multidisciplinary' - a concept that Marianne had embraced years prior and one that shaped her education, practice, and research.

Marianne was quick to smile, was authentically kind, and she gifted her time in mentoring others. Her legacy extends to her countless students, research colleagues including members of the community engaged in participatory and qualitative research, the past and future recipients of AMERSA's Marianne Marcus Award. She will be missed. She will be remembered as one of the great pathfinders in nursing and the addictions field.

From Kate Driscoll Malliarakis, PhD, ANP-BC, MAC, FAAN

Dr. Marianne Marcus was a transformational leader in nursing. She changed the way we think about substance use disorders. She contributed greatly to the understanding and practice of mindfulness. Most of all, Marianne was a kind and loving person. We will miss her dearly.

From Madeline A. Naegle, PhD, CNS-PMH, BC, FAAN

I met Marianne in 1973 shortly after we were both hired to teach in a nascent baccalaureate nursing program at Lehman College in Bronx, New York. We both had small children and sometimes would socialize as couples so I remember husband Don as well. We work in specialty focused groups and Marianne was involved with medical surgical nursing while I was tasked with integrating mental health/psychiatric nursing into the adult health curriculum.

I left that group to begin doctoral study and we did not work together again until 1989 when each of us was funded - she in Texas, I at NYU, for CSAP/CSAT/SAMHSA Faculty Development Programs in Substance Abuse. Of course, I was delighted that we were sharing a specialty which she undertook with great dedication. All of our nursing colleagues celebrated when she received the McGovern Chair at UT Houston and I am very proud to have known her as she worked through the ranks at AMERSA to achieve a BOD position.

Marianne is at heart a teacher and that was resoundly remembered by two other nursing colleagues who attended the Columbia University School of Nursing in NYC and who also taught with her at Lehman. She was kind, conscientious in her lectures and clinical work and she brought those accomplishments to her professional role over time. I am sure that many, many students were influenced by her commitment to teaching content on substance use disorders and the excellent care she delivered and sought for patients who struggle with them.

Her efforts at AMERSA, as well as those of other nurses who followed in her footsteps, assure a respected home for nursing in the organization and we can all be grateful to her for her pioneering role. Her dedication and service have been remarkable. Her personal presence, her mentoring, teaching and encouragement of those who follow in her footsteps, however, will be our greatest losses.

From Victoria Osborne-Leute, PhD, MSW

I didn't have the privilege to work closely with Marianne, but I had the pleasure of seeing her at so many AMERSA conferences, in awe of how respected and loved she was by so many people in every profession.

It is well known that she was a leader in the field, having made so many contributions to the field of addiction research and education. Perhaps as important—or more important—was the impact she made on countless students and colleagues as a mentor and friend.

Though I always remember her smile, enthusiasm and seemingly endless energy as she met with so many junior faculty and peers at AMERSA conferences, probably my fondest memory of Marianne was a more personal one. I was recently awarded my first HRSA grant, and not a

couple of days after I mentioned to Doreen that I had received this grant, did I get an email from Marianne, congratulating me. I was so touched by her warmth, and the fact that she took the time to do this—as I said, I had not had the privilege of getting to work with her closely, so getting this note from her was such a nice surprise. Nice, but yet—from what I know of Marianne—not unusual.

I feel honored to have gotten to know her over the years.

It is not often that such an important leader in an academic or professional field is also an outstanding person—a kind, dedicated, and genuine person who will be deeply missed.

From Elizabeth Pace, MSM, RN, CEAP, FAAN

I only knew Dr. Marcus by name and then I was able to attend AMERSA. Then, I got to see her, got to listen to her, firsthand, especially up close at our nurses' SIG meetings. She reminded me of my first Dean, a nurses' nurse. I feel so fortunate to have crossed paths with Marianne and to have been a small part of the many grateful to have known her.

From Christine L. Savage, PhD, RN, FAAN

I met Marianne in 1991 at an AMERSA conference. I was only in my second year of my BSN to PhD program and felt very junior, yet Marianne greeted me warmly and encouraged me. When I completed my PhD Marianne actively recruited me to join her faculty and so did Jan Dyehouse. It was a difficult choice, but Texas was too far away from my oldest son.

My first year at the University of Cincinnati I presented my dissertation at AMERSA, and Marianne took me under her wing, introducing me to people (including Rich Saitz) and including me in dinner invites. Over the years she continued to mentor me from a distance and served as a consultant on several of my grant submissions.

But most of all I remember her kindness and all the encouragement she gave me over my entire academic career. Being around Marianne was a joy. A true friend indeed. Too many memories spanning 30 years and all of them wonderful.

From Sidney Schnoll, MD, PhD

Marianne was a very special person, who made enormous contributions to the field of nursing and especially nurses involved in the treatment of substance use disorders. Her charm made working with her a great pleasure. She brought nursing into a major position in AMERSA, which had been dominated by physicians. Her numerous awards were well deserved. It was my honor and pleasure to be the moderator of her AMERSA podcast. Her smile and grace brought warmth to every meeting she attended. I, along with all those she touched in her long and meritorious career, will miss her.

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More about Marianne Marcus

Interview with Marianne Marcus. (2016). DigitalCommons@TMC, Texas Medical History Documents, Texas Medical Center – Women’s History Project. Paper 25.
<https://digitalcommons.library.tms.edu/tmx-whp/25>.

AMERSA People and Passion. (2021). Episode 4: A Path for Substance Use Disorder Content in the Education Setting. Podcast. [AMERSA People & Passion Podcast | Addiction Technology Transfer Center \(ATTC\) Network \(attcnetwork.org\)](https://www.attcnetwork.org/)

