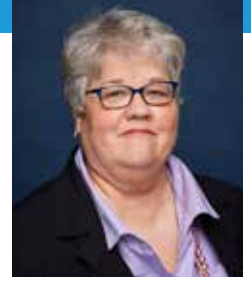


# Meaningful Recognition: What is it and Why is it Important?

Contributing Author: Rebecca M. Patton, DNP, RN, CNOR, FAAN



The nursing profession over time has experienced an evolution in recognition of our unique contributions in a growing complex world. Our recognition traces back to the 1896 founding of the national professional association, The Nurses Associated Alumnae of the United States and Canada. Renamed in 1911 as the American Nurses Association (ANA), this first nursing professional association had as one of its core purposes, "Promote the Profession to The Public." More than one hundred years later, ANA's core purpose and focus remains consistent with this in one of the goals of the ANA's 2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan: "Elevate the Profession of Nursing Globally." Without the intentional promotion and recognition of nursing and nurses, the evolution of nursing as a discipline would have remained static.

ANA President Rosamond C. Gabrielson (1972-'76) advocated for the professional recognition of all nurses. This resulted in the 1974 White House designation of National Nurses Week and President Nixon's proclamation. Gabrielson wanted the public to realize that nurses play a vital role in health care and are highly professional and not unprepared amateurs. Following this, in 1982, the

ANA Board of Directors affirmed a joint resolution of the United States Congress designating May 6, 1982 as "National Nurses Day." Now May 6 – 12 is designated as the permanent dates to observe National Nurses Week.

Meaningful recognition goes beyond the yearly celebration of nurses. It is a good start, but it is much more than the annual celebration of nurses during National Nurses Week. It is not defined or limited by a week on the calendar. Furthermore, although nurses' week celebrations are considered meaningful by many, some view it as a barrier to consistent recognition of all nurses (Ledger, 2021). In 2021, the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) defined "Meaningful Recognition" as individualized recognition of the value and meaningfulness of each one's contribution to an organization. Additionally, recognition is a fundamental human need and essential to professional development.

Meaningful recognition provides the opportunity to honor all voices, particularly those that not been previously heard. Brené Brown points out that "To be heard is to be honored and to be recognized is to be valued." Honoring all voices can occur in multiple ways. One

example is the DAISY Foundation. This organization was established in 1999 by a patient's family, to express gratitude and recognition for extraordinary care. It is now a global program to provide meaningful recognition to nurses, regardless of where nurses serve or their career stage. Healthcare organizations utilize this program to honor and celebrate staff yearlong for their contribution.

Multiple studies have highlighted the value and impact that meaningful recognition brings to the organization and profession. Recognition is viewed as a critical component of a healthy work environment. It is a valued strategy for healthcare organizations to support nurse retention and recruitment as well as establishing workplace cultures of excellence. Nurses who feel recognized report higher levels of job satisfaction and lower burnout. AACN's six standards for a "Healthy Work Environment" include meaningful recognition as an element that leads to engaged, fulfilled, and effective nurses. Meaningful recognition as an essential component of a healthy work environment impacts nurses' well-being and, as a result, improves patient care outcomes. Eileen Lake (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of work environment and outcomes reported in seventeen studies. She found significant and consistent associations between work environment and both nurse and patient outcomes. The positive work environments were associated with 28% to 32% lower odds of nurse job dissatisfaction, burnout, or intent to leave, and an 8% lower odds of an adverse patient event or death. Lastly, it is important to understand the effect on the individual nurse as well as the profession. Recognition that is mean-

ingful to the individual endures over time, often lasting throughout a person's life and making a substantial impact and difference. It makes sense that nurses' ability and effectiveness to advocate on behalf of ourselves, patients, and our communities is affected by meaningful recognition. Most importantly, we must

appreciate what constitutes meaningful recognition through the lens of individuals with diverse backgrounds. ANA-Ohio is committed to continuing advances in improving equity, diversity, and inclusion across our profession and communities through meaningful recognition. ■

*Becky*

Rebecca M Patton

DNP, RN, CNOR, FAAN

Dr. Patton welcomes letters to the president. Email [president@ana-ohio.org](mailto:president@ana-ohio.org)

References list is available upon request.

## An Extraordinary Life of Davina Gosnell, PhD, RN, FAAN

Contributing Author: Ruth Ludwick, PhD, RN-BC, APRN-CNS, FAAN

Davina Gosnell, RN, PhD, FAAN, has earned various wonderful awards and honors throughout her lifetime. These are recounted in numerous tributes as well as her obituary. (<https://www.bisslerandsons.com/obituary/DrDavina-Gosnell>). Her life is also beautifully chronicled in a YouTube video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnLOahbYynI> that was created for her induction into the Distinguished Fairless Falcons in 2022 at her high school. These tributes highlight her underlying intellect, leadership and kindness that led to these many prestigious recognitions. As I write this short article, I know I cannot capture all that Davina (Dr. Gosnell) meant to all of our readers, friends, colleagues, family, and the profession, but I know that Davina will be good with it and I definitely know she will be glad I am not asking her one more time for critique and feedback!

However, Davina's own words about herself may provide the best synopsis about her. I was a member of the audience when someone asked Davina in an interview for the deanship at Kent State University's College of Nursing how she would describe herself. She replied, "Still waters run deep". The origin of this Latin

proverb that first appeared in English use in the 1400s is used to convey that under a calm exterior can hide intelligence, wisdom, and passion. Davina was indeed composed but she was passionate about the profession of nursing and about the teaching of nursing. That passion moved us forward as a profession and moved the teaching of nurses at all levels to new successes. She believed in global education and global citizenship. She always advocated for students locally and globally supporting them not only academically, but also by establishing scholarships to help them financially. In fact, she often took international students into her home to help with student housing. She wrote, "Those of us who have benefited from scholarships in our lives have the responsibility to pay it forward ... And you don't have to be rich or famous to make a difference."

Davina has indeed made a difference. I am so glad to have had the privilege of calling her friend, and colleague and knowing how she enriched my life and my family's life with her love and friendship. In fact, the night I was asked to write this article I dreamt I saw Davina at a dinner reception event. I looked up



and asked someone near me how could Davina be in attendance, I thought she passed away? Before I knew it, I was in a long hug and Davina was reassuring me everything was fine. Please take a moment and embrace how Davina has influenced and touched our lives, our profession, and the teaching of nursing locally and globally. Her life is truly an inspiration to us all. ■