

## **Margaret I. Fitch RN PHD - Biography**

Dr. Fitch received her Bachelor of Nursing from Dalhousie University (Halifax) and her Masters of Science in Nursing (Faculty of Nursing) and Doctorate (Institute of Medical Science) from the University of Toronto.

Currently, Dr. Fitch holds the positions of Head of Oncology Nursing and Supportive Care at the Odette Cancer Centre (Sunnybrook and Women's Health Science Centre in Toronto) and Co-Director of the Patient and Family Support Program. She also holds appointments as Associate Professor in the Faculty of Nursing and Professor in the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Toronto.

In the past, Dr. Fitch has held positions as staff nurse, team leader, clinical nurse specialist, and director of a research and professional development department for nursing. She has taught at a number of community colleges and York University and serves as an invited lecturer on a frequent basis.

Dr. Fitch's specific research interests lie in the area of coping and adaptation to illness with a particular focus on understanding patients' experiences and perceptions. Research utilization and knowledge exchange have also been important underpinnings of her work. She has presented papers to a wide variety of professional and student groups, nationally and internationally, on such topics as palliative care, supportive care, coping with life-threatening illness, specialization in nursing and clinical nursing research, in addition to reporting her own research. Additionally, she is the author of numerous publications regarding these topics and her research work.

Dr. Fitch has maintained a high level of involvement in professional nursing organizations. She has served as the Founding President of the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology and President of the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care. She is currently serving as the Immediate Past President for the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care (ISNCC), a role that will be completed in July 2010. She had been a member of the International Board for 8 years prior to her election as an Honorary officer in the ISNCC.

Dr. Fitch is currently serving as the Chair of the national Cancer Journey Advisory Group for the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. This group has the mandate of providing leadership to stimulate the cancer system to become more person-centered. Dr. Fitch also serves on the Board of Directors of the Cancer Institute Advisory Board of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and on the Board of Directors for the Multinational Association for Supportive Care in Cancer.

The Canadian Nurses Association recognized her for her leadership in nursing with the awarding of the CNA/Ross Award for Nursing Leadership (1993); the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology with an Award of Excellence in Research (1995) and the first CANO Lifetime Achievement Award (2004); and the Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology with the first Award of Excellence for outstanding contribution to psychosocial oncology (2004).

July 2010

## Participation in the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care

Margaret Fitch began her interactions with the international Society of Nurses in Cancer Care in 1988 when she served as the representative of the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology to the newly formed ISNCC Council of Representatives. In that capacity she was able to successfully bid for Canada to host the 1994 ISNCC biennial conference. This was the first ISNCC conference to have abstract submissions and concurrent sessions. Margaret co-chaired this conference with Barbara Warren.

Margaret became the elected North American Representative to the ISNCC Board in 1992. During her time as a Board member, she established the ISNCC Research Committee and instituted the research workshop at the Biennial ISNCC Conference. The Research Committee also produced several inventories of cancer nursing research around the world and implemented a program of small research grant awards.

Margaret continued to hold a Board position until her election to the role of President Elect in 2000. This was the first election by the members for the Leadership positions in ISNCC. She served as the President from 2002 to 2006. One of the key activities during that time was to serve as the oncology nurse on task groups for the International Council of Nurses, the World Health Organization, the International Union Against cancer, and the International Cancer Control Conference Initiative. She actively advocated for cancer nursing as a specialty and the inclusion of cancer nurses in country initiatives related to cancer control strategies. Two ISNCC Leadership Institutes were held (one in Toronto and one in Capetown) under her direction to provide vehicles for nurses to increase their capacity to engage in leadership roles.

Margaret Served as Immediate Past President from 2006 to 2010. One of the key roles during that interval was to pilot the ISNCC Twinning Program. She linked the Odette cancer Centre in Toronto with the Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi as partners. The partnership has produced a curriculum for a 5 day chemotherapy instructional course that was offered in Nairobi. Seventy nurses attended the program.

Margaret continues to foster this partnership as well as work collaboratively with other nurses in Africa under the auspices of the African Organization for Research and Training in Cancer (AORTIC). The goal is to promote access to cancer nursing education across Africa.

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International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care (Member)	1988 to present
Board of Directors (Elected North American Representative – 2 terms)	1992 to 2000
Site Co-ordinator: Project for Developing Nurses' Manual on Nausea and Vomiting (Canada)	1991
Representative to Annual Meeting of Action in International Medicine, Toronto (August)	1991
International Conference Planning Committee (Co-Chair)	1991 – 1994
Scientific Committee – 10th International Conference on Cancer Nursing	1996 – 1998
Scientific Committee – 11 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Cancer Nursing	1998 – 2000
Scientific Committee – 12 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Cancer Nursing	2000 – 2002
President Elect	2000 – 2002
President	2002 – 2006
Steering Committee Co-Chair – 14 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Cancer Nursing	2004 – 2008
President, ISNCC Ltd.	2004 – 2008
Immediate Past President	2006 – 2010

Photo of Margaret Fitch (see attached)