



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **THREE PIONEERS OF MIDWIFERY IN ILLINOIS RECEIVE A.C.N.M. FOUNDATION'S DOROTHEA LANG AWARD**

**Silver Spring, MD** – Lillian Runnerstrom, CNM, Jean Downie, CNM and Pat Urbanus, CNM were awarded the 2007 Dorothea M. Lang Pioneer Award from the American College of Nurse-Midwives Foundation, Inc. during the American College of Nurse-Midwives 52nd Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois, on May 26, 2007. These midwives laid the foundation for midwives to successfully study, practice and thrive in Chicago's maternity care system.

**Lillian Runnerstrom, CNM, PhD, FACNM** - the founding mother of midwifery in Illinois – is one of midwifery's visionaries, serving ACNM in a variety of roles, including as ACNM President from 1967-69. Dr. Runnerstrom received her nursing education at St. Luke's Hospital School of Nursing during World War II. She completed her midwifery education at Maternity Center Association in 1955, her BS and master's degree at Columbia University, and her PhD at New York University in 1963. After earning her PhD, Runnerstrom accepted a faculty position in maternity nursing at UCLA. From 1965-1967, she headed up a nurse-midwifery education program at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where she also held the rank of assistant professor Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the first nurse or midwife ever to receive such appointment. In 1969, after spending some time in Taiwan for the WHO, she moved to Chicago to accept the position of full professor and department head of Maternal Child Nursing at the University of Illinois. Runnerstrom developed the first nurse-midwifery service in the Midwest at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. She then established the Nurse-Midwifery Education Program at the University of Illinois, the first graduate program in the MCN department. Since its inception, there have been over 400 graduates of the Illinois program.

**E. Jean Downie, CNM, BSN, MPH** was born in China, where her parents were medical missionaries. After high school, Jean returned to the US to enter a new 5-year nursing program leading to a BSN. As it happened, her curriculum included a clinical rotation to the historically famous Chicago Maternity Center. After three years working in Malaysia and Hong Kong with an international public health program, she became convinced that maternity care was a public health priority. In 1964, Downie joined the maternity nursing team at the Chicago Maternity Center and started looking for a midwifery education program. It was Lillian Runnerstrom who invited her to join the Johns Hopkins Hospital's Nurse-Midwifery Education Program. Later Downie came to work at Chicago's Cook County Hospital, which started the pioneering demonstration that showed how midwives could be included on Cook County's maternity care team, serving 5000 births each year!

**Patricia Urbanus, CNM, MSN, FACNM** graduated from Columbia University's Nurse-Midwifery Program in 1969. Urbanus worked in New York's MIC project where she became an

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expert clinician. She later joined Runnerstrom and Downie in Chicago, where she became the second CNM faculty and the first clinical faculty at the University of Illinois. Urbanus has served ACNM in a number of ways; as chair of the Bylaws Committee, as Region IV Representative, and in several roles on the Division of Accreditation. Pat has also served as a trustee of the A.C.N.M. Foundation, and as Foundation President. Continuing her steadfast commitment to the ACNM, Urbanus came out of retirement in 2007 to work as the co-chair of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the ACNM!

The Lang Award is presented to certified nurse-midwives or certified midwives who has been certified for at least ten years and have not previously won ACNM's Hattie Hemschemeyer Award, and has demonstrated pioneering vision and leadership. The Lang Award recipients are chosen by the A.C.N.M. Foundation Board of Trustees.

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**For more information, please contact Rebecca Jacob, ACNM Communications Manager, at (240) 485-1822 or via email at [rjacob@acnm.org](mailto:rjacob@acnm.org). Photos are available upon request.**

With roots dating to 1929, the American College of Nurse-Midwives is the oldest women's health care association in the U.S. ACNM's mission is to promote the health and well-being of women and newborns within their families and communities through the development and support of the profession of midwifery as practiced by certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives. Midwives believe every individual has the right to safe, satisfying health care with respect for human dignity and cultural variations. More information about ACNM can be found at [www.midwife.org](http://www.midwife.org).

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