Triumph Award
2014
Honoring Those Who Make a Difference
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AHIMA has a long and cherished tradition of honoring the excellence, dedication, and service of those professionals whose steadfast efforts have enriched the health information management (HIM) field. This time-honored celebration of outstanding accomplishment continues with the 2014 AHIMA Triumph Awards.

The AHIMA Triumph Awards are national awards designed to recognize those special individuals who have made a difference in the HIM profession. The AHIMA Triumph Awards honor leaders in the HIM field, reward contributions that build our knowledge base, recognize excellence in preparing future HIM professionals, and encourage fresh talent and new leadership.

Congratulations to the 2014 AHIMA Triumph Awards recipients and nominees!
The Distinguished Member Award is AHIMA’s highest honor. This award celebrates an individual with a long, exceptional history of HIM contributions. It is given to an outstanding member with an extraordinary record of contributions to the field over many years.

Bonnie Cassidy, MPA, RHIA, FAHIMA, FHIMSS, has an exceptional history of contributions to the HIM profession. Her volunteer service on national, state, and local levels spans over three decades and includes more than 50 appointed and elected positions. Among her volunteer elected and appointed offices is her service as a member of the AHIMA Board of Directors, president of the Ohio Health Information Management Association, representative to the AHIMA House of Delegates, AHIMA Fellowship Committee chair, AHIMA Nominating Committee chair, Commissioner, board member and chair-elect of the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education, Editorial Review Member of the Journal of AHIMA, and member of the AHIMA Panel of Accreditation Surveyors. In her various volunteer roles, Ms. Cassidy worked endlessly in establishing the discipline of practicing HIM principles and was a primary champion in the development of AHIMA’s Data Quality Model, e-HIM branding, and the HIM Core Model.

Ms. Cassidy served as AHIMA’s 2011 president/chair, leading the Association with grace, dignity, and courage, and guided the Board in setting challenging strategic priorities. As a firm believer that ‘exceptional boards set strategy for an association’, Ms. Cassidy led the AHIMA Board and CSA Boards by example to develop and set goals focusing on the AHIMA member and the preservation and expansion of the HIM profession. Key strategic initiatives focused on governance, education, research, recognition, marketing and branding, and agility. In each strategic area, the Board created and leveraged existing relationships with AHIMA staff and our volunteer leaders to achieve success and extraordinary advancements. As president, Ms. Cassidy focused on ensuring that future AHIMA Boards would be able to function at a high performance level by creating new bylaws for the Association.

These bylaws were designed to foster growth and governance of the HIM profession for future generations of HIM professionals.

In addition to her volunteer service to AHIMA and state HIM associations, Bonnie has enthusiastically worked as an ambassador for the HIM profession on national and international levels. This includes, among others: membership, elected, and appointed volunteer positions with the HIMSS, ACHE, NAHQ, HFMA, AMIA, ACHE, and IFHIMA.

Ms. Cassidy’s accomplishments and contributions have been recognized by her peers. She has received the AHIMA Leadership Award (2008), AHIMA Legacy Award (2000), AHIMA Professional Achievement Award in (1995), and the Distinguished Member Award of the Ohio Health Information Management Association (1991). Ms. Cassidy was one of the first AHIMA members to become a Fellow of the American Health Information Management Association, and a Fellow of the Health Information Management and Systems Society. Ms. Cassidy is committed to life long learning as evidenced by being approved by AHIMA as an ICD-10-CM/PCS Trainer and Ambassador.

Bonnie Cassidy’s legacy, however, is more than the sum of all of these achievements. It is Bonnie’s unending devotion to the HIM profession, never forgetting the needs of the AHIMA member, her winning smile and “I can get it done” attitude, and her persistent ability to successfully transform herself and the HIM profession as the industry-at-large requires, that characterizes her innumerable contributions. It is for these very reasons that AHIMA presents Bonnie Cassidy with the 2014 Distinguished Member Award.
The Advocacy and Public Policy Award honors those whose long-term and enthusiastic support of AHIMA and the HIM profession has advanced AHIMA's capacity to achieve its mission and/or advanced HIM practice through involvement in AHIMA's advocacy and public policy efforts.

It is an honor to award Linda L. Renn, RHIT, CCS, CPC, CPC-H, CHTS-TR, the Advocacy and Public Policy Award for 2014. Ms. Renn understands the nuances of governmental procedures and consistently follows issues of HIM interest at both the state and national levels. She has earned a reputation as a tireless advocate for the advancement of health information management through her successful networking and advocacy efforts, and Ms. Renn has proudly represented professional interests in Florida's state capitol, Tallahassee, for the last 10 years.

She has demonstrated advancing legislative initiatives that promote the interests and awareness of the HIM profession at many levels. In conjunction with HIP week, for the last two years, she has been intimately involved in the planning, scheduling, and organizing of FHIMA Hill Day. The “FHIMA Strong! Empowering Our Membership to Advocate for HIM” 2014 Hill Day was a tremendous success and exceeded all expectations. The Advocacy Team visited 58 senators and representatives in Tallahassee on behalf of our interests. Using a mentorship model has allowed students to be introduced to the importance of advocacy prior to graduation as the mentors share experiences and advice with the students throughout the day. FHIMA Hill Day has become more efficient with legislative appointments, delegate education on pertinent talking points, and recruitment of participants for the day.

Ms. Renn is known for working tirelessly on behalf of our profession. She actively participated in AHIMA’s Congressional Campaign by telephone, e-mail, and Twitter; wrote and submitted a letter on behalf of FHIMA to the AHIMA Speaker of the House urging AHIMA leadership to engage and negotiate with AMA’s ICD-10 stakeholders who set out to “Kill ICD-10”; and she has worked to refine our physician ICD-10 advocacy message, training, and value statements. Her letter supporting ICD-10 resulted in a “grassroots” campaign, which AHIMA has termed ICD-10 Matters, with Florida signed on as an initial participant.

She is a passionate and engaging speaker at state and regional meetings, providing presentations that urge and inspire members to become involved in advocacy. She is a well-known and well-respected source of information and is regularly sought out for her expertise on a variety of topics, including: cyber security, EHR privacy, ICD-10 coding, and strategic planning. She is commonly called upon to testify before and work with attorneys, legislators, and legislative bodies on drafting bills on legislative and advocacy issues affecting the HIM profession. Since 2012, she has represented FHIMA at the Florida Board of Medicine hearings on the Costs of Reproducing Medical Records and has diligently followed the progress, ensuring that FHIMA is represented at all hearings. She works closely with the Florida Hospital Association and several County Medical Societies on HIM-related topics, and was recently described by FHA General Counsel, William Bell, as "someone whom I rely on for advice."

Congratulations goes to Linda Renn as a well-deserving recipient of the Advocacy and Public Policy Award based on her dedication, commitment, and leadership to advocacy and policy matters related to the HIM profession.
The Educator Award honors those who demonstrate excellence in preparing the next generation of professionals for their HIM careers.

Dr. Joanne D. Valerius exemplifies what it means to be an HIM educator dedicated to preparing the next generation of HIM professionals. She is a supportive coach and mentor who has been a dynamic, highly visible member of the HIM profession for over 41 years. She values the diverse viewpoints of students and continuously strives to improve her knowledge and skills to impart to others.

Dr. Valerius has dedicated a large portion of her career to education: first as a director of the HIM programs at St. Catherine University, where she led development of one of the first coding specialist programs, a reimbursement specialist program, and a Bachelor of HIM program; then, as associate professor and chairperson of the Information Management Department at the University. Currently, she is the director of the Health Information Management Graduate Master’s and Certificate Programs at Oregon Health & Science University, where she has developed and implemented creative and innovative teaching tools and methods by intersecting existing informatics curriculum with the health information domains.

Dr. Valerius continually updates and revises the curriculum to ensure it meets both Oregon Health & Science University and Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education standards. She holds all her students to the same high level of excellence. She has also demonstrated significant leadership/motivational skills and a clear vision of the profession in her career, to her students, and through volunteer activities for AHIMA, the Oregon Health Information Management Association, and the Minnesota Health Information Management Association.

Through her dissertation, “Experiences of Health Information Managers with 20+ Years of Experiences in the Complex and Ever-Changing Healthcare Environment,” Dr. Valerius has contributed to the research base of the HIM field. Her goal was to gain a better understanding of how change has affected the health information manager, specifically the transformation from a paper-based to an electronic health record.

Dr. Valerius is a national and international speaker on educational topics about diversity, human resource management, and current HIM educator issues. She participated in the ONC national grants in developing curriculum used by many community colleges, and has published on topics of curriculum and importance of graduate education to advance the profession.

She currently serves on the Graduate Resource Alliance of the Foundation of AHIMA. Her international work includes current committee membership of the WHO FDRG for the International Health Information Management Association. Her previous professional activities include volunteer consulting to health information technology professional in Ethiopia, for the advancement of an EHR, and to a stateside medical clinic which served the Somali and East African communities in the Twin Cities, MN. She was a part of the 2005 Recovery Team for Hurricane Katrina. Office of Public Health, Lafayette Louisiana, developing a health record tool for work in the field for physicians and nurses.

Teaching, professional, and extra-curricular experiences are extensive for Dr. Valerius. Graduates continue to reach out to her for advice and mentoring, valuing her history and experience in all area of health information management. AHIMA is honored to congratulate Dr. Joanne Valerius as this year’s recipient of the Educator Award.
The Innovation Award honors individuals, groups, or organizations that focus on moving HI/HIM into the future of the healthcare and wellness industry.

Throughout her HIM career, Joan C. Hicks, MSHI, RHIA, has been a champion for innovation. She has demonstrated this with a steadfast knowledge, expertise, and application of HIM principles to improve the quality and delivery of healthcare. Ms. Hicks began her HIM career as assistant director of HIM at Cullman Medical Center in the 1970s. Her appreciation of learning and passion for innovation led her to advanced studies and completing a Master of Science in Health Informatics in 1994. She advanced her career as Director of Medical Information Services with Children's Health System in Birmingham, AL, and was recruited to the University of Alabama (UAB) Health System to lead the implementation of a web browser-based transcription solution for the Health Services Foundation, a faculty practice with more than 1,100 physicians. Joan’s duties expanded in 2003 to include HIPAA compliance for the UAB Health System and the Privacy Officer for all UAB.

In 2004, Ms. Hicks assumed the position of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the University of Alabama at Birmingham Health System, the position she currently holds today. As CIO, Joan leads the Health System Information Services and Health Information Management Departments.

In this role, she guided the vision, values, strategic plan, governance, and operational effectiveness to bring many innovations to UAB that have improved communication between providers, enhanced quality and safety of care, and established the foundation for effectiveness and research. Her many accomplishments are impressive, but what makes them most noteworthy is the fact that she has consistently delivered value over many years.

Among her numerous accomplishments is the implementation of an Enterprise EHR at UAB that included emergency room, radiology, laboratory, and operating room systems, and assimilated these department functions into an enterprise information services structure. UAB Hospital was the first in the world to implement PowerChart Maternity and incorporate fetal monitoring into the EHR. Ms. Hicks led the strategy and deployed an implementation process that concentrated on process and process redesign, and de-emphasized the technology. This method was highly successful and provides UAB with the foundation for continued innovation and the ability to solve some of the most vexing problems in the industry today. Having the acute care system in place, Joan extended the EHR implementation to the UAB ambulatory practice, which has more than one million annual patient visits. These implementations were managed under budget and on time, and created an enterprise EHR that supports meaningful use. UAB Hospital and more than 750 physicians have successfully attested to MU Stage I for two consecutive years and are now in the attestation period for MU Stage II. Additionally, UAB Hospital and the HSF Ambulatory Clinics have achieved HIMSS Analytics ERAM Stage 6.

Ms. Hicks has demonstrated that with the appropriate skill set, vision, values, strategy and resources, one can create an environment that fosters innovation. She has also shown that innovation is enabled through the enterprise systems and processes based on standards for information management.

She is being awarded AHIMA’s 2014 Innovation Award for her unparalleled demonstration of continuing innovation and commitment to HIM principles that have led her organization, and the industry, to realize the maximum value from healthcare information systems.
The Leadership Award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding accomplishments as valued and trusted leaders and distinguishes recipients as qualified authorities who present a positive professional image as leaders for the Association and the profession.

**DIANN H. BROWN-SMITH**  
MS, RHIA, CHP, FAHIMA

AHIMA is proud to select Diann Brown-Smith, MS, RHIA, CHP, FAHIMA, as a recipient of the 2014 Leadership Award. She has over 30 years of leadership in HIM, from directorships to education. Her passion for the HIM profession is evident through her service in many elected positions, from state president to the AHIMA Board of Directors. She was named Distinguished Member of TxHIMA twice, received the hospital President’s award for her work in advancing the EHR and was elected the 2014 chair of the Joint Commission Hospital Professional & Technical Advisory Committee. As the Vice President of Health Information Management Services for Texas Health Resources, an integrated healthcare system serving 16 counties in North Texas, Ms. Brown-Smith has led the successful consolidation of 14 HIM departments within an 18-month period. During this implementation process, the department had a positive variance in cost savings and significantly reduced the expenses during this very large transition.

During a relocation of the staff to the newly consolidated division, her carefully executed plan demonstrated her ability to effectively direct positive change, manage resources, provide extensive HIM knowledge, and engage with staff to produce the best outcome.

Ms. Brown-Smith is committed to advancing the profession. With her active involvement as an advisor to several HIT/HIM programs, she helps ensure the future of healthcare includes HIM professionals. She is a past commissioner on the CAHIIM board, and she serves as a professional practice director for multiple HIM programs across the nation, providing students with valuable experience in launching their careers. She believes that the HIM professional should be highly regarded in the decisions surrounding healthcare delivery, and has truly been at the forefront of advancing the HIM professional to newer and brighter heights.

AHIMA congratulates Diann Brown-Smith as a recipient of the 2014 Leadership Award.
AHIMA is proud to select Carolyn R. Kirk-Valo, MS, RHIT, FAHIMA, as a recipient of the 2014 Leadership Award. Ms. Kirk-Valo has over 30 years of leadership experience in HIM. Her first introduction to healthcare was in 1970, when she began work with the city Public Health Department to lead the pilot for the WIC (Women, Infant, Children) nutritional program. In this role, she worked closely with data capture and submission to the CDC. She was an early pioneer into HIM/HIT, from the perspective of home healthcare and public health.

Ms. Kirk-Valo is currently a senior specialist for Siemens Healthcare in Malvern, PA, and has retained this position since 1994. In this role, Carolyn works to break down the complexity of regulatory requirements that customers will face, such as the ICD-10 transition, meaningful use stages and reporting requirements. She has also helped develop several “how-to” guides and reference tools, with a goal to minimize administrative work and redundancy, helping to make proposal work more efficient.

Terri Whiteford, Senior Manager, Siemens Healthcare; graduate candidate from Penn State University writes, “Carolyn is an exemplary and authentic leader. The Siemens Healthcare mission is to advance health, one life at a time. Carolyn embraces this mission and uses her optimism and enthusiasm to motivate others in the organization to be creative and help our sales team succeed.”

Dr. Joanne Valerius, MPH, RHIA, program director of HIM graduate programs at Oregon Health & Science University writes: “I’ve known Carolyn for over 30 years. She was creating electronic records with her first HIM job in the late 70’s. She continued to support the rapidly changing HIM environment across many areas. She is well respected by her peers. She has served as President of MHIMA, as past chair and member of several committees; and was awarded its Distinguished Member. She is an exceptional presenter at CSAs and AHIMA national meetings. I specifically find her integrity and ethical decision-making to be exemplar. She is a stellar professional and a remarkable leader.”

Ms. Kirk-Valo is also involved in leadership roles at AHIMA. She received AHIMA Fellow designation in 2006 and has served on the AHIMA Fellowship Committee, and later as its chair in 2012. She developed the first AHIMA fellowship candidate review handbook on how to effectively and respectfully coach or mentor Fellowship candidates, assisting committee members to work collaboratively with candidates, toward reaching the potential of readiness for Fellow designation.

Ms. Kirk-Valo is a current member of the AHIMA Foundation Board of Directors and is also Chair of the Foundation’s Policy & Research Committee. She has presented at several AHIMA national and state conferences on topics such as leadership and championing change, and healthcare intelligence, informatics, and analytics.

“Carolyn shows an appreciation of, and love for, learning. This is evidenced by her creation of the Dancia and Pierson Kirk Scholarship Award for aspiring AHIMA professionals. Carolyn clearly inspires others to move forward in our profession and is a dynamic leader, not only possessing high moral standards, but she operates with an elevated sense of ethics and integrity,” writes Linda M. Belli, RHIA.

AHIMA congratulates Carolyn Kirk-Valo as a recipient of the 2014 AHIMA Leadership Award!

“Leadership comes through active, committed service — service to life-long learning, service to one’s profession, and service to its members. I believe that leading and mentoring, in a comfortable, collaborative way, helps bring in new members with fresh ideas. I work to foster this effort through outreach to other members, students, and to my work colleagues, and help encourage individuals to consider options for Health Information/Informatics Management careers. I strongly believe in supporting education and demonstrating this through leadership by committed service through student learning, presentations, authorship, and volunteerism.”

–Carolyn R. Kirk-Valo
AHIMA is pleased to select Kathy Westhafer, RHIA, CHPS, as a recipient of the 2014 Leadership Award. Ms. Westhafer has over 30 years of experience in HIM, both in traditional hospital roles and as a hospital system and statewide leader in enterprise data management.

Prior to graduation from Temple University, she began her career as a utilization review coordinator. Upon graduation, she joined Lankenau Hospital as assistant director of Health Information Management, and was responsible for their implementation of the DRG prospective payment system. Her first director post was at Reading Hospital and Medical Center, at which one of her accomplishments was implementation of the SMS independence system, specifically as it related to medical record and ADT functions.

In 1989, she joined the team at Christiana Care Health System, first as the operations director in medical record services. Soon thereafter, she began her 15-year tenure as the corporate director of health information management services. During that time, Ms. Westhafer was involved in multiple system selection and implementation projects, including the development and implementation of an electronic medical record (EMR), an enterprise master person index, physician order entry, decision support, and on-line documentation and scheduling. In 2005, she made the transition to information technology at Christiana, where she rose from the position of program manager, Clinical Information Access, to her current position of manager, enterprise data management.

Her professional achievements extend beyond her work life. She has been a member of the HIM Advisory Board at Delaware Technical Community College since 1995. She has worked tirelessly through the years as an advocate and champion to gain community support and justification for implementation for the medical coding studies program and, more recently, the HIM associate degree program.

In 2009, the Delaware Health Information Network (DHIN) HIM Committee was formed under her guidance and she has served as its chair since its inception. According to the DHIN’s Chief Information Officer, Kathy has “helped to shape many of the policies, procedures, and business processes at the DHIN today. In her capacity as the DHIN HIM Chair, she serves as an exemplary data steward and role model. She was also instrumental in preparing all of the Delaware hospital HIM Departments as they joined the DHIN.

Ms. Westhafer has served as president of DHIMA twice and recently completed two years as treasurer. She served on multiple AHIMA practice councils, including Personal Health Information and Health Information Exchange, which she chaired in 2013.

AHIMA congratulates Kathy Westhafer, RHIA, CHPS, for her many achievements and as recipient of the 2014 Leadership Award.
The Literary Legacy Award honors a significant contribution to the knowledge base of the HIM field through an insightful recent publication, building on the enduring tradition of the Edna K. Huffman Literary Award.
LYNN KUEHN
MS, RHIA, CCS-P, FAHIMA

Lynn Kuehn, MS, RHIA, CCS-P, FAHIMA, and Therese Jorwic, MPH, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, FAHIMA, have made a meaningful contribution to the HIM profession knowledge base with their publication, *ICD-10-PCS: An Applied Approach*. The textbook is the premier publication on how to code using the ICD-10-PCS coding system. It provides the foundation for students and practitioners to learn a coding system unlike any coding system previously experienced in the US. It takes the reader from an introductory knowledge of ICD-10-PCS through advanced application of the coding system in an easy to use, understandable manner.

Ms. Kuehn is the president of Kuehn Consulting, LLC, with over 30 years of experience in management, coding, reimbursement, compliance program development, and education. She has authored or co-authored numerous publications and topics including ambulatory care, coding and reimbursement for physician services, CCS-P examination preparation, and analyzing healthcare data. Ms. Kuehn has served the profession on the state and national levels and shared her expertise through myriad presentations and courses. She was a member of AHIMA’s Board of Directors and of the AHIMA Foundation Board of Directors for five years, which included two years as chair. Additionally, she is a faculty trainer for AHIMA’s ICD-10-CM/PCS academies and has trained thousands of people on both basic and advanced ICD-10-CM/PCS concepts.

THERESE M. JORWIC
MPH, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, FAHIMA

Ms. Jorwic is an assistant professor in the health information management program at the University of Illinois at Chicago and a consultant with over 30 years experience in academic, vendor, and consulting roles. She has been involved in writing her entire career in HIM, and her curriculum vitae includes publication of books and articles on coding, the query process, and data quality. In her role as an educator, Ms. Jorwic has helped to prepare numerous HIM professionals in coding and classification. Ms. Jorwic’s service to the profession includes leadership activities at the national, state, and local levels, and she was a founding member of AHIMA’s Society for Clinical Coding. She has presented frequently on various aspects of coding and is a faculty trainer for AHIMA’s ICD-10-CM/PCS academies.

As co-authors of this landmark text, Ms. Kuehn and Ms. Jorwic understand the importance of providing the healthcare industry with a key publication to teach the ICD-10-PCS coding system. They provide a systematic approach for introducing coding concepts followed by practical application. They were pioneers in developing this publication and have provided the HIM industry with a wonderful resource for years to come. AHIMA congratulates Lynn Kuehn and Therese Jorwic as 2014 recipients of the Literary Legacy Award.

PATRICIA L. SHAW
MEd, RHIA, FAHIMA

Patricia L. Shaw, MEd, RHIA, FAMHI, has dedicated her career to the HIM field. Ms. Shaw has an impressive publication, presentation, and editorial record, having written and reviewed several texts and books throughout her career. She is the lead author for *Quality and Performance Improvement in Healthcare: A Tool for Programmed Learning, Fifth Edition*, a text utilized by many HIM programs and the author of *Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA) Exam Preparation*. Both publications are well-received and have accessible instructional guides published through AHIMA Press. It is with pride that AHIMA has selected Ms. Shaw as a recipient of the 2014 Literary Legacy Award.

Ms. Shaw’s commitment to the HIM field is evident through her professional association activities. She is actively involved with AHIMA and UHIMA, having served on several committees and boards. In addition, she was a Validator for the Health: Electronic Health Records (EHR) Competency Model for the United States Department of Labor from August 2010 through December 2010. She was also a Participant for the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (HIT) Implementation Competency Requirements held at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, in August of 2009.

She exhibits the characteristics required for the Literary Legacy Award by constantly providing high visibility to the HIM profession and to the healthcare community. She was the principal investigator for Health Information Technology — Career Moves, which resulted in a 2.5 million dollar award from the U.S. Department of Labor for Weber State University, HIT program in 2014.

Ms. Shaw, has been honored with many awards including Teacher of the Year from Weber State University Dumke College of Health Professions in 2002 and 2009, Fellow of AHIMA, ACE Member from AHIMA, Marriott Recognition Award for Outstanding Service from Dumke College of Health Professions, George and Beth Lowe Innovative Teaching Award, and Distinguished Member Award for UHIMA in 1991.

Finally, her commitment to HIM and the profession, and her work in the community, are outstanding. She is a positive role model for her students and peers. Congratulations, Ms. Shaw, on receiving the 2014 Literary Legacy Award from AHIMA. It is well deserved!
DONNA J. SLOVENSKY
PhD, RHIA, FAHIMA

Donna J. Slovensky, PhD, RHIA, FAHIMA, has authored and edited numerous book chapters and journal articles on topics of contemporary importance to HIM professionals over the course of her 30 plus year career. Through her scholarly work, she has been instrumental in advancing the HIM body of knowledge, contributing to both academic and practice literature. Her most recent contribution is a co-authored book on mobile health technologies released in July 2014. Dr. Slovensky is currently engaged as co-editor of the forthcoming Handbook of Healthcare Management Research under contract with Elgar Publishing.

A review of Dr. Slovensky curriculum vitae demonstrates approximately 60 publications on a variety of topics that advance existing theoretical concepts or explore new concepts in health information and healthcare management, and that showcase practical applied research. She has enjoyed collaborations with colleagues from several health professions, and with them has addressed pressing issues that impact our healthcare system to shape the future course of our profession.

Dr. Slovensky has been recognized for her accomplishments in many professional forums, receiving the 1988 Alabama Health Information Management Association’s Distinguished Member Award, the 1996 President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and the 1999 AHIMA Educators Award. She achieved AHIMA Fellowship in 2001 and was named as an Outstanding Alumnus by the School of Health Professions at UAB in 2009.

AHIMA is proud to present Dr. Slovensky with the great honor of the 2014 Literary Legacy Award!

SUSAN WHITE
PhD, RHIA, CHDA

Susan White, PhD, RHIA, CHDA, has an extensive educational background in mathematics and statistics, as well as her certification as a health data analyst from AHIMA. This type of experience is highly needed in the field of HIM and health informatics. It is not easy to find someone of Dr. White’s caliber with this background in HIM. It is because of her unique experience and commitment to the field that AHIMA is honored to present Dr. White with the Literary Legacy Award.

Dr. White has proven herself as an HIM leader by not only having several publications in peer-reviewed journals but also authoring several books, book chapters, and technical reports. She is a reviewer for national journals in HIM and informatics. Her textbooks, the second edition of A Practical Approach to Analyzing Healthcare Data, Second Edition and Principles of Finance for Health Information and Informatics Professionals, along with instructor and student materials, provide content vital to the education of today’s HIM workforce. In addition, Dr. White completed the first AHIMA CHDA Exam Preparation book. She has presented complex material, such as data mining, data analytics and predictive modeling, in a manner that can be understood by audiences at many state and national meetings. She continues to create new theoretical concepts as well as furthers the development of concepts previously advanced by others.

Research is an area in which Dr. White has also excelled. In fact, she has no less than seven funded grants under her belt, of which she was involved as either the principal or co-principal investigator. She has diversified her expertise to include a wide range of data analytics and quality measures, ranging from neurological disorders to ICD-10 coding to stress reduction, all of which are important in the HIM field.

Dr. White is a well-respected professional, having taught many courses in areas related to financial management, statistics, micro-application, data analysis, and health services policy and management. Her teaching methods are very hands-on. She does a superb job taking complex topics and explaining them in simple, concrete terms well received by both her students and professionals in the field.

Dr. White has proven herself as a worthy recipient of the Literary Legacy Award. Congratulations, Dr. White, and thank you for your exemplary service to the field of HIM.
Mentors are professional colleagues and friends who touch our lives and launch us toward new horizons. The AHIMA Mentor Award honors individuals with long records of encouraging students or colleagues to realize their full potential, or helping them find ways to achieve their best.

AHIMA is proud to select Susan P. Scully, MS, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P, as the recipient of the 2014 Mentor Award.

For nearly two decades, Ms. Scully has devoted herself to HIM education and student mentorship as director of the Health Information Technology Program, Burlington County College, Pemberton, NJ. She is dedicated to her students in the classroom—helping them achieve their competency requirements and pass certification examinations—as well as beyond by serving as a role model of good "HIM citizenship" and mentoring them throughout their careers.

Ms. Scully is committed to and passionate in promoting the HIM profession, recruiting a diversity of students of all ages and backgrounds, many of whom choose HIM as a second or even third career after speaking with her. Accordingly, she mentors each student individually, helping them to identify the areas in which they excel and can progress in their careers to achieve their best and realize their full potential. Her “contagious” energy and enthusiasm for the HIM profession at the state and local level has inspired many of her students to volunteer for a variety of activities and positions for the New Jersey Health Information Management Association.

Her students and colleagues have expressed their gratitude for her ongoing career guidance and providing them with networking opportunities for employment. Ms. Scully cannot attend an association meeting or enter a hospital in her area without being happily greeted by scores of her former students. Many of her students are hired as a result of a successful professional practice experience under her careful guidance, and employers have consistently remarked that “when you hire a student from Ms. Scully’s program, by default you have a good employee.”

During her many years of service on the NJHIMA Board of Directors, including tenure as president, Ms. Scully has always taken the time to nurture, encourage, and support new board members, many of whom have been inspired by her example to later become HIM mentors themselves.

AHIMA congratulates Ms. Scully for making a lasting, positive difference in the lives of so many HIM students and colleagues, and is pleased to recognize her dedication with the 2014 Mentor Award.
The Research Award honors those who have made an outstanding contribution to original and applied HIM research.

AHIMA is honored to recognize Alice Noblin, PhD, RHIA, CCS, with the 2014 AHIMA Research Award. Dr. Noblin is the program director and assistant professor of the health informatics and information management program at the University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando, FL. As a faculty member at the University of Central Florida for the last 13 years, Dr. Noblin has engrossed herself in the research process. She has distinguished herself as a leader in the practice of research in HIM through her writing, research, and public speaking as well as demonstrated critical thinking in all her research projects including her most recently funded project, Physical Therapists’ Perceptions of the Use and Efficacy of Mobile Apps to Improve Patient Outcomes. This project highlights the forward thinking nature of her work, as projects of this nature are not present in the current literature.

Dr. Noblin’s use of quantitative and qualitative research methods, as well as advanced statistical techniques, is the foundation of her work. Her dissertation research topic related how patients and providers communicate through an electronic personal health record. One manuscript, “The Impact of Health Literacy on a Patient’s Decision to Adopt a Personal Health Record,” was published in Perspectives in Health Information Management in 2012. This study subsequently gained her international recognition when it was included in the International Medical Informatics Association 2013 Yearbook of Medical Informatics in the Consumer Informatics subfield.

Dr. Noblin participated in a research project with a large hospital system in Orlando to determine which parts of electronic health records (EHR) were perceived as most useful by clinicians. The multidisciplinary research team included physicians and nurses. The results of this project were presented to the AUPHA Academic Forum at Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the manuscript was published in the Journal of Healthcare Management in 2014. Another project involved interviews of clinical personnel at a new physician practice to ascertain the early viewpoints of the EHR. The manuscript from this qualitative research project was published in the Journal of Medical Systems. Dr. Noblin’s involvement in these types of projects exemplifies her ability to seek out opportunities for research on topics of interest in her health-care community. These projects improve the visibility and recognition of HIM professionals in the interpretation and dissemination of research results.

She has published numerous additional articles in peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of AHIMA, Educational Perspectives in Health Informatics and Information Management, the Journal of Cases on Information Technology, and Advances in Health Care Management. Additionally, she is continuously sought out for review of chapters in textbooks. Dr. Noblin has reviewed many chapters and has been the co-author on five different chapters in three different textbooks. Her most recent chapter is included in the 2013 published book, Cases on Healthcare Information Technology for Patient Care Management.

As director of the health informatics and information management program at UCF, and having served as the 2013–14 president of the Florida Health Information Management Association, she is an exemplary healthcare professional who has a sincere belief in giving back to the profession through scholarly research, publications, and presentations. She is well known in the academic and professional practice communities for her visionary leadership as a result of these contributions. Her ability to incorporate thought leadership and critical thinking in research contributions has earned her a well-deserved reputation as an expert in the HIM field.

Dr. Noblin’s publications and presentations of original research in the HIM arena have demonstrated vision for how our chosen field of health information is seminal to the future of healthcare. Dr. Noblin was an outstanding candidate for this award not only for her productivity in the HIM research field, but also because of the topics she has chosen to examine. AHIMA is honored to congratulate Dr. Alice Noblin as this year’s recipient of the Research Award.
The Rising Star Award honors those individuals who are up and coming in the HIM field for a period of five years. It honors a promising new professional who embodies great hope as we look to the future of the HIM profession.

Megan Munns, RHIA, is the recipient of the AHIMA Rising Star Award, having begun her HIM career with graduation from the College of Saint Scholastica in May 2011. She is quickly rising through the HIM field, taking on a number of traditional and untraditional HIM roles to expand her knowledge past the walls of the average HIM department. She held the role of business analyst for a large healthcare organization, helping deploy their EHR across 11 hospitals and a number of clinics, and is currently serving as project manager at Just Associates, a consulting firm specializing in data integrity and data quality solutions for the health information exchange, HIM, health informatics, and health information technology markets. She has escalated her career in several areas with electronic implementation, maintenance of electronic health records, and health information exchanges in both the acute care and physician practice setting.

Within a few months with her current employer, Ms. Munns moved into a management role, demonstrating her excellent foundation for leadership and service excellence. She seeks opportunities to volunteer to take on projects for work plan revisions, electronic automation, efficiency, and tasks delineation.

She also gives back to the HIM profession by serving on the Advisory Board for the local HIM program, as well as mentoring other students toward their own successes. She is active in the Colorado Health Information Management Association, currently serving as Secretary. CHIMA also awarded her the CHIMA Rising Star Award at the spring meeting in 2014.

Ms. Munns recognizes that her career path does not stop, and she continues by setting her Rising Star sights on pursuing a graduate degree in Public Health focusing on Health Systems, Management and Policy. AHIMA is proud to award Megan Munns the Rising Star Award for attributes she is bringing to the profession and the industry!
The Student Award recognizes and encourages the best of the fresh new talent being trained in CAHIIM-accredited or AHIMA-approved coding programs nationwide.

AHIMA is honored to recognize Kaley Schnitker, CCA, as a recipient of the AHIMA Student Triumph Award.

Ms. Schnitker is a recent graduate from the HIM program at the University of Central Florida with a GPA of 3.825 and Magna Cum Laude Honors. Kaley is a member of AHIMA, the Florida Health Information Management Association, and the Student Health Information Management Association at UCF (SHIMA). She was selected to be the first FHIMA Student Liaison due to her outstanding performance as a FHIMA 2013 Convention Student Assistant. In this role, Ms. Schnitker is involved in organizing service projects and meetings for the group. Ms. Schnitker was also a co-presenter at the 2014 state meeting in July, discussing “Getting Linked to HIM: Navigating Social Media — FHIMA, AHIMA and More.”

Ms. Schnitker was president for UCF SHIMA during her senior year, and she also earned her Certified Coding Associate (CCA) certification, as well as attended the AHIMA ICD-10 training in March 2014. Most recently, she earned her RHIA credentials.

Since August 2013, she has been the administrative assistant to the director and chairman of the Department of Healthcare and Spirituality at Florida Hospital. This position has allowed her to learn about the inner workings of a hospital and network with numerous healthcare providers.

Between 2010 and 2014, Kaley has received the following awards: AT&T Foundation Scholarship, Betty Kernodie Endowed Scholarship, President’s List Recipient at University of Central Florida, Dean’s List Recipient at University of Central Florida, and a Bright Futures Scholarship.

Alice M. Noblin, PhD, RHIA, CCS, Director of the HIIM Program and Assistant Professor at the University of Central Florida writes, “Kaley is very bright and personable and certainly an asset to the HIIM program. I wholeheartedly support her nomination based on her academic and leadership skills as well as her willingness to support and be involved with the HIIM Profession.

As AHIMA and FHIMA struggle to create and maintain connections across generations, we are grateful for the example Kaley sets for students and young professionals alike. In this manner, she is a role model for us to be proud of.”

RoseAnn Webb, MNM, RHIA, CHPS, LHRM, FAHIMA, Corporate Director of HIM, Promise Healthcare, Inc., in Boca Raton, Florida also writes, “When I was looking for a student to sit on our FHIMA board as our student liaison, Alice Noblin recommended Kaley Schnitker. Alice was right on the mark and could not have made a better recommendation. Kaley has been attending FIRE Committee calls and subsequently, she has been holding calls with students that are assisting us with student involvement with FHIMA. Kaley and her group are bringing FHIMA into this century with our communication and technology efforts.”

Thomas J. Falen, DHSc, MA, RHIA, Associate Instructor – HIIM Program at the University of Central Florida writes, “There is no doubt that Kaley is an over-achiever who is able to balance many academic, personal/family, volunteer, and work-related activities equally well. Beyond her academic excellence, strong work ethic, and professional competence, I find Kaley to be a genuinely nice person, well-liked by all she comes in contact with, and especially this instructor.”

Ms. Schnitker epitomizes the academic and leadership skills that this award recognizes and encourages. Congratulations to Kaley Schnitker on receiving the 2014 AHIMA Student Award!
AHIMA is honored to recognize Janice Wishart, RHIT as a recipient of the AHIMA Student Award.

Ms. Wishart is a recent Summa Cum Laude graduate of the Health Informatics and Information Management division of Allied Health Sciences at Florida A & M University (FAMU). She also recently accepted a position as HIM Director Trainee with Parallon. As a nontraditional student who returned to college for her baccalaureate degree in the field she had worked in for nearly 20 years, she was very motivated and inspired to excel. Janice published several articles in the FHIMA e-Alert, which exemplifies her efforts at educating others of the opportunities and rewards in the health information field. She also participated in numerous career development events at local community colleges as well as provided mentorship and tutoring to other students enrolled in her degree program at both FAMU and Rasmussen College.

Marjorie McNeill, PhD, RHIA, CCS, FAHIMA, Director of the Division of Health Informatics and Health Information at Florida A & M University writes, “Janice Wishart has advanced, and will continue to advance, the professional practice of HIIM over the last few years as both an associate degree and baccalaureate degree student. She has demonstrated extraordinary knowledge, skills, and abilities in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings. She excels in the areas of academic excellence, publications, professional service, leadership, student recruitment, and volunteerism.”

Altheia Griffin, MHSA, RHIA, Director of Health Information Services and Facility Privacy Officer at St. Petersburg General Hospital, writes: Janice exemplifies the spirit of the Triumph Award through her actions, as she continually finds ways to promote the health information management career field with an infectious, positive attitude and excitement. Additionally, prior to her attaining her most recent accomplishments, Janice coordinated on-the-job training opportunities with two Pinellas County high schools, providing these students exposure to the HIM field.”

Lauralyn K. Burke, DrPH, RHIA, CHES, CTS-IM, Assistant Professor at Florida A & M University states, “Jan has a natural leadership style with an easy-going manner that belies her tenacity for achieving her goals. She has a great ability to relate well to other students, faculty, and healthcare professionals. She is currently the treasurer of our Student Health Informatics and Information Management Association and is very active in a wide variety of projects. One project was FHIMA Hill Day at the Capitol where she skillfully assisted the FHIMA Advocacy Director in lobbying for support of the telemedicine legislation.”


Ms. Wishart is the author of four FHIMA e-Alert articles:

- **Change is Constant**, October 2013
- **Embracing Fear and Conquering the Examination**, February 2014
- **Hill Day 2014 at the Florida Capitol**, April 2014
- **Learn to Tweet and Stay Connected**, May 2014

Ms. Wishart, RHIT has proven leadership skills and promises to be a rising star in the health informatics and information profession. Congratulations to Janice Wishart, on receiving the 2014 Student Award!
2014 AHIMA TRIUMPH AWARD NOMINEES

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Gloryanne Bryant, RHIA, CDIP, CCS, CCDS
Andrea Clark, RHIA, CCS, CPC-H
Yvonne Hughes, MPA
Beth Haenke Just, MBA, RHIA, FAHIMA
Kauser Karwa, MBA, RHIA, CDIP
Valerie McLeary, RHIA
Laura Marie Nardone, RHIA, CCS
Margaret (Peg) Schmidt, RHIA, CHPS
Kelly Wilson, MBA, RHIA, CHP, FAHIMA, LHRM

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE 2014 AHIMA TRIUMPH AWARDS COMMITTEE:

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