

# Member Spotlight

## Nancy M. Lewis, PhD, RDN, FADA



Nancy Lewis is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, where she held a teaching and research appointment for 25 years. In her retirement, Nancy focuses her efforts on her roles in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, where she currently serves as the 2013-2014 Speaker of the House of Delegates. As a professor, Nancy taught undergraduate courses in Medical Nutrition Therapy, Nutrition through the Lifespan, and Cultural Aspects of Nutrition, as well as graduate courses in Advanced Clinical Nutrition and Nutrition Counseling. Her research focused on the behavioral aspects of omega-3 fatty acid consumption and advanced dietetic/nutrition practice. As an instructor, Nancy enjoyed working with students at every level and was inspired by RDN's who were pursuing graduate degrees as they were very passionate about the profession. Through her leadership with the Academy, Nancy enjoys the challenge of moving the profession forward. She recognizes the need for putting nutrition care at the forefront of health care legislation to help RDNs become leaders in addressing obesity.

Nancy spent most of her early childhood living with her family in Anchorage, Alaska, but at the age of 11 she and her family moved to her birthplace of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, where her family managed a small farm. It was then that Nancy began developing an interest in nutrition. With her mother working in town, about 15 miles from their farm, it was Nancy's responsibility to prepare the noon meal for her five brothers and father. She made a variety of dishes and her family ate them all, making her feel like a great cook! Nancy also participated in 4-H and won a speech contest for a talk she gave about vitamins and food. She was further inspired to learn more about nutrition after reading a *LIFE* magazine article about the discovery of Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>. She realized that nutrition was a relatively young science with much to be discovered.

Nancy earned a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics from New Mexico State University, a Master of Science from Iowa State University, and a PhD from the University of Nebraska. She completed a dietetic internship at Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital in Illinois. Neither of Nancy's parents had a college education, but they understood the need for education and encouraged all of their children to pursue higher education. While her parents could not afford to send their children to college, Nancy is proud to say that she and her five brothers all earned bachelor's degrees or higher, each working hard and paying their own way through college. Nancy feels privileged to have had great mentors and a supportive husband and family throughout her training and career.

Nancy has been a member of the Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group (PHCNPG) for several years. She came to recognize the power of public health to improve nutritional health and to change lives through her experience providing nutrition education through the Nebraska Department of Health in the Maternal and Child Division, and serving as the WIC Program Director in Lincoln, Nebraska. Nancy is heavily involved in the Academy, currently serving a three-year term in the House of Delegates as a member of the House Leadership Team, a member of the Academy's Board of Directors, and as the 2013-2014 Speaker of the House of Delegates.

Throughout her training and career, Nancy has been honored with several awards and recognitions. She received the Meade Johnson Award through the American Dietetic Association and was recognized as the Outstanding Dietitian of the Year by the Nebraska Dietetic Association. She also received a Distinguished Teaching Award from the University of Nebraska, and a Distinguished Alumni Award from New Mexico State University.

Nancy and her husband, Austin, celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 2013. Living in North Carolina, they enjoy eating fresh fish and Nancy likes experimenting in the kitchen cooking with new herbs. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her nine-year-old grandson, Langdon, a fellow Nebraska Cornhusker's fan!

PHCNPG is proud of Nancy's work and appreciates her contributions to the Academy, our practice group, and public health nutrition!