

**Dr Lorraine M. Wright, C.M.**  
**Recipient of the Order of Canada (October 3, 2024)**

Nominated by Maureen Leahey, RN, PhD



Dr. Lorraine Wright received the prestigious Order of Canada on October 3, 2024, during an investiture ceremony at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. The

Governor-General Mary Simon presented her insignia: <https://www.gg.ca/en/activities/2024/order-canada-ceremony-october#:~:text=October%203%2C%202024,a%20ceremony%20at%20Rideau%20Hall.&text=The%20snowflake%20insignia%20that%20you,no%20two%20snowflakes%20are%20alike>.

This award recognizes the outstanding merit and distinguished service of Canadians who have made a major difference to Canada through lifelong contributions in every field of endeavor.

Dr. Wright is recognized for her leadership and contributions to the field of Family Nursing in Canada and around the world. She has put Canada on the map as the leader in Family Nursing, changed Family Nursing practice not just in Canada but around the world, and elevated the profession of Nursing to a higher level.

Dr. Wright is very well-recognized, admired, and respected across Canada, the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East for her seminal theoretical contributions; founding of the Family Nursing Unit (FNU), University of Calgary; the introduction of live supervision of clinical practice with families; and the development and dissemination of new nursing practices that focus on family health and healing. Her passion and commitment to these endeavors far exceeded her role as a university faculty member for 27 years. Her drive, initiative, and dedication to the worldwide education of nurses and health professionals from various disciplines in family-focused care are ongoing. She has continued her innovative work long after leaving the university in 2002. Her scale of achievements continues. Every nurse interested in collaborative family nursing practice and family-focused health care recognizes her as the international authority on these important topics. She is viewed by her peers as a living legend, having set the gold standard for family nursing and continuing to push its boundaries. Dr. Wright has brought incredible honor to Canada by her work throughout North America and around the world.

Lorraine has provided nursing leadership in Alberta, across Canada to English and Francophone communities, in North America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East for over 40 years. She co-developed with Dr. Maureen Leahey the first nurse-led family assessment and intervention theoretical frameworks called the Calgary Family Assessment and Intervention Models, which have been used by many health professionals. The International Council of Nurses recognizes the Calgary Family Assessment Model as one of the four leading family assessment models in the world. In addition, Lorraine co-developed with Dr. Janice Bell an advanced practice nursing model in Family Systems Nursing called the Illness Beliefs Model; she also developed the Trinity Model, which describes interventions to address illness suffering.

Dr. Wright provided the academic foundation and rigor that fundamentally have changed family-focused health care in the world with this sentence: "Illness is a family affair." The role of families in health care is no longer questioned; illness beliefs are seen to be critical to the development of a treatment plan; and nurses are recognized as leaders in an interdisciplinary care team. These are significant benefits for Canadians and others that stemmed from her seminal work. Her work is known globally both within family nursing and with other health care providers who are committed to a family focus

in health care. The International Family Nursing Association recently published a *Position Statement on Generalist Family Nursing Practice and Advanced Practice Competencies for Family Nursing*. Both documents relied heavily on Dr. Wright's foundational ideas and visionary work.

In addition to developing theoretical foundational models for practice with families, Lorraine has had a number of significant firsts in her outstanding distinguished career.

Beginning in 1982, Dr. Wright founded the FNU, a unique nursing outpatient clinic that involved faculty, graduate students, and families in a clinical setting to offer treatment and concurrently to research its effectiveness. That this ground-breaking FNU operated for 25 years at the University of Calgary is an amazing tribute to Lorraine's determination, drive, passion, commitment, and ability to foster teamwork among her colleagues. She overcame institutional challenges and obstacles by demonstrating the benefits of live supervision of students working as clinicians with families to relieve their suffering. Her collaboration with families and students working together as partners foreshadowed the beginnings of Collaborative Family Health Care Centers, now common elements in health care. The ripple effect impact of this first FNU on nursing education, practice, and research across Canada and beyond is undeniable. For example, the last two Presidents of the Canadian Nurses Association sought out Lorraine to study with her in the FNU during their graduate programs. She is an outstanding role model.

Another significant first was the co-authoring, with Dr. Maureen Leahey, of the book *Nurses and Families: A Guide to Family Assessment and Intervention* published in 1984. This text has been adopted into nursing curricula in over 26 countries, translated into eight languages, and is currently in its seventh edition. It won the American Journal of Nursing 1984 Book of the Year Award and has held the honor of being among the three most used family nursing textbooks across North America for over 35 years. Its content has significantly influenced health promotion and the delivery of health services provincially, nationally, and internationally.

Interest in the work being done by the FNU grew quickly and was far reaching. In 1988, it was Lorraine's inspiration to establish, host, and chair the First International Family Nursing Conference. Held in Calgary, over 500 members of the nursing community from a wide variety of countries attended. Out of this global gathering and under Lorraine's persuasive leadership, the International Family Nursing Association was born. This association now sponsors a biennial conference, and the 17th International Family Nursing Conference will be held in June 2025 in Perth, Australia, the outcome of the vision and leadership that Dr. Lorraine Wright demonstrated in 1988.

Lorraine has always believed that an important mandate of her work was the dissemination of knowledge and the education of nurses. She was significantly instrumental in the start-up of the *Journal of Family Nursing* (SAGE Publishing), which has flourished over 30 years and has global readership. She was a member of the first editorial board of this journal and continues to serve on it.

Lorraine has published five books for advanced nursing practice. In addition, Dr. Wright has given over 300 presentations and workshops provincially, nationally, and internationally on chronic illness, family health, family nursing, family therapy, oncology,



palliative care, and spirituality at health conferences, universities, and hospitals. She has published numerous articles on the research she and her team conducted at the University of Calgary; co-developed eight educational DVDs with Dr. Maureen Leahey; and, with Dr. Janice Bell, offered 4- to 5-day Externship workshops to hundreds of scholars and practitioners from around the world who have learned how to implement Family Systems Nursing and the Illness Beliefs Model. Many of these Externships have included a live family consultation with a local family experiencing illness. These endeavors were over and above her job requirements and continue to have a significant lasting global impact.

Dr. Wright's creativity, dedication, initiative, and leadership have continued long after leaving the university in 2002. She has traveled to over 70 countries to teach and consult not just with nurses but with other health professionals from various disciplines as well. Some of this has been paid, but much has been conducted for a nominal sum or has been volunteer work. She is eagerly sought after to speak at both nursing and inter-professional conferences to increase knowledge development in family-focused care. Her influence is widespread and deeply felt at the clinical, academic, and organizational levels. She is recognized as a foremost thinker capable of rolling up her sleeves to meet with families suffering from health problems, teach undergraduate and graduate students and practicing nurses, review journal articles for editorial boards, and conceptualize and write about new ways of being helpful to families. Her innovative approach, list of writings and presentations, blogs, and CV are well articulated on her website, [www.lorrainewright.com](http://www.lorrainewright.com).

Lorraine has significantly contributed to the prestige and credibility of nursing and collaborative family health care. She has put Canada on the map as the center for family nursing. She exemplifies Canadian values and is very much admired by her peers and students for her generosity with her time and her resourcefulness. Dr. Wright has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees from the University of Montreal (2008) and Linnaeus University, Sweden (2012). Her contributions to interdisciplinary practice were recognized by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy which gave her the Outstanding Contribution to Marriage and Family Therapy Award.

It is timely to celebrate the long distinguished extraordinary and outstanding contributions of Dr. Lorraine M. Wright, a global scholar, educator, and clinician who has changed family nursing practice not just in Canada but around the world. She has brought incredible distinction to Canada, by developing the gold standard for family nursing through her creativity, initiative, leadership, and dedication. She is an outstanding role model, attracting numerous students and professionals globally to enhance their skills in offering compassionate family-focused care.