2019 ARP Award Recipients

The Association of Rheumatology Professionals (ARP) merit awards began in 1982 to recognize outstanding contributions to the field of rheumatology. The ARP appreciation awards recognizes students, researchers, top member recruiters, and outstanding ACR/ARP volunteers.

The following individuals are the recipients of the 2019 ARP Merit and Appreciation awards in recognition for their outstanding contributions to the field of rheumatology.

SANDRA J. MINTZ, MSN, RN-BC
DR. GERI NEUBERGER, RN, MN, EdD
ROBERT W. RICHARDSON, PT, MEd, FAPTA
MEREDITH CHRISTIANSEN, DPT
DANA GUGLIELMO, MPH
MAURA DAILY IVERSEN, PT, DPT, SD, MPH, FNAP, FAPTA
HEATHER BENHAM, DNP, RN, CPNP
JONI DEAN, NP
ANNELLE REED, MSN, CRNP
MICHAEL LAVELLI, PhD
MONIQUE GIGNAC, PhD
ARP President’s Award

The ARP President’s Award is awarded the ARP/ACR member or team performing outstanding service within the present year in advancing the goals, ideals, and standards of ARP.

Sandra J. Mintz, MSN, RN-BC
Nurse Care Manager
Division of Rheumatology
Children’s Hospital of LA
Los Angeles, CA

Sandra Mintz, MSN, RN-BC is a nurse at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA). Initially she worked with children with Rheumatic conditions in a rehabilitative setting and since 2011 as a Nurse Care Manager for the Pediatric Rheumatology CORE at CHLA. She has been an active member of ARP serving on several committees. She is currently serving on the ARP Membership and Nominations Committee, as well as the Executive Committee.

Having her own autoimmune disease for 16 years Ms. Mintz has a passion and understanding of life with a chronic illness. Using her own experience, she engages patients and role models to live a full and active life while managing their own condition. She has developed a forum for patients and their parents to learn to live with Rheumatic diseases. With support of collaborators like Lupus LA and the Quality of Life grant from the Arthritis Foundation the first support and education group were held in July of 2009. She continues to be a co-organizer of this program.

Through her volunteerism she has developed and provided education sessions for many of the organizations that support those living with this disease, including Lupus LA, the Arthritis Foundation, the Myositis Foundation, and the Scleroderma Foundation. In 2012 she worked with the Scleroderma Foundation to hold their first comprehensive dedicated pediatric track during their Annual National Patient Conference. Through collaboration with colleagues around the country the local centers are now develop and support the continuation of this program. For this work Ms. Mintz was honored at their 2012 Conference with their National Volunteer of the Year award for her services and support of their organization.

At CHLA she helped develop a transition program with the University of Southern California for their young adult patients. Ms. Mintz and her USC collaborators are part of the Adolescent-Young Adult and Transition Work Group to develop and expand the transition-transfer of care programs for all sub-specialties. In addition, she has been a leader and advocate for the Nurse Care Managers as the organizer and co-facilitator for their meetings which began in 2011.

Quality care and patient safety is of the utmost importance to her. Through engagement of her physician team and the hospital safety protocols, policies, and order sets are now in place for all non-cancer patients at CHLA. She was a key member of the team that developed a Non-Cancer Chemotherapy and Biologics course that is now part of her CHLA’s core curriculum for nurses providing these therapies. Through this work she and her collaborators developed a train the trainer program to develop the skills of core educators to teach this course. Her commitment and leadership lead her nursing colleagues to nominate her for the Nurse Excellence Award in California. She also was the recipient of the Rheumatology Nurses Society Ambassador Award in 2017.

Ms. Mintz continues to be an advocate and educator to provide quality care for patients and families learning to live with Rheumatic diseases.
**Master Award**

The ARP Master Award is the highest honor the College bestows. This award is presented to ARP members who have made outstanding contributions to the field of rheumatology through service to the ACR/ARP, and advancements in research, practice, education, and/or advocacy.

**Dr. Geri Neuberger, RN, MN, EdD**

Professor Emerita  
School of Nursing  
University of Kansas  
Kansas City, KS

Dr. Neuberger’s education includes a Diploma in Nursing, Kentucky Baptist Hospital School of Nursing, Louisville, Kentucky in 1956; BA, cum laude in English in 1959 from Georgetown College; Master of Nursing from the University of Kansas School of Nursing in 1976; Doctoral degree in Education (EdD) from the University of Kansas in 1983. After completion of her master’s degree she was hired as an instructor at the University of Kansas School of Nursing where she was promoted to Assistant Professor with tenure in 1981, Associate Professor in 1984 and full Professor in 1998, Professor Emerita in 2016.

The focus of her contributions to science has been on Improving the treatment of persons with rheumatic diseases. Her Mother and younger sister had severe forms of rheumatoid arthritis (RA), which were diagnosed before the discovery and use of biologics for treatment. Her master’s degree thesis addressed testing a method to assist patients in taking their medications as prescribed. For her Doctoral dissertation, she designed an individualized education program that women in the experimental group read on four subsequent visits while the control group only completed a quiz but did not read the instructional program. The experimental group performed significantly higher than the control group on the knowledge post-test. In 1986, she received her first grant funding from the Arthritis Foundation to test the addition of practice time of tasks to the educational program. Use of contracting and practice time with the self-instructional program increased not only subjects’ knowledge of arthritis but also their ability to demonstrate range-of-motion exercises and joint protection tasks. An RO1 grant from NIH [1996-2001] was obtained for testing a low-impact exercise program in patients with RA. A convenience sample of 220 male and female adults, ages 40-70, were randomized to one of three groups: class exercise, home exercise using a videotape, or a control group who did not participate in the exercise. After 12 weeks of exercise, walk time and grip strength improved while symptoms of pain, fatigue and depression decreased significantly for the class exercise group compared to the control group.

First joined in 1977 when the organization was under the Arthritis Foundation; Chaired Planning Committee for Regional Meeting in 1988; Served on numerous committees as a member or chairperson from 1988-2010. In 2011-2012 served as Scientific Editor for the development of a series of educational modules called Fundamentals of Rheumatology and was Scientific Editor for the revision of these modules in 2015-2016.
Robert W. Richardson, PT, MEd, FAPTA
Maria Parham Medical Center
Henderson, NC

Robert W. Richardson, PT, MEd, FAPTA is a distinguished clinician, educator and advocate for Rheumatology and Physical Therapy. There are few if any health professionals and no other Physical Therapist who had a more outstanding and longer career than Bob in providing quality care to patients and consumers with rheumatic disease.

Dr. Richardson started his career as a Practitioner/Administrator in 1960 at St Margaret Memorial Hospital in Pittsburgh, PA. As a new physical therapist, he was hired to develop a Rheumatology Rehab Center working with Academic Rheumatologists from the University of Pittsburgh and 2 large Private Rheumatology Practices. This program was known for interdisciplinary comprehensive patient care serving the tri-state regions of W. Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania. The commitment to the team approach spawned a successful application of a multi-center Regional Medical Program grant that funded a rheumatology outreach program in W. Pa. The RMP provided rheumatology education to primary care physicians and improved patient access to rheumatologic and orthopaedic care. The Center’s core values and philosophy to educate patients, professionals and students, served as a unique model that developed opportunity and leadership skills that resulted in 4 Presidents of the ARHP/ARP of the ACR.

Throughout his career, he has served on the faculty at the University of Pittsburgh, Slippery Rock and Duke Universities in their DPT Programs. In each of these academic programs, he introduced Rheumatology as a component of curriculum design and associated business development.

Dr. Richardson has served the Arthritis Foundation and ARP as an officer, representative and leader, as well as President when the ACR moved headquarters from New York to Atlanta. He also was APTA President and have received honors for distinguished service and leadership.

Dr. Richardson remains active in clinical practice and supporting publications related to Physical Therapy and Rheumatology. As a member of the ACR Ethics Committee he authored an article in the Rheumatologist on “Ethical Dilemmas in Physical Therapy” and as a member of the ACR Marketing and Communications Committee was interviewed for an article in the Rheumatologist regarding “What you want your Rheumatologists to know about Physical Therapy.”
Outstanding Student in Rheumatology Award
The ARP Outstanding Student in Rheumatology Award seeks to recognize students advancing rheumatology in one or more of the following areas: education, practice, research, and/or advocacy.

Meredith Christiansen, DPT
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware

Meredith completed her Bachelor of Science degree from Linfield College in 2008 and Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Pacific University in 2012. After graduating, she completed an orthopedic physical therapy residency at UT Southwestern Medical Center. Meredith worked as a physical therapist in Dallas before starting her Ph.D. in Biomechanics and Movement Science at the University of Delaware in 2016. Currently, her research focuses on physical therapy utilization for knee osteoarthritis.

Meredith has received funding from the Rheumatology Research Foundation for her research related to a clinical trial promoting physical activity after total knee replacement. She recently received funding from the Academy of Orthopaedic Physical Therapy for her dissertation project “Investigating Physical Therapy Utilization for Knee Osteoarthritis – A Mixed Method Study.” Since embarking on her Ph.D. with her research in the field of rheumatology, she has published three first author manuscripts, one pending first author manuscripts, two published co-author manuscripts, 27 published abstracts, and three platform and six poster presentations at national and international conferences.

Meredith has been an active member of ARP since starting her Ph.D. in 2016. She currently serves on the eLearning Subcommittee and was recognized by Arthritis Care and Research as a top reviewer of for the journal. She is also an abstract reviewer for the 2019 ACR/ARP Annual Meeting.
Ms. Dana Guglielmo has been a fellow in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Arthritis Program since 2017. During her fellowship, she has published studies on arthritis prevalence and mental health, pain, physical inactivity, and health care provider counseling for weight loss among adults with arthritis. Dana also works on projects related to opioid use among people with arthritis, health care provider counseling for physical activity, and pain self-management programs. She is interested in social determinants of health and how modifiable risk factors can affect arthritis outcomes.

Dana received her Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in behavioral science from Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health. She plans to pursue her PhD in epidemiology.

Dana’s interest in arthritis research stems from her diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis at age 17. Before joining CDC, she interned with the Arthritis Foundation of Richmond, VA and wrote human interest stories about people thriving with arthritis for the Arthritis National Research Foundation’s website.
ARP Lifetime Achievement Award

The Lifetime Achievement Award is the second highest honor the College bestows. This award is presented to a current or former member of ARP whose career has demonstrated a sustained and lasting contribution to the field of rheumatology and rheumatology professionals.

Maura Daly Iversen, PT, DPT, SD, MPH, FNAP, FAPTA
Professor and Associate Dean, Clinical Education, Rehabilitation Programs and New Initiatives
Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts

Dr. Iversen is Associate Dean of Clinical Education, Rehabilitation and New (Domestic and Global) Initiatives at Bouve College of Health Sciences and Professor and Director of the Rehabilitation and Epidemiology Lab, Department of Physical Therapy, Movement and Rehabilitation Sciences at Northeastern University. She is also a Senior Lecturer in Medicine, Harvard Medical School and serves as the Senior Behavioral Scientist and Clinical Epidemiologist in the Section of Clinical Sciences, Brigham & Women’s Hospital, Boston, MA, USA. Dr. Iversen holds appointments as a Foreign Professor, Department of Women’s and Children’s Health, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden and adjunct faculty, HERACLEIA Human Centered Laboratory, University of Texas, Arlington. She was the scientific advisor to the Physical Therapy Research Initiative in Denmark and Honorary Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, DK.

Dr. Iversen earned a BS. and Certificate in Physical Therapy from Simmons College, Master of Public Health from Boston University, Doctor of Physical Therapy from MGH Institute of Health Professions, Doctorate of Science in Behavioral Science from Harvard University, School of Public Health and completed her postdoctoral training in clinical epidemiology in the Department of Medicine, Harvard Medical School. Iversen is a U.S. Fulbright Research Scholar, a Catherine Worthingham Fellow of American Physical Therapy Association, a Distinguished Scholar and Fellow in the National Academy of Practice, and a Distinguished Research Scholar and a Distinguished Lecturer, Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals, American College of Rheumatology. She is a former member of the Board of Directors for the Rheumatology Research Foundation, American College of Rheumatology, Former Trustee of the Arthritis Foundation of Massachusetts and Past President of the ARHP. She reviews grants for national and international funding agencies. She is currently the arthritis media spokesperson for the American Physical Therapy Association.

Dr. Iversen’s research focuses on clinical trials of exercise, behavioral interventions to improve adherence to pharmacologic/non-pharmacologic therapies and technologies to promote physical activity in persons with arthritis. She has published over 150 papers and has mentored numerous students who have now gone onto to become leaders in higher education and research. Dr. Iversen has received funding from the National Institutes of Health, National Arthritis Foundation, the National Science Foundation, Foundation for Physical Therapy, Rheumatology Research Foundation (formerly REF), and the Farnsworth Foundation. She has also received awards for advocacy, research and/or professional service from the Arthritis Foundation, the American College of Rheumatology and the American Physical Therapy Association.
ARP Ann Kunkel Advocacy Award

Ann Kunkel Advocacy Award is presented to an ARP member with a history of advocating at local, regional/state, national and/or international levels. It is named in honor of ARP member Ann Kunkel, a patient educator in pediatric rheumatology whose enthusiasm and persistence has inspired many members to join the effort to increase arthritis awareness.

Heather Benham, DNP, RN, CPNP
Ambulatory Care–Pediatric Rheumatology
Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children
Dallas, TX

Dr. Benham completed her nursing education (DNP and MSN) at The Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH. She has been employed as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner in Pediatric Rheumatology at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for 16 years.

Dr. Benham has recently developed an interest in Musculoskeletal Ultrasound. She has completed both the Basic and Advanced courses through the American College of Rheumatology as well as USSONAR. She recently became certified in Musculoskeletal Ultrasound (ACR). She has been a member of ARP for over 12 years and has advocated locally and nationally for pediatric patients with rheumatic disease by helping develop and plan local educational programs, participating in regional summer camps as well as attending multiple Advocacy Summits in Washington, DC. She has also advocated for APPs who currently practice in Rheumatology as well as those who are considering entering this subspecialty. Dr. Benham was a member of the NP/PA Rheumatology Curriculum Task Force and have also been a member of both the Committee on Rheumatologic Care and the ARP Practice Committee. She recently wrote an article for “The Rheumatologist” encouraging other APPs to seek education in Musculoskeletal Ultrasound while also finding other unique ways to contribute to their practices including research, quality improvement initiatives and professional development.
**ARP Distinguished Clinician Award**

The ARP Distinguished Clinician Award is presented to an ARP member who is engaged in clinical practice and demonstrates outstanding clinical expertise in arthritis and the rheumatic diseases.

**Joni Dean, NP**  
*Nurse Practitioner—Pediatric Rheumatology*  
*American Family Children’s Hospital*  
*Madison, WI*

Joni graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with her Master's Degree in 1993. She worked in Family Practice and Pediatrics before settling into Pediatric Rheumatology in 2000. She joined Dr. Huttenlocher as the first Pediatric Rheumatologist to be hired at University of Wisconsin Hospital. She helped create the successful clinic that it remains today. The practice has grown to add two more pediatric rheumatologists and a registered nurse. Through the addition of the electronic health record, Joni created Treatment Plans for infusions in the Day Treatment Department, to eliminate paper orders. Two quality improvement projects are ongoing in the department (methotrexate lab monitoring & lipid panel monitoring) with poster presentations. Joni continues to be a Study Coordinator for the CARRA Study since the legacy registry began in 2011. She also serves as an active member of the Research Coordinator Advisory Committee and now is on the Planning Committee at her institution which coordinates CME credit for CARRA seminars. Joni was a member of the task force that created Certified Rheumatology Nurse designation through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

Joni has been involved as a Board Member on the local Arthritis Foundation Chapter for the past three years and currently is serving as Chair. She also volunteers in the local summer camp, Walk to Cure Arthritis and the Jingle Bell Run.

Joni is active with the ARP as an abstract reviewer for the past three years, a moderator at the 2017 Annual Scientific Meeting and currently serving on the ACR/ARP Task Force with writing the pediatric portion of the future workshop The Training Rheum. She has attended and enjoyed the Annual Scientific Meetings to keep updated in her practice.
ARP Distinguished Educator Award

The Distinguished Educator Award is presented to an ARP member who has demonstrated sustained excellence in teaching of patients and students/trainees, including health professional students, medical students, residents, graduate students, and/or fellows, with their primary focus being rheumatology related content.

Annelle Reed, MSN, CRNP

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner
Division of Pediatric Rheumatology
Children’s Hospital of Alabama
Birmingham, Alabama

Annette B. Reed graduated from Samford University in 1970 with a BA in Psychology/Biology and from Emory University in 1975 with a BSN. She worked as an RN in PICU at Children’s of Alabama for several years. In 1978, she received her MSN in dual tracks of education and clinical. Annette then took a position as a pediatric nursing instructor as the University of Alabama in Birmingham. Her mentors encouraged her to develop teaching and curriculum skills and serve in leadership roles. She was soon promoted to Assistant Professor. After leaving UAB a few years later, Annette worked as clinical faculty for several institutions both in BSN and MSN programs. She has been a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner since 1998 and employed in the UAB Division of Pediatric Rheumatology for the last 12 years at Children’s of Alabama.

Annette has been an active member of ARP since 2007 and has served on the ACR Governmental Affairs Committee [three years], the ARP Executive Committee [two years], the ACR Pediatric Special Committee [three years], and now on the PRYSM planning Committee [two years]. She has also reviewed abstracts for the ARP Education Committee, served as facilitator for roundtable discussions, and as a moderator for ACR presentations. She presented the topic, JIA and the ARP Clinic Focus Workshop in 2016 and edited “Fundamentals of Rheumatology” in 2017.

While Annette delights in patient care, she relished educating others. She is especially committed to serving as a preceptor for PNP graduate students but also enjoys teaching medical students, residents, fellows, and dental residents about the diagnosis and treatment of rheumatology patients. Annette appreciates opportunities to present lectures on a variety of rheumatology subjects for local Grand Rounds and workshops, as well as national groups such as the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP), the Rheumatology Nurses Society (RNS), Alabama State Nurses Association (ASNA), and the Alabama Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). She found it challenging, but satisfying to edit and create new modules for the ARP “Fundamentals of Rheumatology” course and two chapters in the RNS core curriculum textbook.
ARPA Distinguished Scholar Award
The ARPA Distinguished Scholar Award is presented to an ARPA member who demonstrates exceptional achievements in scholarly activities pertinent to arthritis and the rheumatic diseases.

Michael LaValley, PhD
Biostatistics
BU School of Public Health
Boston, Massachusetts

Dr. LaValley received his PhD in Statistics from Penn State in 1993, and then completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Harvard School of Public Health. Since 1995 he has served on the faculty and taught in the School of Public Health at Boston University. While at Boston University he has collaborated with arthritis researchers from the Clinical Epidemiology Research and Training Unit and from Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. Since 2011 he has served as an Associate Editor of *Arthritis Care & Research*.

Dr. LaValley joined the ARP in 1996 and has been a member ever since, serving on the Research Committee for several years, and often serving as an abstract reviewer for the annual meeting. Recently, he was on the ARP Survey Task Force and is currently a member of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee. Highlights include having the opportunity to collaborate with many outstanding rheumatology researchers over almost 25 years. This includes working on randomized controlled trials that established the impact of vocational rehabilitation on work outcomes for persons with arthritis; collaborating on several teams performing meta-analyses to critically evaluate treatments for rheumatic conditions; and in formulating new ways to assess osteoarthritis progression for clinical trials and longitudinal cohort studies.
ARP Addie Thomas Service Award

The Addie Thomas Service Award is presented to an ARP member in honor of our Association’s first president and recognizes individuals who have been active volunteers involved with local, regional/state, national and/or international arthritis-related activities.

Monique Gignac, PhD
Associate Scientific Director & Senior Scientist
Institute for Work & Health
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Dr. Gignac received her BSc from the University of Toronto and her MA and PhD in social psychology from the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship in social gerontology at the University of Guelph.

From 2008-2014, Dr. Gignac was Co-Scientific Director of the Canadian Arthritis Network, a Networks of Centres of Excellence comprised of over 200 arthritis researchers, trainees, and people living with arthritis. She has served as Chair of the Advisory Board of the Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Canada’s federal health funding agency, from 2011-2016 and from 2017 to the present. She has been a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee at the Arthritis Society, Canada since 2011.

Dr. Gignac’s research expertise is in the areas of health and social psychology. Her research examines psychosocial factors like stress, coping, and adaptation and their role in understanding the impact of chronic conditions in the lives of adults across the life course. A particular focus is research on arthritis and employment, especially workplace communication of health needs, and workplace support and accommodations.

Dr. Gignac feels fortunate in being able to engage in collaborative research, mentorship and leadership activities. Particularly important to her is being a contributor to a growing movement that has gone beyond studying arthritis and its impact on physical functioning to a greater awareness, understanding, and advocacy for what can be done to help people manage the roles that matter to them and the psychological and social impacts of arthritis. “I’m extremely honored and humbled to receive the Addie Thomas Service Award from the Association of Rheumatology Professionals. The most rewarding part of my research career has been opportunities to work with others who share the common goal of wanting to make a difference in the lives of people with arthritis through research and training activities.”