

2013 AWP Presidential Commendation Award

To be presented in San Francisco to Dr. Nanette Gartrell



SILVIA W. OLARTE, M.D., DFAPA

Nanette Gartrell

Often in our professional lives we meet individuals who mark our trajectory in a meaningful and personal way. Most often they are our seniors; seldom do we have the opportunity to have a peer play such a role in our lives. In 1982 I had such experience.



One day while working as the Director of Outpatient Services in the Department of Psychiatry at Metropolitan Hospital in New York City, I received a call from a “Dr. Gartrell”. A name I did not recognize. I took the call thinking it was going to be “another transfer from another emergency service within the city” and got ready to “screen the call”. To my surprise, a vibrant, friendly, young voice on the other side of the line introduced herself and invited me to join the “American Psychiatric Association National Committee on Women”. That call not only introduced me to the inner workings of the APA but most importantly it was the beginning of a professional relationship and a personal friendship that has enriched my life in innumerable ways.

So who is Nanette Gartrell? Words like vibrant, energetic, beautiful, intelligent, athletic, dedicated, intellectually rigorous come to mind. Committed to her ideas, she thoroughly researches her areas of interest, reports them truthfully and stands by her findings even when “politically incorrect” or “threatening to the status quo”. She negotiates but does not compromise her beliefs. She lives her principles. She does not judge, she accepts other people’s limitations while expecting their best. She is kind and understanding. Her teaching by example inspires and motivates those that cross paths with her. She does it quietly and humbly, as real mentors do.

She began her ground-breaking investigation into physician misconduct while chairing the National Committee on Women at the American Psychiatric Association. Through this project she motivated, guided, and mentored members of that committee. I had the honor to be one of them. She taught us leadership, activism, and development of grass roots support for a project that was at the time seen by the establishment as negative to our profession. Due to her tireless commitment and scholarship this project not only became ground breaking research but led to modification of the Medical Ethics Code with special annotations for Psychiatry, and to the criminalization of boundary violations. For this work, she was featured in a PBS “Frontline” documentary *My Doctor, My Lover*.

Nanette is known nationally and internationally as a superb clinician, researcher, and writer. She is the author of over 70 research reports on topics ranging from medical student depression, to lesbian mothers and their children, to sexual exploitation of patients by healthcare professionals. The National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study website, another ground breaking study in which Nanette is the principal investigator and for which she has been cited worldwide, has this short bio:

“Nanette Gartrell MD, is a 2013 Williams Institute Visiting Distinguished Scholar, UCLA School of Law, and she has a guest appointment at the University of Amsterdam. She was previously on the faculty at Harvard Medical School and the University of California, San Francisco.

She is a clinician and researcher whose ground-breaking investigations have been published in professional journals and cited in the media. Dr. Gartrell has appeared on network television (including PBS, Good Morning America, CNN, NBC, CBS, and Fox News), and on public, talk, and Sirius satellite radio.

She is the author of the bestselling *MY ANSWER IS NO—if that’s okay with you: How women can say NO with confidence*. Her articles have appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, the *San Francisco Chronicle Magazine*, the *Ladies Home Journal*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

Dr. Gartrell has a private psychiatry practice, and for 13 years volunteered her psychiatric services to chronically mentally ill homeless people. Her spouse of 37 years is Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Dee Mosbacher, M.D., Ph.D.

Among other honors, Dr. Gartrell was the recipient of the 2008 Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award of the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues ([Division 44, American Psychological Association](#)).

She was honored as “Researcher of the Year” by the [UCSF Lesbian Health Research Center](#).”

Dr. Gartrell represents the best of the Association of Women Psychiatrists’ spirit and essence. Her life and her commitment to women’s issues, to patients and to her ideals has been and will continue to be an inspiration to many for years to come. Dr. Patricia Ordorica, President of AWP, together with the AWP Executive Council and members at large, are honored to present her with the First Presidential Commendation Award in San Francisco in May 2013.