American Academy of Nursing Fellows:

Because of her important role in the Academy's history and with her permission, I inform you that former Academy president Rheba de Tornyay has entered hospice care in Seattle, Washington. She holds a special place in the hearts of Academy Fellows having served as a founding fellow and the first president of the Academy. Her career contributions clearly distinguish her as one of the transformative leaders of our time.

Dr. Tornyay, known by colleagues and friends as Rheba, received her bachelor's degree in nursing from San Francisco State University in 1951, a master's in education from San Francisco State University in 1954, and a doctorate in education from Stanford University in 1967. She served in leadership positions in several universities, but is perhaps best known for her work as dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Washington. Under her leadership, the School of Nursing at the University of Washington achieved a series of truly remarkable accomplishments: the establishment of one of the first doctoral degrees in nursing science in 1978; the creation of a satellite nursing education program and a separate continuing nursing education division; and the development of the first sleep lab in a school of nursing. In 1984, the school was selected as the premier school of nursing in the country in the nation's first survey of schools of nursing. Since that time, the school has remained a leader in nursing education and research, a school that others aspired to imitate. The de Tornyay Center for Healthy Aging at the University of Washington's School of Nursing was named in her honor following her retirement.

A pre-eminent educator, Rheba served as editor of the *Journal of Nursing Education* and was a member of the American Nurses Association’s Commission on Nursing Education. Additionally, Rheba served in leadership roles on a number of national boards and councils, including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Board of Trustees, the Harborview Medical Center Board of Trustees, and chairing the board for the UW Retirement Association's Wallingford Retirement Center.

Within the Academy, Rheba has provided leadership and modeled active engagement throughout our 40-year history. Early pioneer and colleague, Muriel Poulin, noted, "Rheba has been a shining light in nursing throughout my life and career. Her contribution is unsurpassed and will always be remembered."
Rheba consistently gave of her Time, Talent and Treasure and, most recently, allowed us to name the Academy’s Development Fund after her. Catherine Gilliss, president of the board of directors at the time the fund was renamed described why naming the fund for Rheba was so apt:

Leadership and Rheba are synonymous. In her own charming and easy way, Rheba is always several steps ahead. When I asked her if the Academy could rename its development fund in her honor, she readily agreed, offered to participate in a video about the fund and then appeared in the video explaining why Academy Fellows needed to give back to the fund. She understood people and she understood responsibility.

The video on the founding and sustaining of the Academy can be seen here.

In 1995, Rheba was appropriately named a Living Legend by the American Academy of Nursing for her lifetime of work. We celebrate that work and are so very grateful for her early and lasting vision, wisdom, compassion and generosity. We are the better for it.

Sincerely,

Joanne Disch
President
American Academy of Nursing