



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Center For Nursing Excellence announces winners of the Nursing Legend Awards***

ALBUQUERQUE — Today, the New Mexico Center For Nursing Excellence announced the honorees of the annual Nursing Legend Awards. The winners of the Nursing Legend Awards will be honored at the this year's [New Mexico Nursing Excellence Awards](#) Gala on Saturday, April 6, 2024. Honorees of 22 different categories of distinctive nursing awards will also be announced in person at the Gala.

The New Mexico Nursing Legend Awards are presented to fully retired nurses whose careers have significantly enhanced the nursing profession in New Mexico. This year's recipients are Diane Cassell, RN, BSN, MBA; Joan Deis, MSN, MSN, RN, NPD-BC; and Diane Viens, DNSc, APRN, FNP, FAANP. "We are incredibly proud to recognize nurses whose tireless efforts have not only impacted the lives of countless patients but have also elevated the standards of nursing practice in New Mexico, said Robert Middleton, MSN, MBA, RN, CENP, and President of the Board of Directors for the New Mexico Center For Nursing Excellence. Middleton continued, "The Nursing Legends Awards is a testament to these nurses' exemplary contributions and enduring legacy in nursing."

Diane Cassell, RN, BSN, MBA is an American soldier, educator, executive, nurse leader, mother and grandmother. She is being recognized for her professional impact on nursing which benefited her community, state, and country over many decades. Reflecting on her career, Cassell said "I am incredibly grateful for this honor! Nursing is not just a job, but a vocation. As a nurse, I have served citizens in several states and served my country in the Army Reserves. My nursing career has been extremely rewarding and fulfilling." Colonel Diane Cassell's career in nursing had a typical beginning as a bedside nurse. Eventually she spent the better part of three decades in the Army Reserve Nurse Corps in various roles, the last being the Reservist Chief Nursing Officer of the Fort Bliss Hospital, one of the largest military hospitals in the nation. Her career culminated as a hospital administrator and nursing leader at Presbyterian Healthcare Services in Albuquerque specializing in emergency and behavioral care in New Mexico.

Joan Deis, MSN, RN, NPD-BC was instrumental in preparing critical care nurses for their national certification, teaching the toughest and most complex content. Well known for expertise in emergency and trauma care, Joan traveled the state to offer critical national courses that impacted patient outcomes. Reflecting on her career Deis said, "It has been a privilege to provide nursing care to the

critically ill and injured of New Mexico, to work collaboratively with so many dedicated professionals, and to teach and inspire the next generation of healthcare providers.”

Dr. Diane Viens, DNSc, APRN, FNP, FAANP is being recognized for her career-long efforts to advance Nurse Practitioners education and practice authority in New Mexico as well as at the national and international levels. During her tenure at the University of New Mexico College of Nursing, Dr. Viens was committed to providing nursing care throughout the state with a particular focus on ensuring primary nurse practitioner care in rural New Mexico. Reflecting on her career Diane said, “Nursing is such a rewarding profession. I am thankful for the wonderful career I have had in nursing where one can touch the lives of people in so many ways. I hope that I have inspired the nursing students that I have had the privilege of teaching my love for this profession and have inspired them with the joy and satisfaction that my nursing career has given me.”

The [New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence](#) is hosting its 19<sup>th</sup> annual [Nursing Excellence Awards](#). More information is available on the New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence’s website. This year’s gala will be on Saturday, April 6, 2024 at Sandia Resort & Casino, starting at 5:30 PM with a reception and silent auction. To reach this year’s recipients of the Nursing Legend Awards, please contact Meggin Lorino at (505) 750-4756. Photos of the winners below are for media use.

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*The mission of the New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence (NMCNE) is to advance and engage the nursing community to promote excellence and improve the health of all New Mexicans.*



Pictured from left to right: Diane Cassell, Joan Deis, and Diane Viens