

*The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
School of Nursing*

**Kristen M. Swanson, PhD, RN, FAAN Bio-sketch**

Kristen M. Swanson, PhD, RN, FAAN, is professor and Dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing. She is renowned for developing the Swanson Theory of Caring – a theory that names and defines five characteristics of caring. She is also an active Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Fellow and is a member of the American Academy of Nurses, the American Nurses Association, the Council of Nurse Researchers and Sigma Theta Tau International. Before coming to the SON, she pursued research and academic interests at the University of Washington School of Nursing in Seattle for 25 years.

“I came to the School of Nursing because I saw the commitment of administration, faculty, staff and students to ‘getting it right.’ There is clear evidence of integrity, a passion for excellence, openness to collaboration and a sense of pride in knowing that the work here makes a difference,” Swanson said. “The School’s values and mission match my personal and professional beliefs about nursing education, clinical research and the delivery of care.”

Swanson earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Rhode Island and continued with her academic pursuits, culminating with a master’s degree in adult health and illness nursing from the University of Pennsylvania and a PhD in psychosocial nursing from the University of Colorado. She completed her postdoctoral work at the University of Washington. In addition to holding a faculty position at the University of Washington, she taught at Trenton State College, the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing and the University of Colorado School of Nursing.

Swanson’s particular area of research interest is in miscarriage and early pregnancy loss. She began this work with her dissertation, “The Unborn One: A



Kristen M. Swanson, PhD, RN, FAAN, became the sixth dean for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing on Aug. 1, 2009.

Profile of The Human Experience of Miscarriage,” and has continued studying this area both as an investigator and as a consultant to other researchers’ works. She has been the principal investigator or co-investigator on 10 grants dealing with early pregnancy loss, caring and related topics since 1985. It is during this time that she developed the Swanson Theory of Caring. Since developing the theory, she has consulted with and guided 20 healthcare institutions on the proper way to implement her caring theory in clinical practice.

In recognition of her work, she received an Outstanding Researcher Award from Sigma Theta Tau and has been an invited speaker or visiting professor on multiple occasions, most recently at the National Cheng Kung University in Tainan, Taiwan in 2007. In 2002, she was awarded the University of Rhode Island College of Nursing Distinguished Alumni Award. She is also on the editorial board or serves as a reviewer for the Journal of Nursing Scholarship, Nursing Outlook, Research in Nursing and Health and the International Journal of Human Caring.