Newswise — MAYWOOD, Ill. – Nola Pender, PhD, RN, FAAN, was recently named a Living Legend by the American Academy of Nursing for her lifetime achievements as a nurse educator, researcher and author. The Living Legend designation is the academy’s highest recognition.

Dr. Pender was among four people who received this honor at the American Academy of Nursing’s 39th Annual Conference and Meeting last week. She was recognized for her contributions in theory-based research integrated into and tested in nursing practice.

Each year the Academy Board of Directors recognizes a small group of fellows as Living Legends. To be eligible, a Living Legend must have been a fellow for at least 15 years and have demonstrated extraordinary and sustained contributions to nursing and health care throughout their careers. Since the initiation of the award in 1994, the academy has honored 82 Living Legends as a way to commemorate distinguished careers that have affected health care through notable contributions to nursing practice, research and education.

“We unite across generations of leadership as we celebrate the career contributions of these distinguished nurse leaders,” said Joanne Disch, PhD, RN, FAAN, academy president. “We are inspired by their values and commitment and we hope to build on their success to improve the nation’s health.”

Dr. Pender is a distinguished professor at Loyola University Chicago Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing and a professor emerita at the University of Michigan. She also is an accomplished researcher and author who has published a significant amount of work on health promotion and physical activity among adolescents. Dr. Pender is a member of the Midwest Nursing Research Society, the Illinois Nurses Association and the American Nurses Association. She also served on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, which develops preventive services guidelines for primary care providers. She earned her bachelor of science degree in nursing from Michigan State University. She went on to complete her master of arts in human growth and development at Michigan State and completed her doctorate at Northwestern University.