

# *VCU School of Medicine*

## *WISDM Professional Achievement Award*

### **Susan R. DiGiovanni, M.D.**



Colleague Anna K. Vinnikova, M.D., Associate Professor of Nephrology, marvels at all that Dr. Susan DiGiovanni is able to accomplish in her many roles. "I suspect that she has acquired a magic "time-turner" from her beloved Harry Potter series and "makes" extra time to fit everything she does in her day!"

Dr. DiGiovanni, M '84, H '89, came to VCU in 1980 as a medical student, and stayed to complete her residency in Internal Medicine and fellowship in Renal Medicine. She was elected to AOA in 1983. After fellowship training, Dr. DiGiovanni entered private practice for two years. Looking for a different type of challenge, she won an intramural research training award and spent four years as a Staff Fellow in the Laboratory of Kidney and Electrolyte Metabolism at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Upon completing this fellowship, she returned to VCU as an Assistant Professor, serving as a staff physician, teaching, and continuing her research on kidney function. Over time, she realized she especially enjoyed the time she spent teaching, and gradually shifted her focus to education.

In 2010 Dr. DiGiovanni, having led many aspects of medical education, including serving as Course Director for the M2 Renal Course since 1999, was selected as the SOM Assistant Dean for Medical Education, Pre-Clinical Curriculum. In 2011 she was promoted to Professor of Medicine. In 2015 she became Associate Dean for Medical Education, and later that year, assumed the role of Interim Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education. In 2017 Dr. DiGiovanni became Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs for the School of Medicine, responsible for all aspects of medical student education and support services.

Renowned for her ability to teach difficult concepts, Dr. DiGiovanni received Outstanding Teacher Awards for the M2 Renal Course for 15 years. She has served as the Director of Education and Nephrology Fellowship Program Director since 2005, leading the program through successful accreditation and expansion of educational offerings. In 2011 Dr. DiGiovanni received the SOM Leadership in GME Award for her work directing the Program. Dr. DiGiovanni has mentored medical students in Project HEART groups since the program began in 2005 as well as dozens of students, housestaff, and fellows.

Dr. DiGiovanni's leadership ability is also evident in her clinical service. She has served as Medical Director for the Renal Clinic since 1998. An advocate for underserved patients, she pioneered the use of telemedicine to provide renal care to prisoners. She served as the Medical Director of the VCU Division of Nephrology Greenville Department of Corrections Dialysis Unit from 2001-2006, and the Leigh Street Dialysis Unit from 2003-2005.

Dr. DiGiovanni serves as a site visitor for the LCME and from 2007-2010 she served on the item writing and test review team for the American Society of Nephrology. Since 2009 she has been a Review Panel member for the American Society of Nephrology NephSAP CME self-assessment publication. Dr. DiGiovanni completed the VCU Teaching in Medical Education (TIME) Graduate Certificate in 2014.

Dr. DiGiovanni was inspired to go into medicine by her father, who worked as a janitor at Queens Hospital Center, NYC. He would come home and talk about all of the interesting things he had seen during the day, fascinating his young daughter and greatly influencing her decision to go into medicine. This background is evidenced in Dr. DiGiovanni's special empathy for learners who come from atypical backgrounds. She is a role model demonstrating respect for all members of the healthcare team, and dedication to providing quality medical care for all.

In recognition of her outstanding record of leadership, clinical service, and dedication to educating learners at all levels, we honor Dr. Susan DiGiovanni with the 2019 WISDM Professional Achievement Award.