Gertrude Ann Stokes, PhD, RN  
1918 to 2003

Gertrude Ann Stokes, PhD, RN, 85, died Friday, January 10 at Southern Ocean County Hospital in Manahawkin, New Jersey. She was a well-known psychiatric nurse and nurse educator. Dr. Stokes was a member of Dr. Hildegard Peplau’s first psychiatric nursing class at Rutgers—The State University of New Jersey and wrote about community psychiatry when it was barely a murmur anywhere.

Dr. Stokes was chairperson of Psychiatric Nursing and Education at the University of Illinois for 10 years and taught and practiced psychiatric nursing at New York University and in Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, New York. She was in charge of the psychiatric ward at Bellevue Hospital in New York for 2 years before retiring in 1983. Dr. Stokes earned a doctorate from New York University and degrees from Hunter College and Columbia University in New York City and Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing in Baltimore. Born in New York City, she lived in Baltimore, Rochester, Chicago, and Newark, Delaware, before moving to Bayville, New Jersey, 4 years ago.

Although Dr. Stokes was a superb faculty member and mentor, it often is forgotten that she made a major, in fact unique, contribution to the field of community psychiatry and the role of the nurse in that modality of care. Her book, The Role of Psychiatric Nurses in Community Mental Health Practice: A Giant Step (1969), describing the development of the community psychiatry division of Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn, New York, was the first of its kind and enormously important to nurses trying to forge a role in this area. The project was funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). This followed on her significant role at Strong Memorial Hospital, where she had the dual roles of nursing administrator and faculty member. Dr. Stokes was ahead of her cohort in every dimension.

Sources: Asbury Park Press (2003, January 12); Claire Fogin, PhD, RN, FAAN; and Margaret P. Stokes.