

Elnora “Ellie” M. Gilfoyle

Occupational Therapy, 1980 - 2000

Personal Background

Date of Birth: 1934

Growing up & Family

Ellie was born and raised in Ottumwa, Iowa with her three older siblings. Her mother was a stay-at-home mom, and her father worked with his brother at their manufacturing company.



Ellie met her future husband, Gene Gilfoyle, at a party she attended with her sister at the Boulder Reservoir. Gene and Ellie Gilfoyle were married in 1958 and decided to establish their home in Colorado. Gene worked at StorageTec for many years in accounting. They have a son, who now has three step-children and three children of his own. While his family waits for a new home to be built in Tennessee, Ellie has enjoyed hosting her family in her home and finds one of her favorite hobbies is playing with her grandchildren.

Sadly, Gene passed away on November 9, 2010, at his home in Loveland. He and Ellie were married for 53 years and together they enjoyed all Colorado has to offer, including camping, skiing, hiking, handball, tennis, rewarding careers in finance, occupational therapy and higher education, as well as a vibrant social life. Family and innumerable friends were the epicenter of Gene and Ellie's life together. They were true “Ram” fans attending football, basketball, and volleyball games.

Education & Pre-CSU Employment

Ellie attended Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa from 1952-1954. Upon entering school, her roommate at the time was an OT student who worked in an area hospital. One day, Ellie joined her at the hospital and discovered that she appreciated OT's approach, which emphasized ability rather than disability. From that moment on, Ellie was hooked.

She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Occupational Therapy at the State University of Iowa City, Iowa in 1956. Ellie received her Advanced Certificate in Professional Occupational Therapy in 1958 from State University of Iowa.

After moving to Colorado upon graduation, Ellie found employment as an occupational therapist at Denver General Hospital, then at Craig Hospital in Denver where she was one of the founding therapists that initiated the quality rehabilitation program that is nationally recognized. From Craig,

she went to The Children's Hospital, Denver to begin her career serving children with handicapping conditions.

For her extensive work with children, Ellie was selected to be a member of a Fellowship in Child Development at the Department of Pediatrics from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center from 1964 – 1966. Working as a founding therapist to establish the John F. Kennedy Child Development Center, Ellie developed her research expertise and also began teaching OT students from CSU. She enjoyed working with fellow pediatric fellows, while teaching medical classes in pediatric OT.

Ellie also worked as a member of a child abuse and child development research team at the Denver Department of Health. The American Occupational Therapy Association employed her to direct a U.S. Department of Education grant that resulted in an innovative national curriculum to prepare occupational therapists to serve children and youth in public school programs. From her research and design of treatment programs she and a colleague designed a theory about neurodevelopment in children with central nervous systems. The theory continues to be used as a basis for treatment. Ellie was recognized by her profession with the association's highest scholastic award, *The Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lectureship*. She was also awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Science degree from Colorado State University for her scholarly contributions to the advancement of occupational therapy.

What brought her to CSU?

When she moved to the John F. Kennedy Child Development Center, CSU students were coming to Denver during their senior year to take medical courses they didn't have in Fort Collins. During this time, CSU was up for accreditation, but could not receive it unless students had more access to medical courses and medicine. Ellie was excited to teach all of the pediatric courses, where she fell in love with teaching.

After she left John F. Kennedy with a grant from the American Occupational Association, CSU called her, asking her to apply for open faculty position. With the grant almost up, Ellie visited Dean Helen Mc Hugh at CSU, who gave her the opportunity to work as an Associate Professor. Within a year, Ellie applied and was rewarded a tenured full professor position. A few years later, Ellie became the department head of Occupational Therapy

She knew that she wanted to be a leader from a young age, back during her days as a Girl Scout. Ellie consistently put herself in positions where she could be a leader. Interestingly, she never set a goal to be a department head, a dean, a provost – instead, she focused on putting herself in positions where she could learn about leadership and systems. Ellie has found that her life was not about goal setting, rather she sought and took advantage of opportunities.

Dates of Employment at Colorado State University

Dr. Ellie Gilfoyle first joined Colorado State University in 1981 as an Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy. In 1986, she became a Professor, followed by her position as the Assistant Dean of the College of Applied Human Sciences, as well as Department Head of Occupational Therapy. From 1989 – 1991, Ellie served as Dean of the College of Applied Human Sciences, and was named Provost/Academic Vice President at Colorado State University in 1991 –

the first woman to hold that post in the institution's history. During her tenure at CSU, she founded and directed the Institute for Women and Leadership, an educational and research program whose mission is the promotion of women and inclusive leadership.

Publications

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Young, J., Gordon, G., & Gilfoyle, E. (1961, April). Functional use of "nylon" muscle in severe quadriplegia. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*.

Honors & Awards

1996 - Inducted into Colorado Women's Hall of Fame

1994 - Award, Black Student Affairs, for significant contributions to African-American students at Colorado State University

1993 - Service Award, The American Occupational Therapy Association, for significant contributions to the Association.

1991 - Award of Merit, The American Occupational Therapy Association, for sustained contributions to the development of the profession and Association.

1990 - Certificate of Appreciation, The American Occupational Therapy Association, for outstanding scholarly contributions to the profession.

1989 - Selected by The American Occupational Therapy Association as one of ten individuals nationwide whose contributions have had a significant impact on the practice, education, and research of the profession.

1989 - Service Award, The American Occupational Therapy Association, for distinguished service as President, 1986-1989.

1988 - Selected as Delegation Leader, Citizens Ambassador Program, People-to-People Educational Programs, Republic of China.

1987 - Service Award, Florida Occupational Therapy Association, for distinguished service to the development of the profession of occupational therapy.

1987 - Recognition for distinguished service for the profession and Association, Occupational Therapy Association of Indiana.

1987 - American Occupational Therapy Foundation, distinguished service for the promotion of knowledge and research as a member of the Editorial Board of Occupational Therapy Journal of Research. American Occupational Therapy Association.

1986 - Service Award, Occupational Therapy Association of Massachusetts, for distinguished service to the profession of occupational therapy.

1986 - U.S. Army Golden Medallion Award, U.S. Army Medical Specialist Corps (one of five persons to receive this award since 1947 for distinguished services in the promotion of the allied health profession in the military).

1985 - Service Award, American Occupational Therapy Association, for distinguished service as Secretary, 1983-1985.

1984 - Selected as Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecturer for the American Occupational Therapy Association (Association's Highest Scholastic Award).

1982 - Selected as one of three finalists for "Educator of the Year" for the American Society of Association Executives.

1973 - Selected to the Roster of Fellows, American Occupational Therapy Association.

1972 - Elected to membership in the Society for Behavioral Kinesiology.

1971 - Selected as the Marjorie Ball Lecturer, Occupational Therapy Association of Colorado (the Association's highest scholastic award).

1969 - Selected as one of eight representatives to the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare's project entitled, "Research Development for Allied Health Professions".

Professional Organizations

American Occupational Therapy Association

- President, 1986-1989
- President-Elect, 1985-1986
- Secretary, 1983-1985 and 1974-1977
- Member, Accreditation Evaluator, 1989-1993
- Liaison, Commission on Practice – Occupational Therapy in the Public Schools, 1979-1982
- Secretary, American Occupational Therapy Political Action Committee, 1976-1978
- Chair, Task Force on Organizational Design and Transitional Planning, 1975-1978
- Member, Editorial Board, American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 1970-1975
- Chairman, Research Training Workshop, 1970-1972
- Organization of Affiliate Presidents, 1965-1970
- Member, Council on Development – Liaison to Student Organization, 1970-1972

- Member, Recognitions Committee, 1972-1974
- Chairperson, AOTA Annual Conference, 1964

American Occupational Therapy Foundation

- Member, Editorial Review Board, American Occupational Therapy Journal of Research, 1985-1987
- Member, Executive Board, 1986-1989
- Member, Research Development Committee, 1985-1989

Colorado Occupational Therapy Association

- Executive Board Member, 1979-1989
- President, 1966-1970
- Vice-President, 1962-1964
- Secretary, 1960-1962

Society for Behavioral Kinesiology

- Co-Chairman, Annual Conference, 1972
- World Federation of Occupational Therapy
- American Society for Allied Health Professions

