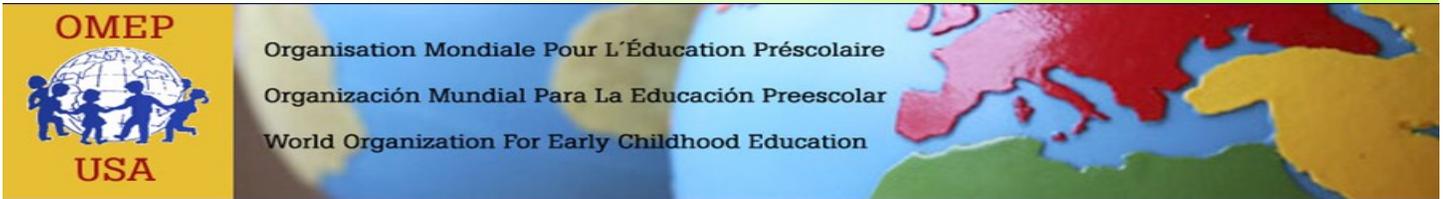


April  
2018

# OMEP-USA NEWSLETTER



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## Message from OMEP-USA President

Judith Lynne McConnell-Farmer, Ed.D

### Standing in Line

My memories of being in Mrs. Michael's kindergarten at Cordley Elementary School in Lawrence, Kansas include standing in line. We stood in line to go out to recess, to go to music class, and to walk back inside to solemnly and efficiently go to our classrooms for naps. I, like so many young students, learned to stand in line obediently and without question. We were told to stand so, walk so, because we were told to do so. Likewise, as a teacher in my own classroom I instructed and guided my students to stand front to back with one another in a straight line. We had a lining-up song, a dance to correctly place every student in their proper place in line before proceeding out into the hall of the school. So much in life is learned in kindergarten as author, Robert Fulghum, elegantly recounted in his 1986 book, All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, including learning to stand in line.

As President of OMEP-USA, I now find myself at the front of the line. To me this is a somewhat surprising and certainly a humbling position. I reflect on how, seemingly so quickly, I am now at the helm of this long line of early childhood professionals. For years I was in line as the then President seemed to create miracles to better the lives of children and their families here in the USA.

#### Editor's note

Please send your story  
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The Presidents during my tenure in OMEP-USA include Lenore Wineberg, Leah Adams, Gwen Coe, Edna Ranck, Judith Wagner, and Jean Simpson. I slowly became more involved in OMEP-USA by being a member, Region 5 Representative several times, and then the Vice President. As I worked my way up the line I continued being in awe of the dedication, energy, kindness and generosity of each of these legendary lady Presidents.

We are a volunteer organization and function without government support or independent sponsorship. We are a gathering of like-minded, strong, committed individuals, men and women, young and old, those who are university professors, state agency workers and owners/directors of child care centers, to name but some of our diversity. What unites this volunteer organization is zeal, focus, and determination that we can and must make this world safer and healthier for the young. I believe all of us in our society must make available sustainably rich and high-quality educational opportunities for our young children.

Do I sound like a cheerleader? Probably so. I believe all of us in OMEP-USA are collaboratively making a positive difference as we change from the traditional regional framework of our organization to that of action-based committees. We are now in the midst of preparing our 2nd OMEP-USA Regional Conference which will be held in Texas during the spring of 2019. Included in the conference will be the countries of the Caribbean and Canada, along with every state in our USA. Be prepared to attend with your colleagues, and better yet, get in line and help us facilitate the conference. We need EVERY ONE'S HELP to produce another successful regional conference.

I am confident that in line are a ready squadron of skilled and enthusiastic advocates of young children. As the years go by and your placement toward the beginning of the line gets closer and closer to the front be assured that you will have the grace and support of all those dear friends and colleagues which stand behind you. Being the new President of OMEP-USA is an honor and privilege. I joyfully look forward to the months ahead as we work ardently together for the betterment and health of our children.

## *A Generous Donation*

Endowed funds in the name of Lea Lee and Frank Mangum in the amount of \$5,000 in 2018 have been donated to OMEP-USA. Lea is a long-standing, active member of OMEP-USA and a Professor in the Department of Teaching & Learning at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. These funds will focus on research and publication related expenses. This generous donation can be allocated to pay for the beginning of an online journal, innovative research presentation awards, and/or a reception for published authors and presenters at regional conferences we host.

# Dr. Judith Lynne McConnell-Farmer's Interview

Dr. Mary Duncan

Region 5 Representative

During a relay race at a track meet, one will see a baton passed from one team member to another. Critical time can be gained when the baton is passed smoothly from one team member to another during the crucial first steps of the next leg of the journey. Similarly, with the passing of the baton to team members in a professional teaching career "race", more experienced OMEP members can "pass the baton" of ideas and experience to newer teachers who are on various legs of their career journey. Dr. McConnell-Farmer was that for me (as a student) nearly 15 years ago as my first online professor. Over the years, she has provided a mentoring role as I would strive to begin my career in higher education. It has been a privilege learning under her leadership.

In the relay race of the education profession, we have at the helm of our OMEP-USA organization, one who has "run the race" over the last 34 years with incredible accomplishments. Embracing learning and establishing international connections are just a few of the core strengths that our new OMEP-USA President, Dr. Judith Lynne McConnell-Farmer, lives by. The baton was passed to her during the November 2017 board meeting in Atlanta, Georgia by the then President of OMEP-USA, Dr. Jean Simpson. With the March 2018 board meeting behind her, Judith has grabbed ahold of technology and has found a way for others across the country to join through the virtual platform of ZOOM. One of those valuable members who joined through ZOOM was Dr. Edna Ranck, in Washington DC, a former President of OMEP-USA. She was one of several members who provided additional insight to the board meeting held in Overland Park, Dr. Judi Estes, Vice President of OMEP-USA, and a seasoned veteran of online learning, helped the off-site members navigate the technology using ZOOM. True teamwork is at the core of the OMEP members as they work as a team to rise to the next level of accommodating the needs of the membership.

Dr. McConnell-Farmer's dissertation at Teacher's College, Columbia University in NYC, focused on technology and now many years later, she uses that same vision to connect with those in OMEP-USA. USA connections are not all that Judith has networked with during the years. She has a true passion for education across the globe and with that comes international professional connections. Not only has she had the opportunity to present in 27 countries around the world, she has also directed the *Oxford International Round Table Symposium* 46 times at Oxford University, Oxford, England. Over the years thousands of individuals from across the world have taken part in the Round Tables. Topics for the Round Tables originally focused on the Early Years but later branched out to include a variety of topics including Children at Risk and Women Studies.

“How did she begin building this international connection?” you may ask. Judith shared how fortunate she was during her earlier years in the 1990’s to become involved with the People to People International Organization. She began her first professional international excursion to Spain for People to People International Organization where she led a delegation of early childhood professionals from North America. Later trips that she hosted for the international organization were to China (2 times), Cuba, Russia, and The Czech Republic. By meeting other early childhood professionals from across the world, it helped her to put things into perspective. For example, she had one colleague from China who asked her if it was true that American children were taught to play with their food in school when there were so many children across the world starving. Her first thought was, “No, we don’t teach our children to play with their food”. Yet, in reflection, she realized that there were too many USA preschool classrooms where rice tables were prevalent and art activities, such as, making mosaic eggs, and fruit loop necklaces prevalent practices. Through conversation with fellow teachers across the world, she received a broader perspective as she reflected upon and learned from the viewpoints of those in other cultures.

Some people may choose to retire when they reach a certain age, but not Dr. McConnell-Farmer. Her grandson is proud to share that he has a bionic grandmother with two new knees! Over a couple of months, she only paused for a “tune up” and within a short time, she was back this last March walking through the streets of Rome, Italy. Currently, she stays busy with a variety of upcoming professional responsibilities. These activities include being a keynote speaker at a USA conference, heading a panel presentation and presenting a paper at the *World OMEP Conference* in Prague, presenting a paper at a conference in Rome, Italy, and directing three *Oxford Roundtable Symposiums* in England. This June and July she will be traveling in several countries including Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, the Czech Republic, Poland and England, Dr. McConnell-Farmer still finds time to pass that baton to others as she looks at her upcoming projects for this coming year. On her “to do list”, is the writing of another book, more articles, and chapters to share what she has learned. Currently, she has written three books, Adventures, fantasy and dreams in children’s literature, and the Education of young children, research and public policy, published in Cambridge, UK, by Linton Atlantic Books, Ltd., and Teacher renewal, professional issues and personal choices, published in NYC by Teachers College Press.

For her OMEP-USA board and membership, the new OMEP-USA President has a shared vision. The March 2018 board meeting utilized ZOOM to bring in members from Washington DC, Texas, Virginia, Minnesota and other states in the USA. There is an upcoming change in the structure of OMEP-USA first introduced to the membership by Dr. Jim Hoot.

He recommended the reorganization from Regional Representation to more efficient Action Committees that will strive to accomplish specific tasks. There is a strong desire to do more with accomplishing projects at a national level, such as, creating professional development for our members, responding to the needs of refugees, as well as providing education on other goals of World OMEP.

As she passes the baton to you and me in our teaching profession, Dr. McConnell-Farmer shares these final words of encouragement:

- Keep moving, keep learning, be curious, keep striving to make a difference in others' lives.
- Others will learn bits and pieces from you and, not surprisingly, they will enhance and grow from them. Before you know it, the seeds you have planted in others have taken root and grown into something beyond your wildest dreams.
- Strive to get involved in professional organizations with other teachers.
- Learn to network.
- As teachers, we are making a difference.
- Relish every moment of what you do.
- Journal about your students.
- Take photographs along the way of your whole class, frame them and hang them on your wall.
- Don't underestimate the influence you have in each of your student's lives. Someday you may be fortunate to see them again and they will remind you of various things they remember from their long-ago classroom days with you.

Once again, the baton is passed on to the next generation of teaching professionals. By getting involved in a professional organization like OMEP-USA, you can learn from others, learn to develop appropriate practices and influence legislation. By being a member and working on various projects across the country, you are working as a team, you are part of something bigger than just you or your school. Become all you can be and keep learning and growing.

# OMEP-USA New Leadership

**President**

**Judith L. McConnell-Farmer, Ed.D.**



**Vice President**

**Judith S. Estes, Ph.D.**



**Secretary**

**Pamela R. Cook, Ph.D**



**Treasurer**

**Lisa Douglass, Ph.D**





**Chair of Membership**

**Reina Park, Ph.D**



**Immediate Past President**

**Jean Simpson, Ph.D**



**Deputy World OMEP Vice President**

**Judith Wagner, Ph.D**



**70th OMEP  
World Assembly  
&  
International Conference, 2018  
in  
Prague, Czech Republic**

World Assembly: June 25 - 26, 2018  
Prague, Hotel Olympik

International Conference: June 27 - 29, 2018  
Prague, Hotel Clarion

<https://konference2018.omep.cz/home>

## *OMEP Website & Facebook*

The OMEP-USA website has a new look and is available for you to obtain information. Even though the website is evolving, you will find important links, history and events of interest to the student of professional with international interests. Many thanks to Ebony Cray Jones for her assistance!

The website address is: <https://omep.us/>

Join OMEP- USA on Facebook : **OMEP-USA**

Twitter : **OMEP-USA**

## *Upcoming Professional Events in Europe*

### **International Round Table Symposiums Held at Oxford University, Oxford, England 2018 Sessions**

- Educational Issues and Trends (Pre-K-12) : July 15 –July 18, 2018
  - Literature, Language and the Arts: July 18 – July 21, 2018
  - Health, Nutrition and Aging: July 22 – July 25, 2018

### **ISERD – International Conference on Education and E-Learning Held in Rome, Italy June 20-21, 2018**

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