



The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy

OJOT Sponsor Profiles

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Katherine A. Lawson, OTR/L, LMSSW, PhD, Honoring Family

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Sponsor Profile: Katherine A. Lawson, OTR/L, LMSSW, PhD, Honoring Family



Dr. Katherine A. Lawson is generously sponsoring the Summer 2016 issue of *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy* (OJOT). She was previously featured as the sponsor of the Summer 2014 issue of OJOT. Dr. Lawson graduated with a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy degree from The University of Texas at El Paso and The University of Texas at Galveston Cooperative Program. Dr. Lawson received her Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences in 2013 with a focus on fall prevention in older adults.

Our environments and relationships have a profound impact on us while we are growing up. As the sponsor of this issue of OJOT, Dr. Lawson is honoring her parents. Her mother, Captain Mary Lawson, was a nurse in the army, and her father, Sergeant John Lewis Lawson, was a medic in the army. The people around us in our formative years have a great impact on our future lives and personalities. The love and compassion they share with us is often reflected in our actions as an adult. Dr. Lawson demonstrated the impact her parents had on her by forming the Senior Wishes Foundation and continues to demonstrate their influence by contributing to occupational therapy scholarship through supporting OJOT.

For many of us, as we grow up, our parents, or our adult influences, are our pillars of morality. Their choices and sacrifices teach us what it means to live a valued life. It is through our parents that we learn cultural customs, including beliefs, traditions, and the importance of familial relationships. These pillars and cultural customs are an integral part of our being and identity as we grow older, which ultimately has a great influence on our occupations.

It can be difficult as a child to understand the sacrifices that a parent who is a member of the military makes. As you get older, you begin to understand the weight of the choice and the greater impact it has on society. The influence family has during these formative years is long lasting, and the strength that members of

a military family demonstrate is memorable. Dr. Lawson's parents demonstrated dedication both to country and family, which instilled core values that ultimately guided her participation in valued occupations.

Although Dr. Lawson's parents were both members of the military, her mother retired from service as a nurse in order for them to marry. Her father was a medic in the army for 35 years, serving in WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. During this time, her mother raised seven children while working full time. Her mother worked the night shift from 11 p.m. until 7 a.m., then got the children ready for school, and slept during the day. Her parents' influences and their dedication to family and the country during this time left a lasting impact.

Dr. Lawson's father, unfortunately, passed away in his mid 50's from a myocardial infarction. Her mother passed away after complications from a fall. It was through her parents' influence of giving back and dedication that she chose to pursue her Ph.D. in fall prevention to help decrease further injuries and fatalities from falls. Dr. Lawson is currently part of an interdisciplinary team that provides home-based personal care services in order to decrease falls by assessing the home environment.

With her parents' influence as a guiding force, Dr. Lawson also founded the Senior Wishes Foundation through Hospice El Paso 3 years ago. It is a program specific to individuals who are currently receiving Hospice El Paso services. "Senior Wishes" are identified by Hospice El Paso social workers and implemented by their interdisciplinary team. Senior Wishes made it possible to grant a couple who were not able to have a church wedding a church ceremony 25 years after they were married. A senior woman was able to hear members of the symphony play at the nursing facility where she lived while holding hands with her husband. In addition, Senior Wishes also granted sight to a man whose only desire at the end of his life was to have new eyeglasses to read his books.

Dr. Lawson is enthusiastic in furthering scholarship practice through OJOT, as the journal provides a platform for high quality, open access research. Dr. Lawson has an appreciation for the great efforts of Dr. Diane Powers Dirette, the Editor-in-Chief, who maintains the journal's high quality. In addition, she values Fred Sammons and Barbara Rider's philanthropic contributions to the field of occupational therapy and their continued support of OJOT. Dr. Lawson also serves on OJOT's editorial board. She continues to be enthusiastic about the future of the journal and the high caliber research articles that have been published and will continue to be published.

For information on the Senior Wishes Foundation please call Hospice El Paso:
915-532-5699 or visit their website at <http://www.hospiceelpaso.org>

For Dr. Lawson's 2014 Summer Sponsorship profile please visit:
<http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=sponsorprofiles>

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