Dear Dr. Cipriano,

Why is Margaret Sanger in the ANA Hall of Fame? Perhaps it is because the selection committee in 1976 did not have access to the internet and information from less well known publications. While in graduate school I did a paper on Margaret Sanger where I read a number of her books. In these books I perceived that Margaret Sanger’s reason for introducing the pill was for altruistic reasons to help the poor and prevent deaths from abortions. When I recently found the scholarly work of Dr. Angela Franks I realized I was terribly misinformed. I bought into a big lie. Here are but a few of many disturbing quotes made by Margaret Sanger that every nurse should find deeply offensive!

* In April 1932 Birth control review Sanger wrote, “We should apply a stern and rigid policy of sterilization and segregation to that grade of population whose progeny is tainted, or whose inheritance is such that objectionable traits may be transmitted to offspring.” (p. 107 retrieved http://birthcontrolreview.net/Birth%20Control%20Review/1932-04%20April.pdf)
* In Woman and the New Race.  1920, The Wickedness of Creating Large Familiesshe wrote, “The most merciful thing that the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it”(p. 62-63).
* In a letter to Clarence Gamble Sanger wrote “it seems to me from my experience where I have been in NC, GA, TN, and TX, that while colored Negros have great respect for white doctors they can get closer to their own members and more or less lay their cards on the table which means their ignorance, superstitions and doubts …. The ministers [sic} work is also important and also he should be trained, perhaps by Federation as to our ideals and the goal that we hope to reach. We do not want the word to get out that we want to exterminate the Negro population and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to their rebellious members (Franks, 2005, loc. 617 eBook).
* In a 1939 letter to Frederick Osborn, Sanger wrote, “It is essential that we take an unequivocal and courageous stand and present a clear cut program. We know without a doubt that certain groups should not reproduce themselves. Why not say so as the English eugenist (sic) have done. We can not improve the race until we at first cut down production of its least desirable members”(Franks, 2005, loc 148 eBook).
* In April 1932 Birth Control Review Sanger wrote, “the world and almost all of civilization for the next 25 years is going depend on a simple, cheap, safe contraceptive used in poverty stricken slums, jungles and among the most ignorant people” (Franks 2005, loc 3079 eBook)

It is rather interesting that the World Health organization now classifies that ‘safe

contraceptive’ (the pill) as a **class one carcinogen.**

* In an unpublished paper called the Hereditary Factor she wrote, “A nation rises or sinks on the physical or mental quality of its citizens. It cannot thrive when its fundamental structure is based on defective stock, the increase of morons, feebleminded, psychopaths, diseased slum population” (loc.177, Franks, 2005, eBook)
* In 1921 Sanger founded the American Birth Control League (ABCL), a precursor of the Planned Parenthood Foundation of America. Among the principles and aims of the ABCL were convictions that the ‘healthy classes’ bore the costs of “those who should never have been born and that sterilization of the insane and feebleminded should be encouraged” (Franks, 2005, loc 469 eBook).

When I reviewed the ANA Code of Ethics I find that Sanger’s beliefs and writings are contradictory to Provisions 1, 2, 5, and 8. Sanger did not respect human dignity (P1), the primacy of the patient’s interests (P2), moral self-respect (P5), health needs and concerns and responsibilities to the public (P8).

In Florence Nightingale’s *Notes on Nursing* wrote, “Let whoever is in charge keep this simple question in her head (not, how can I always do this right thing myself, but) how can I provide for this right thing to always be done?” Florence was a pioneer in her care of the poor and the soldiers. If she were alive today I am sure she would be horrified that nurses today would honor someone with such a hatred for humanity. I believe the appropriate course of action is that the ANA acknowledge that, in light of this information recently brought to their attention, it was an error to give Margaret Sanger a place of honor. I urge you to please consider removing Margaret Sanger from the Hall of Fame. Several of my colleagues dropped their membership in ANA once they saw that Sanger was in the Hall of Fame. I dropped my membership for a while too, but then I decided you can't effect change from outside an organization so I chose to return and inform the members of the real truth about Margaret Sanger.

You might want to look into the work of Rose Hawthorne Lathrop who set up centers to care for the poor who were dying of cancer as an addition to the ANA Hall of Fame. This nurse did some phenomenal work and exemplified compassionate care. Rose Lathrop was the kind of nurse that makes me proud to be a nurse.

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Franks, A. (2005). *Margaret Sanger’s Eugenics Legacy The Control of Female Fertility.*

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