

Dr. Nancy Felipe Russo

Class of 2019



Nancy Felipe Russo graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1961, and was a member of the California Scholastic Federation. She was a song leader, editor of the school newspaper, "Tiger Tales," and voted "Most Intelligent." She also participated in the Auto Club and received the Auto Club Scholarship.

Following OHS, Nancy earned her AA degree from Yuba College, then attended the University of California at Davis (UCD), was initiated into Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi honor societies, and received her BA degree with highest honors. Her honors thesis work was highly influential, one year appearing in the 99th percentile of cited social science literature.

After UCD, Nancy earned her PhD in social psychology in 1970 at Cornell University where she excelled academically. During graduate school she supported herself working as a teaching assistant. She also won a coveted New York Graduate Teaching Fellowship that enabled her to focus on her dissertation research, later published in the leading journal in her field.

As an assistant professor at Richmond College - CUNY in New York, she continued her interest in public policy issues, particularly those related to women's rights. She worked with her father-in-law, Lucio F. Russo, an Assemblyman in the New York legislature and chair of the banking committee, to address inequality in mortgage banking laws. At the time, banks required a woman to have a male co-sign her mortgage application regardless of the woman's economic status. Ultimately Nancy's work resulted in New York passing the first state law to prohibit sex discrimination in mortgage banking (the first Equal Credit Act).

In 1973 Nancy moved to Washington D.C. where she helped organize the first Women's National Bank, which opened in Washington D.C. in 1978. She also met and married Allen Meyer, a political scientist.

For the next 12 years, she focused on public policy related to women's rights and social justice. Most of the time she worked at the American Psychological Association (APA), where she became the first director of the newly established APA Women's program office in 1977. She served on the Subpanel on the Mental Health of Women of the President's Commission on Mental Health during the Carter Administration and as the President of the Federation of Organizations for Professional Women, an umbrella organization of groups advocating for women in the sciences and professions.

In 1985 Nancy left APA to join the faculty of Arizona State University as the Director of Women's Studies with a faculty rank of Professor in ASU's Psychology Department. Recognition of her many roles and contributions at ASU are reflected in her promotion to ASU's highest faculty rank of Regents Professor – the third woman to attain that honor. She also received the Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award and was elected President of the Faculty Women's Association.

In her 25 years as an ASU faculty member, she worked hard to ensure diverse students had access and support at ASU and nationally. She is renowned for her mentorship of women and ethnic minorities at all stages of their careers, receiving the Elizabeth Hurlock mentoring award at the Carter Center in Georgia for "mentoring that affects the community at large."

Her numerous honors and awards include the Distinguished Contribution to the Public Interest Award by the American Psychological Association. The Citation reads in part: *“For her innovative and influential scholarship that has generated new understandings of women’s lives and circumstances, her leadership in promoting women’s mental health research and education, and her unique ability to translate research findings into effective public policy instruments.”* She has authored or co-authored many award-winning publications encompassing a range of topics related to women’s health, education, and careers, including *No Safe Haven: Male Violence Against Women - At Home, at Work, and in the Community*, which earned a Washington Ed Press award for “most outstanding treatment of a public concern.”

In retirement, Nancy lives in Corvallis, Oregon, with Allen Meyer, her husband of 44 years. As a couple they enjoy travelling and continuing to expand their knowledge of the world. Nancy is back to a life of community service and political advocacy, albeit primarily on the state and local level. She is still writing and consulting nationally and internationally.