Ruby P. Puckett, MA, RD, FCSI, CFE receives 2003 Copher Memorial Award

The Marjorie Hulsizer Copher Award is the highest award bestowed upon a member of the American Dietetic Association. The 2003 award is presented to Ruby P. Puckett, MA, RD, FCSI, CFE in recognition of her contributions to the Association and to the profession of dietetics.

During a career in dietetics that has spanned over four decades, Puckett has brought innovation, creativity, and dedication to every project, challenge, opportunity, and position presented to her. Puckett brings out the best in people by giving her best. She challenges students, emerging dietitians, and experienced dietitians to continuously “think out of the box” and to assume leadership roles. Her leadership and dedication to management dietetics is legendary. She was at the forefront of the development of the DPGs, constantly standing up for both the concept of the practice groups and the necessity of a unified voice for management dietitians. She continues to this day to be passionate and committed about foodservice management.

Her vision in helping to establish the first dietetic internship in the state of Florida as well as her Dietary Managers Training program are but two prime examples of her commitment to the future of the dietetics profession. Her award-winning Dietary Managers Training program at the University of Florida is recognized nationally, as well as internationally, and counts over 31,000 enrollees in its 30-year history.

Aside from authoring numerous articles and books on foodservice management, being in demand as a speaker, being a CADE site visitor, and consulting for the United States military foodservice worldwide, Puckett is also active in numerous volunteer organizations. From the first days of her professional membership, Puckett’s involvement in the ADA at all levels—local, state and national—has been extensive and contributory. She has served ADA in numerous appointed and elected positions, always willing to share her knowledge and talents. The state of Florida has also benefited from her leadership and devotion for the past 35 years, having served in many positions including as president of the Florida Dietetic Association and as president for three different terms of the Gainesville District Dietetic Association. Her spirit of willing service extends to her community with substantial involvement and commitment to her local credit union, the Gainesville Women’s Club, Altrusa International of Gainesville, Mothers Supporting Daughters with Breast Cancer, and her local church.

It has been written “…when a man (or woman) lives multi-dimensionally, explores all possibilities available, never shrinks back from any challenge, goes, rushes to it, welcomes it, rises to the occasion, then life becomes a flame, life blooms.” This thought epitomizes Ruby Parker Puckett. She has been a flame of care, concern, and compassion wherever she found herself. As an educator, author, mentor, and manager without equal, Puckett’s flame has helped countless others to also become living flames of integrity and dedication. What a gift and inspiration to our profession!