

## Parker J. Palmer Courage to Lead Award



The Parker J. Palmer Courage to Lead Award honors designated institutional officials (DIOs) who have demonstrated excellence in overseeing residency and fellowship programs at their Sponsoring Institutions. DIOs have authority and responsibility for all graduate medical education (GME) programs in a teaching hospital, community hospital, or other type of institution that sponsors GME programs. Parker J. Palmer is the author of the book *The Courage to Teach*; his promotion of the concept of “living divided no more” has proven relevant to teaching in academic health centers.



**Joann Porter, MD, FACP**

Creighton University School of Medicine  
Omaha, Nebraska

### **Nominators Had This to Say:**

“Dr. Porter faced the COVID-19 crisis head on and spearheaded the COVID Task Force where we met daily to assess the threat level and adjust as necessary. She developed the Creighton GME COVID website; she then regularly added updates and educational materials for our learners and our faculty. Even in Creighton's darkest days of the early pandemic and later surge, Dr. Porter was a source of alacrity we could turn to for encouragement.”

“On a personal level, I feel compelled to expand further on the areas that strike me as the most impactful. In the middle of our global pandemic, I assumed the role of program director for our pulmonary and critical care medicine fellowship at Creighton. Despite that fact that Creighton asked GME personnel to remain at home, Joann continued to work from an empty GME office to support her faculty. She continued to foster her motto that her door “remained open.” It was during this time that my presupposition of her support and work ethic was confirmed.”

“I had the opportunity to first meet Dr. Porter early in my intern year, when she served as interim Internal Medicine program director while helping conduct the search for a full-time replacement. She was able to handle these duties while continuing to serve as the GME DIO. It was evident that Dr. Porter's welcoming and infectious personality permeated down throughout all of Creighton's GME programs, as she set the tone for what it means to embody the Creighton culture and values: “Cura Personalis” (to care for the whole person). She modeled this by mentoring residents in the clinic setting that served our VA population. This mindset additionally personified her leadership style within GME as she has always emphasized the balance of our academic training and maintaining physical and mental wellness. To make sure our house staff are appropriately supported during their training, she has brought on board a full-time psychologist who is the director of wellness and has been an invaluable resource for house staff

as we tackle the unique challenges of our medical training. We have monthly GME sponsored conferences promoting a collaborative multidisciplinary workplace. During my training, she has spearheaded creating both GME QI and Research Symposiums providing a stimulating environment to showcase high-value change within our health care system and the entire medical community.”