

# 2005 Elizabeth Noble Award Recipient: Elaine Meadows, PT



*Elaine Meadows accepts the Elizabeth Noble Award.*

I am incredibly honored to receive this special award and be added to the list of exceptional Physical Therapists who have received the Elizabeth Noble award in the years before me. I want to thank Cindy Feldt for nominating me and for being a special friend, an extraordinary PT, a terrific Mom, and generous volunteer to the Section on Women's Health.

I believe everything happens for a reason. Some times I call it Karma in, Karma out. Some times the

reasons are not clear, or the pain too strong to realize the lesson. But I have always believed everything happens for a reason and we must learn from each event. Whether happy or sad, learn from your lessons.

Early one morning in the Fall of 1979, I was riding my bicycle to my morning class at the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC). A young woman driving her car to work made a right turn, never saw me and hit me. I was knocked off my bike and I hit the pavement very hard. I don't remember much except an ambulance ride to the hospital and later a taxi ride back to my home across from the beach.

The moment I was hit, my whole life changed. At the time, I did not understand the technical, medical information regarding my herniated L5-S1 disc. I was in incredible pain and experiencing weakness in my left leg. I could barely walk, let alone sit through my classes and do school work. It was horrible and I was unhappy.

Luckily, I was directed to the Massage classes at UCSC and slowly I began feeling better. I graduated on time with a BA in Environmental Studies and Economics and a Certificate in Massage Therapy.

It was 1980, and there were many opportunities for Massage Therapy and Bodywork and I was actually able to support myself for many years in this field. I worked on private clients, in Chiropractors offices, in spas, especially in Calistoga, California, and in Physical Therapy offices. After several years, I decided Physical Therapy was the avenue I wanted to pursue.

With everything happening for a reason, I was accepted to the PT program at Emory University in Atlanta. Our program was lucky to have Elaine Wilder as a Professor and she taught us many hours on OB/GYN physical therapy treatment techniques. This specialty area of PT definitely interested me and it complemented my interest in spinal disorders and manual therapy.

Fast forward a few years and a young medical secretary timidly walks into the small PT office in the basement of Emory Clinic where I was employed as the Coordinator of Spinal Therapy. She wanted to know if anyone was interested in working with a GYN physician in a Continence Clinic. I jumped on the opportunity and for 18 months worked with Dr. Lewis Wall. If you were in Nashville at last year's CSM, you had an opportunity to hear him speak. Again, everything happens for a reason.

Around this same time, I met Elisa Kennedy who was on the Board of Directors for our Section in the early 90s. At the 1993

Combined Section Meeting in San Antonio, the Regional Representatives were initiated. Elisa was in charge and she asked me to be the Southeast Regional Representative.

My son was just born when I started this job and I thought I would never have any time or energy to do my duties. Fortunately, technology has made this job much easier than in the early years which is good because we have more responsibilities than in the early years.

Our Section has grown dramatically in the past 13 years that I have been involved, and I know I have grown along with our Section. It has been a fun journey and I am grateful for the opportunity to grow professionally with all of the great PTs in our Section.

This May, my husband Steve and I will celebrate the Bar Mitzvah of our son, Alan Pitt. Much like Alan celebrates his personal achievement, in many ways, the Elizabeth Noble Award is my personal achievement.

For the past 13 years, I always eagerly await my quarterly *SOWH Journal* as I hope many of you also do. I usually save reading the Journal for a quiet moment by myself to savor the information and the good vibes. I was particularly touched by the From the Editor comments this past issue dated December 2004. Trish King wrote on the topic of Feminist, Feminine, or Both?

A deep nerve was hit because I can remember in High School when I started a Women's Discussion group, we were all labeled radical feminists. I remember how saddened I was when the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution was defeated. I am shocked by the commitment of those that are Pro-Life but use violent and angry tactics to reach their political goals. After 20 years of marriage, I still feel a need to explain why my last name is different from my husband and son. Is this Feminist, Feminine, or Both?

I live in a liberal county but a very conservative community in Atlanta. I play on a tennis team with women ranging in age from mid 20s with new babies to late 60s with grandchildren. I was shocked at how few of these women knew of their G spot and how embarrassed they were when someone asked me about it.

I tried to explain in a thorough and clinical manner but the level of uneasiness was off the Richter scale. These women didn't want to hear about doing their pelvic floor exercises to have more fulfilling sexual function or less urine leakage with daily activities. Is this why women walk around with urine leakage up to 7 years before discussing it with their doctors? Is this Feminist or Feminine or plain dumb? Is it not Feminine to be Feminist?

To be involved in women's health and women's issues should not label us as Feminists or Feminine. Let us move forward with



*Past Elizabeth Noble winners in attendance at CSM with Elaine Meadows were Trish King, Ann Dunbar, Elaine Meadows, Rebecca Stephenson, MJ Strauhal (not present—Barb Bauman, Jill Boissonnault, Jane Frahm, Elizabeth Noble).*

cooperation, dedication, and grace as Trish King wrote. Let us work together to educate and promote Women's Health services throughout a woman's lifecycle.

I have had the opportunity to work with women throughout their lifecycle. For 8 years, I have worked in the Continence Clinic at Wesley Woods Geriatric Center at Emory University with Dr. Joe Ouslander. During these years, the average age of the patient is approximately 84. In other settings, I work with women and men of all ages with bowel and bladder disorders, pelvic pain, and whatever crazy diagnosis they can't figure out and send to me.

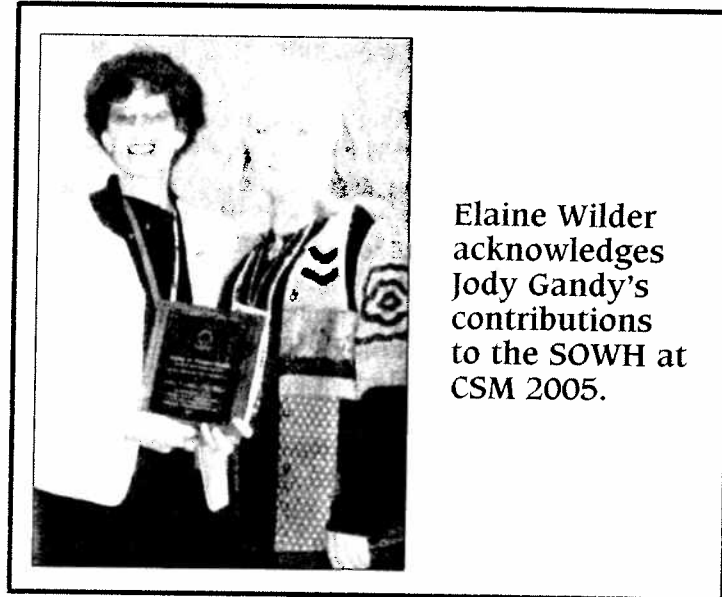
I am lucky to have found professional work that I find rewarding both emotionally and financially. I am lucky to enjoy my employment and not feel restricted. I am lucky to help people restore their lifestyles and shed embarrassing issues.

Last, I want to mention that the Elizabeth Noble award is particularly special to me because my fellow colleagues have recognized my service and contributions to the Section on Women's Health and to the field of women's health. This recognition can be achieved by everyone sitting in this room. I am not the leader of the pack. I have not served on the Board of Directors. I am a small engine that keeps on running. I am a small fish in the big sea of volunteerism. My parents taught me the value of service and in their mid-70s they continue to volunteer with several different organizations where they live in Florida. I hope that everyone will consider the many opportunities our Section offers us and con-

sider being a volunteer. Karma in, Karma out. It is in giving that we receive.

Thank you all very much.

*Congratulations Elaine*



**Elaine Wilder acknowledges Jody Gandy's contributions to the SOWH at CSM 2005.**

## COLONIAL MEDICAL SUPPLY

*Specializing in equipment used in the treatment of weak pelvic muscles.*

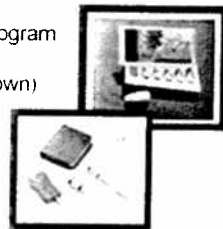
*Equipment includes cost effective home use products.*

- :: Biofeedback device that helps identify, isolate and train your weak pelvic floor muscles.

**Pelvic Muscle Therapy Program**  
\$49.95



- :: FreeStep Vaginal Weights - \$59.95
- :: Liberty Stim - Rental and purchase program
- :: EMG - Office and at home use (not shown)



For more information please call **1.888.442.PMTx (7689)**  
or visit us on the web at :

[www.kegelme.com](http://www.kegelme.com)

[www.womanshealthdirect.com](http://www.womanshealthdirect.com)

## THE IEM MATERNITY SACROILIAC (SI) SUPPORT



The maternity Lumbo/Pelvic Support is designed to stabilize the postural changes of pregnancy. It is tightened posteriorly, support is fabricated with an elastic front panel which minimizes compressive forces to the abdominal cavity.

**An integral part of the management of lumbo pelvic disorders**

### The "S-I" Support by IEM

Supports the base of the spine and allows for LUMBAR MOBILITY while providing Pelvic Stability (Pregnant - Obese available)

### The Lumbar Stabilizer by IEM

Compresses and/or stabilizes the Lumbar Spine by utilizing an anatomically compatible padding and tightening system

- SAME DAY SERVICE
- QUALITY LEATHER CONSTRUCTION
- MADE IN USA
- PATENTED DESIGN

### IEM ORTHOPAEDIC SYSTEMS, INC.

Suppliers of Innovative Support Systems  
Designed for the Healthcare Professional  
7108 State Route 14, P.O. Box 592 • Ravenna, Ohio 44266  
1-800-992-6594 • Canada 1-800-243-6594  
Manufactured by IEM Orthopaedic Systems, Inc.