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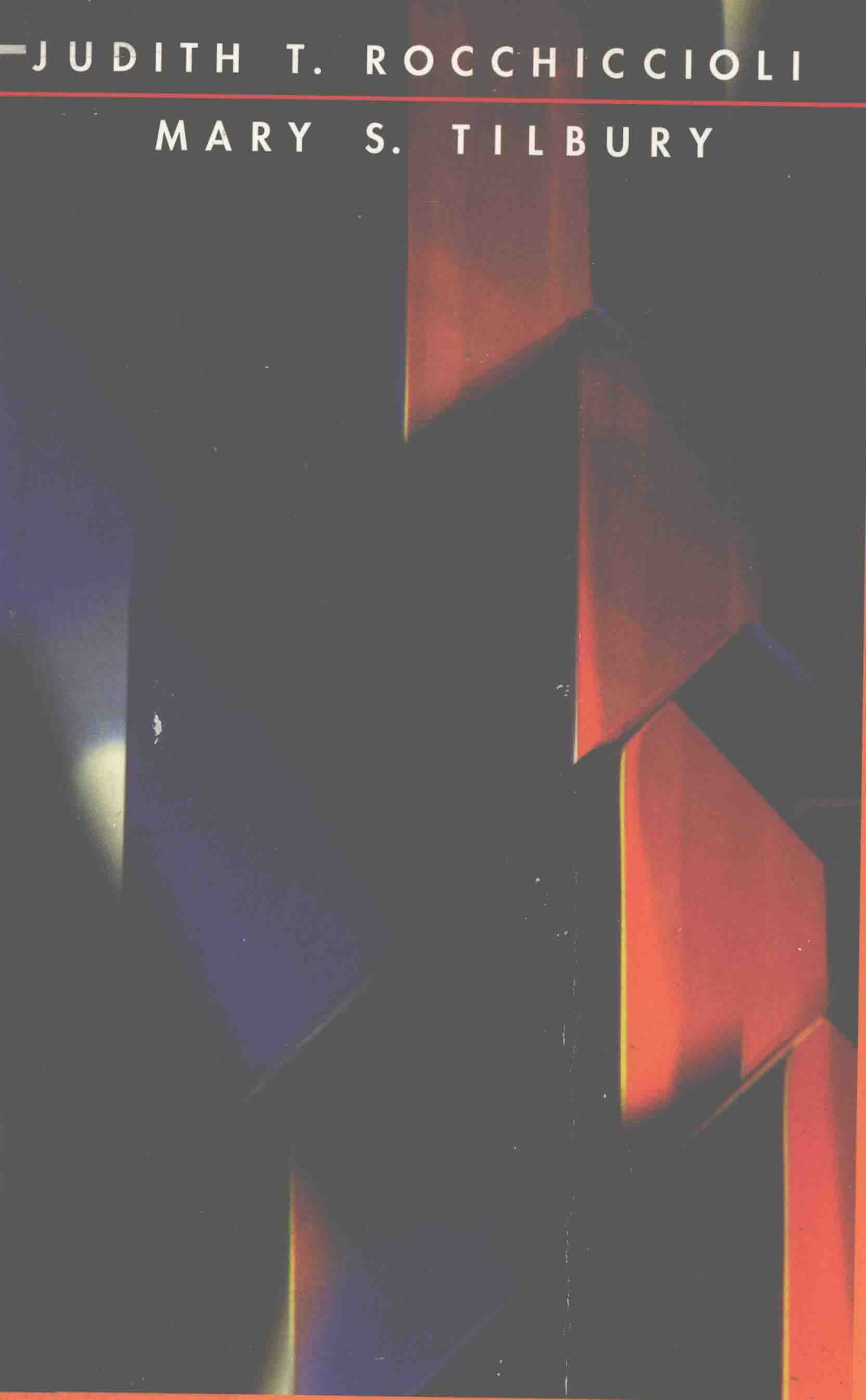

Clinical Leadership in Nursing

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Planned Change

Preface

The health care system is undergoing change at an unprecedented rate, and the impact of this process is profound. Reduction, retrenchment, and re-engineering of the hospital industry are all but accomplished. Newspapers and trade journals report hospital closures, mergers, and acquisitions and the formation of regional integrated health care delivery networks. Traditional health care insurance has essentially been replaced by a myriad of managed care structures that look like alphabet soup—HMO, PPO, POS, IPA, MSO—and headlines speak of drive-through deliveries and denial of care. The values, attitudes, and beliefs of a not-for-profit orientation are challenged by an environment characterized by for-profit motives. Against this backdrop, educators are challenged to respond and react, so as to prepare nurses who can provide leadership in this brave new world. This text was prepared with these thoughts in mind.

The registered nurse's role is shaped primarily by environmental factors. Today more than ever before, nurses are focused on the management of patient care, not only in the traditional acute-care setting but increasingly in community-based practice. The emergence of case management is only one reflection of this evolutionary process. On a daily basis, nurses must confront the impact of economic factors on the nursing process. The utilization of assistive personnel, the analysis of supply consumption patterns, the development of tools to map interdisciplinary clinical activities, the acquisition of electronic information systems, and the introduction of quality management methodologies represent only a few initiatives developed and designed to respond to the changing environment.

The need for effective nursing leadership has never been greater. In this text, leadership is used in a generic sense and incorporates the knowledge, skills, and competencies that might, in a theoretical sense, be associated with management. While the authors recognize that leadership and management are different, the fundamental principles and concepts associated with these areas of content and those required for practice in today's health care system are inexorably intertwined.

In keeping with this perspective, this text is divided into three sections. The first focuses on the knowledge, concepts, and principles that are fundamental to leadership in the evolving environment. It includes a brief exploration of our health care system in transition, an examination of common organizational structures and their operating principles, a review of nursing care delivery systems, and an introduction to nursing case management. The incorporation of substantive fiscal content and a focus on information management is a direct reflection of the changing environment. Nurses must develop the skills and competencies necessary to include fiscal analytical tools and information management skills in decision-making activities.

The second section highlights concepts that are critical to the achievement of predetermined organizational outcomes. The ability to motivate subordinates in a challenging environment and to manage time wisely; the acquisition of leadership, supervision, and delegation skills are essential. The vital nature of effective communication and conflict management; the need for planned change; and the essentials of multicultural group process are requisite skills and competencies in a managed care environment.

The text concludes by focusing on systems that serve as integrating functions across the organization. Legal and ethical factors must receive the leader's consideration not only in the management of patient care but also in the management of personnel. Finally, the management of quality and of employee performance is at the heart of organizational effectiveness.

Although professional nursing leadership principles and concepts have always been an integral part of the nursing education process, their impor-

tance is increased and broadened in the evolving health care system. We must now be concerned with the "business" of nursing. This text is designed to provide the student with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to effectively engage the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing environment.

MARY S. TILBURY, EDD, RN, CNAA
JUDITH T. ROCCHICCIOLI, PHD, RN

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Unit I

Foundations of Contemporary Nursing Leadership

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