

NURSING

Changing Lives

Breaking Ground



Improving Care



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**Graduates
Giving
Back**



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"My journey to the University of Rochester School of Nursing began after a life-changing experience during my time as a soldier in the United States Army."

A VETERAN OF THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

and recipient of the Purple Heart, Bradley (Brad) Forsythe served as an infantry team leader for 5 years before coming to the University of Rochester School of Nursing in 2011. During his fourth year of service, Brad helped a young Afghan bystander who was shot by insurgents. The experience inspired him to want to help others, especially children, in some of their greatest times of need. Upon completing his Army service, Brad enrolled in the School of Nursing's Accelerated Bachelor's Program for Non-Nurses. He will receive his B.S. this summer and will begin the Master's Program at the School of Nursing this fall to earn his Master's Degree as a pediatric nurse practitioner.



Your gift to the School of Nursing Annual Fund will support students like Brad who will go on to have a positive impact on the field of nursing. Visit www.rochester.edu/annualfunds/brad to make your gift today.



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Kathy H. Rideout, EdD, PNP-BC, FNAP
Interim Dean
University of Rochester School of Nursing

Throughout the pages of this issue you will see faces of change—graduates of the School of Nursing who are changing the lives of patients and families, the nursing profession, health care, and our world.

On the cusp of dramatic changes to our national health care system, I am so proud to be a part of an institution that continually reinforces in its students the importance of giving back—not just by finding a career in their chosen profession—but by collaborating, mentoring, studying, publishing, teaching, volunteering, and being a voice for constant improvement over the course of their lifetimes.

It is our *desire* to make a difference that makes all the difference.

When I spoke at this year’s commencement in May, I challenged our newest graduates to “learn, earn, and return,” a phrase coined by business technology specialist David Dietrich, and one that I think applies perfectly to nursing graduates and anyone entering the health-care profession today.

To paraphrase the key points:

- Never stop *learning*. Absorb everything you can through school, from your nursing colleagues, and from health-care providers

across every setting, and continue to study and seek new levels of knowledge and understanding.

- Appreciate the privilege of caring for others that you have *earned* as a nurse. In my now part-time role as a pediatric nurse practitioner, I still consider it the highest honor to help patients and families during very difficult and pivotal moments of their lives. There is nothing more important.
- And lastly, please *return* to study, teach, mentor, volunteer, and advocate for the health of our communities, particularly the underserved and disenfranchised.

I am thrilled to be leading the School of Nursing during a challenging, yet promising, time of evolution across the Medical Center and within our health care system, because I know our graduates share a collaborative sense of purpose that will carry them far beyond the doors of Helen Wood Hall—into a world that is *ever better*.



On the cover:

The School of Nursing graduates on the cover (clockwise from top, **LaRon Nelson, Daryl Sharp, Mattie Schmitt, Keri Baker, Gerri Lamb, Catherine Kane, Allan Wong, and Bradley Forsythe**) exemplify the sense of purpose and giving spirit shared by alumni. School of Nursing graduates increasingly find ways to positively improve our communities, the nursing profession, health-care policies, and the lives of patients and families around the world.

Contents

2	Cover story: Graduates Giving Back (five profile stories)
9	1937 Alum Shares Story with Students
11	2012 Commencement Ceremonies
14	City Students Get Inside Look at Health Careers
16	NURSING News
19	Sellers and Norton Receive 2012 Klainer Award
21	Rideout and Nurse Leaders Speak at Congressional Briefing
22	School Receives Fifth Round of RWJF/NCIN Funding
24	Norsen to Direct Sovie Institute
26	Biomolecular Lab Opens

giving back

Changing Lives

Keri Baker: Changing Lives in Peru

Executive Director, Sacred Valley Health,
Ollantaytambo, Peru
BS, Nursing, 2010



Keri Baker, RN, has always found it hard to sit still.

Growing up in Woodinville, Wash., with the great outdoors as her backyard, Baker spent much of her time running, hiking, cycling, and camping. After earning her bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from Central Washington University, she stretched her wings further, traveling to Ireland and England, and eventually earning her master's degree in forensic archaeology and crime-scene investigation from the University of Bradford in England. Following her adventurous spirit, she then spent a year backpacking with friends around the world—Europe, Africa, Australia, Antarctica—before returning to the States to prepare for a volunteer position in Honduras.

But tragedy struck in 2005, when she was hit by a truck while cycling, and spent more than a year recovering from serious injuries and struggling to pay off a mountain of medical bills.

"It was a turning point for me, having been very independent up to that point and suddenly being house-bound and accepting that I needed help from other people," recalled Baker. "Going through that experience also made me realize how important good health care is, and how meaningful a health-care career could be. I knew that's what I wanted to do."



School of Nursing Students in Peru

In June, the most recent group of eight School of Nursing graduates to volunteer with Sacred Valley Health returned from a two-week trip to Peru, where they served residents in the villages of Yanamayo, Calconca, Socoma, Ollantaytambo, Patacancha, and Huilloc. All of the students are graduates of the accelerated programs for non-nurses. "It was a privilege for all of us to have had this experience," said Kathleen (Kat) Kohl. "It was incredible to see the challenges that rural communities face to obtain health care, and to play even a small part in creating a better system for them there." Pictured here in the village of Macchu Pichu are Kohl, Samantha Schmidt, Jess Vega, Stephen Goon, Laura Bojko, Jess Hyde, Molly Ward, and Natalie Liebert.

After working for a year as a medical assistant, and four years as an English teacher at a South Korean university, Baker applied to and was accepted into the accelerated program for non-nurses at the School of Nursing. She graduated in 2010.

"My ultimate goal is to become a nurse practitioner," she said. "That the University of Rochester could put me on track to getting my RN licensure within a year was so attractive to me because it allowed me to keep moving toward my goals without losing any ground."

Following graduation, Baker once again found a way to put her skills to work around the globe—this time in Peru. She had previously volunteered with the non-profit organization Awamaki, which works with Peruvian women to enhance their weaving skills and economic opportunities. When Baker returned to lead two nursing service trips there, she realized the area's need for a health program and decided to set up camp indefinitely.

"All of my experiences led me to understand the importance of serving people in disadvantaged communities who might not have health care available to them," she said. "I'm the kind of person always looking for a new challenge and a place to feel needed. I had a gut sense that this would be the perfect place for me."

In January 2010, Baker and two other volunteers created Awamaki Health (now Sacred Valley Health), a clinic where local residents could receive public health education, basic health care assessments, and referrals for more specialized care as needed. A big part of Baker's work also consisted of serving *chocoladas* (a nutritious, hot chocolate drink popular in Peru) to engage residents with the clinic services.

Over the next year, the program grew and began offering fluoride treatments as well. Baker also began coordinating clinical placements for physicians and nurses from the United States interested in doing volunteer work.

The numbers served grew rapidly, but Baker became increasingly aware that there were many

Peruvians in remote areas who were too sick or disabled to make the difficult trek to the clinic.

“So we decided to go to them,” she said.

In June 2011, Baker led the first of many medical service journeys on horseback into isolated mountain villages, where she was able to provide assessments and care for people too sick to leave their homes. One in particular was a woman suffering from a simple bladder infection that had turned severe because she had stopped taking her antibiotic because of the side effects.

“We were able to work with the medication and avert a life-threatening situation,” said Baker. “For me, this experience really illuminated the need for increased access to affordable, quality health care and inspired me to expand what we were doing.”

Working together with **Mark Wilcox, MD**, a long-term volunteer physician, Baker soon expanded the mobile health clinic to include six communities in the Ollantaytambo district and began actively coordinating pools of volunteers, including many recent graduates of the School of Nursing. Every month,

Sacred Valley Health volunteers visit isolated communities to provide medical consultations, medicines, basic health education—and chocolatadas, of course. As the program continues to expand, the goal is to train women in each village to become community health workers, or *promotoras*, who can provide basic health care between visits and improve disease prevention and overall health outcomes.

“Our goal is to expand the reach of Sacred Valley Health to more than 30 villages in the Ollantaytambo district within the next five years,” said Baker. “Also, we would like each community to be served by at least one trained promotora, who can supervise medical compliance, and respond to emergency situations like difficult childbirths and accidents. We really want to empower the people to help themselves.”

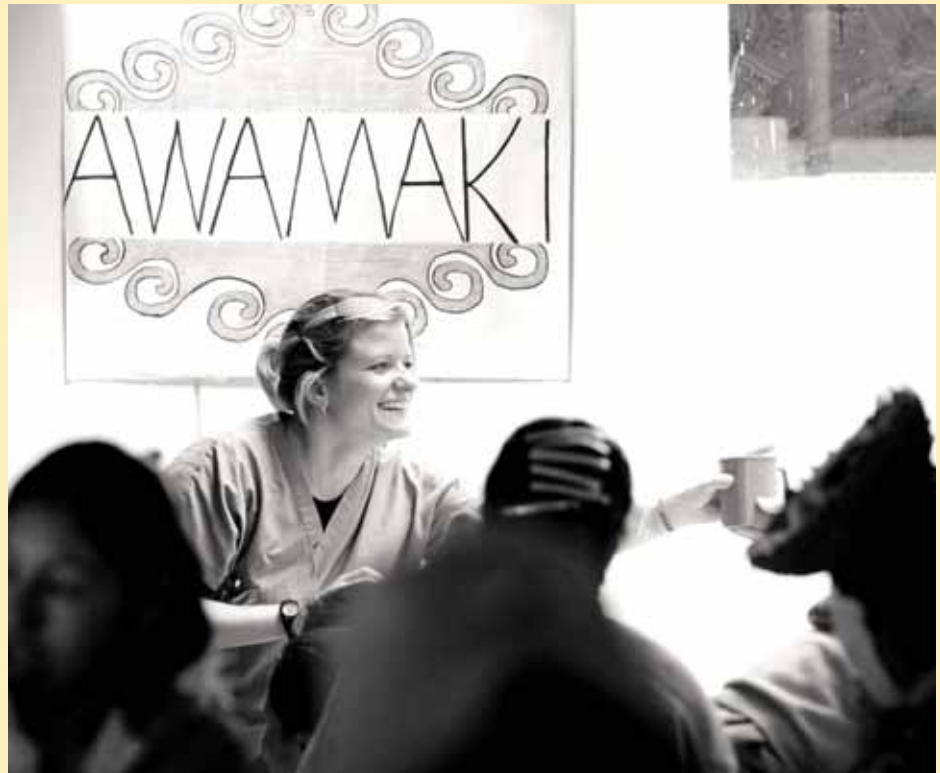
In addition, Sacred Valley Health seeks community partners and works with the local government to promote healthier outcomes for Peruvian residents.

Baker, who participated in the summer

Global Health Effectiveness program at Harvard University, while continuing her work as Sacred Valley Health executive director, says she believes the data being collected in Peru will show how their work is decreasing the incidence of preventable diseases and saving lives through earlier diagnosis of serious illness.

“I have loved everything about my experience in Peru, but most of all I love the feeling of making a direct impact on people’s lives,” Baker said. “It can be overwhelming and exhausting because the needs are great, but the people are so grateful. To me, there really is no other feeling in the world like helping in this way.”

Sacred Valley Health is a non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) funded entirely by contributions and dependent upon partnerships with organizations that can help it grow and improve its ability to aid surrounding communities. The organization welcomes qualified health-care volunteers for long-term placements, and continually seeks donations of medicines and medical supplies. For more information, visit sacredvalleyhealth.org.



Baker serves nutritious chokolatadas to Peruvian villagers.

LaRon Nelson: Breaking Ground in HIV Prevention

Assistant Dean for Global and Community
Affairs, University of South Florida
BS, Nursing, 2002, MS, Nursing, 2004
PhD, Health Practice Research, 2009



Growing up in Savannah, Ga., **LaRon E. Nelson, PhD, RN, NP**, assistant dean for global and community affairs, University

of South Florida College of Nursing, knew early on that he wanted to work to combat health-care disparities and improve the health outcomes of minorities. But it was his experience at the School of Nursing that brought new light to his ambitions.

While working as a National Institute of Nursing Research pre-doctoral fellow with **Dianne Morrison-Beedy, PhD, RN, WHNP-BC, FNAP, FAAN**, former School of Nursing professor and currently dean of the College of Nursing, University of South Florida, on an NIH-funded research project studying young, high-risk, urban minority women, Nelson said he learned to think on a “multidisciplinary level” and to integrate the complex biomedical, behavioral, social, and structural factors that may influence health choices and outcomes.

giving back

Breaking Ground

LaRon Nelson, PhD, RN, NP, says having a degree from the School of Nursing makes it possible to have a positive impact on health and science policy. “Going to presentations around the world has taught me the value of a Rochester education. Once they know you’ve studied at the University of Rochester, they pay attention. They know you have the knowledge, expertise, and above all the vital critical-thinking skills.”

“Human lives are not simple,” Nelson said. “So the answers to problems are not going to be either. I don’t think we should shy away from asking the tough questions or be afraid to break paradigms. That’s how I was trained. My mentors at Rochester encouraged me to go where the data suggests you should go, not just blindly follow the path that other people have trodded.”

Specifically, Nelson has dedicated his research career to the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmissible infections among socially marginalized groups within African and African diaspora communities—in particular, adolescent parents and men who have sex with men.

In his current research project, Nelson is studying the close social networks (values, beliefs, thoughts, hierarchies) of men who have sex with men in Ghana. His goal is to determine the most culturally appropriate ways to introduce HIV/STI-preventive measures, and harness social groups as a way to implement them.

A major part of this work involves not just gathering quantitative data, but engaging Ghanaian men in conversations to understand their prevention-related motives and decisions—for example, why exactly they might not want to take a pill for an illness they don’t have yet.

“It really would be impossible to interpret the data and understand how Ghanaians reason without spending time in the country,” Nelson said. “That’s because I’m primed, as we all are, to see the world in particular ways; for us, it’s through American eyes, with American logic and assumptions.”

Another statistic that Nelson has begun to

explore in related research is whether higher HIV rates among African-American men who have sex with men are linked to lower rates of condom use or some other social process.

“Some evidence shows the opposite—that African-American men actually use condoms as much as or more than other groups, but still get HIV more,” he said. “Our explanations to date have all been behavioral explanations, and they aren’t panning out. So I think there are other things we haven’t even considered yet.”

While working toward his doctorate at the School of Nursing in Rochester, Nelson served as associate director of public health and chief of public health practice and evaluation with the Monroe County Department of Public Health. In 2009, he joined the faculty of the University of Toronto’s Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, and in 2011 was named one of Canada’s Rising Stars in Global Health—the only nurse in Canada to receive this distinction—earning \$113,000 to support his Ghana research. He began his role as assistant dean at the University of South Florida this past summer.

Guiding his work is a desire to make sure that people of color are closely involved in decisions affecting the health of their communities,

“While the hearts of people outside those communities may be in the right place, unless you’ve lived in a culture and been part of it and know what it’s like, you’ll miss things,” he said. “Having community perspective and consciousness can make all the difference in the decisions that get made and their ultimate effect on people’s lives.”



giving back

Improving Care

Gerri Lamb: Improving Care Coordination

Associate Professor, Arizona State
University College of Nursing and Health
Innovation
MS, 1978



Care coordination is very hard work.

Gerri Lamb, PhD, RN, FAAN, associate professor, Arizona State University College of Nursing and Health Innovation, knows this well. Her career began in the 1970s as a home care nurse where she helped patients and families in lower Manhattan coordinate needed services.

The experience was the first of many that would inform her 40-year career.

“Connecting the different parts of the health-care system and making those parts work together is challenging and requires a lot of skill,” she said. “I’ve worked with people who have many chronic illnesses and social problems, and I’ve seen the difficulties they have navigating our health-care system. I always believed we could do better.”

That fact hit home in a personal way when Lamb was working in Arizona and her own mother in Florida became ill and a physician wanted to hospitalize her.

“My mother was worried that if she went into the hospital she would never come back out,” said Lamb. “So I was working long distance to try and coordinate home care, oxygen ...

everything she needed so she could remain at home.”

Due to scheduling problems and miscommunication, it ended up taking 36 hours to get home care for her mother, Lamb recalled.

The experience fueled her desire to change the status quo.

“My greatest passion now is patient-centered care coordination, and shifting our measurement to look at what’s important to patients and families,” she said. “There’s a huge gap between what we currently measure, and what was important to me as a daughter trying to coordinate my mother’s care.”

Earning her master’s degree from the School of Nursing in 1978, where she “formed many inspirational collaborations with colleagues that still exist today,” Lamb went on to earn her PhD in clinical nursing research and lead seminal research into care coordination. During the 1990s, she led a Medicare demonstration project that tested a fully capitated model for community-based care coordination. And, from 2006 to 2010, she was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (with School of Nursing colleague, **Madeline H. Schmitt, PhD, RN, FAAN, FNAP**) to explore and develop tools to measure how hospital nurses coordinate care.

“We found that nurses spend a large percentage of their time engaged in a wide range of coordination activities,” said Lamb. “But when we asked the nurses whether they thought anyone knows what they do to coordinate care, almost all of them said no.”

Most recently Lamb has been working with the National Quality Forum on performance measures around care coordination. She is also co-director for INTERACT, a project that is helping reduce the number of hospital admissions from skilled nursing facilities.

As the keynote speaker in Rochester last March for the Sigma Theta Tau Regional Conference, Lamb spoke on the related topic of bridging research and practice, and elaborated on her research findings.

“With care coordination, we are trying to take what’s invisible and name it,” she said. “Nurses are doing it, but they can’t name it. And if we can’t name it, we can’t measure it, improve it, and we certainly can’t be reimbursed for it.”

Interprofessional education is vital to successful care coordination, said Lamb, and she has also been engaged in this arena for several years. Right now, she is principal investigator on a grant funded by the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation to design an integrated interprofessional curriculum in primary care for nurses, physicians, pharmacists, and social workers.

“We need to build more shared understanding and commitments to take us to the next level of where we need to be,” Lamb said. “We have lots of options for doing things better, and we will get there; we just need to open up our processes. I truly believe that care coordination is the most important barometer of how well health care works for patients.”



A charter member of the Sigma Theta Tau Epsilon Xi Chapter, 1978 alum Gerri Lamb, PhD, RN, FAAN, was the keynote speaker for the Sigma Theta Tau regional conference in Rochester in March. She is pictured here with Epsilon Xi President Cathy Peters, MS, APRN-BC, NPP. “I was a student in Rochester during an amazing time,” said Lamb. “The close ties between practitioners, scientists, and faculty have been a model for me during my entire career.”

Mattie Schmitt: Shaping Policies on Interprofessional Education

**International Expert, Consultant, Speaker
BS, Nursing 1965
MA, Sociology, 1970**



Madeline H. Schmitt, PhD, RN, FAAN, FNAP, has an interesting way of retiring. Since the former professor and Independence Foundation chair stepped down in 2005—after serving 34 years on the School of Nursing faculty—she has been busier than ever, carrying a torch for interprofessional education across the country and around the world.

The scope of her influence has few boundaries.

Schmitt's work as chair of the Interprofessional Education Collaborative Expert Panel led to the 2011 creation of *Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice*, which provides guidelines and principles to prepare health professions students for working together toward safe, patient- and family-centered, community-oriented health care.

She served as the only nurse on a bi-national executive committee that planned and implemented the Collaborating Across Borders III Conference last November in Tucson, Ariz., which turned out to be the largest interprofessional education conference ever held.

Her work was featured in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's recent report, *Charting Nursing's Future II*, and, in March, she was named to a three-year position to represent the American Academy of Nursing and bring her voice and experience to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education.

Atlanta, Boston, Indianapolis, and Washington, D.C. (twice) are just some of the places she's traveled in the past year for presentations and meetings.

Which begs the question: Where does she get her energy?

"The work truly inspires and drives me," she said by phone in May before heading to the Far East for a trip that included a talk in Japan about interprofessional education. "When it's something you really believe in and are passionate about, it doesn't feel at all like work."

Schmitt's focus on interprofessional education began in her early days as a nursing student working in a Strong Memorial Hospital outpatient clinic under the wing of the late **Josephine Craytor, RN, MS, FAAN**. "We were taught in the Hildegard Peplau model of caring for the 'whole person,' and in the clinic where I was rotating, I naturally began to ask a young diabetic patient about factors that might

With **Harriet Kitman, RN, PhD, FAAN**, and other faculty, Schmitt developed the nurse practitioner model at the master's level and established the School's first research office. Later, in the 1970s, she and other faculty created the School's doctoral program, which graduated its first class in 1982.

On the national stage, 1972 was also the year that team-based education for U.S. health professions was initially promoted in a report from an IOM meeting. The report called for educational institutions to transform themselves to better prepare health professionals for the teamwork that would be needed by an evolving system.

"That was 40 years ago," said Schmitt. "We've come a long way but have a lot yet to do, and are entering an era where it's more important than ever. I think Rochester has a distinct advantage because as the home of the nurse practitioner model, we embedded this kind of collaborative

giving back

Shaping Policies

be influencing his health and his choices," said Schmitt.

She recalled that when the patient's physician asked what she was doing, and heard her answer, he invited her to "team up" and see the patient together. Craytor then encouraged Schmitt to reflect on her team experience and think about the ways health care provision could be improved. A fire was lit.

"I guess you could say that's when my almost 50-year conversation about interprofessional education began," she said.

In the early 1970s, as part of a groundbreaking project designed by the late, renowned geriatrician **T. Franklin Williams, MD**, in partnership with the School of Nursing's **Nancy Watson, RN, PhD, FGSA**, Schmitt began to study the processes and outcomes of interdisciplinary team delivery in a randomized trial of care for institutionalized elders.

In 1972, Schmitt was appointed as the first administrator in charge of graduate programs when the School of Nursing became autonomous and **Loretta C. Ford, EdD, RN, PNP, FAAN**, was named dean.

care in community settings before anyone else. We just didn't put a label on it."

The questions that were asked back in 1972 about the potential of interprofessional education to improve health-care delivery are not much different than those being posed today, said Schmitt.

"Only now we have the evidence to show that collaborative care improves outcomes," she said. "We are challenged now by educational silos and the need to alter the educational, administrative, and practice barriers that separate education and practice and keep us from working effectively together."

Ultimately, it's all about providing better patient care, she said.

"That's our common goal, and if we concentrate on what unites us and work toward that, we can move beyond silos and divisions and create better, sustainable models for future generations."



School of Nursing colleagues Madeline Schmitt, PhD, RN, FAAN, FNAP, Gerri Lamb, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Maryjoan Ladden, PhD, RN, FAAN, share a moment in Washington D.C. on their way to a Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation meeting in April. Ladden, who earned her master's degree in Rochester in 1978, is senior program officer for nursing at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and an assistant professor of ambulatory care and prevention at Harvard Medical School. Her role with the RWJF offers an opportunity to work on the intersection of nursing and health care on a national scope.

Schmitt Papers Added to Miner Library Archives

Madeline H. Schmitt, PhD, RN, FAAN, FNAP, was a member of the School of Nursing faculty from 1972 until her retirement in 2005. For more than a quarter century, she played a prominent role as a teacher, administrator, researcher, and mentor to many undergraduate and graduate students. She was integral to the School's emergence as an autonomous school within the University, and to the development of nursing research and graduate nursing education in Rochester.

Shortly after her retirement, Schmitt began to transfer her papers to the Rare Books & Manuscripts section of the Edward G. Miner Library for inclusion among the library's faculty manuscript collections. The processing of the first set of her papers is now complete, and the collection includes correspondence, curricular material, and documentation on the development of graduate studies at the School of Nursing. The collection also includes Schmitt's research on adolescent maternity, weight reduction, and the impact of

social support on cancer patients.

Currently, the set comprises 58 boxes and 38 linear feet of shelving. Her substantial papers on interprofessional education will be added over the upcoming year. Her inventory is available under Historical Services/ Archives & Manuscripts on the Miner Library's Web site. Also available to researchers are the papers of **Josephine Craytor, Loretta Ford, Eleanor Hall, Jean Johnson, and Sheila Ryan.**

Catherine Kane: Advancing Nursing Practice for the Mentally Ill

Associate Professor,
University of Virginia School of Nursing

2012 Recipient, American Academy of
Nursing Hildegard Peplau Award
PhD, 1986



Hildegard Peplau

The first published nursing theorist since Florence Nightingale, the late Hildegard E. Peplau (1909-1999) revolutionized the scholarly work of nurses when she developed the middle-range nursing theory of interpersonal relations, a construct that integrates theory and empirical research. And, as a primary contributor to mental health nursing practice, she led the way toward humane treatment of patients with behavior and personality disorders.

Receiving an award in Peplau's name is one of the highest honors a nurse can receive, and on June 15 the American Nurses Association (ANA) Board of Directors bestowed the 2012 Hildegard Peplau Award to **Catherine Kane, PhD, RN, FAAN**, associate professor of nursing and psychiatric medicine at the University of Virginia School of Nursing.

Presented to an expert in the psychosocial and psychiatric aspects of nursing care delivery, the award recognizes Kane for her lifetime of commitment to clinical practice, scholarly activities, and policy development, to informing the nursing profession with new knowledge, and to supporting patients and families with serious mental health issues toward recovery.

"Dr. Kane has created the next generation of nurse leaders for this specialty," said **Dorrie Fontaine, RN, PhD, FAAN**, dean of the University of Virginia (UVA) School of Nursing. "For all these accomplishments, and her distinguished career, she clearly lives up to the inspiring reputation of Hildegard Peplau."

Kane earned her PhD from the University of Rochester School of Nursing in 1986. During her studies, she collaborated with nurses and colleagues within the Department of Psychiatry and the Rochester Psychiatric Center.

"I am particularly beholden to Mattie Schmitt [**Madeline H. Schmitt, PhD, RN, FAAN, FNAP**] the chair of my doctoral dissertation, who exemplified the standard of nursing excellence and continues to be a mentor and a very dear friend," said Kane, who served on the faculty of the psychiatric mental health nursing program at the School from 1986 to 1992.

"The educational and research environment in Rochester was inspiring, rigorous, and collaborative, and there was also a key focus on community engagement. Rochester truly prepared me for a meaningful career in nursing."

A long-time teacher of psychiatric mental health nursing, Kane has been at UVA for two decades, where she has shepherded hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students through courses, original research, and capstone projects. At UVA, she chaired the department of family and community and mental health systems for 13 years, leading the development of Web-based graduate education for rural nurses; she was also tapped to lead the UVA's distinguished majors program and develop the university's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program.

Widely published, and editor of a recurring column in the Archives of Psychiatric Nursing, Kane oversaw the mental health component of a three-year, \$1.2 million HRSA-funded Nursing Leadership in Rural Health initiative. Kane is a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing where she is a member of the Psychiatric Mental Health and Substance Abuse Expert Panel and recently co-chaired a task force to write and publish the *Essentials of Psychiatric Nursing for Registered Nurses*.*

"Catherine, in effect, continues the work that Peplau encouraged nurses to do," said **Emily Hauenstein, PhD, RN**, School of Nursing associate dean for research, a long-time colleague and friend. "She has advocated for the persistently and severely mentally ill and their families, and provided a model of nursing practice for their care, ensuring that the next generation of nurses will carry out the same mission."

*Kane, C.F. & Brackley, M.A., (Co-Chairs) Psychiatric Mental Health Substance Abuse Essential Competencies Taskforce of the American Academy of Nursing Psychiatric Mental Health Substance Abuse Expert Panel (2012). Essential Psychiatric, Mental Health and Substance Use Competencies for the Registered Nurse. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 26, 80-110.

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Advancing Practice

1937 Alumna Shares Her Story with Students

When 96-year-old **Lillian Buskus Stone, RN**, of Williamson, N.Y., was a nursing student in the 1930s, her training covered how to cook meals, sterilize equipment, clean and sharpen needles, bathe patients, and care for the deceased. Leprosy, gangrene, tuberculosis, polio, and pneumonia were rampant. No medications existed to counteract deadly bacteria.

Once hired, nurses like Buskus Stone—all women—earned \$60 a month plus room and board, and worked not only in hospitals but also across the community, providing in-home care to new mothers and babies, the sick, and the infirm.

These are just a few of the memories Buskus Stone shared with nursing students in the Accelerated Program for Non-Nurses (APNN) when she spoke at the APNN winter celebration in Everts Lounge on February 6. For the students—now male and female—all preparing to become registered nurses through the intensive 12-month program, her presence was a living history lesson, providing a chance to hear about the dramatic ways the nursing profession and health care have evolved.

For Buskus Stone, it was an opportunity to fulfill a lifelong dream.



“It meant so much to me to be able to walk through these doors again after all these years,” she said. “I can’t even describe the feeling. I felt such a warm welcome from

the faculty, staff, and students, and am so pleased they found value in what I had to say. I hope the students not only realize how many things about nursing have changed for the better, but also get a sense of the things that should never change at the heart of what we do.”

Born in Waterbury, Conn., Buskus Stone moved to Rochester with her family when she was 16 and graduated from Benjamin Franklin High School in 1934. Her mother wanted her to become a secretary. Determined to be a nurse, however, she enrolled that same year in what was then a three-year nursing diploma school affiliated with Strong Memorial Hospital. She worked part time as a seamstress, making men’s ties, to pay for her education.

As a nursing student, Buskus Stone recalled, she was required to complete lengthy instruction in instrument sterilization, the primary means of fighting bacteria. Her initial courses also included medicine, surgery, obstetrics, pediatrics, psychiatry, and food preparation, before earning her student cap and being assigned to a hospital unit. Over the next three years, she and other nurses worked across every unit of the hospital, including emergency and the nursery, and spent many hours as visiting nurses in the community. Out of 60 students in her class, only 27 graduated.

Buskus Stone went on to enjoy a 50-year nursing career.

She said the emergence of antibiotics like penicillin, vaccinations to prevent diseases like polio and measles, and advances in diagnostic imaging improved health care in ways younger generations may never fully appreciate.

“Having lived through these major transformations and seeing how far we’ve come in my lifetime is amazing to me,” she said. “It gives me hope that many more great things will be accomplished by the next generation.”

On her visit to the School, Buskus Stone had the chance to tour classrooms and visit the Skills and Simulation Laboratories, where today’s nursing students hone their patient-care skills and critical thinking abilities with no risk to patients.

“So many doors are open to nurses today to be researchers and leaders and to be a big part of improving the way health care is provided,” she said. “But my advice to all students is to remember that people are not numbers. They have a life before they come to the hospital, and unless you can get to their lives or try to know something about them, their cure will take a great deal longer.”





Aldo with daughter, Mary, at Dean's Diamond Circle dinner.

In 2010, I contacted the School of Nursing because I wanted to find a way to establish a fund that would not only financially help nursing students, but also memorialize my wife Anne's name and honor my daughter Joanne, who is a graduate of the School.

Through a charitable gift annuity, I was able to fund a gift that pays me income each quarter and helps ensure that future generations of nurses benefit from a UR School of Nursing education. It is truly a win-win opportunity! This gift has allowed me to establish a legacy in my family's name and has provided a vehicle for Joanne and others to give to throughout their lifetime. It is my hope that I have set a good example for my family to follow, while supporting the profession of nursing.

Aldo F. Fioravanti

Witzels to Endow Nursing Fund for Student Scholarships

As Strong Memorial Hospital's chief nursing officer and associate vice president of the University of Rochester Medical Center, School of Nursing alumna **Patricia Anne Witzel '75N, '84S (MBA)**, has a personal sense of the value of a University of Rochester education and is deeply committed to lifelong learning.

Currently overseeing a department of 3,500 hospital nurses, patient care technicians, and unit secretaries, Witzel also understands the financial realities that may make it difficult for promising students and practicing nurses to further their education, especially in today's economic climate.

In an effort to lighten the burden for potential students, she and her husband **James Witzel '75, '76S (MBA)** have made a commitment to

create the Patricia and James Witzel Endowed Nursing Fund at the School of Nursing in February 2012, as part of *The Meliora Challenge: The Campaign for the University of Rochester*.

Annual income from the fund will be divided equally to provide need-based tuition assistance to nursing students and stipends for Strong Memorial Hospital nurses interested in pursuing advanced degrees at the School of Nursing.

"I'm very proud of the education I received, and happy to have an opportunity to give back to the School in this way," said Witzel. "There is nothing more important we can do than to open doors for nursing students who are looking to advance their education and make a real and positive difference in health care delivery."



The
MELIORA
CHALLENGE

THE CAMPAIGN
for the UNIVERSITY
OF ROCHESTER

Robert Hurlbut Receives Honorary Doctor of Science Degree

In 1953, **Robert H. Hurlbut** made a tough decision to leave Cornell University before earning his graduate degree so he could help his family operate Rochester nursing homes that provided care for the frail and infirm.

On May 18, the successful entrepreneur, University of Rochester trustee, and longtime School of Nursing champion was able to realize a dream that had been deferred for nearly 60 years when he was presented with an honorary Doctor of Science degree by University president **Joel Seligman** during the School of Nursing commencement ceremony.

"Bob's commitment to the University and the entire Rochester community is an example for others," said Seligman. "This is one of the most extraordinary events I've been fortunate to witness."

From the stage of the Eastman Theatre's Kodak Hall, Hurlbut gave tribute to the graduates.

"It's truly inspiring for me to be able to claim that I'm a very small piece of your graduating class today," he said. "Thank you for choosing the nursing path, one in which you will touch so many lives with your compassion, your talents, and your spirit."

The same can easily be said for Hurlbut's career, which helped to revolutionize the care of the elderly and disabled. Building on the principles of respectful, holistic care that his parents fostered, Hurlbut transformed the family nursing home business

into senior living facilities that aimed to maximize the physical and emotional health, independence, and abilities of residents. His path-breaking business model evolved to become a multi-state nursing home corporation called Vari-Care, Inc., which is now part of Living Centers of America.

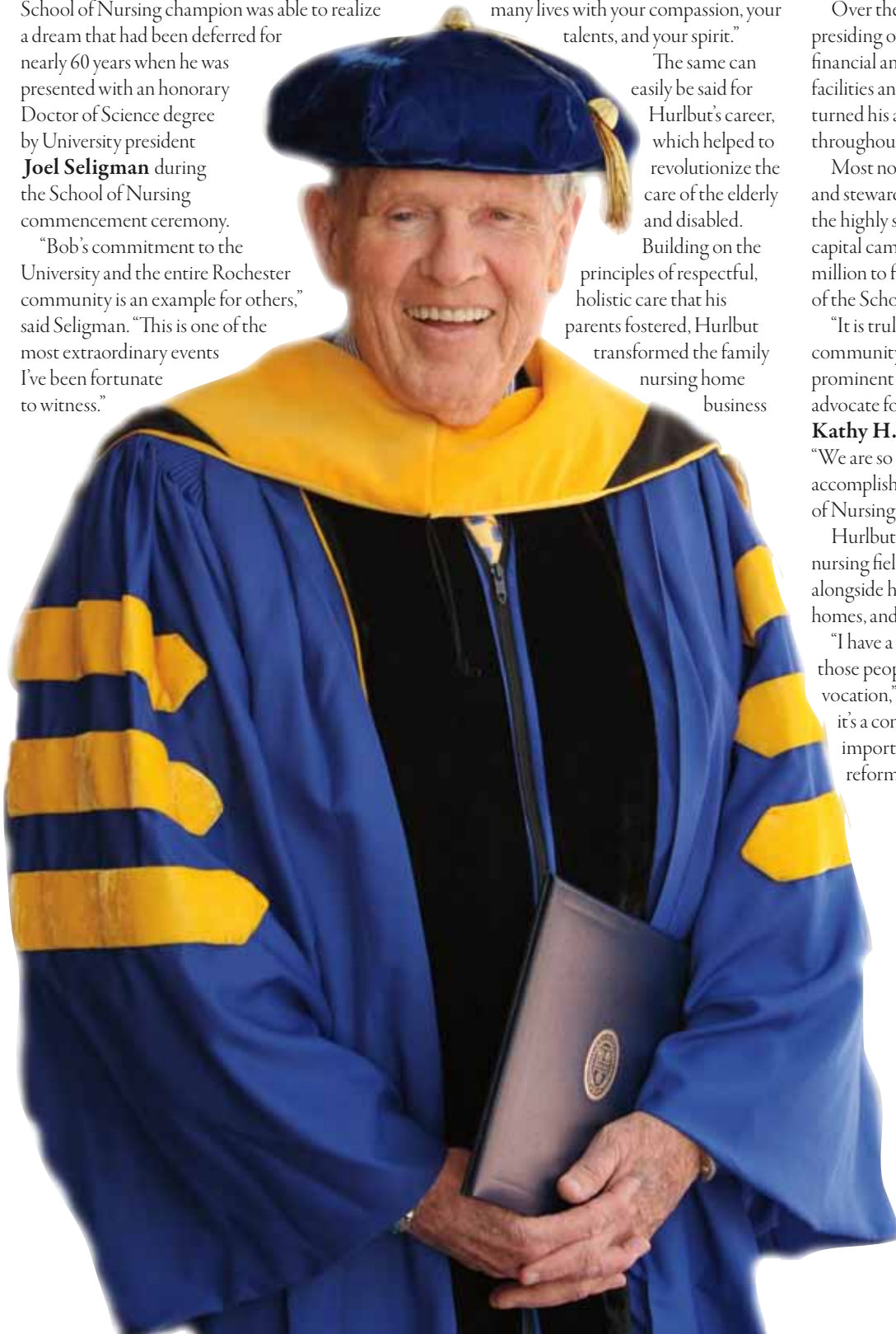
Over the last two decades, in addition to presiding over Hurlbut Trust—which provides financial and consulting services to health-care facilities and rental properties—Hurlbut has turned his attention to philanthropic needs throughout the community.

Most notably, he has been a devoted friend and steward of the School of Nursing, chairing the highly successful 2004 Future of Care capital campaign, which raised more than \$20 million to fund crucial expansion and renovation of the School to accommodate more students.

"It is truly an honor to have a respected community leader like Bob Hurlbut as a prominent voice for nursing and an advocate for our School," said interim dean **Kathy H. Rideout, EdD, PNP-BC, FNAP**. "We are so grateful for all he has helped us accomplish. He will always be part of the School of Nursing family."

Hurlbut attributes his admiration for the nursing field to his years of working closely alongside his family and the staff in the nursing homes, and seeing the value of their work.

"I have a deep appreciation and respect for those people who make caring for others their vocation," he said. "Nursing is basic to caring; it's a constant factor in health care, and its importance will only grow as health-care reform evolves."



On May 18, the School of Nursing conferred 156 bachelor's degrees (113 to graduates of the School's accelerated programs for non-nurses and 43 from the RN to BS program) as well as 60 master's degrees. At the doctoral ceremony on May 19, eight PhD degrees and four DNP (Doctor of Nursing Practice) degrees were conferred.

Class speakers **Alexis Croucher**, a graduate of the accelerated program for non-nurses, and **Heather Menchel, RN, BSN, OCN**, a graduate of the master's program in Leadership in Health Care Systems, spoke eloquently about their career paths.

"My mother once said that if you can blend your vocation and your avocation, there is nothing better that you can do with your life," said Croucher, whose mom was a labor and delivery nurse for 50 years. Croucher was formerly an actor in New York City, who left a career in the footlights to follow in her mother's footsteps.

Menchel, who is currently nurse manager of Strong's blood and marrow transplant unit and associate director of medical-surgical nursing at Strong, said that health care reform is complicated and treacherous, but pointed out that the

"opportunities for nurses to lead change are endless. Boldness is genius. Never be afraid to be bold."

The 2012 Dean's Teaching Award for Excellence was presented to **Sharon Lessard, PhD, RN, CS, ANP**, assistant professor of nursing, who is beloved by accelerated program students for the support and guidance she provides from their very first semester to the end of the intensive program. Lessard was the very first academic support person for accelerated program students, and her efforts paved the way for the Center for Academic and Professional Success, which now provides a broad spectrum of services to all School of Nursing students.





In his keynote address, New York State Regent **Wade Norwood**, director of community engagement at Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, spoke of the life lessons imparted from his mother, a nurse at Strong for 50 years, who was in the audience.

“As a nurse, my mother never met a sick or needy person that she could not, or would not, care for,” said Norwood. “My mother loved to find disease she could comfort, and if we were all feeling normal, she would try to figure out if there was something wrong with us being normal.”

Norwood described his mother as evidence-based, compassionate, dedicated and selfless.

“Nurses are artists who bring people and science together for the purpose of healing,” he said. “You’ve committed to one of the most demanding professions there is, one that will tax you physically

and emotionally. All of your giving will leave you exhausted unless you give to yourselves sometimes. So make sure you go outside and look at the stars, take time with friends, say ‘I love you’ to someone every day, and say ‘I love you’ to yourself all the time.”



Rochester Students Get Close-Up Look at Health-Care Careers



Passers-by at the School of Nursing on the morning of May 3 might have shared a brief moment of surprise at the younger age of the students enrolled in its nursing programs. But these budding scholars were all part of the School's newly created "See What You Can Bee" program, which gave sixth-grade boys and girls from the Rochester City School District Children's School (#15) a behind-the-scenes chance to learn about careers in physical therapy, nutrition, nursing, and medicine.

On a sunny morning, nearly three dozen students eagerly poured off a school bus in front of Helen Wood Hall, where they were greeted by School leaders, faculty, and students before taking part in hands-on demonstrations within the Simulation and Skills Laboratories and classrooms, and learning about the roles nurses, doctors, technicians, nutritionists, and others play in delivering health care. The program was developed with the Rochester City School District to support the district's efforts to engage students in STEM-focused learning (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and prepare them for success in college and careers in these areas.

"We are so grateful to the University of Rochester and the School of Nursing for providing our sixth-grade students with this opportunity," said **Jay Piper**, principal of the Children's School, which serves a large population of students and families who have relocated from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, in addition to those native to Rochester. "Part of creating a college-going culture is helping students and their families understand that it's never too early to start thinking about going to college. It's no longer just an option;

it's imperative in a highly competitive global economy. The University of Rochester students serve as role models and communicate the benefits of pursuing higher education to the younger children."

The See What You Can Bee program is the newest piece of the School of Nursing's child and family health literacy initiatives, through which nursing students provide health education (on topics including hygiene, nutrition, illness, and disease prevention) to a variety of multicultural and underserved groups throughout the Rochester community. These partnerships—allied with local nonprofit organizations as well as city schools and affiliated programs—help nursing students develop critical multicultural competence, and fulfill a core part of their clinical practice curriculum requirements.

Leann Patel, MS, RN, assistant professor of clinical nursing, worked with nursing students to develop the See What You Can Bee program as a way to give back to the schools and organizations that have allowed them to gain valuable field experience. They collaborated with Children's School sixth-grade teacher **Telesta Rice** to design the program around student needs. All of the participating School of Nursing students are recipients of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing Scholarships, awarded to high-achieving students of varied backgrounds who will enrich the diversity of the nursing profession.

Patel, who coordinates the School of Nursing's health literacy initiatives, says these reciprocal relationships elevate the nursing students' understanding of people of all ages, cultures, and experiences, and help them realize the vital role they will play as nurses.

"This is why our students are going into the nursing profession, to strengthen our communities," she said. "We are very thankful to the City School District and other organizations in Rochester who open their doors to us and help our students see health care through their eyes. These experiences are crucial to preparing the nurses of tomorrow. We were thrilled to open our doors to them and introduce children to health-care professions they might see themselves in one day."





Sharp Honored for Dedication to Patients and Partnerships

As a nurse, associate professor of clinical nursing **Daryl L. Sharp, PhD, PMHCNS-BC, NPP**, is all about two things: listening to what patients need and collaborating with other health professionals to meet those needs.

“Nursing is a team sport,” said Sharp, who received a 2012 Rochester Business Journal Health Care Achievement Award in March for her many significant contributions as a researcher, professor, mentor, and psychiatric nurse clinician, and her impact on the quality of health care in the Rochester-Finger Lakes region. “I think the best nurses are those who partner with their patients and colleagues to help people achieve their health goals. Establishing, cultivating, and tending those partnerships are the best parts of nursing to me.”

Sharp, who also serves as associate dean for faculty development and diversity, was specifically recognized for her trail-blazing efforts to help psychiatric patients reduce and eliminate their dependence on tobacco. Her work has not only had an impact locally, but it also has helped to facilitate the integration of tobacco-dependence interventions into mental health service delivery regionally and nationally.

In 1999, Sharp was working as a clinical research coordinator for a University of Rochester study, led by **Geoffrey Williams, MD**, to evaluate a smoking-cessation intervention. People with psychiatric disorders were excluded from the trial, however.

“Many of these patients came to me asking why they couldn’t be a part of the study,” said Sharp. “They knew smoking was hurting them and were desperate to quit; they just didn’t know how. It was then that I realized how urgently this issue needed attention.”

The facts bear out the importance of Sharp’s work. Among men and women who are mentally ill, smoking is a quiet epidemic. Psychiatric patients comprise 44% of the tobacco market and face a life expectancy of 25 years less than the general population, largely due to tobacco dependence and other cardiovascular risk factors.

Undaunted by these statistics, Sharp set out to help psychiatric patients reduce their tobacco

dependence through nursing education and research. Never losing sight of her relationships with individual patients, she aimed to drive evidence-based improvements at the systems level, where they would translate to improved outcomes for the largest number of people.

Within the University of Rochester Medical Center and the School of Nursing, Sharp provided educational training, resources, and support to help psychiatric nurses offer smoking cessation interventions to their patients. She also adapted and provided concrete, evidence-based



pharmacological and behavioral strategies that nurses could use every day to help patients cut or eliminate their tobacco intake. The results of her work are now felt by men and women served throughout the Medical Center’s inpatient and outpatient psychiatric programs. Today, many more patients are screened for tobacco use, advised to quit, and given help to do so with counseling and pharmacotherapy interventions. Smoking-cessation support groups are available, and there is greater advocacy for adequate cessation medications to ease patients’ withdrawal symptoms.

In 2007, Sharp was also principal investigator for a three-year Tobacco Dependence Intervention program at Strong Ties, which demonstrated the strength of various interventions to reduce smoking in the mentally ill. Participating smokers reduced their usage from an average of 21.6 cigarettes a day to an average of 13 cigarettes a day at three-month, six-month, and 12-month intervals. A large number of

participants stopped smoking entirely after six months in the program.

On the national level, Sharp is founding chair and current co-chair of the American Psychiatric Association’s Tobacco Dependence Council. Working collaboratively with the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center based at the University of California-San Francisco, the council helps to mobilize and support the abilities of psychiatric nurses to change tobacco-independence behavior.

“Daryl is passionately and tirelessly focused on reducing tobacco dependence in the mental health population,” said **Steven A. Schroeder, MD**, director of the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center at the University of California-San Francisco. “She has been instrumental in bringing leaders from mental health, addictions, public health, and tobacco control to the table to tackle an issue so close to her heart.”

Today Sharp is also a key member of the clinical team of the Healthy Living Center at the URM Center for Community Health, where individuals get help to make desired lifestyle changes in areas such as tobacco use, diabetes prevention, nutrition, exercise, and stress reduction. A large number of her patients cope with mental illness and lack adequate access to health care or socioeconomic resources.

Sharp also provides consultation to the care managers of more than 20 newly created patient-centered medical homes within the URM Center for Primary Care, which is overseen by **Betty Rabinowitz, MD**, and **Wallace E. Johnson, MD**. Sharp helps the care managers in each of the homes develop ways to motivate patients toward adopting sustainable lifestyle changes that support their health goals.

“It’s hard to change behavior, so we all have to work together to help people maintain their motivation,” Sharp said. “The other important thing for me is to remember how difficult it is for most people to stop smoking or change their behavior, even when they don’t have the additional challenges of serious mental illness. That really helps me stay constantly motivated and engaged with staff to help them.”

Hauenstein and Norton Selected as Fellows of AAN

Emily Hauenstein, PhD, LCP, MSN, RN, professor and associate dean for research, and **Sally A. Norton, PhD, RN, FNAP, FPCN**, associate professor of nursing, both at the School of Nursing, were recently selected to be inducted as fellows of the American Academy of Nursing. Selection to the academy—composed of more than 1,800 of the nation's top nurse researchers, policy makers, scholars, executives, educators, and practitioners—is one of the highest honors in the field of nursing. Hauenstein and Norton will be inducted during the academy's 39th annual meeting and conference on October 13, 2012, in Washington, DC.

Hauenstein, who joined the School's faculty in the summer of 2011, directs the School of Nursing's Center for Research and Evidence-Based Practice, a role in which she collaborates closely with faculty and students on research development. A nurse and clinical psychologist with nearly 30 years' experience as a practitioner in both acute and community settings, she is nationally recognized for her published research and her work to develop intervention programs that seek to meet the mental health needs of women in rural, impoverished communities.

Specifically, she explores the individual, family, and community factors that contribute to depression, examines service disparities, and designs and tests treatments that can be successfully implemented in underserved regions.

Awarded tenure at the School of Nursing in February, Hauenstein also received the Diversity/Equity award for Outstanding Leadership in Promoting Culturally Sensitive Mental Health Services from the International Society of Psychiatric Nurses in March.

She earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Rochester, her master's



Emily Hauenstein, PhD, LCP, MSN, RN

degree in nursing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and her doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Virginia.

Building on years of experience as an intensive-care-unit nurse, Norton is a nationally recognized expert on palliative care and end-of-life issues, and works across professions to influence and improve how palliative care is delivered in an acute-care setting. Norton links practice and research as an associate professor at the School of Nursing and co-director of research for the University of Rochester Medical Center's Center for Clinical Ethics, Medical Humanities, and Palliative Care. Her role in this interprofessional center creates many opportunities for innovative, hospital-based research responsive to palliative care needs.

Over the last decade, Norton has been the principal investigator or co-principal investigator on several National Institutes of Health-funded studies that have examined the



Sally Norton, PhD, RN, FNAP, FPCN

communication strategies used by clinicians to discuss end-of-life issues, and has explored the effects of the hospital cultural context on family members' end-of-life decisions. She collaboratively developed, tested, implemented, and evaluated a proactive and sustainable palliative care screening tool in the Strong Memorial Hospital intensive care unit, and more recently is heading up a New York State-funded program to support nurses' care of hospitalized older adults with serious, life-limiting illness. Her published findings have served as a model for hospitals around the world, and in 2009 she was selected by the Hospice and Palliative Care Nurses Association for the inaugural class of fellows in palliative care nursing.

Norton holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa, earned her master's and PhD degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and completed her postdoctoral research fellowship at Oregon Health and Science University.

Kearney Named Editor of *Research in Nursing & Health*

Margaret H. Kearney, PhD, RN, FAAN, vice provost and University dean of graduate studies, and professor of nursing at the School of Nursing, was recently named editor-in-chief of the academic journal *Research in Nursing & Health (RINAH)*. She succeeds Judith Gedney Baggs, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor of nursing at Oregon Health and Science University, who led the journal for ten years.

Now in its 35th year, *RINAH* is an international, interdisciplinary journal that ranks in the top three general-research journals in nursing. The journal's interdisciplinary focus is especially fitting for Kearney, who led an initiative to expand enrollment in the School of Nursing's PhD program to include other health

professionals in addition to nurses. A nurse and researcher for more than 30 years, Kearney's own record of scholarship also crosses disciplines and includes qualitative research methods, health behaviors, and socially vulnerable women and infants.

"My goal is to uphold the journal's tradition of top-quality research and scholarship, while working to expand submissions from all health-focused disciplines in the United States and internationally," she said.

Prior to this appointment, which begins in September, Kearney served as associate editor of *RINAH* for two years, and was previously the associate editor of the *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing*.



Groth Selected as Fellow of American Academy of Nurse Practitioners

On June 22, **Susan W. Groth, PhD, RN, WHNP-BC**, assistant professor of nursing, was inducted as a fellow of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).

A clinician, educator, and scientist, Groth is widely recognized for nearly two decades of work to improve women's health, particularly in the area of pregnancy-related obesity. She was inducted with 42 other nurse practitioner leaders from across the country at the AANP 27th national conference in Orlando, Fla.

The AANP established its fellowship program in 2000 to recognize nurse practitioner leaders who have made outstanding contributions to health care through clinical practice, research, education, or policy. Fellows of the AANP take part in an annual "think tank" to strategize about the future of nurse practitioners, and have many collaborative opportunities to influence national and global health.

Since 1994, Groth has been providing obstetric and gynecologic care for high-risk girls served by Hillside Family of Agencies and the juvenile justice system. For 15 years, she also worked as a women's health practitioner for St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center in Rochester, where she provided safe, accessible, and affordable obstetric and gynecological



services to underserved women with minimal resources. Her clinical experiences have not only shaped her career as a patient-oriented researcher, but also have made her a highly effective educator and preceptor to hundreds of nursing students over the years.

Groth's research stems from years of caring for women who expressed difficulties losing weight after their pregnancies, and her desire to prevent the adverse and often long-term effects of weight gain on these mothers and their children. The recipient of the School of Nursing's 2010 Promising New Investigator Award, her research findings and publications have informed the understanding of obesity

risk factors in pregnant women at the national and international level.

With funding from the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), Groth is currently engaged in research to identify the genetic and behavioral factors that contribute to weight gain during pregnancy, and explore potential interventions that could prevent obesity in vulnerable populations.

Specifically, she has focused her research on the weight gain experienced by African-American women, a demographic with the highest prevalence of obesity. Her study, which began in October 2008, examines how physical activity and weight gain in pregnancy may in fact be affected by the presence of a particular gene. Through focus groups, her research also seeks to improve understanding of how African-American women view diet, physical activity, and gestational weight gain.

Groth is also co-investigator of a separate collaborative study, funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), that is testing an Internet-based intervention to prevent excessive gestational weight gain. She is currently applying for additional funding to build on her research, with the long-term goal of integrating the most appropriate interventions into practice.

Norton and Sellers Earn Klainer Award

Funds to Support Center of Excellence for People with Chronic Illness

In February, the Dr. Jeremy Klainer Endowed Dean's Discretionary Award in Nursing was presented to associate professor of nursing **Sally A. Norton, PhD, RN, FPCN**, and associate professor of clinical nursing **Craig R. Sellers, PhD, RN, ANP-BC, GNP**, to support their work in developing an integrated center that will maximize the well-being of individuals coping with chronic illness and their families.

The center is anticipated to be a major step toward advancing the School's strategic goal of promoting health, preventing disease, and managing symptoms across diverse populations.

Norton and Sellers share a passionate focus on improving outcomes for people with chronic and advanced illness, and look forward to moving the center from concept to reality over the next few years.

"We believe that while many of the components of excellent systems of care are in place locally, they are not yet integrated to fully capitalize on our strengths and provide the best care to this population," said Norton, who is co-director of research at the Center for Clinical Ethics, Medical Humanities, and Palliative Care. "Because of the School's longstanding commitment to practice, education, and research partnerships, we are in an excellent position to lead this vital initiative, and the Klainer award helps make it possible."

Norton and Sellers (who directs the School's nurse practitioner programs as well as the adult and gerontological nurse practitioner programs) are now working to develop a center prototype. The award's funds will support their crucial groundwork, which includes visiting other model centers across the country and strategizing with national experts.



The annual award was established in 2003 by the Klainer family and others in memory of the late **Jeremy (Jerry) Klainer, PhD**, founder of the Rochester-based financial services firm Professional Planning Associates, Inc., which served clients nationwide. Klainer also had a passion for starting and growing businesses, and shared a deep commitment to maximizing the professional potential of nurses. He passed away suddenly in April 2002.

"Jerry always believed that the people who are closest to patients are in the best position to



The Klainer Family

spot opportunities for innovation," said his wife, **Pamela York Klainer, EdD, '80W**, an entrepreneur, financial expert, philanthropist, and author, who has also taught classes on entrepreneurship at the School and has served as a longtime

advisor. "Because of the holistic model of health care, nurses are uniquely positioned to develop new ways to provide care. This fund carries out Jerry's vision of supporting the nursing field in this vital direction."

Norsen to Direct Transformed Sovie Institute

Strong Memorial Hospital chief nursing officer and Medical Center associate vice president **Patricia Anne Witzel, RN, MS, MBA, FNAP**, and School of Nursing interim dean **Kathy H. Rideout, EdD, PNP-BC, FNAP**, recently named **Lisa Norsen, PhD, RN, ACNP-BC**, School of Nursing associate dean for innovation and community outreach, as director of the Sovie Institute for Advanced Practice, Scholarship and Innovation.

Norsen will devote her time equally between the School and Nursing Practice, where she will work to lead the Sovie Institute into a new era of collaboration, and position it as a preeminent center for advanced practice nursing.

"With this transformation, the Sovie Institute fulfills a long-standing vision of nursing practice and education working together to capitalize on our strengths and resources, and move advanced practice nursing forward in education, practice, and research," said Witzel. "Lisa's leadership is pivotal because she brings years of experience as a nurse practitioner, scholar, educator, and administrator. Her unique level of understanding and unparalleled skill set will strengthen the bridge between education and practice."

Norsen—who began her career in 1980 as one of the first nurse practitioners to work in acute care at Strong before progressing to administrative roles in nursing practice and to teaching and leadership positions within the School of Nursing—has worked over the last several months with Sovie Institute assistant director **Anne Swantz, RN, MS, PNP**, and others across the Medical Center to develop an entirely new blueprint for the institute. Swantz, who has worked as a pediatric nurse practitioner at Strong for more than two decades, will continue as assistant director and lead the day-to-day operations of the institute.

Under its new organizational structure, the institute is a joint entity of Nursing Practice and the School of Nursing, with a single executive board and linkages between all clinical, academic, and research programs and centers, as well as educational resources and entrepreneurial initiatives. Under the institute's umbrella are a Center for Clinical Practice and Operations (which oversees credentialing, compliance, orientation, billing, continuing education, and central functions), and a Center



for Scholarship and Innovation (which oversees research, publications, presentations, education, and development of nurse practitioner models of care).

"The key advancement is the introduction of scholarship," said Norsen. "Although we have always been doing this to an extent, we now have a structure in place where practice and education will truly inform one another. It's an important step because we can harness our energies to more effectively support nurse practitioners in practicing to the full extent of their education, continually publishing, studying, and evaluating—and then translating—that evidence to the delivery of improved, cost-efficient, patient- and family-centered care."

Norsen earned her bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the School of Nursing and worked as a nurse practitioner on Strong's cardiothoracic unit from 1980 to 1994; she then served 12 years as associate director of nursing at Strong. In 2006, pursuing her interest in nurse practitioner education, she joined the School of Nursing faculty to direct the School's master's programs. In 2011, she was named to her current position of associate dean, where she oversees the School's numerous business lines and educational opportunities within the community.

"Moving advanced practice nursing forward is in my blood, and is something I'm very passionate about," Norsen said. "I believe that the direction of the Sovie Institute represents a return to our pioneering roots of nursing education and practice working in seamless partnership, and we have a real opportunity now to be a national leader in this area."

In Memoriam

The School of Nursing expresses sympathy to the loved ones of our deceased alumni.

- Farris, Margaret (Stebbins)**, '39, '40N, February 16, 2012, Brookfield, WI
Matthews, Marcella (Pugh), '42, '43N, March 16, 2012, Henrietta, NY
Meyer, Elsie (Schockow), '44N, January 10, 2012, Charleston, SC
Fernandez, Mabelle (Burke), '45N, January 3, 2012, San Juan, PR
Wolff, Marilyn J. (Ingraham), '45N, November 12, 2011, Fredericksburg, VA
Gallup, Luna (Shepherd), '46N, January 4, 2012, Alameda, CA
Buehler, Jean (Lissow), '47N, March 28, 2012, Rush, NY
Utegg, Margaret (Atherton), '47N, May 11, 2012, Bath, NY
Riley, Joyce (Branagh), '48N, January 8, 2012, Oswego, NY
Roome, Marie (Lindenmuth), '49, '50N, December 12, 2011, Webster, NY
Kramer, Corinne J. (Hays), '50N, January 10, 2012, Lake Wylile, NC
Jones, Barbara Kandt (Smith), '52N, February 3, 2012, Hamlin, NY
Holliday, Marion (Lopuszynski), '55N, March 25, 2012, Fairport, NY
Savlov, Jean K. (Tullius), '55N, February 11, 2012, Austin, TX
Shepardson, Jeanette (Leffingwell), '56N, February 27, 2012, Urbana, IL
Gugino, Nancy H. (Green), '61N, April 12, 2012, Bemus Point, NY
Young, Jean (Kilmer), '60, '62N (MS), February 8, 2012, Penfield, NY
Eichwald, Ann E. (Brown), '64N (MS), January 26, 2012, Peoria, AZ
Scott, Karen (Knaebel), '72N, April 27, 2012, Dalton, MA
Labarre, Lyn (Lawrence), '77N, December 1, 2011, Howes Cave, NY
Ingersoll, Gail Laura, '83N (MS), '87W (EdD), December 5, 2011, Penfield, NY
Maxwell, Jacqueline L., '83N (MS), December 25, 2011, Henrico, VA
Bazar, Mary T., '88N (MS), May 11, 2012, Scottsville, NY
Price, Irene (Wilson), '42, '43N, May 31, 2012, Syracuse, NY

Nurse Leaders Brief Congressional Audience

Rideout Joins Nurse Leaders to Share Nursing's Role in Health-Care Reform

On July 19—in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in favor of keeping the Affordable Care Act—more than 30 legislative and nursing association staff members attended a congressional briefing on Capitol Hill to hear School of Nursing interim dean **Kathy H. Rideout, EdD, PNP-BC, FNAP**, and other members of the Deans Nursing Policy Coalition discuss the central role of advanced practice nursing to the nation's evolving health-care system.

It was the very first congressional briefing for nursing school deans.

Sponsored by the House Nursing Caucus, a bipartisan advisory organization, the briefing highlighted the specialized education and training of advanced practice nurses (APNs) that makes them uniquely qualified to provide the cost-efficient, accessible, quality care that will be required as health-care reform unfolds.

Joining Rideout were the deans of the nursing schools from Columbia (**Bobbie Berkowitz, PhD, RN, FAAN**), Vanderbilt (**Colleen Conway-Welch, PhD, CNM, FAAN**), and Emory (**Linda McCauley, RN, PhD, FAAN, FFAOHN**) universities. Nursing Caucus co-chairs Congressman Steven LaTourette (R-OH) and Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA) emphasized the importance of nursing to the next stage of the nation's evolving health-care system.

"Graduate schools of nursing have a pivotal role to play as the new health law goes into effect," Congresswoman Capps told the audience. "Nurses are the backbone of our health-care system, and advanced practice nurses are a major force in the future health of the nation's citizens, families, and communities."

Breaking Down Silos

In her remarks, Rideout—who works part time as a pediatric ostomy nurse practitioner at Golisano Children's Hospital at Strong—emphasized the need to eliminate silos (management systems incapable of reciprocal operation with other, related information systems) in health-professional education in



Deans McCauley and Rideout

order to provide the best care for patients.

Focusing on pediatrics, Rideout noted that the complex nature of both acute and chronic ailments in children often requires coordinated care from a spectrum of health-care experts.

"When health-care providers from different disciplines—nurses, social workers, nutritionists, pharmacists, physicians, and others—work well together as an integrated team, it has been shown to lower the length of stay for patients and increase the quality and safety of care," she said. "And, the very best path to having teams of health-care providers work well together is to have them be educated and trained together."

An active proponent of interprofessional education across the Medical Center, Rideout pointed to examples in which care providers from allied health and medical disciplines successfully learned and delivered care together; notably, affiliations between Strong and several hospitals in the Finger Lakes region have enabled health-care provider teams to bring care to rural communities.

She also spoke of the health clinic at East High School, operated by the School of Nursing, as an example of how teams of pediatric nurse practitioners, psychiatric nurse

practitioners, and specialists in adolescent medicine and nutrition meet the needs of youth in impoverished, underserved neighborhoods of Rochester.

A Bridge Between Acute and Community Care

In her presentation, Columbia's Berkowitz called for a realignment between the formal, hospital-based health-care system and the informal network of care often

provided in clinics and community residential settings.

"As more Americans live longer and become eligible for medical treatment, providers will need to care for increasing numbers of patients suffering from chronic diseases like diabetes, which require periodic care best delivered outside the hospital setting," she said.

An example of how Columbia is bridging the informal and formal hospital system of care is its independent nurse practitioner practice. The Columbia Advanced Practice Nurse Associates (CAPNA) provides individualized disease prevention and health promotion interventions, empowering patients to meet their health-care goals, and providing health education and comprehensive care plans.

Many chronic diseases affect minority and underserved populations disproportionately, *continued on page 23*

The Deans Nursing Policy Coalition

In addition to Columbia, Vanderbilt, Emory, and the University of Rochester, the Deans Nursing Policy Coalition includes the deans of the schools of nursing at Duke, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania. Established in 2010, the coalition brings a credible and powerful voice to issues that promote nursing education, nursing science and research, and nursing practice. The coalition plans to hold congressional briefings twice a year.

School Receives Fifth Round of RWJF/NCIN Scholarships

“Today’s nursing students are our future practitioners, professors, researchers, strategists, and leaders, and our role is to guide and nurture their potential. Beyond the academic support we provide, we aim to spark in them a lifelong commitment to learning and an understanding for the positive, collaborative impact they can make on the future delivery of health care.”

In June, it was announced that the School of Nursing was selected as a grant recipient of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) New Careers in Nursing (NCIN) Scholarship Program for the fifth consecutive year. It is one of only three nursing schools in the entire country to receive all five rounds of funding for both its accelerated master’s and bachelor’s degree programs.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the School will receive \$120,000 to support students enrolled in the accelerated programs for non-nurses (APNN). The APNN is designed for men and women who already have degrees in other fields and are interested in pursuing a second career in nursing. It attracts individuals from a broad range of cultures and backgrounds who have traditionally been underrepresented in the nursing field.

The NCIN Scholarship Program was launched in 2008 by the RWJF and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) to expand the numbers of baccalaureate-prepared nurses

and enrich the diversity of the nursing workforce—two key recommendations of the 2010 Institute of Medicine report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*.

“We need a well-educated, diverse nursing workforce to provide quality care for our changing patient population,” said **David Krol, MD, MPH, FAAP**, program officer for NCIN, RWJF senior program officer, and team director of the RWJF Human Capital portfolio. “NCIN is strengthening nursing education and helping to fill the pipeline of capable, culturally competent nurses.”

The NCIN scholarships, which will be awarded to 12 School of Nursing students in amounts of \$10,000, are especially important to APNN students because students with degrees in other fields are often disqualified from receiving federal financial aid for entry-level programs.

The APNN, which draws students from across the country, has grown from an enrollment of 22 students in 2002 to more than

168 students across three cohort admission cycles today. Building upon students’ existing degrees in other fields, the program provides 12 months of academic and clinical preparation to qualify students for nursing licensing exams.

Meeting the intensive demands of an accelerated program is challenging, however, and all NCIN grantee schools are required to maintain a mentoring program for their scholars. The School went a step further and formally created a Center for Academic and Professional Success (CAPS) in 2011 with partial support from the scholarship program. **Patrick Hopkins, RN, DNP, C-PNP, NNP**, assistant professor of clinical nursing, is mentoring liaison for the center and works specifically with RWJF scholars.

CAPS helps students across all nursing programs at the School develop strong learning strategies, sound study habits, critical thinking, and career management skills that are pivotal to their success and professional advancement. The efforts have

translated to high retention and graduation rates, as well as exceptionally high pass rates on licensing exams. All of the RWJF scholars who have taken the licensing exams since round one of the scholarship funding have passed them.

“Ensuring student success is our number one priority,” said interim dean **Kathy H. Rideout, EdD, PNP-BC, FNAP**. “Today’s nursing students are our future practitioners, professors, researchers, strategists, and leaders, and our role is to guide and nurture their potential. Beyond the academic support we provide, we aim to spark in them a lifelong commitment to learning and an understanding for the positive, collaborative impact they can make on the future delivery of health care.”

For more information about the School’s RWJF/NCIN scholarships, visit son.rochester.edu. Prospective students may also call (585) 275-2375. To learn more about the NCIN program, visit newcareersinnursing.org.



APNN Grads Achieve 100% Pass Rate on RN Licensure Exam

In April, the School of Nursing was excited to learn that every one of the 53 men and women who graduated in December from its accelerated bachelor's degree program for non-nurses (APNN) passed the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX). The students were all enrolled in the APNN cohort that began in January 2011 and concluded in December 2011.

Although the NCLEX pass rate for the School's APNN graduates has consistently been above 90% for several years, this is the first time that an entire cohort has achieved a 100% pass rate in the ten-year

history of the program. At nursing schools here and across the country, achieving a 100% pass rate on the licensing exam is uncommon regardless of enrollment size, but is especially rare

in nursing schools with cohorts of more than 50 students. The School has also received word that nearly all of its December graduates are employed as nurses, the majority of them in the Rochester area.

The School of Nursing's NCLEX pass rate for 2011 is 94%, which is currently the highest of any APNN baccalaureate program in the state. The most recently released statistics will be reported as part of 2012 figures.

"One of the first questions prospective nursing students ask us is what our NCLEX pass rate is, and we have always been able to say with great pride that we have one of the highest rates anywhere," said **Kathy H. Rideout, EdD**,

PNP-BC, FNAP, School of Nursing interim dean. "But now we can say that we have truly achieved perfection in this area, and we think this speaks volumes about our faculty, students, and the support we foster here."

Under the direction of assistant professors of clinical nursing **Elaine M. Andolina, MS, RN**, and **Joanne V. Clements, MS, RN, ACNP**, the three-semester, 12-month APNN accepts students who already have bachelor's degrees in other fields, and prepares them for RN licensure through rigorous academic coursework and clinical experience. The School of Nursing accepted its first class of 22 APNN students in May 2002, and today, the program enrolls more than 168 students across three cohort admission cycles.

Since its beginning, the program has attracted men and women of varied cultural, professional, and socioeconomic backgrounds from virtually every state. The program

has received five consecutive rounds of scholarship funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing Program to support its efforts to develop a diverse nursing workforce and a pipeline of nurse clinicians, faculty, researchers, and leaders well prepared to meet projected health care needs.

Rideout attributes the most recent NCLEX success to a combination of factors.

"The School is in the fortunate position of being able to select from a very bright, ambitious, and high-achieving pool of applicants who have a strong desire to become nurses and strengthen the profession," she said. "But equally important is the fact that we have outstanding faculty, cohort coordinators, and advisors who give our students a high level of personal attention to ensure their progression. And, we are able to ramp up that support quickly if it's needed."

continued from page 21

and advanced nurse practitioners are a logical solution to realign the two health-care systems.

"APNs are educated and trained to provide care in different settings, at any given point in an individual's lifespan, and to factor in socioeconomic influences and lifestyle issues that affect disease," she said.

Creating a Safety Net for Geriatric Patients

Chronic illness among older adults is going to touch us all," said Emory's McCauley. And, as the incidence of patients with chronic disease outpaces the number of physicians, advanced practice nurses are well suited to care for this population, she noted.

Psychiatric issues commonly coincide with chronic illness, and advanced practice nurses can play a key role in coordinating care among a

patient's health-care team, which might include a geriatric psychiatrist, medical specialist, pharmacist, and physical therapist.

McCauley emphasized the need to broaden the responsibilities of the caregiver. In treating a geriatric population, this can mean also caring for the caregiver, which might be a spouse or other family member. She also called for an evaluation of new models of geriatric care, particularly in emergency situations.

"We have the evidence now to do more to prevent the slide of elderly patients into dangerous health problems, and nurses have long been at the forefront of this effort," she said.

Eliminating APN Barriers

Inconsistencies abound when it comes to the ability of advanced practice nurses to practice to the full extent of their education and training, said Vanderbilt's Conway-Welch.

She presented a map of the 50 states showing that just over half have restrictive collaboration requirements limiting nurse practitioners' ability to prescribe, diagnose, or treat patients without physician supervision.

"That an APN can write a prescription in one state and cross a river and not be able to do the same thing is not in the best interest of patients," she said. "Nurses in these states take the same tests, the schools meet the same criteria, the faculty teaches similar curricula, and the students are certified by the same associations."

Although many areas are improving, Conway-Welch cited other obstacles still facing APNs, including inconsistent or lower reimbursement rates, lack of acknowledgement from physicians, limited funding for nursing and interprofessional education, fewer clinical privileges, and limited research funding to expand the knowledge base of nursing science.

Nowak to Direct Center for Nursing Entrepreneurship (CNE)



Daniel Nowak, RN, MS, associate director of nursing for geriatrics at Strong, has recently been named as clinical director of the School of Nursing Center for Nursing Entrepreneurship (CNE). Nowak, who has more than 15 years of experience in nursing leadership roles at Strong, will also serve as an assistant professor at the School, where he will teach graduate students enrolled in the Leadership in Health Care Systems program.

"I've had the privilege of working with Dan for many years and am thrilled that he is joining the School of Nursing in this way," said **Lisa Norsen, PhD, RN, ACNP-BC**, associate dean for innovation and community outreach. "His history of exemplary leadership, combined with his vision, great energy, and top-notch team-building skills, will strengthen the services the CNE provides, help us develop new service lines, and expand its presence in the community in meaningful and productive ways."

While Nowak will retain his role with Nursing Practice, Lean Implementation, and Crucial Conversations at Strong, he will devote about two-thirds of his time to the School and to leading the CNE, which is a nursing group practice providing health care and related consultative services. A significant practice arm

and revenue stream for the School, the CNE currently includes an employee health program, a travel health program (Passport Health), contract services, and nurse practitioner clinics.

"It's exciting because there is such a strong foundation of success here to build on," Nowak said. "I'm looking forward to exploring the opportunities for successful growth and partnerships in all areas."

Building partnerships has been a hallmark of Nowak's career as both a nurse and an administrator.

He worked for more than a decade as a nurse and nurse manager at Rochester General Hospital before earning his master's degree in nursing administration from the School of Nursing in 1992. Upon graduation, he was recruited to Strong by Norsen (who was then associate director of nursing) and chief nursing officer **Patricia Anne Witzel, MS, RN, MBA, FNAP**, to open a new cardiothoracic intensive care unit.

Nowak worked with a team of physicians and nurses to take the unit from concept to reality, and served as its nurse manager/senior nurse manager for several years. He then helped lead the unit through the major evolution of providing heart transplants and artificial heart implants (ventricular assist devices), working to develop and implement the spectrum of care (congestive heart failure clinic, pre-operative, operative, postoperative, recovery, and follow-up) for patients in this specialty. In addition, he was chiefly responsible for nurse recruitment, orientation, education, and leadership on the unit.

In 2006, Nowak was named assistant director of nursing for perioperative services at Strong, with oversight of the Strong Surgery Center, Operating Room, Post Ambulatory Care Unit, Sterile Processing Department, and Sawgrass Surgical Center. Over a five-year span, he successfully initiated the division of the Operating Room into clinical clusters and teams through which nurses could better focus and

specialize in the care of patients in certain areas.

Also under Nowak's leadership, **Virginia Towle, RN, BSN**, designed and implemented a perioperative nurses council, which brought together nurses from all different surgical areas to share best practices and collaborate in the development of new models of patient- and family-centered care.

Most recently, Nowak has overseen the geriatrics nursing program within the hospital, working to educate nurses about the unique diagnostic and therapeutic challenges of the vulnerable and growing population of elderly, hospitalized adults; his work in this area will continue in tandem with his role at the CNE. For six months, Nowak also served as interim associate director of nursing in the Emergency Department, an experience that, he noted, also informs his new position at the School.

"I wouldn't be able to do anything without the foundation of education I received here at the School of Nursing," he said. "I've also been fortunate to have coaches and mentors across the Medical Center and to have gained an appreciation for the skills and perspectives people bring to the creative process and to problem-solving in a health-care setting. While I'm no longer working with patients at the bedside, I see my role as preparing the nurses who *will* be there, and as being a voice in those crucial conversations that can improve health-care delivery."

Looking for Class Notes? Due to space issues, we will feature a two-page Class Notes section in the next magazine, publishing in late fall. If you have a news item and/or photo for submission, please E-mail Christine_Roth@urmc.rochester.edu.

School Takes Part in United Way Day of Caring



More than 50 faculty and staff members put their painting, raking, weeding, and mulching skills to work at Hill Haven, Bethany House, Catholic Charities Community Services, and Mercy Community Services during United Way's Day of Caring May 10. The event was a way for the School to show support for these non-profit organizations that do vital work in the Rochester community and provide School of Nursing students with meaningful field experience.

Epsilon Xi Hosts Regional Conference, Celebrates 30 Years

Epsilon Xi, the University of Rochester chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, proudly hosted the Sigma Theta Tau Regional Conference March 30.

The conference featured a variety of presentations by School of Nursing faculty on topics including translational science, palliative care, child and adolescent psychiatry, and sleep disorders. Keynote speaker **Gerri Lamb, PhD, RN, FAAN**, spoke on the topic of bridging research and practice. A School of Nursing

alumna and Epsilon Xi charter member, Lamb is an associate professor at Arizona State University College of Nursing and Health Innovation.

The conference also marked the 30th anniversary of the Epsilon Xi chapter which was chartered on February 7, 1982 and today has more than 400 active members. More than 50 of these members attended an anniversary reception in the Saunders atrium March 29.

Epsilon Xi President **Cathy Peters, MS, APRN-BC, NPP**, conference chair, and **Jane Tuttle, PhD, RN, FNP-BC**, faculty counselor, described the milestone event as a way to honor Epsilon Xi's founding members, and celebrate the chapter's successful mission of supporting lifelong learning and professional development among nurses. The chapter supports nursing students, clinicians, and faculty with annual scholarship/research awards and sponsorships.





Research assistant Judith Brasch, BS, RN, principal investigator Susan Groth, PhD, RN, WHNP-BC, FAANP, and molecular scientist Oksana Polesskaya, PhD.



Biomolecular Laboratory Opens Promising Doors for Social Scientists

In June 2010, assistant professor of nursing **Susan W. Groth, PhD, RN, WHNP-BC, FAANP**, was seeking to study the relationship of obesity genes with gestational diabetes in pregnant women.

But Groth, who has devoted many years to researching the social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors contributing to gestational weight gain, hit a stumbling block when trying to delve “beneath the skin” into the realm of biomarker research.

“I knew about the advances in dried blood spot analysis, and very much needed to use this technology to include new biomarkers as the next vital step in my research,” said Groth, now principal investigator of the School of Nursing’s Biomolecular Laboratory, which opened in May. “But I couldn’t find anywhere that I could obtain the required laboratory analysis without a great deal of expense and inconvenience. That’s when I began to inquire about what it might take to

have a lab right here in the School.”

Groth sought the support of **Harriet Kitzman, RN, PhD, FAAN**, senior associate dean for research, to develop the concept for a lab that would meet the needs of the School. As the idea began to take shape, Groth said, she and Kitzman soon realized the “larger benefit it could bring not only to nurse researchers but to investigators across the Medical Center.”

Dried blood spot (DBS) analysis itself is not new. The heel-prick test—in which single drops of blood are taken from the heel of a newborn, dropped onto blotter paper, and used to screen for metabolic and genetic diseases—has been the gold standard in the United States for more than 40 years. But because larger volumes of blood are needed for most other types of clinical tests and diagnoses, workable alternates to use DBS have been few—until the last few years, that is, when high-tech advances have opened exciting new doors in the research arena.

Specifically, dramatic increases in the sensitivity and selectivity of mass spectrometry are making it easier for investigators to separate and identify particular molecules and retrieve larger, multiple amounts of information from a single sample of blood than ever before. For patients, especially the elderly and infirm, DBS offers a virtually painless, one-time finger prick in contrast to numerous venous blood draws. Although there is an initial technology investment, there is the potential for vast cost savings from the ease of sample collection by study teams in the community. As a result, improved, minimally invasive DBS methodology is now being used in both preclinical and clinical studies, and making it possible for social scientists like Groth to perform complex assays and to integrate biomarkers into population-based, epidemiological research.

“Biology and environment, to varying degrees, reciprocally shape our physiological

landscape, and the inclusion of biomarkers can shed light on the specific and relevant links between them—particularly when looked at over the life course,” Groth said. “Having objective, scientific data about the multiple pathways through which social contexts and behaviors influence health, and vice versa, is crucial when determining what populations are at highest risk for disease. And, it helps us shape new interventions and policies to promote healthier outcomes.”

The Biomolecular Laboratory at the School of Nursing—part of the School’s Biobehavioral Laboratories on the fourth floor of Helen Wood Hall—was created with the support of \$75,000 from the Medical Center’s Clinical Translational Science Institute (CTSI). The CTSI moved into its new home within the 200,000-square-foot Saunders Research Building, adjacent to the School of Nursing, in April 2011.

While intended for research, not for clinical diagnostics, the Biomolecular Laboratory works with human blood, and as such is a designated Biosafety Level 2 laboratory and thus subject to all standard regulations. Research assistant **Judith Brasch, BS, RN**, in the School of Nursing’s Center for Research Facilitation, as part of her master’s capstone project worked for several months under the direction of Groth and Kitzman to launch the lab and to facilitate its opening in compliance with chemical safety guidelines.

“I believe it is a true ‘first’ for a nursing school to develop the capability of doing onsite DBS analysis,” Brasch said. “We are very proud of this accomplishment, but also mindful that this level of investment demands great responsibility to ensure that we provide a high-quality, safe, and supportive working environment where

scientists across the Medical Center can confidently utilize laboratory services to conduct meaningful, collaborative research.”

Scientists wishing to use the lab would first consult with Groth and Brasch, who can advise on the best methods of sample collection and storage (based on populations and research focus), as well as overall study goals, necessary applications and approvals, and cost. In addition, they have the option to meet with Medical Center molecular scientist **Oksana Polesskaya, PhD**, for a consult regarding the ideal biomarker selection for their research questions.

Once DBS samples are collected and dried, the laboratory provides storage freezers where they can be kept indefinitely for future analysis. All necessary equipment is available within the lab for reconstitution of samples for conducting various assays to study the expression of markers such as cholesterol, triglycerides, or insulin, among many others.

Before any official studies can begin, however, Polesskaya must create protocols on various analytes to ensure DBS reliability and correlation with venous samples. Thirty-five volunteers—mostly faculty and staff from the School of Nursing—provided both venous and finger-prick blood samples early this summer for use in developing these protocols for research purposes.

One of the first researchers to use the lab this fall will be **Michael M. McKee, MD, MPH**, a family medicine researcher who is exploring cardiovascular risk factors in 500 participants, and examining biomarkers including cholesterol, high-density cholesterol (HDL), and hemoglobin A1C. To be ready for McKee’s

Biomarkers—A Dynamic and Powerful Research Tool

A biomarker, or biological marker, is a cellular, biochemical, or molecular alteration measurable in human tissues, cells, or fluids that can indicate the presence of a disease state or biological condition; for example, the presence of an antibody in the blood may indicate an infection. More specifically, a biomarker indicates a change in the expression or state of a protein that correlates with the risk or progression of a disease, or with the susceptibility of the disease to a given treatment. Biomarkers of all types have been used by generations of epidemiologists, physicians, and scientists to study human disease because they can reflect the entire spectrum of a particular condition, from the earliest manifestations to the terminal stages. The application of biomarkers in the diagnosis and management of cardiovascular disease, infections, immunological and genetic disorders, and cancer are well known. Today, thanks to the rapid growth of molecular biology and laboratory technology, molecular biomarkers give investigators a dynamic and powerful approach to understanding the pathways of disease, with multiple applications in analytic epidemiology, clinical trials, and disease prevention, diagnosis, and management.

studies, Polesskaya is focusing on creating those protocols.

Groth anticipates the demand for the lab will grow as awareness increases about DBS analysis and its potential to inform evidence-based research.

“We’re at an exciting new threshold,” she said. “I know the opportunities are unlimited and I look forward to seeing what the future brings.”



The New Skills Lab

In May, a 17-bed Skills Laboratory opened on the first floor of the School in the former site of the doctoral suite, which was relocated to the fourth floor. Besides offering the most current, sophisticated technology, the spacious lab dramatically increases the learning capacity for teams of students. An additional two-bed private skills laboratory across the hall provides opportunities for one-to-one learning.

Doctoral Student Orlando Harris Selected as Fulbright Scholar

School of Nursing doctoral student **Orlando O. Harris, MS, APRN, FNP**, was recently selected to receive a United States Fulbright award to support his dissertation research in Kingston, Jamaica. He will leave for Jamaica at the end of December to lead a 10-month project in which he will study the HIV prevention needs, and the social and cultural determinants of HIV risk, among young Jamaican men who have sex with men. This is the first time a School of Nursing PhD student has earned a Fulbright award.

Born in Jamaica and raised in New York City, Harris currently lives on Rochester's east side, and is employed as a nurse practitioner with the Monroe County Health Department's Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic and as a senior trainer with the Center for Health and Behavioral Training at the University of Rochester. He is also a senior teaching associate with the School of Nursing, where he is working toward his PhD in health practice research.

In Jamaica, Harris will be affiliated with the Institute for Gender and Developmental Studies at the University of the West Indies Mona Campus. He will be supervised and

supported there by **Leith Lorraine Dunn, PhD**, a senior lecturer and department chair, who has research expertise in gender-based violence, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS.

"There is very limited research about the HIV-prevention needs of young Jamaican men who have sex with men," said Harris, who intends to focus on factors that include interpersonal (family friends and social networks), organizational (governmental and social institutions), and community and public policy (local laws) that influence HIV risk and prevention. He also plans to conduct individual interviews to better understand how young men navigate the factors that place them at risk for HIV.

"The Fulbright fellowship is especially meaningful to me because it allows me to gather this information by immersing myself in the culture and society of Jamaica, and to build on my public health expertise to formulate a multifaceted insider perspective," he said. "My hope is that this will provide critical information to stakeholders within Jamaican society to aid in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and that it also may have a far-reaching impact on public health, prevention, and linkage to care for these same



populations living in the United States."

Established in 1946, the Fulbright is the flagship international exchange scholarship program between the United States and 155 countries, and is supported by the U.S. Congress and partner governments. The program awards about 8,000 grants annually to U.S. students wishing to study, teach, and conduct research abroad and to non-U.S. citizens wishing to do the same in the United States.

The application process is lengthy, rigorous, and competitive, with eligibility criteria varying by program and country. Harris was one of only a handful of students to receive grants to conduct research in the Caribbean region.

State Grant Supports Education of Hospital Nurses in Elder Care

Strong Memorial Hospital Nursing Practice and the School of Nursing recently received a New York State Health Workforce Retraining Initiative grant to support the training of more than 700 nurses at Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital in the best practices for caring for elderly patients.

The two-year, \$136,000 grant will help ensure that existing and new nursing staff members are prepared to respond to the unique and complex health care needs of hospitalized older adults and increase the number of direct care nurses certified in geriatric nursing.

"The average age of hospitalized patients here and across the country is 65, and many of these patients also have chronic conditions and cognitive impairments that place them at higher risk for complications, prolonged hospital stays,

functional decline, and poor outcomes," said **Daniel Nowak, RN, MS**, associate director of nursing for geriatrics at Strong Memorial Hospital. "Due to these unique diagnostic and therapeutic challenges, we need to make sure we are educated and responsive to the needs of this vulnerable and growing population," Nowak said.

The training will be a joint effort by the School of Nursing and Nursing Practice at Strong Memorial and Highland, said **Sally Norton, PhD, RN, FNAP, FPCN**, associate professor of nursing, who is the principal investigator on the grant.

"Educating hospital nurses in the care of the hospitalized older adult wasn't something that was done as recently as five or ten years ago," she said. "But we have a growing body of research about geriatrics care that we simply didn't have available to us before, demonstrating the most successful collaborative assessments, interventions, and therapies for this population. Our goal is to translate the very best evidence we have to the bedside."

In the two years under the grant, about 50 nurses will participate in the Nurses Improving Care for Health System Elders (NICHE) intensive education and certification program. These nurses then will teach approximately 650 nurses at Strong Memorial and Highland.

The course includes case studies, online interactive programs, and videos. Some of the curriculum was developed based on personal input from elderly patients and their families gathered through Strong's and Highland's Patient Advisory Councils.

Participating nurses will enrich their understanding of the distinction between delirium and dementia in elderly patients, and the various medical and environmental factors that can impede accurate diagnosis. Other topics include safe walking techniques and the elements of hospitalization that can contribute to functional decline in elderly patients. The original course is four hours; the School of Nursing and Nursing Practice plan to develop additional courses.

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