TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE 2. A Message from the Dean

PAGE 3. Education Beyond Borders – Online Programs Expand VCU Nursing’s Reach

PAGE 7. Ann Hamric Fosters Nursing Excellence as New Associate Dean of Academic Programs

PAGE 9. Shelley Conroy Excels as Academic Leader

PAGE 11. Alumni News

PAGE 13: Remember When - MCV 3 South and West Project


PAGE 17. Why I Give - St. Philip Alumna Sallie Smith’s Small Investment Produces Large Gift

PAGE 19. School of Nursing News

PAGE 21. New Faculty and Staff

PAGE 22. Dissertation Defenses
The VCU School of Nursing continues to raise the bar for delivering cutting-edge education to prepare nurse leaders. We are building on a proud tradition of more than 100 years of educating the nation’s best nurses – all while advancing our mission of improving health and the human condition through nursing research, education and service.

As I shared in the fall edition of Connections, our school is part of VCU’s Quest for Distinction to become a preeminent public, urban research university, focused on academic quality and student success at all levels. VCU Nursing reflects the basic premise of Quest through our innovative program offerings and impactful projects championed by faculty, staff, students and alumni. We are committed to transformative education that influences nursing beyond the borders of our local community, the state and the nation.

This edition of Connections is focused on some of the unique aspects of the educational experience at our school. I invite you to learn more about our efforts to meet the needs of working nurses through online education. Our cover story provides an overview of the RN to BS and Ph.D. Hybrid programs – how they are making it possible for nurses to work and reside in their own communities, while pursing their education online. Just imagine how convenient it is that students don’t have to pick up and move to Richmond just to have access to the best preparation for nursing excellence. The Ph.D. Hybrid program represents a significant milestone for us. Launching in the fall, the program is the first of its kind at a nursing school based in Virginia. This clearly exemplifies our position as a leader in setting benchmarks to advance nursing education.

Another article in this issue presents an up close and personal view of Dr. Ann Hamric, our new Associate Dean of Academic Programs. A highly respected leader and expert in advance practice nursing, Dr. Hamric demonstrates the vision necessary to ensure that our programs continue to embody academic excellence at the highest level. I would also like to direct your attention to the story about Sallie Smith, a St. Philip alumna who started with a small investment and grew it to become the single largest gift ever presented to the St. Philip Scholarship Fund. We are truly grateful that her gift is now part of the fund that makes it possible for many minority students to become nurses.

Overall, we are very appreciative for all of the philanthropic gifts and involvement of alumni and friends who are committed to the success of our school. Our Cabaniss Campaign is underway to raise endowed funds for student scholarships and endowed professorships for faculty, as well as to provide critical support for current and future generations of VCU Nursing leaders. We ask that you consider a donation to help us achieve our goals. Together we can ensure that the VCU School of Nursing remains one of the top schools in the nation for leaders in nursing.

Nancy F. Langston, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN
Dean and Professor, VCU School of Nursing
Executive Director for Academic Nursing, VCU Health System
Welcome!

In this unit we will begin our study of Community Health & Public Health Nursing by learning how to develop and provide population-focused interventions to improve the health status of communities.

The health of the community is supported at local, regional, state, and federal levels through various health care infrastructure. Issues at each level may need to be addressed by health care professionals. In this unit, you will learn about each level and how to apply it when addressing community health.

At the completion of this unit the student will have:
1) Viewed the Course Overview and completed the Course Overview activity.
2) Completed the required textbook readings and the readings on the Unit.
3) Reviewed the Unit 1 lessons: Orientation to Public Health, Community
4) Completed the unit test.

Education
Beyond Borders
After more than a century of growth and success, the VCU School of Nursing continues to build on its tradition of excellence by increasing its online education options to meet the varying needs of working nurses nationwide.

The School is launching the first nursing Ph.D. hybrid program in Virginia that combines online courses with classroom experiences. Designed to expand the Ph.D. program, the hybrid instructional format will provide a vibrant and engaging learning experience for independent and highly motivated students seeking to advance their careers as teacher-scholars or pioneering researchers, but desiring to do so with the flexibility of online coursework. Only a few Mid-Atlantic universities offer this degree option.

The program will kick off this fall with a projected enrollment of 10 to 12 students, said Nancy McCain, D.S.N, RN, FAAN, chair of the Doctoral Program Committee. "This format will expand outreach to a wider range of potential scholars interested in studying with nationally-recognized nurse scientists who conduct biobehavioral clinical research," McCain said.

The on-campus schedule will consist of five days during the fall, three days during the spring and two days during the summer semester for the first two years. When students are on campus, they will attend classes and participate in activities that may include biobehavioral research, advisory meetings, presentations, manuscript development, technology and library skill development, and social activities to foster group cohesiveness. The online courses will be delivered through Blackboard and additional multimedia technologies.

"We are doing a lot of planning to make this program as seamless as possible for our students," said Ann Hamric, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, professor and associate dean for Academic Programs. "Our doctoral students like our programs. We want to keep that learning strong while we make this program available to a larger group of students. This is an important initiative for us and we are committed to keeping it a high quality program," she said.

The nursing Ph.D. hybrid program is the second online degree program at the School of Nursing. The RN to BS online degree
option, in place since 2008, is offered mainly through distance learning and is typically completed in about 2.5 years.

Integrating online education into the curricula makes earning a degree easier by increasing educational access for nurses who work, have families, or are geographically bound, said Cheryl Peterson, M.S.N., RN, director of Nursing Practice and Policy for the American Nurses Association, (ANA), a professional organization that represents 3 million registered nurses.

"Technology has made our society a 24/7 world, and nursing is no exception," Peterson said. "Online learning options that give current and aspiring registered nurses more flexibility to pursue their goals while minimizing geographic barriers and [helping to] balance their family and work commitments are a benefit to the profession and the health care system," she said.

Hamric agreed that the school’s online programs provide a convenience for busy students. For the new hybrid nursing Ph.D. program, “We want students who want to study biobehavioral research but we recognize these students have busy lives and can’t drop everything to move to Richmond. Nursing has never been like traditional arts and sciences, where students proceed directly into graduate study after receiving their undergraduate degree,” she said. “Nurses tend to enter the workforce after graduating from their undergraduate program and come back to school at a later point. The hybrid format accommodates that reality much more than saying, ‘Well, we’ll give you a really great Ph.D. experience but you have to move to Richmond.’”

McCain said Ph.D. students in the hybrid program will find the School of Nursing offers stellar learning and training opportunities, a faculty with global or national reputations for research and state-of-the-art-facilities. Its graduate nursing program is ranked in the top 10 percent by U.S. News and World Report and VCU is consistently ranked in the top 25 schools of nursing, based on research funding from the National Institutes of Health.

The School of Nursing’s other online program, the popular RN to BS program, consistently attracts about 250 applicants for approximately 150 slots, said Betsy Bampton, Ed.D., RNC-E, WHNP, associate professor emeritus and RN-BS academic advisor. “We have a good reputation of working with students, they like to get their degree from here. I think our history and word of mouth help to sell the school,” she said.

VCU School of Nursing partners with three other institutions so students enrolled around the state can take one required on-site class closer to where they live. The partner institutions are the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville; the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg; and, the Tidewater Community College in Portsmouth. The on-site course, “Foundations of Professional Nursing,” meets once a month for the first semester. It includes an orientation and allows the students to work on a group project they present to the class.

Mirna Medina-Gonzalez of Chesapeake took the only face-to-face RN-BS class at VCU Nursing’s partner campus in Portsmouth in 2010. She enjoyed learning how to interpret and research articles and liked how the instructor incorporated group work into the course.

Medina-Gonzalez, 42, always wanted to attend VCU but “there was no way I was going to do a commute. The kids are here, I work full time and currently manage two units [for Sentara Healthcare]. I can’t just drop what I’m doing and go. I do miss the classroom because I am old school when it comes to that but the online program gives you flexibility.”
When she started her management position in nursing in 2004, a bachelor’s degree was not a requirement as it is now. Still, she wanted to earn a degree. But helping her children with college expenses was a priority and so “I put my stuff on the back burner,” said the mother of five, who is on track to graduate later this year.

Increasingly, Bampton said nurses are seeking a baccalaureate degree online to stay competitive. A report by the Institute of Medicine, entitled “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health,” recommended increasing the percentage of nurses with a bachelor’s degree to 80 percent by 2020, so online programs make it easier for more nurses to advance their education.

With hospitals and academic health centers requiring or preferring the BS degree, tdegree completion programs are mushrooming. There are 633 RN to BS programs nationwide, including more than 400 programs that are offered at least partially online, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). In response to calls for a more educated nursing workforce, enrollment in RN to BS programs jumped 21 percent, or by 13,468 students, from 2009 to 2010. This marked the eighth year of growth.

More nurses are needed to meet the increasing demands and address a nursing shortage that is projected to worsen, said Peterson from the ANA. And more nursing faculty members are needed to educate the future generation of RNs, she said.

Nursing alumna Mary Vickerman, a 2010 graduate, constantly urges her colleagues and peers to get their undergraduate degree so they can stay competitive. An online degree option can be the best solution, she said. Vickerman enrolled in VCU’s online RN to BS program after her son took some classes. There were other programs, but the Richmond resident knew the school’s reputation. “I know the respect VCU has. I felt it was a good school that would carry a lot of weight. There are a lot of programs that my friends go to and I don’t think they are strong.”

Vickerman, 57, started the program at age 54. She was initially concerned about being the oldest student. She wasn’t. Another concern was doing most of her coursework online since she was used to face-to-face classroom interaction. It did not take long for her to adjust and she completed the program in 18 months while working full time.

Her degree “lends credibility when I am teaching other nurses,” she said. As a nurse technical specialist for Kimberly Clark, Vickerman travels around the nation to work. Wherever she goes, she encourages nurses to get their bachelor’s degree to advance their career, as some hospitals will not hire a nurse without one. “They don’t need to. They have enough nurses that they can be picky. They are beginning to weed out,” she said.

Another advantage to online learning is the freedom to move at your own pace. Phillip Meekins of Williamsburg is steadily working on his bachelor’s degree. He started in 2010 and expects to finish in 2014. The online program allows him to maintain an active lifestyle that includes working full time at VCU Medical Center while raising three sons.

“The online program is very convenient for where I am in my life at this time,” said Meekins, 42, a board certified psychiatric nurse. I am taking one class at a time which allows for a better life and work balance.”

Meekins noted that his employer is very supportive. “VCU encourages higher learning and being a life-long learner...the benefits are priceless,” he said.

Working on his bachelor’s degree also enables him to continue a family tradition. “My mother is a [retired] nurse and she instilled in me years ago that I have to obtain or surpass her educational level. So I am fighting to do that,” Meekins said. •
When Ann B. Hamric, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, recalled what sparked her interest in a nursing career as a youngster in Texas, the new associate dean of Academic Programs and professor at the VCU School of Nursing credited two physicians — one a former neighbor, the other fictional.

The neighbor arranged summer jobs at a local hospital. “I really liked the hospital, but” — she paused as a smile lit up her face — “if you want to know the real reason I am a nurse, it’s Dr. Kildare,” she said, referring to the fictional physician who starred in the popular television show in the 1960s.
Ann Hamric is "a great thinker, bridge builder and good listener."

— Nancy Langston

“He was the greatest looking thing I ever saw. I was in middle school and I was just hooked. I’m a nurse because of Dr. Kildare,” she said with laughter one bright winter afternoon in her office, where the walls are lined with framed degrees and awards befitting an internationally renowned leader in advanced practice nursing and nursing ethics.

Though Hamric has not starred in a self-titled TV series, colleagues view her as a star in her field. They describe her as a visionary leader, a nurse's nurse and a “national treasure” with a good sense of humor. Her rich and distinguished career revolves around one powerful word. “I aspire to excellence and I try to inspire others to excellence because patients deserve it,” Hamric said. “If you are really sick, you want a nurse who is aspiring to excellence.”

Considered an expert in the areas of moral distress and nursing ethics with a prolific publication history, she has won numerous awards, including the Faculty Leadership Award, U.Va. School of Nursing Alumni Association and the Award for Substantive Contributions to Nursing Ethics, American Society of Bioethics and Humanities Nursing Affinity Group.

Hamric has served as senior editor for six books on advanced practice nursing, including the most widely used graduate text on the subject of advanced nursing roles, Advanced Practice Nursing: An Integrative Approach. The 5th edition is currently in development.

She has lectured in 24 states and seven countries, including Japan, China and Canada.

Prior to her VCU appointment last year, Hamric was a professor at the U.Va. School of Nursing, where she also served on U.Va.'s presidential search committee, which in 2010 selected Teresa A. Sullivan as the university’s first female president.

VCU Nursing Dean and Professor Nancy F. Langston, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, who called Hamric “a great thinker, bridge builder and good listener,” said having someone of Hamric’s stature working in a leadership role with faculty for curriculum development and implementation will help VCU to become a preeminent public, urban research university. “She has begun to ask us to think about our assumptions and to essentially ask why and how we do things as we do them within our programs,” Langston said.

A desire to shape the future of nursing and to give back to a profession that has given her so much, led Hamric to VCU. She joined the faculty full time last fall.

“The things the school wanted really aligned with what I wanted to do at this point in my career, and that’s curriculum development and faculty development,” she said. “Developing people and programs for the future is a neat thing to do. I’m really having fun.”

One top goal for Hamric involves transforming the academic programs into state-of-the-art offerings so that the School of Nursing is known for its instruction and curriculum. “We have a quest for distinction, and the university aspires to being distinguished by the quality of our teaching and student engagement,” Hamric said.

Mentoring is another priority. “I love to mentor junior faculty and to develop others. My main co-editor for years was a student of mine here, Judith Spross. She was a grad student when I taught here in the 70s and now she is a wonderful colleague. That’s one of the most rewarding things any teacher can experience, to watch your students become your peers.”

Among her own circle of mentors was Luther Christman, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, who served as Dean of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, where she received her bachelor of science in nursing. Christman was one of the few men in nursing at the time. “He was nationally known, and he believed that nurses needed to go on for higher education,” she said.

Christman encouraged Hamric to continue her education. She received her master’s degree in medical-surgical nursing from the University of California at San Francisco, and her doctorate in nursing with a concentration in ethics from the University of Maryland.

“I’ve always aspired to be a role model as he was,” she said. Spross, (MS ’76), Ph.D., RN, AOCN, FAAN, now a professor at the University of Southern Maine, counts herself among Hamric’s mentees. She met Hamric in 1976 as a graduate nursing student at MCV. Hamric empowered her, especially at “finding my voice and becoming assertive. She helped me to see how essential that was to nursing practice,” she said.

“|I eschewed teaching for a long time, and when I did begin teaching, it was Ann I most wanted to emulate,” said Spross, who called Hamric “a national treasure when it comes to nursing,” and considered it a privilege to co-edit textbooks with her for 30 years. Jeanne Salyer, Ph.D., RN, VCU Nursing associate professor, gave kudos to Hamric for helping others develop their strengths. “She helped me develop the first article I ever had published, from my master’s thesis. That was quite exciting for me and she was just as excited as I was!” she said. Six months after arriving at VCU, Hamric remains enthusiastic. “I was taken by the energy here. People work well together and want to solve problems. We have a great dialogue with each other. I like it,” she said. “I just think the place is full of possibilities.” •
VCU Nursing alumna Shelley F. Conroy, Ed.D., M.S., RN, became interested in a nursing career right out of high school at the bedside of patients in a U.S. Army Hospital in Nurnberg, Germany.

“I was enthralled with all the action in the hospital and being able to work with people who were in need,” said Conroy, who served as a summer volunteer when her father, an Army chaplain, was stationed in Germany for three years. “It seemed to me that nurses were the ones who really were there at the bedside. I saw they were able to be present with patients providing care and comfort that made a difference in the lives and health of those they cared for.”

“I also saw the nurses in positions of leadership, managing units and directing care. I saw them making decisions in urgent situations and directing the outcomes of care,” she added.

Conroy, who graduated from Nurnberg American High School in Germany, has
come a long way from observing nurses in leadership positions. The Richmond native not only entered the nursing field, but also steadily progressed to become leader of a nationally recognized nursing school. She was recently appointed dean of the 750-student Louise Herrington School of Nursing at Baylor University in Dallas, Texas. “I see this as an opportunity to serve as an academic leader at a top tier, nationally-ranked and highly respected research university, where I am able to actively share and practice my Christian faith and caring in educational and work settings,” she said, “and thereby influence the total development and preparation of faculty, staff and students for worldwide leadership and service.”

Conroy brings more than 35 years of experience in higher education, health care administration, nursing and health care research to Baylor. She most recently served at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Ga., where she was dean, professor, and a member of the graduate faculty of the College of Health Professions. Prior to that, Dr. Conroy was dean of the Dr. Ezekiel R. Dumke College of Health Professions at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, and dean for professional and technical studies at John Tyler Community College in Chester, Va. Before her service at John Tyler, she spent 14 years in Florida, where she held positions in hospital administration and was a faculty member at the University of Central Florida and Valencia Community College. In addition, her background includes a clinical faculty teaching appointment at the VCU School of Nursing for six years.

Conroy has a significant background in research and has been awarded more than $6 million in grants and sponsored projects. Some of these specialty areas include simulation training; critical incident stress; rural health outreach; nursing and health professions workforce preparation; curriculum development; and nursing externship.

Conroy has also been active in various professional organizations nationwide. A professional reviewer for the Journal of Allied Health since 2010, she is a member of the Georgia Nursing Leadership Coalition, a member of the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions, and serves as a U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant reviewer.

Conroy said the accomplishment she is most proud of is her gubernatorial appointment to the Virginia Board of Nursing, where she served as president for part of her eight-year tenure, as well as chair of the Committee of the Joint Boards of Nursing and Medicine. She noted that Sadie Heath Cabaniss, founder of the VCU School of Nursing, was credited with the work that started the board.

“It was a thrill to be able to serve in that role during the centennial celebration,” she said. “I am also proud to have served on the department of health professions task force that developed the first health care practitioner intervention project in Virginia.”

Conroy also served on the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, where she was appointed to the Committee on Practice, Regulation and Education. During that time, she chaired the group that prepared the model standards for regulating nursing education.

Conroy holds a Doctor of Education degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Central Florida with a specialization in nursing education and a cognate in health policy, as well as a Master of Science degree in maternal Florida with a specialization in nursing education and a cognate in health policy, as well as a Master of Science degree in maternal-infant nursing and a B.S.N. from the VCU School of Nursing.

She said the faculty at VCU shaped her as a nurse leader who was prepared to “think creatively and outside the box.” She also acknowledged the friendship and mentorship of Dean Nancy Langston and Professor Emerita Janet Younger.

“I would have to say that the two of them have set the bar high to emulate,” she said. “They were both there for me when I needed advice and mentoring. They are two of the smartest and most politically astute women I have known and worked with during my career.”

Younger said she first knew Conroy when they both served on the Virginia Board of Nursing.

“I was impressed by her ethics in decision making. I thought then that she had found the Board of Nursing to be a good place to express her values in nursing. I also watched her question witnesses with a great deal of kindness while approaching her questions strategically and incisively,” Younger said.

“Now I think she has found another place to express those gifts,” she added.

Although she has a busy career, Conroy said she and her husband Rich travel to the Richmond area often to visit her daughter Jennifer, 31, who is married with two sons.

“I have two grandsons, Logan and Carter, who are such a joy,” she said, adding that she also has a son Richie, 25, in Los Angeles, Calif.

Reflecting on what advice to offer VCU nursing students, Conroy said she would encourage them to continue their education.

“Graduating with your B.S.N. degree is only the first step in your educational and professional journey,” she said. “The profession needs you to continue advancing your nursing knowledge and expertise so that you are prepared to assume the leadership roles in the profession and health care tomorrow.”

“Find a mentor along the way to help you develop your expertise and abilities as a nursing leader so you can step forward and lead the profession into the future,” she added. ∙
Patricia Eck Receives Top Papal Honor

VCU School of Nursing alumna Sr. Patricia A. Eck, C.B.S., B.S. ’72, the congregation leader for the Sisters of Bon Secours of Paris since 2009 and chairperson of Bon Secours Ministries, the sponsor for Bon Secours Health System, was presented with the Papal award, Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifici medal on Nov. 20, 2011. This award is the highest honor given to a member of a religious community by the Vatican.

“I am grateful for the recognition of the long-standing presence of the Sisters in the Archdiocese, especially in Baltimore and Marriottsville. This is indeed an honor for us all,” Sr. Eck said.

Instituted by Pope Leo XIII in 1888, the honor is bestowed upon lay people and clergy who have provided distinguished service to the Roman Catholic Church. Sr. Eck received the medal at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore.

Sr. Eck entered religious life on Sept. 11, 1966, dedicating her ministry to the care of the sick, particularly those who are poor or marginalized. With a health care career that spans more than 40 years, Sr. Eck has served in several roles including clinical nursing, health care administration, and sponsorship and governance for Bon Secours Health System.

Through the years, Sr. Eck has served on the Leadership Team of the Sisters of Bon Secours, U.S.A, and, in 2006, she was one of the primary leaders in creating and structuring Bon Secours Ministries as the Public Juridic Person/sponsor for Bon Secours Health System and is currently the chairperson of Bon Secours Ministries. Under Sr. Eck’s leadership, Bon Secours Ministries included for the first time, laypeople working side by side with the sisters.

She has been recognized nationally for her leadership in creating alignment between sponsorship and governance. Sr. Eck served as chairperson of the Catholic Health Association (CHA) and, in 2007, received the Sister Mary Concilia Moran Award from CHA. She has also served as chairperson of the Corporate Members of Mercy Housing and currently serves on the Catholic Medical Mission Board.

Sr. Eck earned a master’s degree in health administration from the Medical College of Virginia at VCU, a master’s degree in nursing from Catholic University of America, and a bachelor’s degree in nursing from VCU.

Leslie Wyatt Honored Among Class of 2012 YWCA Outstanding Women

VCU Nursing alumna Leslie Wyatt, M.S., RN, vice president of children’s services and executive director of the Children’s Hospital of Richmond at Virginia Commonwealth University, was named as one of the 2012 YWCA Outstanding Women Award recipients.

Wyatt is among nine other women in the Richmond area named as award winners based on their impact on the Greater Richmond Community, leadership skills, personal and professional achievement, and commitment to the YWCA of Richmond’s mission to empower women and elevate children. She was recognized in the health and science category as a result of her 40 years of dedication to the field of nursing. Wyatt helped establish a dually licensed medical and psychiatric hospital for children and adolescents and spearheaded the establishment of the first neonatal transport vehicle in Virginia.

Wyatt’s background includes a wide range of roles and experiences in clinical nursing, nursing administration and hospital administration, concentrating in pediatric health care. She is a member of numerous local and national organizations, including the American College of Healthcare Executives, the Pediatric Society of Richmond, the Richmond Academy of Medicine and the National Association of Children’s Hospitals and Related Institutions.

Wyatt received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1972 and 1976, respectively. She will be recognized at a luncheon for award recipients on May 4 at the Richmond Marriott.
VCU School of Nursing alumnae Susan Gaskins, D.S.N., RN, ACRN, and Jennifer Matthews, Ph.D., RN, A-CNS-BC, were among 142 nursing leaders nationwide inducted as Fellows during the American Academy of Nursing’s 38th Annual Meeting and Conference in Washington, D.C. last fall.

"Selection for membership in the Academy is one of the most prestigious honors in the field of nursing," said Academy President Catherine Gilliss, DNSc, RN, FAAN. "Academy Fellows are truly experts. The Academy Fellowship represents the nation's top nurse researchers, policymakers, scholars, executives, educators and practitioners."

Gaskins, a professor at the University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing, was selected based on her long-standing research, leadership and advocacy in the field of HIV/AIDS nursing care. Her scholarship in HIV care has consistently focused on disadvantaged and special populations with HIV/AIDS - women, older adults, the deaf community, migrant workers and people in rural areas. She was a founding board member of the local AIDS service organizations and was one of the early members of the Association of Nurses in AIDS care, where she served in many capacities. Gaskins received a B.S.N. from the VCU School of Nursing, an M.P.H. from the University of Pittsburgh and a D.S.N. from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Matthews, a professor of nursing at Shenandoah University, was selected based on her varied techniques to educate and guide master and doctoral students, her influence on grass root, state, national and international policy development, and her commitment to advancing the nursing profession through dedicated service to the American Nurses Association and as a member of the advisory board for the Online Journal of Issues in Nursing. She received the VCU 2008 Outstanding Nurse Alumnus Award and was recognized in 2010 by the Virginia Nurses Associations as its Outstanding Member of the Year. Matthews received her M.S.N. and B.S.N. from the VCU School of Nursing, her master's degree in business management from Troy State University of Alabama and her Ph.D. from George Mason University.

President Barack Obama announced his intent to nominate VCU Nursing alumna Marilyn Tavenner, M.H.A., B.S.N., RN, to serve as administrator of the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), an $820 billion federal agency that ensures health care coverage for 100 million Americans.

Tavenner has served as principal deputy administrator of CMS since February 2010. She is serving as acting administrator during her confirmation process.

Previously, Tavenner served as Virginia’s Secretary of Health and Human Resources in the administration of former Governor Tim Kaine. Before entering government service, she spent more than 25 years working at Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), where she rose through the ranks from a staff nursing position to become CEO of Johnston-Willis Hospital. She completed her HCA career as president of outpatient services at the national level. Tavenner has served as a board member of the American Hospital Association and as president of the Virginia Hospital Association.

She holds a bachelor’s degree in nursing and a master’s degree in health administration from VCU.
September 1962: Nine brand new Bachelor of Science nursing graduates and one “experienced” graduate of the Class of ’61 launched the 3 South & West Project on the 3rd floor of the old MCV Hospital. We intended to transform patient care from task-oriented, procedure-focused treatments to individualized, personalized nursing care – the kind of nursing care we had studied and learned in our nursing education at MCV.

Throughout our nursing education we were inspired by our instructors to analyze problems, understand the pathophysiology, identify needs, and be creative in planning and providing patient care. In our senior leadership course, we were challenged to design a patient care unit and plan the staffing to deliver quality patient care. With the support of faculty, we presented our idealistic proposal to the Nursing Director, Miss Lourie Pottinger, who agreed to hire all nine of us to “take over” MCV 3 South and West and implement
the plan, with Phyllis Chickos Patrick, N’61, as head nurse. Now, the fact that we agreed to cover ourselves for sick leave in return for the agreement that there would be no “pulling” of staff from 3 S&W to other hospital units may have sealed the deal.

This was back in the dark ages of hospitals when there were no established standards of treatment or nursing care. Physicians were very individualized in their practices and nurses were expected to follow doctors’ orders without question. There were no special care units, no intensive care units, no emergency carts or response teams, no unit dose medication system, no medication carts, and no disposable supplies. Catheters, syringes, needles, tubes – almost everything was returned to Central Supply for re-sterilization. We used a kardex to write the nursing care plan. RN’s set up the medication trays from a stock room and administered all medications. LPN’s, not yet trained to give medications, provided hands-on care, checked vital signs, changed dressings, and did treatments, assisted by nursing aides and orderlies (male nursing aides).

You need to know something about 3 S&W. It was a 39-bed surgical unit serving indigent patients, south wing with 21 open ward beds for male patients, and west wing with 17 open ward beds for female patients, as well as one private room. The open ward beds were separated by privacy curtains. Patients were admitted and treated by house staff physicians (interns and residents) from nine surgical specialties. Nursing practice was not specialized.

We felt that our bachelor’s education was more than “training.” Compared with the traditional diploma nursing training, the B.S. degree program at MCV provided in-depth education in chemistry, biology, biochemistry, anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology, psychology, sociology, comparative religion, and liberal arts courses. On 3 S&W, we intended to put what we had learned into practice by collaborating with each other and physicians to deliver comprehensive, high quality care and treatment.

So, here was a dream come true! We began by organizing nursing care teams and a staffing plan. All RN’s rotated shifts and had one weekend off per four weeks. When anyone called in sick, someone within the unit staff would substitute. No overtime was paid. For each shift the teams consisted of one RN, one LPN and several aides/orderlies for each wing. On weekdays for the day shift, there were usually four RN’s. On weekends there were two RN’s. On evenings and nights, the teams consisted of one RN, one LPN and several aides/orderlies.

It helped that we knew the LPN’s, aides and orderlies from our student days, and most of them were excited to be part of the project. There was a mood of cooperation among all of us. Shift report was done by the off-going RN team leader with the on-coming team. All team members were encouraged to ask questions and make suggestions. The RN team leader made rounds with the attending physicians to participate in the evaluation of the patients, and made rounds with her nursing team to keep everyone current on the patient care plans and to be directly involved in hands-on care. Day-to-day and shift-to-shift continuity of care was of prime importance.

Joyce Arritt Laine shared this memory: Frequently the RN’s on the night shift (11 p.m. - 7 a.m.) would have difficulty finding the orderly, who would often disappear to a corner and sleep. He often grumbled when asked to assist with a patient and was not a cooperative member of our “team.” After tolerating this behavior for several nights, she presented him with a written assignment, explaining expectations and specific times for tasks. She explained to him how important his work was to the team and to the patients. He took the written assignment as if it were a gift and with tears in his eyes, said, “No one ever told me I was important or why I was asked to do certain things. Thank you.” The outcome? – an orderly who was more cooperative and conscientious in his work.

The RN’s also met together to develop patient care plans for individuals who presented with unusual and complex situations. The nurses designed a comprehensive nursing care plan to address all issues pertinent to the patient’s healthy outcome.

So, what did we accomplish? This was not a research protocol and no data was collected. We experienced the satisfaction of being able to practice nursing as we had been taught and saw remarkable results. We gained confidence in ourselves as professional nurses and earned the respect of the house staff physicians. We heard through the grapevine that some of the private physicians wanted their patients admitted to 3 South and West where the nursing care was excellent.

We give much credit to the excellent LPN’s, aides and orderlies who worked with us and gave their best. I’m sure we demanded more from them than others in their past, but I know they felt the satisfaction of seeing their patients thrive, and they knew they were appreciated by all of us.

In April 1963, we received a letter from Dean Doris Yingling expressing her pride in us and what we were doing. “You will be pleased to know that we are achieving some national recognition because of what you are doing and on May 22, we will have representatives here from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Division of Nursing Resources, to learn more about the project and its developments.”

Of the original nine, four moved on to other pursuits and were replaced by several other classmates. Gaylia Hudgins was promoted to head nurse, several BSN’s were hired and we continued for another year. I was motivated by my experience with this project to pursue a master’s degree in nursing at Boston University the following year, and I returned to MCV Hospitals in a clinical nurse specialist position. Phyllis Chickos Patrick also obtained a master’s degree in nursing at the University of Maryland, and later taught at VCU.

Thanks to all who assisted in writing this article: Lynda Haywood, Sarah Drummond, Joyce Laine, Shirley Thomas, Gaylia Hudgins, Phyllis Patrick, and Earlene Canaan (N’63).
Stacy Brinkley, N’00, is a Nurse Practitioner with Riverside Health System.

Clarence Allen Burkett Jr., N’97, is retired from the U.S. Navy. His daughter, Emma Faye, was born on July 5, 2011.

Hyunkyung (Heidi) Choi, M.S.’08, has successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation at UNC Chapel Hill.

Lisa Stone Davis, N’87, is a Nurse Manager in General Psychiatry and CSU for the VCU Health System.

Elizabeth Echols, N’11, began working as an RN in the Cardiac Progressive Care Unit at Johns Hopkins Hospital in February.

Tammy O. Johnson, N’07, NP’09, is a FNP with Fishing Bay family Practice in Deltaville.

Vickie Bell Leming, RN, M.S.N., NP, N’79, married her college sweetheart Dr. Joseph Leming, former head of the Virginia Board of Medicine on April 30, 2011. Her daughter, Katie Wilt, graduated from the VCU School of Nursing’s Baccalaureate program in May 2011. Vickie’s father, Dr. Dewey H. Bell, former Chairman of the MCV Dept. of Prostodontics was present and so proud to watch his granddaughter, a third generation of MCV alumni, graduate before his death on Aug. 20, 2011.

Mary Jane Lyons, N’07, graduated from Walden University with a degree in leadership and management M.S.N. in October 2011.

Patricia Kinser, N’03, NP’04, successfully defended her dissertation at UVA. She works as a WHNP and an Assistant Professor at Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing.

Randall Mangrum, N’94, is Chief Operating Officer for Paradise Home Care, Inc.

Julie (Wash) McLeod, BS’11, is an RN at Bon Secours St. Mary’s Hospital. She got married on November 4, 2011!

Stacy (Bailey) McGowan, N’03, is an ACNP in Hospital Wound Care at Kaiser Permanente Hospital in San Clemente, CA.

Courtney Sloan, N’11, is working in the Richmond Health Department.

Ashley Hutchinson Stigall, N’04, is a CRNA with the VCU Health System.

Former Nursing Associate Professor Passes Away

Betty Joyce Moore, 85, of Richmond, passed away Saturday, November 19, 2011. She was preceded in death by her parents, H. Floyd and Eloise H. Moore. She was a native of Polkton, N.C., where her family owned an original King James land grant property. Betty retired from the Medical College of Virginia/ Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing, where she taught classes on human nutrition. Betty also taught in the MCV School of Dentistry in the 1980’s. Betty graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1946 with a degree in Home Economics. She later received a Masters Degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in human nutrition, and did her internship at New York Hospital/Columbia University. Betty worked at the University of Virginia Hospital as a dietician before she was employed as an associate professor at the MCV School of Nursing in 1963. She was a member of the American Dietetic Association and the Virginia Tech Alumni Association. She was involved with the planning and presentation of several Elderhostel seminars presented by Virginia Commonwealth University in the late 1980’s. Betty was a founding member of the Planters Society of The Church Hill Association. The Society focuses on preserving green spaces in the community. Betty was also an avid supporter of the Historic Richmond Foundation, where she served as a member of the Board of Trustees. In 1964, she moved into the then recently-restored Turner-Sinton house (ca. 1803) on Church Hill, one of the oldest homes in Richmond, and helped plan the first Church Hill Christmas Tour. Her home was on the Church Hill Christmas Tour a number of years as well as being open a number of times for the Virginia Historic Garden Week tour sponsored by the Garden Club of Virginia. Coordinated with Historic Richmond Foundation, Betty sponsored the Betty Joyce Moore Memorial Garden at historic Monumental Church in Richmond.

*Reprinted from the Richmond Times-Dispatch

In Memory

October 2011
Mrs. Claire H. Dovel, N’46
Mrs. Mildred H. Mathews, N’50

November 2011
Mrs. Virginia F. Shockley, N’52

December 2011
Ms. Debra H. Farley, N’93
Mrs. Gleda R. Baldini, N’41

January 2012
Ms. Sydni G. Connally, N’04
Mrs. Judith H. Pace, N’70
Ms. Aimee E. West, N’08

February 2012
Mrs. Deborah S. Matthews, N’77
Cabaniss Leadership Challenge Update

During the annual Cabaniss Society Dinner on Nov. 9 at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the VCU School of Nursing announced a new fundraising campaign called the Cabaniss Leadership Challenge, and three VCU School of Nursing faculty members were awarded the VCU Medallion for Endowed Faculty Honors as part of an investiture ceremony.

Cabaniss Leadership Challenge chair, Corinne Dorsey, N’54, announced that the group had already raised $1.3M in leadership commitments towards a $4M goal for endowed funds for student scholarships, endowed professorships for faculty, as well as an endowed chair for the dean’s position, to provide critical support for current and future generations of VCU Nursing leaders. She invited members of the Cabaniss Society, our most loyal annual donors, to consider making a multi-year commitment to help the School meet the Challenge.

In that spirit, the evening’s program included an investiture ceremony for three endowed professors, including Mary Jo Grap, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, Nursing Alumni Endowed Professor; Nancy L. McCain, D.S.N., RN, FAAN, Nursing Alumni Endowed Professor; and Debra E. Lyon, Ph.D., RN, FNP-BC, FNAP, FAAN, the inaugural Judith B. Collins and Joseph M. Teefey Distinguished Professor.

“We at VCU and the VCU School of Nursing are proud of these distinguished faculty members and grateful to our alumni and friends who made these endowed professorships possible,” said Dr. Sheldon Retchin, vice president of health sciences and CEO of VCU Health System. Dr. Retchin, assisted by Nancy Langston, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN, dean of the School of Nursing, presided over the investiture ceremony.

Endowed professorships are among the highest honors awarded to university faculty members. Those who are named to endowed professorships represent excellence in teaching, research, clinical practice and service.

Grap is a professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems and the administrative core director for the School’s Center for Biobehavioral Clinical Research (CBCR). McCain is a professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems and serves as co-director of the Biobehavioral Science Core of the CBCR. Lyon is a professor and chair of the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing and serves as co-director of the Biobehavioral Science Core of the CBCR.

Mary Jane (Powell) Cook, N ’52: Giving Back Blessings

Mary Jane Cook’s Aunt Laura was her inspiration for becoming a nurse. Following in her footsteps, Mrs. Cook began her career in the operating room at the MCV Hospital and later worked in surgery at the Richmond Eye Hospital. She and her late husband, Ray, have a longtime dedication to the School of Nursing and the VCU Health System and have given back to the School of Nursing for over 25 years. When asked why she gives, she said:

“I feel I have been blessed, and I learned from my parents to share what you have. You enjoy your blessings more when you share them with others. I am so proud of the School of Nursing. It gave me my career. You support your School!”

While serving on the MCV Alumni Association Nursing Division Board, Mrs. Cook jumped at the opportunity to join the Cabaniss Society by making a pledge to name the Heritage Room during the School of Nursing Building Campaign. She enjoys seeing friends at the annual Cabaniss Society dinner and has maintained her membership in this important group.

Above all, it is pride in her School of Nursing, and a commitment to the Medical Campus, which keeps her giving back. “My husband and I have all our appointments there. We go to the faculty dental practice. The hospital has such a high quality of service. Ray was in and out of the hospital frequently in his last months and the quality of the nursing care he received was exceptional. The care partners were so good, and many of them are nursing students, so the School of Nursing plays a role in that. I let the Dean know how good the care was. She will be a hard act to follow, she has done so much for the School,” said Mrs. Cook.

Mrs. Cook maintains a strong faith that God takes care of us. We thank you, Mrs. Cook, for passing along those blessings through your unfaltering support of the VCU School of Nursing.
When St. Philip School of Nursing alumna Sallie Smith starting buying AT&T stocks in 1966, she had no idea that what started as a $50 investment would eventually grow more than 10-fold.

Smith steadily reinvested dividends over the years until the stock price climbed to more than $400 per share.

"Because the price had gone up so much and the taxes would be so much, I decided to give it to the St. Philip Scholarship Fund," Smith said. "I didn’t tell any of my friends about it because I knew they would think I was crazy to give that much to a scholarship. I had a general idea of how much it was worth, but didn’t really know until I gave the stock in 1999."
It was worth $55,575.63 – the single largest gift to the St. Philip Scholarship Fund.

“At least I got a tax write-off for three years so it worked out all right,” she said, chuckling when hearing the gift’s value.

“I knew that a lot of scholarships were financed by people who were white,” she said, and “I always wanted to see some black students benefit from a scholarship fund.” Today, the St. Philip Scholarship Fund has grown to a corpus of more than $186,000 and it has helped many minority students achieve their dreams of becoming nurses.

Smith said she felt a need to give back because she received a partial scholarship that helped her attend college. Although she was born in Virginia, she grew up in Baltimore because her father, a fisherman who worked up and down the East Coast and in the Gulf, was injured and had to move the family to Baltimore since there weren’t any hospitals near where they lived in Kilmarnock that would admit black sailors, Smith said. After graduating in the top 10 of more than 300 students at her high school, she attended Morgan State University and majored in biology for three years before enrolling at St. Philip.

Smith said she had a lot of free time on her hands while other St. Philip students were taking science courses she had already completed at Morgan State. She recalled the only extra thing she had to do was take a public health nursing course like the other MCV nursing students.

“I would stop by the dining room, get my brown paper bag lunch and then go to visit patients in their homes in Richmond until about 4:30 or so and catch the bus back to the dorm,” she said. “Most of these people had no indoor plumbing even though they lived in the city.”

Because of her time at Morgan State, Smith said she was the only St. Philip graduate to earn a bachelor’s degree in nursing in 1956, while other graduates received a diploma.

After graduation, Smith went to live with her mother in Brooklyn, N.Y. and obtained a position at Kings County Hospital, where she worked as an assistant clinical instructor in obstetrics in their school of nursing. She also had a chance to get a degree from the school’s midwifery program.

“It wasn’t too tough because the St. Philip program was rigorous and our graduates had a high pass rate on certification exams,” Smith said. “For all of us at St. Philip – if you passed the state boards in Virginia you could be certified in any state. MCV did a really good job with its students.”

Smith was recruited into the Ready Reserve of the Air Force, devoting one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer, after she started working at Kings County. After a while, she decided to go into the Air Force full time.

Smith was stationed first in Indiana, followed by assignments at Goose Bay Air Force Base in Canada and flight nurse school in California. She then went to Scott Air Force Base in Illinois to serve as a flight nurse instructor. Afterward she obtained a master’s in maternal and child health at the University of Colorado and was assigned to Andrews Air Force Base as an instructor to help launch a school for nurse-midwives. After stints as a staff nurse-midwife at several military bases, including ones in Washington State, Germany and Shaw Air Force Base in S.C., she retired from the military in 1985.

Looking back, Smith never imagined being able to contribute such a large gift to her alma mater, especially since she recalled going window-shopping fresh out of nursing school because she didn’t have the money to buy anything. The sacrifice of juggling a small budget for bus fare, food, hospital meal tickets, two new dresses in the spring and two in the fall, as well as new uniforms, made a lasting impact.

“I was going to give it to a sorority I belonged to, but decided that the scholarship fund (St. Philip) was more worthwhile,” she said “I know how tight it is when you’re going to school.”

“**For all of us at St. Philip – if you passed the state boards in Virginia you could be certified in any state. MCV did a really good job with its students.**”

— Sallie Smith

Sallie Smith and her longtime friend, Marjorie Towns-Craig, class of ’56
Nancy Langston Named NLN Board Chair

The National League For Nursing (NLN) Foundation for Nursing Education elected Nancy Langston, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, dean and professor of the VCU School of Nursing, to fill an open position on its board of trustees.

Langston returns to the board to serve as its chair, 10 years after she was founding chair of the NLN Foundation during her tenure as NLN president, from 1999-2001. According to its original mission statement, the NLN Foundation was created "to raise, steward and distribute funds that promote excellence in nursing education to build a strong and diverse nursing workforce." In the ensuing decade, Langston’s commitment to the NLN and to the NLN Foundation remained strong.

“We have kept Nancy’s seat warm, and this is an ideal time for her to re-engage with the Foundation as it moves into a new phase of growth and productivity,” said NLN CEO Beverly Malone, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, who also serves as CEO of the NLN Foundation. “We are honored to have her rejoin the board in this leadership role.”

Looking ahead to her second time around as NLN Foundation chair, Langston identified as her primary goal the expansion of the board to include leaders in business and the non-profit world who can help secure the NLN Foundation’s future as a sustainable foundation that does not rely on the NLN (its parent organization) for support. She also aims to raise the foundation’s visibility among the community of nurse educators, in particular encouraging those approaching retirement to “keep the NLN Foundation in the forefront of their minds as they consider their legacies,” she said.

Mary Jo Grap Receives AACN Research Abstract Award and Patent for New Device

Mary Jo Grap, Ph.D., RN, ACNP, FAAN, Nursing Alumni Endowed Professor, has been selected to receive a 2012 American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) Research Abstract Award for being co-author of a poster abstract titled “Sedation as a mediator of the stress response during mechanical ventilation.” Grap will present her findings in May at the National Teaching Institute 2012 in Orlando, FL. NTI is the National Critical Care Conference sponsored by AACN. Grap’s abstract was part of the VCU School of Nursing’s NIH-funded SAVE study, “Sedation Effects in Mechanically Ventilated Patients.”

Grap was also part of a team of VCU inventors who were recently issued a U.S. Patent entitled, “Prevention of Ventilator Associated Pneumonia (VAP)” for a new device intended to reduce pneumonia in mechanically ventilated, critically ill patients.

Marian Altman Selected for AACN Circle of Excellence Award

Marian Altman, M.S., RN, CNS-BC, CCRN, ANP, a VCU School of Nursing adjunct instructor who teaches in the RN-BS program (NURS 367) and in the CNS concentration, has been selected to receive a Circle of Excellence Award from the American Association of Critical Care Nurses. AACN selects only 25 individuals to receive this award each year. The awards are presented to individuals who exemplify excellence in the care of acutely and critically ill patients and their families. Recipients will become part of the Circle of Excellence Society, which provides a rich network of experts who will continually generate innovation and excellence. Altman is a nurse clinician in the Digestive Health Unit at VCU Health System.
VCU Nursing Presents at SNRS Annual Conference

The VCU School of Nursing was well represented at the 2012 Southern Nursing Research Society annual conference in New Orleans, with 14 faculty members and 16 students in attendance. Most were presenting either posters or papers. A symposium on “Biobehavioral Measurement in Critical Care” presented by VCU Nursing’s Center for Biobehavioral Clinical Research drew strong attendance. Faculty members Mary Jo Grap, Ph.D., RN, ACNP, FAAN, Nursing Alumni Endowed Professor, and Alison Montpetit, RN, Ph.D., assistant professor, as well as Ph.D. candidate Ann Hamilton and recent Ph.D. graduates Mamoona Arif and Michelle Frazelle presented at the symposium. The conference was highlighted by a dinner event with faculty and students from VCU, the University of Virginia and the University of North Carolina Schools of Nursing providing great opportunities for developing research collaborations.

VCU Nursing Faculty and Student Receive March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Award

Two VCU Nursing faculty members and one student were named winners of the March of Dimes Inaugural Central Virginia Nurse of the Year Award. The March of Dimes recognized nurses in nearly 20 fields of nursing specialties at a gala held in fall 2011 at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Nurse of the Year winners and specialties include: Karen Mace, an Accelerated B.S. student, Student Nurse Rising Star of the Year; Jacqueline McGrath, Ph.D., RN, FNAP, FAAN, associate professor, Neonatal Nurse of the Year; and Melanie Binshtok, (M.S./N.P. ’10), RN, B.S.N., adjunct instructor, Cardiac Nurse of the Year. — In addition, Dorothy Crowder, VCU Nursing associate professor emerita, received the Education Nurse of the Year Award.

Nancy Jallo Receives March of Dimes Leadership Award

Nancy Jallo, Ph.D., RNC, FNP-BC, CNS, assistant professor, received the 2011 Outstanding Leadership in Program Award from the Virginia Chapter of the March of Dimes. This award is given annually to members demonstrating many years of active support to the Chapter. Jallo joined the Chapter Program Services Committee in 2004, where she served on the grants subcommittee and played a critical role in developing the chapter’s Virginia Prematurity Task Force Summary published in November 2004. She worked diligently to ensure that the Chapter’s mission activities were well planned and implemented. Jallo played a major role in orienting program and board volunteers on mission goals, as well as ensuring that all volunteers knew the key elements of the work.

R.K. Elswick Co-Authors Award-Winning Research Article

R.K. Elswick, Ph.D., director of Biostatistics and Data Services, is co-author of a research article selected for the Judson C. Hickey Scientific Writing Award. The article, entitled “Randomized, prospective, clinical evaluation of prosthodontics modalities for mandibular implant overdenture treatment,” was published in the July 2011 issue of The Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry.
Alison Montpetit, Ph.D., RN, is an Assistant Professor in the Adult Health and Nursing Systems Department. She earned a Ph.D. and M.S.N from the University of South Florida and a B.S.N. from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Prior to her current appointment, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the VCU School of Nursing since 2008. Her research focus includes “Exhaled Biomarkers of Pulmonary Infection in the Critically Ill” and “Airway and Secretion Clearance Therapies in Critical Care.”

Carley Lovell, M.S.N., M.A., WHNP-BC, RN, has moved from an adjunct instructor position to a full-time Collateral Faculty Position in the Family and Community Health Nursing Department, where she will be focused on clinical education and coordination in the undergraduate and master’s programs. She earned an M.S.N. in women’s health and a B.S.N. from the VCU School of Nursing, a master’s degree in educational psychology from New York University and a bachelor’s degree in psychology, philosophy and women’s studies from Randolph-Macon College.

Brenda Ayala is an Administrative Professional in the Clinical Learning Center. She received an A.A.S. degree in nursing from John Tyler Community College. She comes to VCU Nursing from Columbia University Medical Center, where she served as Residency Manager.

Erin Carr is the Pre-licensure Academic Adviser in the Office of Enrollment and Student Services. She received a B.S. degree in mass communications from Virginia Tech and a M.S. degree in education from VCU. She formerly served as a Graduate Assistant in the VCU Athletic Office.

Ciera Davidson is an Administrative Professional in the Family and Community Health Nursing Department. She received a B.S. degree in business from George Mason University. Ciera comes to VCU Nursing from George Mason University, where she served as a Fiscal Technician.

Michael Davis is the Project Director of Exhaled Breath Research. He obtained a B.S. degree in biomedical science from Lynchburg College and an A.A.S. degree in respiratory therapy from Central Virginia Community College. He most recently served as a Clinical Research Coordinator at the University of Virginia School of Medicine.

Fonda Neal is the Program Administrator in the Office of Academic Programs. She received a B.S. degree in office automation management and a Post-Bachelor's Certificate in human resources management from VCU. She was formerly the Residency Coordinator for the VCUHS Department of Surgery.
Ph.D. Dissertation Defenses

Avis Allen, Ph.D. '11
"Biobehavioral Relationships in Persons on Hemodialysis"

Brenda Baker, Ph.D. '11
"Understanding Mothers of Late Preterm Infants"

Kathy Baker, Ph.D. '11
"The Determinants of a Nurse's Discretionary Decision to Respond to Situations that Place Patients at Risk for Safety Events but Requires a Response that is Beyond the Scope of Nursing Practice"

Sharon Cone, Ph.D. '11
"Response to and Recovery from Endotracheal Suctioning in Preterm Infants Using Routine Versus Four Handed Care"

Linda Eastham, Ph.D. '11
"Living with HIV: Views through the Blog"

Michelle Frazelle, Ph.D. '11
"Healthcare-Acquired Infection Risk and Toothbrush Contamination in the ICU"

Lois Phillips-Pula, Ph.D. '11
"Caring for the Preterm Infant Post NICU Discharge: A Mother's Perspective"

Get connected today!

The School of Nursing has several options to help you stay up-to-date on our activities.

- Likes us on Facebook at the Real VCU School of Nursing page.
- Join the School of Nursing subgroup of Virginia Commonwealth University on Linkedin to network and discuss nursing topics with fellow alumni, faculty, staff and current students.
- Send your email address to soncomm@vcu.edu so we can share special announcements and other timely news.
Upcoming VCU Nursing Events

May 10
5:30 p.m. - VCU Nursing’s Celebration of Preceptors
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Education and Library Complex- Auditorium and Azalea Room
For more information, contact Kelly Gotschalk at (804) 828-2993.

May 11
7:30 p.m. - VCU Nursing Recognition Ceremony
Stuart C. Siegel Center

May 12
10 a.m. - VCU Commencement
Richmond Coliseum
*Times and locations are subject to change. Please contact the School of Nursing at (804) 828-0724 to confirm prior to day of event.

September 2012
Stay tuned for an announcement on a special event to observe the 50th anniversary of the closing of St. Philip.