MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: A GAME-CHANGER RETIRES
Connections SPRING 2013

VCU Nursing students staffed tables offering health and wellness information at a ribbon cutting held recently for the new Hillside Resource Center in Richmond’s south side. Nursing students will promote health and wellness at the center, including screenings, checkups and nutrition information, with students getting hands-on experience as part of their clinicals.

On the cover: Official portrait of Dr. Nancy F. Langston as painted by Loryn Brazier.

Connections is the official magazine of the VCU School of Nursing and is published twice yearly. Comments and letters may be directed to the editors.

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Graduate students in NURS 611 Advance Practice Primary Care Procedures course learn minor surgical procedures, which include skin biopsy, incision and drainage of abscesses, as well as reading chest X-rays. Here, students practice suturing techniques using pigs’ feet.
The Dean's Message - A Fond Farewell

I knew the day would come when I would be writing this, my last "Dean's Message," as your dean. When I came to VCU in 1991, I anticipated that I would write it in a mere 10 years – but I blinked and it has now become 22 years. How time has a way of flying by – some days feel as if I arrived only a short while ago and others feel as if that first day was a remote and far distant past. However, this is a far more difficult message for me to compose than I have ever anticipated. I cannot seem to find the words that I think would be appropriate to express the depth of my gratitude and the heights of my joy for all the generous support and kindness that you as individuals and groups have given to me through the years. Together we have accomplished much. Our School and VCU have transformed during the 22 years; many people have made significant contributions to this transformation. We have done it as a community of scholars and professionals; we could never have achieved the enrollment growth, the national stature in research or reputation for our clinical work without having created partnerships throughout our university, our city and our state. And we have transformed the work of our school while remaining steadfast in our mission to improve the quality of care of patients.

My life has been blessed and my career deeply enriched and expanded because of the opportunities that have come my way through the years as your dean. Few people of the world have such privilege – I am honored and humbled by what we have accomplished together here at VCU. There is no doubt in my mind that the legacy of this School of Nursing will continue to be as rich in the upcoming decades as it has been during its first 120 years.

As I transition to the next stage of my life, I will be informed and guided by the greatness of the experiences and colleagueship I have had during this time with you as dean. I am looking forward to the change of pace that I will have and the opportunity to travel and select those meaningful activities in which I will be involved. I say not "good-bye" but rather, "until" we meet in new associations for new ventures – and adventures.”

With my sincere best wishes and my abiding gratitude to each of you,

Nancy F. Langston, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, ANEF
Dean and Professor, VCU School of Nursing
Executive Director of Academic Nursing,
VCU Health System
Dear School of Nursing Alumni and Friends,

Virginia Commonwealth University is a place of high expectations. Graduates are expected to be leaders in their fields and in their communities. Faculty members are expected to be nationally renowned scholars and researchers. We expect our university to be one of America’s most prolific research universities with an enduring focus on student success at every level and an unending commitment to excellence in every way.

No one has done more to advance those high standards than Nancy Langston. As she nears retirement as one of our nation’s preeminent leaders in nursing education, we pause to reflect on her remarkable career and celebrate the legacy she has built for the School of Nursing at VCU. Simply put, it is a legacy of profound national excellence that has elevated the entire university and has made a difference for every alumnus and alumna of the School.

In her 22 years as dean, Nancy grew the enrollment in Nursing dramatically, doubling it to more than 900 students, driven largely by the enhancement of the RN to BS program. When her tenure began, VCU graduated about 60 nursing students with bachelor of science degrees. Today, it is nearly three times that many, along with more than 250 graduate students. Nearly every hospital in Virginia is staffed with VCU-educated nurses, which means our health care is in good hands for years to come.

Many of those nurses were educated in a state-of-the-art learning space. More than anyone, Nancy is responsible for the School of Nursing’s beautiful 47,000-sq. ft. building, which opened in 2007 and includes the Clinical Learning Center, one of the most advanced and comprehensive clinical simulation centers on the Eastern Seaboard.

In keeping with VCU’s place as a national research university, Nancy grew the research enterprise in the School of Nursing to a consistent Top 25 ranking nationally. And there is no better representative of VCU’s commitment to community outreach and engagement – as outlined in the Quest for Distinction strategic plan—than our School of Nursing, which promotes health and wellness in places like Mosby Court and the Richmond Health Department, and as a leader in the university’s Carver Project.

Nancy has been a tremendously effective fundraiser, and friend and advocate for alumni—including from the St. Philip School of Nursing—and has served on the board of countless national nursing organizations. And her extraordinary service lasted a little longer than expected. You may not know that she intended to retire four years ago, but as VCU’s new president, I asked her to help me through the transition. I am forever grateful that she did, and that I had the opportunity to work closely with her for these few years.

As we welcome Dr. Jean Giddens as the next dean of the School of Nursing, I promise you that we will continue to build on the strong foundation that Nancy began here. Dr. Giddens is another game-changer, an undisputed national leader in nursing education and research, someone who will accelerate VCU’s progress as a Top 50 national research university.

A prominent university needs a prominent School of Nursing. That is Nancy Langston’s legacy at VCU. And we are grateful.

Sincerely,
Michael Rao
President, Virginia Commonwealth University and VCU Health System
Mission Accomplished: A Game-Changer Retires

By Katherine Schutt

When Nancy Langston, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, ANEF, accepted the position as dean of Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Nursing in 1991, she planned to stay for only 10 years, anticipating another career move before she retired. Twenty-two years later, Langston is set to retire this summer, having ushered the school to new heights of achievement while more than doubling its enrollment and overseeing a move to a 47,000-square-foot state-of-the-science education building.

“When Nancy Langston first arrived as dean of the VCU School of Nursing more than two decades ago, it was a good school that offered superb clinical training to its students,” said Sheldon M. Retchin, M.D., M.S.P.H., senior vice president for health sciences at
VCU and CEO of the VCU Health System. “However, during her tenure as dean, she has taken it from ‘good’ to ‘great’ by recruiting an outstanding faculty, building its research base and enhancing the school’s academic programs.”

Under her visionary and collaborative leadership, the VCU School of Nursing has become one of the top 25 nursing schools in the nation based on research funding from the National Institutes of Health, is ranked in the top 10 percent of nursing graduate schools nationwide by U.S. News & World Report and serves as a stellar model for community outreach.

“We focused on the tripartite mission – teaching, research and service – and showed that you can do them all and they don’t have to compete one with the other,” Langston said.

Janet Younger, Ph.D., RN (B.S. ’67/N; M.S. ’72/N), who retired as associate dean for academic programs in 2009 after a 40-year career at the VCU School of Nursing, said Langston initiated a new era upon arriving at the school, creating an atmosphere of opportunity and possibility for faculty and students.

“Dean Langston balanced the need for the school to be prominent in research while at the same time maintaining notably excellent academic programs that got incredible support from accreditors,” Younger said. “She basically rewarded people who did the job well in either or both areas. What you did mattered. She made it matter.”

Once Langston initiated a new focus on scholarship in the late 1990s, research funding grew from $300,000 to as high as $2.8 million, catapulting the nursing school into the upper echelons of NIH-funded research.

“Whatever we need for research, she finds a way to get it done and provide the support that’s needed,” said Mary Jo Grap, Ph.D., RN, ACNP, FAAN, Nursing Alumni Endowed Professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, who began her career at VCU in 1984. “After Nancy arrived, we really started focusing on what our research needed to be, what our impact could be on the national arena, and she was instrumental in moving that agenda forward for the school. That’s the reason we are where we are today.”

Langston also participated on the leadership team that created a strong partnership between nurse education and nursing services at the VCU Medical Center – a partnership cited as a national model.
to be emulated during the hospital’s Magnet designation, the most prestigious honor awarded for nursing excellence in national and international health care.

She supported faculty and students as they returned to the community, reinvigorating a legacy of local outreach established by the school in the early 1900s. During her tenure, the School of Nursing helped establish a free clinic for women and children at the Fan Free Clinic, as well as a new resource center in the Mosby community, providing access to health care for underserved and vulnerable populations.

Working tirelessly to ensure diversity at the school, Langston brought alumnae from the St. Philip School of Nursing, a separate nursing school established for African-American women at the Medical College of Virginia from 1920 to 1962, into the VCU fold by hosting joint reunions.

“She has been wonderful for us and to us,” said Arlethia Rogers, RN (Diploma ’60/St.P; B.S. ’96/N), a 1960 St. Philip graduate. “She wasn’t readily received at first because of the history, but she came to our reunion events and alumni meetings and even joined our alumni association. She never gave up, and she persevered. She made sure that we became a part of VCU.”

Langston placed equal importance on engaging MCV alumni, traveling from North Carolina to attend an MCV alumni-sponsored fundraising event before she even assumed her duties as dean.

“She took the trouble to come and meet us,” recalled alumna Corinne Dorsey (Diploma ’54/N; B.S. ’65/N), former executive director for the Virginia Board of Nursing. “She recognized that, in addition to faculty and students, the alumni also made the school what it was.”

To ensure the school’s future, Langston worked with a range of alumni and friends to more than double the school’s annual fundraising totals from less than $500,000 in 1991 to more than $1.5 million in 2012. Under her leadership, the VCU School of Nursing raised more than $12 million during the Campaign for VCU, exceeding its $10 million goal. In addition to providing $3 million in private support for the school’s $17 million state-of-the-science building, which opened in 2007, these funds endowed student scholarships and professorships, providing critical support for current and future generations of VCU nursing leaders.

Outside of VCU, Langston has served on the Fan Free Clinic board of directors, on the disaster management planning committee of the Richmond Chapter of the American Red Cross and on the Richmond Forum board of directors. At the national level, she has served on numerous committees of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and as president of the National League for Nursing, where, true to form, she helped unite two separate groups to create a stronger whole.

“We have about 1,200 schools of nursing in our organization,” National League for Nursing CEO Beverly Malone, Ph.D., RN, said. “Nancy was the president of this organization during a challenging time when there was a dividing line between associate degree programs and baccalaureate degree programs. Nancy brought those groups together under one umbrella. Everyone was afraid they would lose their identity during the reorganization, and it was Nancy standing at the helm saying we would come through together.”

Langston currently is chairperson of the board of trustees of the National League for Nursing Foundation for Nursing Education. The recipient of numerous awards, Langston was honored with the Nancy Vance Award, the Virginia Nurses Association’s highest honor for nursing excellence, in fall 2011. She was inducted as a Fellow by the American Academy of Nursing in 2001 and an Academy of Nursing Education Fellow by the National League for Nursing in 2012.

“I believe Nancy has had an effect that extends beyond the nursing profession and into the overall health care system,” Malone said. “She is a culture builder. She comes into a system and it is transformed to be more receptive and more cohesive, to not accept mediocrity but to stretch for excellence. I think the students who have the privilege to grow and learn in those systems are better for it, as are the faculty, as are the staff.”

“— Nancy Langston

“We focused on the tripartite mission — teaching, research and service — and showed that you can do them all and they don’t have to compete one with the other.”

— Nancy Langston

[Image: A group of women, presumably alumnae or staff from VCU School of Nursing, posing together.]
Jean Giddens Named Dean of VCU School of Nursing

Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, a nationally recognized expert in nursing education, curricula and evaluation, has been named dean of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing effective July 1.

Giddens currently serves as professor and executive dean of the College of Nursing at the University of New Mexico. The author of numerous journal articles, nursing textbooks and electronic media in nursing education, she is widely recognized for creating innovative teaching and learning models in nursing sciences, including The Neighborhood, a web-based virtual community used to enhance integrative approaches in nursing education.

“I am very pleased to welcome Jean Giddens to Virginia Commonwealth University as she personifies everything that makes VCU one of the nation’s best and rapidly rising research universities,” said Michael Rao, president of VCU and the VCU Health System. “Her commitments to research, education, service and student success are exemplary, and will be an ideal addition to a highly energized team committed to supporting a world-class faculty and student body.”

Giddens is the principal investigator of an Academic Progression in Nursing grant funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The grant involves the development of a statewide nursing education plan for New Mexico, featuring university and community college partnerships. Giddens is an executive nurse fellow of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

“This is an exciting time to be a student, faculty and alumnus as the School of Nursing welcomes a new dean and celebrates its 120th year of nursing excellence,” said Sheldon Retchin, M.D., senior vice president for VCU Health Sciences and CEO of the VCU Health System. “Dr. Giddens brings a national reputation as a thought leader. She has the strategic vision and enthusiasm to build on the school’s outstanding tradition and achieve even greater heights of excellence in nursing education.”

Giddens earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Kansas, a master’s degree in nursing from the University of Texas at El Paso and a Ph.D. in education and human resource studies from Colorado State University.

She succeeds Nancy F. Langston, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, ANEF, who will retire this summer, leaving a legacy of significant growth in enrollment, programs, research and community outreach. Langston served as dean for 22 years.

“Our nation needs nurses who are deeply committed to caring for their fellow human beings through leading-edge practice and improving the human experience through cutting-edge research and education. VCU’s School of Nursing is nationally known for preparing alumni to be role-models in their discipline and their community,” Rao said. “I am grateful to Dean Langston for building this reputation during her remarkable 22-year tenure, and I look forward to working closely with Dean Giddens as she takes VCU Nursing to even greater heights nationally.”
The VCU School of Nursing is celebrating its 120th anniversary this year. As part of this observance, the School is holding a gala on May 30 to honor 120 alumni and faculty as Visionary Leaders, to celebrate the successful completion of the Cabaniss Leadership Challenge, to recognize Nancy F. Langston, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, ANEF, for her remarkable 22-year career as dean and professor, and to introduce Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, who begins her term as dean on June 30. An article about the gala will appear in the fall 2013 edition of Connections.

As the School marks 120 years of nursing excellence, it is poised to build on a profound legacy steeped in many firsts that led more than 11,000 alumni to pursue a nursing education within its walls. Founded by Sadie Health Cabaniss as Virginia Hospital Training School in 1893, the VCU School of Nursing has eight other schools that are a part of its history. These include Old Dominion Hospital Training School (1895-1903), Memorial Hospital Training School (1903-1913), Virginia City Hospital Training School (1913-19220), Medical College of Virginia School of Nursing (1913-1968), School of Social Work and Public Health Nursing (1917-1943), School of Nursing, Richmond Division of the College of William and Mary (1926-1969) which were combined to become part of the Richmond Professional Institute in 1939; St. Philip School of Nursing (1920-1962); and Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing (1968-present).

The history of the first 100 years is chronicled in the book “A Proud Heritage: 100 Years of Nursing Education,” written by Betsy Bampton (B.S. `60). The book is available in the Special Collections & Archives at Tompkins-McCaw Library and on the library’s website.

The Heritage Room located on the first floor of the VCU School of Nursing is another medium that reflects the history of the School. Located adjacent to the Office of Enrollment and Student Services, the room is an historical exhibit of nursing uniforms, yearbooks, photographs, and other artifacts that celebrate the rich history of the School from its beginnings to its present. A Heritage Room Committee of current and former VCU School of Nursing Faculty, as well as distinguished alumni, oversaw its creation. The exhibit is supported by an endowed fund.

A timeline and images on pages 9 and 10 highlight some of the milestones achieved during the School of Nursing’s 120 years. The legacy continues as the School builds on its tradition of excellence and continues to scale new heights in carrying out its mission to improve health and the human condition through nursing research, education and service. •
1893
The University College of Medicine opens the Virginia Hospital Training School for Nurses.

1895
The Old Dominion Hospital Training School for Nurses opens under the auspices of the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) and the leadership of Sadie Heath Cabaniss.

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1917
The Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health opens and offers instruction in public health for graduated nurses and social workers.

1920
MCV establishes the St. Philip School of Nursing to educate African American women to provide nursing care for patients in the newly opened St. Philip Hospital.

1928
Cabaniss Hall, a dormitory and classroom building for nursing, opens on Broad Street. The Richmond Division of the College of William and Mary, formerly the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health, initiates a five-year course in nursing with Stuart Circle Hospital leading to a bachelor's degree in nursing and health.

1943
The National League for Nursing Education grants national accreditation to the MCV and St. Philip nursing programs.

1943
The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corp program is implemented at the MCV and St. Philip schools of nursing.

1953
The MCV School of Nursing admits its first students to the four-year degree program.

1958
A two-year program leading to an Associate in Science degree in nursing is established (the associate degree program is discontinued in 1965).

1960
The baccalaureate program is accredited by the National League of Nursing.
1962
The last class of students graduate from the St. Philip School of Nursing and the school is closed.

1968
MCV and RPI merge to form Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).

1966
The MCV School of Nursing’s proposal to initiate Virginia’s first master’s program is approved and students are admitted the following year. The first nursing lectureship is held, now known as the Mahoney-Hamner Lectureship.

1972
The first male students are accepted into the nursing program.

1973
The Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate program gains approval and the first class begins in 1974.

1976
The Gamma Omega Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the national nursing honor society, is created. A year later, 86 charter members are inducted.

2007
The new School of Nursing building opens, offering 47,000 square feet of modern classroom, clinical learning, office and research space.

2009
VCU School of Nursing appoints the first Nursing Alumni Professors.

2013
VCU School of Nursing celebrates 120 years of nursing excellence.

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VCU School of Nursing is ranked in the top 20 Schools of Nursing in NIH funding for the first time.

Scenes from the Fall 2012 Recognition Ceremony

The VCU School of Nursing recognized more than 180 graduating students at its 2012 Fall Recognition Ceremony. Nursing awards were presented to the following degree candidates:

- **Allison Douthat** – Mayme B. Wilson Lacey Award
- **Mike Duckwall** – Yingling Senior Achievement Award
- **Jeff Robbins** – Mabel E. Montgomery Award
- **Jennifer Cunningham** – Marguerite Nicholson Award
- **Jeanette Dupree** – RN Award
- **Anne Moore** – Temple Memorial Award
- **Dudley “Kent” Norman** – Temple Memorial Award
- **Claudia Bouhaidar** – Martha Borlick Research Award

Doctoral candidates and their dissertations included the following:

- **Marian L. Baxter**
  “Being Certain: Moral Distress in Critical Care Nurses”

- **Claudia Hakme Bouhaidar**
  “Text Messaging as Adjunct to a Community-based Weight Management Program”

- **Janet Kay Herr**
  “Heart Failure Symptom Clusters and Functional Status”

- **Valentina Sage Lucas**
  “Psychological Stress and Wound Healing”
Judith Lewis Receives March of Dimes Lifetime Achievement Award

Genetics and women’s health expert. International nursing leader. Mentor. Textbook author. These are just a few of the many hats worn by Judith A. Lewis, Ph.D., RN, WHNP-BC, FAAN, VCU School of Nursing professor emerita, during her longtime career in nursing. Her extensive nursing commitment led to her being recognized last year with a prestigious award. Lewis was named the recipient of the 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Central Virginia Chapter of the March of Dimes. The award was presented at the March of Dimes Annual Nurse of the Year Awards Gala last fall.

“I truly was honored to receive this award, which acknowledged my long-term commitment to mentoring my colleagues in nursing from the time they are students through their professional careers. I continue to ask my colleagues to ‘pay it forward’ so that we as a profession continue to support the development and success of the next generation,” Lewis said. “I am grateful to my colleague Dona Dei who nominated me for this award and to those on the selection committee who saw fit to create this award to honor me.”

A native of Massachusetts, Lewis began her secondary education at Brandeis University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and American literature. She continued her education, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from Boston University, a Master of Science in nursing from the University of California at San Francisco, and then returned to Brandeis University to earn a doctorate in health policy and social welfare from the Heller School. Lewis also obtained a post-master’s certificate in online teaching from UCLA Extension and is a certified women’s health nurse practitioner. In addition, Lewis has completed postdoctoral education in genetics through the Web-Based Genetics Institute at Cincinnati Children’s Medical Center and the Summer Genetics Institute sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research, and Georgetown University.

Actively involved in nursing education, Lewis has lectured nationally and internationally on public policy in genetics and the integration of genetics into nursing education and practice. She served as chair of the VCU School of Nursing’s former Women’s Maternal Child Nursing Department for five years. Lewis currently serves as an adjunct faculty member in the VCU School of Nursing and in VCU’s Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies.

Lewis has served in leadership roles for several professional associations. She served as president of the International Society of Nurses in Genetics, and as treasurer of the National Academies of Practice. She was appointed by Donna Shalala to the Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Genetic Testing, and served as a member for the entire length of the committee’s tenure. She also served as a member of the Steering Committee for the Essential Nursing Competencies and Curricula Guidelines for Genetics and Genomics. Lewis has been a journal editor for publications such as the Southern Online Journal of Nursing Research, the Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing, and Issues in Interdisciplinary Care. She is a member the American Academy of Nursing’s Expert Panel in Genetics, the Academy’s Expert Panel in Women’s Health, the Editorial Board of MCN: The American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing, and the March of Dimes National Nurse Advisory Council.

In addition to her March of Dimes Lifetime Achievement Award, Lewis has received AWHONN’s Distinguished Professional Service Award, the National Academies of Practice’s Nicholas Andrew Cummings Annual Award, and the ISONG Founder’s Award for Service.

In 2012, Lewis co-authored with Carole A. Kenner, D.N.S., RNC, FAAN, dean and professor of the School of Nursing at Northeastern University, the textbook Genetics and Genomics for Nursing by Prentice Hall. The textbook covers the essential principles of genetics as well as outlines the ethical, legal, social, and public policy implications to provide safe and effective care in today’s “genomic era.”

“I continue to ask my colleagues to ‘pay it forward’ so that we as a profession continue to support the development and success of the next generation.”

— Judith A. Lewis

Judith Lewis

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three-time VCU Nursing alumna Sherry Williams Fox, RN, CNRN (B.S. ’80, M.S. ’90, Ph.D. ’02), has come full circle working with brain tumor patients after her first encounter more than 30 years ago. A neuroscience nursing expert, Fox is vice president of the Bon Secours Cancer Institute and program director of the Cullather Brain Tumor Quality of Life Center. She was recruited by Bon Secours to set up and run the Cullather center, as well as see patients due to her extensive experience as a neuroscience nurse, as well as her teaching and research contributions to the discipline.
Her foundation in health care began at the age of 15, when she served as a nurse’s aid at a rural hospital in Southwestern Virginia. She then went on Roanoke Memorial Hospital, where she first experienced working with brain tumor patients, including a friend she had met at church camp.

“I developed my passion at that point and I went on to spend many years at MCV, UVA and now Bon Secour still passionate about the needs of brain tumor patients and their families,” Fox said.

After graduating as an RN from the Roanoke Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, Fox relocated to Richmond to earn her B.S. at VCU. She went to work at the VCU Health System, where she served as a neuroscience nurse with renowned clinicians and researchers for 22 years. Like many nursing alumni, Fox balanced a full-time job and raising two sons while going back to school.

“The dedication of the faculty and the flexibility with scheduling were wonderful facets of life at VCU, so much so that I decided to continue on and pursue my master’s and Ph.D. degrees,” Fox said.

Fox said Nancy McCain, D.S.N., RN, FAAN, Nursing Alumni Endowed Professor, inspired her while she worked toward her doctorate. McCain would encourage students to create things that have not yet been pursued, and contribute to the knowledge base in nursing. It was obvious she saw Fox’s potential from the start.

“Sherry’s leadership and scholarship skills were already well developed when she entered the doctoral program, having been a highly successful nurse manager and president of the American Association for Neuroscience Nurses,” McCain said. “Her potential for greater leadership accomplishments and outstanding contributions to the science was exceptional. And, indeed, she has clearly made ever-expansive contributions to the discipline!”

While working at VCUHS, Fox also spent time as an adjunct faculty member at the VCU School of Nursing. She served four years as an assistant professor at the University of Virginia before the Bon Secours opportunity came along. Fox said she was honored to accept her current position, especially since she had a history with the Cullather family, having cared for Jack Cullather’s son Chris while he was being treated at VCUHS for a brain tumor. He died at the age of 19.

Having dedicating much of her 30-plus year career to brain tumor patients and their families, Fox said she has greatly benefitted from her experience as a student at the VCU School of Nursing.

“The fact that the faculty is heavily comprised of strong clinicians that balance didactic knowledge with the real world is invaluable,” Fox said. “As a result of my education, I have the wherewithal to navigate the world and my career.”

Fox has authored numerous articles in professional journals and has written a number of book chapters and specialized publications. She has also lectured extensively and has served in leadership roles on various national advisory boards and committees, including president of the American Association for Neuroscience Nurses. She was the first nurse on the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group Brain Tumor Committee sponsored by the National Cancer Institute and the Society of Neuro-Oncology Board of Directors, as well as other national boards.

Fox has won many awards for her neuroscience nursing efforts, including the Sister Elizabeth Durney Award for Care of the Dying in 2008 from Bon Secours Richmond and the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses National Award for Leadership in Neuroscience Nursing In 1997. She was also honored as a Neuroscience Master Mentor through the Neuroscience Nursing Foundation in 2005.

Fox encourages students to reach out for all kinds of experiences, begin developing a vision and make sure every step puts them closer to that goal.

“I know I got lucky but that’s not the case for everyone,” Fox said. “Look at your work as a career, not a job. There are so many opportunities out there for a well-educated nurse.” •
A Letter from The Alumni Chair

It’s not surprising that this magazine goes by the name, “Connections.” As VCU nurses we are all connected by shared experiences in the class and clinical setting, having received instruction from many of the same long-serving faculty and under the senior dean at VCU, and—though the buildings have changed over the years, the ties to the MCV campus of VCU are the same.

When I meet nurses I always ask what school they attended. More often than not VCU is included within their resume, either as at the baccalaureate level, or as the source of their graduate, doctoral and research education. As Virginia’s premier nursing institution, VCU maintains one of the best university nursing programs in the nation and serves as a hub of knowledge that links thousands of nursing students and graduates together. Graduation does not just send us out into the real world to earn a salary but inducts us into a family that is part of our life-long identity.

Presently, there are several initiatives underway to honor our connection to the VCU School of Nursing. One, the Cabaniss Leadership Challenge, aims to enhance scholarships for students, support professorships for faculty, and provide for major endowment funds that will advance nursing research and help to ensure the school’s legacy of leadership is nearing its $4 million goal. This fundraising challenge also serves to honor Dean Nancy Langston who, after 22 years of service, will retire in June 2013. Second, for those of us who were instructed by Dr. Anne H. Boyle, a scholarship is being established in her honor and is two-thirds of the way towards its fundraising goal. For information on how you can support the CLC or the Boyle scholarship, please contact Kelly Gotschalk at kjgotschalk@vcu.edu or (804) 828-2993.

Finally, the MCV Alumni Association and the VCU School of Nursing Alumni Division are embarking on an initiative to strengthen our nursing alumni membership. We want to hear from you and re-engage with you. We want to celebrate your accomplishments and champion your future endeavors. We want your alumni division to be all about YOU. It does not matter how long ago you graduated, where you live, or whether you are working or retired. You are a VCU Nurse, and we are all connected. Please join us!

James L. Jenkins, Jr., RN, BS/N (’07)
Chair, VCU School of Nursing Alumni Division
Bernardine Clarke, M.S. ’75, is retired from the VCU School of Nursing and living in the Pacific Northwest.

Everdean Tisdale Collins, B.S. ’88, has retired from the U.S. Army Reserve Nurse Corps. She obtained certification as an occupational health nurse-specialist and obtained a master’s degree in health sciences from Touro University International. She is currently employed at McDonald Army Health Center, Ft. Eustis, as the chief of Occupational Health.

Heidi Anne Diamond, B.S. ’74, is the CEO of Wellness ReDefined in Edmonton, Alberta.

Angela Marie Ellica, B.S.’12, is an RN at the Eisenhower Medical Center Luci Curci Center in Rancho Mirage, CA.

Captain Elizabeth Hoettels, USAF, B.S. ’05, was recently recognized for Outstanding Achievement in Nursing Force Development by the Air Force Medical Service.

Diane Kraynak, N ’99, M.S. ’00, is a pediatric nurse practitioner in Pediatric Dialysis at Levine Children’s Hospital in Charlotte, NC. In March 2012 she had an essay published in a nursing anthology called Wasn’t Strong Like This When I Started Out: True Stories of Becoming a Nurse.

Karen Mace, B.S. ’11, is an RN in Telemetry at St. Anthony’s Hospital in Lakewood, CO.

Lauren Palmer, B.S. ’10, is an RN in Labor and Delivery at CJW Medical Center on the Johnston Willis Campus.

Adrienne Wass, B.S. ’12, is an RN at Maryview Medical Center. She recently got engaged to her long-term boyfriend Joshua White. A March 2014 wedding is planned.

In Memory

September 2012
Mrs. Evelyn F. Moore (B.S. ’48/N)
Mrs. Margaret Frasier Faust (Cert. ’55/N)
Mrs. Louise R. O’Bannon (B.S. ’46/N)

October 2012
Mrs. Nancy O. Rice (B.S. ’55/N)
Mrs. Carmen H. Drewry (B.S. ’33/N)
Mrs. Carol C. Boswell (B.S. ’79/N)
Ms. Ruth E. Sanger (R.N. ‘42/N)

November 2012
Miss Julia D. Watkins (Diploma ’44/N)
Ms. Florence Greey (B.S. ’42/N)

January 2013
Mrs. Sylvia W. Fritz (Diploma ’53/N)
Mrs. Adelene M. Haden (B.S. ’49/N)
Mrs. Mary P. Strough (Cert. ’38/N)
Mrs. Donna M. Thomas (B.S. ’83/N)
VCU Nursing Philanthropy
by James Parrish, Director of Development

... the very core of the art of professional nursing – the commitment to humanity, the commitment to others less healthy or less fortunate due to poverty, illness, or other human conditions – is the same driving force for philanthropy, which is by definition an act of goodwill toward others, a concern for others, expressed through generosity.

– Dr. Joyce Fitzpatrick, Former Dean, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University

By the time you read this we will be closing in on the May 30th VCU Nursing Gala where we intend to celebrate the School’s 120th anniversary, honor 120 Visionary Leaders, say a fond farewell to outgoing dean Dr. Nancy Langston, who has provided visionary leadership to our School for 22 years, and welcome Dr. Jean Giddens, who will begin her term as dean on June 30.

At the May 30th gala we will be celebrating many successes, including this one: to date, our Cabaniss Leadership Challenge has raised more than $3.7 million, enough to gain approval from the VCU Board of Visitors to name our building in honor of Sadie Heath Cabaniss, our founding director and nursing pioneer, and we are poised to surpass our $4 million goal.

While there are many people to thank for achieving this success, one person stands out – Corinne Dorsey, Class of 1954. Corinne initiated the idea to name the building, accepted Dr. Sheldon Retchin’s challenge to raise $4 million and has chaired our Cabaniss Leadership Challenge committee, encouraging and prodding and convincing us that “pigs can fly.” (You’ll have to ask her about that one.)

The VCU School of Nursing is an amazing school with a proud heritage and bright future thanks to its past, current and future visionary leaders. Thank you to each and every person who has invested in the School’s mission to improve health and the human condition through leadership in nursing research, education and service.

From the bottom of our hearts we thank you for engaging in the wonderful act of philanthropy, which comes from the Greek word philanthrōpos and literally means love of human beings.

In June of 2012, Anne Boyle, Ph.D., RN, CNE, retired from the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. Boyle joined the School of Nursing in 1977 and taught 12 different courses over the years, rising to the rank of assistant professor. Through her work she endeared herself to countless students, many of whom have decided to give back to the School in the form of a scholarship fund to honor Boyle.

Chantel Skipper, B.S. ’07, said “As a past scholarship recipient, I was given the opportunity to attend college without worrying about money. I was able to focus on my work and give back to the School through activities such as the Student Nurses’ Association which taught me a great deal about leadership. I think it is important to increase scholarship support to provide more students such opportunities. Rosa Parks once said, ‘memories of our lives, of our works and our deeds will continue in others,’ therefore this scholarship is a great way to honor all of the great work Dr. Anne Boyle accomplished at VCU and to invest in future students.”

Jessica Thies, N ’07, had this to share: “I’m so happy to be contributing to the School of Nursing to create the Anne Boyle Scholarship fund! Dr. Boyle is a wise woman who is passionate about nursing. I learned so much from her my senior year. My hope is that this scholarship enables nursing students to continue their education and Dr. Boyle’s tradition of lifelong learning.”

Thus far, $6,625 has been raised in gifts and pledges. We welcome more gifts and pledges to reach our goal of $10,000 to make the scholarship permanent. If you would like more information on how to be part of this exciting project, please contact Kelly Gotschalk, director of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement, at (804) 828-2993 or via email at kigotschalk@vcu.edu.
The annual Sadie Heath Cabaniss Society Dinner held last fall featured special recognition of several new Distinguished Cabaniss Society members, as well as the announcement of a new program to help raise funds for recruiting and retaining the brightest clinical faculty to the VCU School of Nursing.

More than 150 alumni, faculty, students and friends of the VCU School of Nursing attended the dinner at the Jefferson Hotel. Guest speakers included Sheldon Retchin, M.D., M.S.P.H., chief executive officer of the VCU Health System and vice president for Health Sciences; Nancy Langston, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, ANEF, dean of the VCU School of Nursing; and Corinne Dorsey (Diploma ’54, B.S. ’65), chair of the Cabaniss Leadership Challenge. VCU President Michael Rao, Ph.D., offered welcome remarks at a pre-dinner reception.

Langston presented the Cabaniss Cup to new Distinguished Cabaniss Society members, who are alumni and friends that donate $1,000 or more to the School of Nursing during the term of one fiscal year. The Cabaniss Cup is a miniature pewter loving cup modeled after one given to VCU Nursing founder Sadie Heath Cabaniss by the Class of 1901. This year’s recipients are Stephanie Ferguson, Ph.D. (M.S. ’87/N), director of the Community Nursing Organization at the School of Nursing; Mary Harris (B.S. ’66/N); and Mary Jane Cook, (B.S. ’52/N); as well as Kenneth Lucas (M.D. ’71) and his wife Ellen Lucas (B.S. ’71/N).

The Cabaniss dinner also included a special announcement to support the school’s fund raising efforts. Barbara H. Dunn, RN (B.S. ’70/N, Ph.D. ’84/SW), Judith B. Collins, M.S. RNC, FAAN (NP ’75) and her husband Joseph M. Teefey, announced the launch of the Clinical Scholars Program, the newest initiative of the Cabaniss Leadership Challenge.

“Our goal is to establish several Clinical Scholars funds to support VCU School of Nursing clinical faculty in the same way that endowed professorships support research faculty,” Collins said.

The first Clinical Scholars award will honor Emily C. “Mimi” Bennett (B.S. ’72/N, NP ’76). An alumna of the School of Nursing, Bennett retired on June 30, 2012 after 36 years as a nurse practitioner, serving the greater Richmond community. She touched the lives of thousands of patients and their families, nursing students and colleagues during her career as a nurse practitioner and educator.

To make a donation to the Clinical Scholars Program in honor of Mimi Bennett, to establish your own named fund or to donate to any existing School of Nursing endowment fund, please contact James Parrish, director of development, at (804) 828-5172.
The VCU Schools of Nursing and Dentistry have partnered with Virginia Premier Health Plan Inc. to establish an innovative model of health care that is expected to enhance dental and physical health outcomes among vulnerable populations.

In a pilot program that integrates dental and physical health services, the schools have established a nurse practitioner-managed health center to identify and address significant health issues among patients who are receiving dental care at the VCU School of Dentistry. The center, named the VCU Neighborhood Partners Practice, is the first of its kind at a university in Virginia. This practice focuses primarily on Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc. participants.

Using oral visits as the entry point, a nurse practitioner in collaboration with a physician will conduct comprehensive health exams at the center, as well as offer health promotion education. The goal is to refer patients back to their primary care physician (PCP) to address chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, cancer and respiratory illness. For patients who do not engage with their PCP, center staff will help connect them to their health plan’s case managers and/or physician network to assist in building the relationship.

“We are pleased that Virginia Premier is a part of the Schools of Nursing and Dentistry’s efforts to provide health promotion and disease prevention services for Richmond’s most vulnerable and underserved populations,” said Nancy Langston, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, ANEF, dean and professor, VCU School of Nursing. “This interdisciplinary approach to health care is the latest example of VCU’s commitment to becoming a national model of community engagement. We’re setting a benchmark for developing innovative, patient-centered programs to address health care disparities of the 21st century.”

Studies have supported a possible relationship between periodontal disease and various medical conditions, such as coronary artery disease, stroke, pre-term births and low birth rate. “The dental practice model is based on risk assessment and prevention of oral diseases with an emphasis on patient education,” said David C. Sarrett, D.M.D., M.S., dean of the VCU School of Dentistry. “Using visits to the dentist as an on-ramp to identify and manage other diseases makes a lot of sense. We are very excited and pleased to be part of this program and greatly appreciate the support of Virginia Premier. Dean Langston and I have been talking about the value of such a program for several years and now it is a reality.”

The VCU Neighborhood Partners Practice is located in the Wood Memorial Building of the School of Dentistry building complex, where two exam rooms have been renovated and outfitted with new equipment. Judith Parker-Falzoi, M.S., B.S.N., FNP-BC, a family nurse practitioner and assistant professor at the School of Nursing, is the clinical director of the center. The collaborating physician is Dr. Steven Crossman of VCU’s Department of Family Medicine.

Future plans may include offering services to participants of other health plans. The center is also being considered as a possible training site for students and for research collaborations between VCU health and social sciences programs. For more information, visit www.npp.vcu.edu.
Debra Lyon Named Associate Dean of Research

VCU Nursing three-time alumna Debra Lyon, Ph.D., RN, FNP-BC, FNAP, FAAN, has been named associate dean for Research at the VCU School of Nursing.

Lyon, the Judith B. Collins and Joseph M. Teefey Distinguished Professor, previously served as chair of the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing since spring 2010. In addition to serving as an administrator and professor, she has conducted NIH-funded research in areas that include symptom management in women with breast cancer and complementary and alternative therapies for symptom management.

Lyon received her B.S. (’94), M.S. (’96), and Ph.D. (’87) degrees from the VCU School of Nursing and served as a post-doctoral fellow at the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health.

A national search is underway to fill the department chair position. Jeanne Walter, Ph.D., RN, FAAMA, assistant professor, will serve as interim chair.

Nancy Jallo Wins Grand Challenges Exploration Grant

Nancy Jallo, Ph.D., RNC, FNP-BC, WHNP-BC, CNS, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, is part of a VCU interdisciplinary team that is a Grand Challenges Explorations winner, an initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The interdisciplinary team from VCU includes medical experts in HIV and community health and anthropologists and linguists who are experts on Malian culture and health care delivery. Jallo is an expert on maternal care and volunteers with Physicians for Peace, which is working on a joint project to develop a blood center in Mali. With the $100,000 grant, researchers from the VCU schools of Medicine, Nursing, and World Studies in the VCU College of Humanities and Sciences, will work with two community partners in Ségou, Mali, to pursue an innovative global health and development research project, titled “Reducing Harmful Inflammation and Attenuating Immune System Deterioration in HIV-Infected Malian Women.”

VCU School of Nursing Among Top Graduate Programs in the Nation

The VCU School of Nursing is still among the top 10% of graduate nursing programs nationwide according to the 2014 edition of U.S. News and World Report’s Best Graduate Schools. In addition to Nursing, VCU’s graduate schools of the Arts, Allied Health Professions, Social Work and Education were also among the nation’s best, with Nurse Anesthesia and Sculpture programs ranked no. 1.

“These rankings of our graduate programs reinforce the world-class reputation of our faculty and students,” said VCU President Michael Rao. “They also reflect the academic excellence of VCU as we take our place among the Top 50 public research universities.”
VCU School of Nursing researchers have discovered that guided imagery significantly decreases stress, fatigue, pain and depression in women with fibromyalgia. The study abstract, “Effects of Guided Imagery on Biobehavioral Factors in Women with Fibromyalgia,” published online in the Journal of Behavioral Medicine, also found significant improvement in self-efficacy, the belief that one can cope regardless of the challenge. Individuals with a high level of self-efficacy seemed better able to manage symptoms that accompany a chronic illness.

The findings could help the estimated 5 million to 10 million Americans who suffer from the chronic disorder that causes muscle pain and fatigue. Sufferers have “tender points” that hurt when pressure is placed on them and symptoms often include anxiety or depression.

“The guided imagery intervention is low-cost, simple to use and easily accessible,” said principal investigator and lead author Victoria Menzies, R.N., Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. “This study provides support for the use of guided imagery as an adjunctive approach to clinical management of the challenging symptoms of fibromyalgia.”

Menzies collaborated with VCU School of Nursing colleagues Debra E. Lyon, Ph.D., associate dean of Research and co-director of the Biobehavioral Sciences Core of the Center for Biobehavioral Clinical Research; R.K. Elswick, Jr., Ph.D., professor, director of the Data Services and Analysis Core of the Center for Biobehavioral Clinical Research; Nancy L. McCain, D.S.N., Nursing Alumni Distinguished Professor and co-director of the Biobehavioral Sciences Core of the Center for Biobehavioral Clinical Research; and D. Patricia Gray, Ph.D., associate professor and chair, Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems.

The full study will be published in an upcoming edition of the Journal of Behavioral Medicine. It was funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research, part of the National Institutes of Health.

Diana Cartagena and Suzanne Ameringer Win Sigma Theta Tau Grant

Diana Cartagena, a Ph.D. candidate, and Suzanne Ameringer, Ph.D., RN, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, won the Gamma Omega Nurse Researcher/Nurse Clinician Partnership Grant award presented by Sigma Theta Tau. The award aims to advance nursing knowledge through the development of evidence-based practice in the clinical setting. As a clinician and doctoral student, Cartagena is seeking to identify important maternal feeding practices and other multidimensional factors that drive infant overfeeding in Latina mothers and identify factors associated with overweight infants.

Students Win Poster Awards at Southern Nursing Research Society Conference

The VCU School of Nursing won two of the student poster awards at the Southern Nursing Research Society annual conference, held recently in Little Rock, Arkansas. Kristin Filler, a Ph.D. candidate, RN, (B.S. ’09) won the Top Student Poster Award with her entry, titled “Comparing Fatigue Scores across Localized Radiation Treatment Modalities for Non-Metastatic Prostate Cancer.”

Marian Baxter (Ph.D. ’12) won a third place award for her poster, titled “Being Certain: Moral Distress in Critical Care Nurses,” co-authored by Patty Gray, chair of the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. VCU Nursing was well represented at SNRS with many faculty and student poster presentations.

Candace Burton Receives Research Award for Project Connect

Candace Burton, Ph.D., RN, FNE, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, received a $30,000 research award through the VCU Institute for Women’s Health for an interdisciplinary project. Her co-investigator is Kellie Carlyle Palazzolo, Ph.D., M.P.H. assistant professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Health in the School of Medicine. The award, funded by the Virginia Department of Health and Futures Without Violence, supports an evaluation study of Project Connect Training among reproductive health nurses, staff and clinicians, and home visitor staff throughout Virginia.
New VCU School of Nursing Staff

Alison Crehore has joined the Office of Academic Programs as program administrator. She most recently served as campus student employment coordinator at Sweetbriar College. Crehore earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Liberty University and is currently working on an M.S. degree in student affairs in higher education from Colorado State University.

Samantha Frazier-Powell has joined the Office of Finance and Human Resources as an administrative specialist. She most recently served as the administrative assistant to the assistant dean of John Tyler Community College’s Nursing Program.

Bryan K. Royal has joined the Office of Systems and Academic and Administrative Technology as an application analyst. He most recently served as LAN administrator at Virginia Union University. Royal earned a bachelor’s degree in information systems and decision sciences from Virginia State University.

Erica Stubblefield has joined the Office of Enrollment and Student Services as pre-admission advisor. Stubblefield most recently served as a graduate assistant in OESS. She earned a B.S. degree in education from Regent University and is currently pursuing a M.Ed. in counseling education from VCU.

LaTashia Williams has joined the Office of Research as grants process administrator. She most recently worked at the Department of Pathology, where she was involved in preparing and submitting grants. Williams earned a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts and sciences from Virginia Tech.
Connections

Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Nursing
P.O. Box 980567
Richmond, Virginia 23298-0567

Upcoming VCU Nursing Events

May 30, 6 p.m.
VCU Nursing Gala: 120 Years, 120 Visionary Leaders
The Jefferson Hotel

October 9, 2013
SAVE THE DATE!
VCU Nursing Building Naming Ceremony, Mahoney-Hamner Lecture, Cabaniss Dinner

Nursing Students Without Borders (NSWB) took their annual international service trip to
Guatemala in January to help improve the health and lifestyle of indigenous Mayans. The
students were joined by (3rd from the right kneeling in the first row) Fay Parpart, M.S., RN, ANP-
BS, AACRN, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing.

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