New DNP Program Focuses on Quality and Safety
New degree focuses on quality and safety

Cover Feature: VCU launches Doctor of Nursing Practice program

Suzanne Ameringer
Faculty Feature: Suzanne Ameringer excels as faculty member, researcher and mentor

Christina Wilson
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Alumna Wilsie Bishop
Alumni Feature: Wilsie Bishop defies the odds in journey to senior leadership role

ON THE COVER: Shelly Smith (far left), DNP, assistant professor and director of the DNP program, is joined by DNP students Pam Bernardo, Laura Reitmeier and Tamara Broadnax.

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

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The School of Nursing held a vesting ceremony Sept. 14 for members of the Accelerated B.S. Class of 2016 to mark their start in the nursing profession. The vesting ceremony has replaced the school’s white coat ceremony to be in alignment with the “bare below the elbows” movement in the health care environment.
Hello Alumni and Friends.

I am often asked by my family members and personal friends who have known me a long time if I like living in Richmond, if VCU is a “good” university to work at, and if I enjoy being a Dean of a nursing school. The answer to all three of these questions is an enthusiastic and unequivocal YES! I have been here just over 2 ½ years and truly love this city, this university and especially the students, staff, faculty, and our very dedicated alumni affiliated with the VCU School of Nursing.

Higher education has significantly changed over the last several years, giving way to a paradigm shift in how we approach our work. This has required individuals throughout our organization to respond to change. One of the reasons I love leading the VCU School of Nursing is because our organization has thrived with the changes we have been making.

This past year alone, our faculty and staff have responded to the changing needs of the nursing workforce by implementing a new DNP program, adding quality and safety science as a focus of study in our Ph.D. program, and completing significant curriculum revisions to the Nursing and Administrative Leadership concentration in the master’s program and the RN-B.S. option in the undergraduate program.

Our faculty and staff have embraced new modalities of teaching for enhanced student engagement through the remodeling of classroom space to accommodate active learning and by greater incorporation of technology for classroom and online student experiences. Our school created the new Langston Center for Quality, Safety and Innovation in partnership with VCU Health. Our Office of Research has developed and implemented new organizational processes to enhance research and grant support for our faculty and students. We have created a service center allowing us to generate revenue streams through our research laboratory and the Clinical Learning Center. This work, combined with the increased and strategic activity of our Development Office, represents important steps toward resource sustainability. We have also had the great fortune to recruit many talented faculty and staff to the School of Nursing, including our new Associate Dean for Academic Programs, Dr. Debra Barksdale, who joined our school on January 4! You will read about many of these important accomplishments in this edition of Connections.

As we begin 2016, the School of Nursing is undergoing the nursing accreditation process with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) by writing a self-study report and planning for a site visit March 30 through April 1. This process creates the opportunity to showcase the many amazing accomplishments of our school and underscores the true commitment of our faculty, staff and students to this organization. It is truly an honor and privilege to lead this remarkable School of Nursing during this time of transformation!

Jean Giddens,
Ph.D., RN, FAAN
Professor and Dean
Doris B. Yingling Endowed Chair
DNP students attend class in one of the school’s new smart classrooms during the fall 2015 on-campus session.
New Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree focuses on quality and safety

With the increasing demand for more doctorally-prepared nurses and the rising complexity of patient care, the VCU School of Nursing launched a Doctor of Nursing Practice program this fall to meet current and future challenges in the health care system.

The program was designed with a focus on quality and safety, becoming the first DNP program in Virginia of this nature.

“Our DNP program's quality and safety focus is in line with the Triple Aim; students focus on patient-centered, population-based and cost effective care,” said Shelly Smith, DNP, APRN-BC, director of the DNP program.

Another distinction is the program’s partnership with the school’s new Langston Center for Quality, Safety and Innovation. The center is affiliated with VCU Health, a nationally recognized health care system with more than 50 doctorally-prepared nurses, magnet certification and top safety and quality award recognition in 2014 by the American Hospital Association.

“Degree candidates will have the opportunity to participate in the Langston Center’s programs and projects, giving them access to the latest advances in health care quality and safety,” said Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, dean and professor, the Doris B. Yingling Endowed Chair.

The quality and safety focus was a major deciding factor, according to students.

“I have been a nurse for over 30 years and had not planned to return to school until I read about VCU’s DNP program that emphasizes patient safety and quality improvement, which is an ongoing goal in my nursing practice with Veterans health care,” said Pam Bernardo, M.S.N., ACNS-BC, quality manager, Home-Based Primary Care at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond. “I also felt this was a great opportunity to be exposed to the DNP program partnership with the Langston Center for Quality, Safety and Innovation.”

Bernardo is among the first cohort of 15 DNP students, which includes nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and nurse administrators, representing academic as well as community health systems.

“I like the diversity of the class,” said Tamara Broadnax, RN, NEA-BC (M.S.'07/N), director of Telemedicine at VCU Health. “We have students from a variety of backgrounds, and I am enjoying learning from classmates who practice in different areas.”

Among her classmates are a husband and wife who are both nurse practitioners at VCU Health Community Memorial Hospital in South Hill, Virginia.
Robert Powell, M.S.N., APRN, FNP-C, works in Orthopedic Services, and his wife Peggie Powell, M.S.N., APRN, FNP-C, works in pain management. Both were drawn to the DNP program’s quality and safety focus, as well as the format geared toward working nurses. It consists of mostly online courses with visits to campus three times per year. Although the program can be completed full time, the first cohort consists of all part-time students, taking 39 credits over five semesters.

“I looked at other programs, but I liked that this one was more clinically-based with quality and safety,” Robert said. “I also liked the fact that it’s affiliated with who I work for.”

“It’s convenient that I don’t have to set aside time to be in a class - we have due dates that allow time to get things done,” Peggie said.

“With us being in a rural area, it makes a huge difference with most of the program being online,” Robert added.

The DNP program’s format is similar to that of the school’s Ph.D. program, which is also aligned with the Langston Center for students who want to pursue research in quality and safety. The difference is the deliverables, Smith said.

“We like to think of it as two sides of the same coin,” she said. “The Ph.D. is generating new knowledge and the DNP is applying that knowledge into practice.”

Another common element among the programs is the faculty, as some teach in both programs.

“Our faculty consists of DNP and Ph.D. prepared nurses as well as content experts in statistics and informatics; this broad perspective enriches our curriculum. We believe looking at the same problem through different lenses enhances perspective,” Smith said.

In addition to Smith, faculty teaching in the DNP program include Marianne Baernholdt, Ph.D., M.P.H., RN, FAAN, professor and director of the Langston Center for Quality, Safety and Innovation; Carla Nye, DNP, RN, CPNP-PC, CNE, clinical associate professor and director of the Clinical Learning Center; Leroy Thacker II, Ph.D., associate professor and biostatistician; Beth Elias, Ph.D., M.S., associate professor; Nancy Jallo, Ph.D., RNC, FNP-BC, WHNP-BC,
Giddens said she is pleased with the collaboration that has brought the DNP program to fruition. The concept of a clinically based doctorate was on her radar when she first arrived as dean in 2013.

“Fortunately the faculty did not need any convincing; they had already had preliminary discussions and were literally waiting for the ‘green light’ to formally proceed,” she said.

A DNP task force was formed and the curriculum was developed with a focus on quality and safety to set the school apart from the many DNP programs nationwide. The program went through an extensive review and approval process, including the school’s faculty and the university, with final approval by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia in May.

“We created a curriculum of connected learning that is dynamic and interactive, building a sense of community amongst our students,” Nye said. “Using technology such as Blackboard and Wordpress, we utilize a digital environment that creates strong faculty-student relationships as well as fosters team projects.”

Laura Pulliam Reitmeier, RN, ACNS-BC (B.S.’06/N; M.S.’12/N), a nurse clinician in acute care medicine at VCU Health, is excited about the opportunity to obtain a practice-oriented terminal degree.

“My passion and talents lie in direct practice and I believe this program will further my ability to translate the best evidence to the bedside,” she said.

She found the on-campus session at the beginning of the semester to be very helpful.

“I particularly enjoyed the three-day immersion which allowed us to put names to faces, have an opportunity to bond over meals and team building events, and have an open question and answer dialogue among peers and professors,” she said.

As an administrator, Broadnax said she wanted to advance to the next level in her practice.

“I chose VCU because I enjoyed my experience while studying for my master’s and felt it was the best fit for my doctoral studies,” she said.

The DNP program is anticipating an enrollment of 20 additional students next fall, Smith said. Applications are now being accepted and the deadline is March 1.

“We’re proud of this innovative program and look forward to preparing more nurses to become expert practitioners prepared to translate research into evidence-based practice,” Smith said.
Ever since she was a child, Suzanne Ameringer, Ph.D., RN, knew she wanted to be a nurse.

“As far back as I can remember, I liked the idea of helping people,” said the Baltimore, Maryland native.

Ameringer, associate professor at the VCU School of Nursing, has devoted herself to helping others at the bedside, in the classroom and in the research laboratory.

Her 35-year nursing career reflects a dedication to helping adolescents and young adults with chronic and life-threatening conditions improve management of their symptoms.

It all started when she was hired as a nurse at Johns Hopkins Hospital after obtaining a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Towson University in Towson, Maryland. While at Johns Hopkins, she worked in the pediatric neurology and neurosurgery unit, where she cared for children with brain and other neurologic cancers. After a brief hiatus from working while her children were young, Ameringer re-entered the workforce at Sinai Hospital, a mid-sized comprehensive care teaching hospital in Baltimore, where she cared for children with acute and chronic illnesses. She noticed a substantial number of children had sickle cell anemia.

“I spent a lot of time sitting with patients – had a lot of conversations about the challenge of having sickle cell as an adolescent,” she said. “I realized how little we had to offer them to help with this terribly painful disease. I always wanted to make life better for them.”

After moving to Wisconsin in the 1990s, Ameringer decided to go back to school. She obtained a M.S.N. and later a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she focused on pain research in children with cancer.

“My goal was to one day transfer that research to individuals with sickle cell,” she said, noting that Madison didn’t have the sickle cell population needed for a study.
Ameringer moved to Richmond in 2007 to accept an assistant professor position at the VCU School of Nursing in the heart of a metropolitan area that had the patient population for her research. She said she was excited about being able to teach and conduct research in such a collaborative environment.

“People say it takes time to build your network when you come into an institution, but I have to say it happened very quickly here,” Ameringer said.

She currently teaches in both the undergraduate and graduate programs and serves as a doctoral student advisor and as a dissertation chairperson.

Ameringer recently received a $250,000 R21 grant from the National Institutes of Health for a study that is the first to examine improved approaches to self-managing exercises in adolescents and young adults with sickle cell anemia. She is joined on the study by R.K. Elswick, Jr., Ph.D., professor and biostatistician in the School of Nursing. Team members also include India Sisler, M.D., assistant professor in the Division of Hematology and Oncology at Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU; Edmund Acevedo, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Health and Human Performance in the VCU School of Education; and Wally Smith, professor in the VCU School of Medicine and scientific director of the VCU Center on Health Disparities.

Ameringer has conducted past studies on pain management in adolescents and young adults with chronic and life-threatening conditions, working with mentors who include former faculty member Rita Pickler, Ph.D., and retired faculty members Nancy McCain, Ph.D., and Mary Jo Grap, Ph.D., as well as current colleague R.K. Elswick.

Elswick said Ameringer has made a significant impact on the School of Nursing in a brief amount of time.

“In addition to having an impressive research portfolio that includes both a P20 and P30 project, participation on a national consortium of pediatric oncology researchers and a recently funded R21, Suzanne is well respected in the classroom for her outstanding teaching and is highly sought as a Ph.D. mentor,” Elswick said. “She has also served the faculty well in several senior leadership roles on key committees.”

Ameringer said she has been collaborating for more than five years with colleagues nationwide on a consortium to study symptoms in adolescents with cancer. The consortium has published many articles and completed an invention disclosure this summer for an iPad app designed for use by adolescents and young adults to create a graphic image of their symptoms.

“This could be used as a communication tool for their doctor to give them a quick snapshot of what the patient is really feeling,” Ameringer said.

The recipient of numerous awards, the most recent being a writing award from the Association of Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurses for an article published in the January/February 2014 issue of JOPON, Ameringer served three years on the National Cancer Institute’s Pediatric Leukemia and Lymphoma Steering Committee as the quality of life expert. She said she is grateful for the support she receives in all of her roles.

“The mentorship and the collaboration within the school, university and health system has been fabulous,” she said. “I couldn’t do what I do now without everyone being so supportive.”
Christina Wilson, RN, WHNP-BC (M.S.’13), realized she wanted to be a nurse while attending Nottoway High School in Crewe, Virginia after recalling a health scare she experienced at the age of nine.

She spent about 14 hours in a hospital to have cyst removal surgery.

“Doctors initially thought it was cancer,” Wilson said, pointing to a scar just below her neck. “They had to remove it because it would have blocked my airway.”

The entire experience prompted the thought of nursing as a career.

“I was thinking about the way the nurses treated me and my family,” she said. “I wanted to make that kind of impact on patients as well.”

Since then, Wilson, a Ph.D. student at the VCU School of Nursing, has spent her nursing career trying to make a difference in the lives of women. Her interest in women’s health began while she pursued a B.S. in nursing at the UVA School of Nursing. Tara Albrecht, Ph.D., RN, ACNP-BC, assistant professor at VCU, taught Wilson at UVA and introduced her to patients with gynecologic cancer while she worked at the UVA Health System.

After completing her bachelor’s degree, Wilson obtained a position as a registered nurse in acute oncology at VCU Health in 2011. She then enrolled in the master’s degree program, women’s health nurse practitioner concentration at the VCU School of Nursing and realized her true calling in a specialized aspect of women’s health.

“I had patients with body issues—they refused to look in a mirror because they didn’t look how they used to,” Wilson said. “I started looking for literature on how women with gynecologic cancer can improve their body image, but there wasn’t anything.”

Wilson said she shared her concern with Jo Robins, Ph.D., RN, ANP-BC, AHN-C, FAANP, associate professor and director of the Ph.D. program at the VCU School of Nursing, who advised her to “make a difference in a clinical setting” or “try to impact patients with research.” Heeding that advice, Wilson decided to pursue a Ph.D. in nursing at VCU, which would allow her to explore the biobehavioral aspects of gynecologic cancer.

“The passion for making a difference in women experiencing gynecologic cancer was sparked when she was a master’s program and women’s health nurse practitioner student, and since becoming a doctoral student she has wholeheartedly immersed herself in developing the knowledge and skills that will ensure that she will contribute significantly to health and health outcomes in this population,” Robins said.

Wilson recently worked with Deborah McGuire, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, associate dean of research and the Florence E. Elliott Professor, and Leigh Small, Ph.D., RN, CPNP-PC, FNAP, FAANP, FAAN, associate professor and chair of the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems.
to prepare an abstract for a poster on “Body Image, Sexual Dysfunction and Sexuality as Predictors of Physical and Psychological Issues Related to Gynecologic Cancer.” The poster, which was based on a review she did while in Small’s Ph.D. class, was selected for presentation on Feb. 25 at the Southern Nursing Research Society annual conference. It will be Wilson’s first at a major nursing conference.

McGuire described Wilson as “the ideal Ph.D. student” and said she is “bright, motivated and incredibly enthusiastic.”

“She embraces learning and professional experiences with gusto, soaks up opportunities like a sponge and constantly seeks to improve her knowledge and skills,” McGuire said. “It’s a pleasure to work with her because she is exploring some important clinical research ideas and is very responsive to mentoring and support. Notably, she is highly appreciative of opportunities and recognizes the excellent environment we provide here to our Ph.D. students.”

Wilson said the opportunity to work with mentors like McGuire, Albrecht and Robins is among the factors that drew her to the Ph.D. program.

“The VCU School of Nursing has numerous outstanding faculty who could mentor me in this area of research,” she said. “I also liked the proximity of the school, its highly ranked graduate program and the convenient online format for the Ph.D. program.”

The recipient of the Waverly Cole Scholarship for the past two years, Wilson works as a VCU adjunct faculty member, teaching clinical aspects of two undergraduate nursing courses, while pursuing her Ph.D. full time. She also helps recruit and follow up with patients involved in Albrecht’s pilot project, “Physical Activity as a Self-management Approach to Improve Health Outcomes in Acute Myeloid Leukemia.”

A member of the Oncology Nursing Society, Virginia Council of Nurse Practitioners and SNRS, Wilson volunteers in her spare time at Crossover Clinic in Henrico County twice per month.

“This opportunity allows me to see women and promote cervical cancer screening,” she said. “My hope is to help prevent or detect it early.”

At press time, Wilson learned that she was selected for the 2016-2018 Jonas Nurse Leader Scholars Program of the Jonas Center for Nursing and Veterans Healthcare. As a Jonas Scholar, she will receive a $10,000 scholarship, matched by the VCU School of Nursing, to support her doctoral studies.
As a female whose career began before the equal educational and employment opportunities afforded by Title IX were a reality, Wilsie Paulette Bishop, D.P.A. (B.S.’70/N; M.S.’78/N), said she found herself “either at or breaking the proverbial glass ceiling on many occasions.”

In 1978, she joined East Tennessee State University, where she’s held numerous positions, including vice president for administration and chief operating officer, dean of the College of Public and Allied Health, department chair in the College of Nursing, assistant vice president for academic affairs and associate vice president for health affairs.

Today, as ETSU’s vice president for health affairs and university chief operating officer, a role she’s held since 2007, Bishop is one of only two nurses in the country to head an academic medical center. Bishop oversees the five health science colleges of the ETSU Academic Health Sciences Center, which serve more than 4,000 students in 35 programs at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level and offer residency programs in medicine and pharmacy. She also teaches, as a tenured professor, a policy, leadership and ethics course to doctoral students. “I value sharing my knowledge and experience with these graduate students and find that teaching keeps me current on theory and the ideals of our next generation of health leaders,” Bishop said.

Recognizing that she serves as a model for young women in clinical, faculty and professional roles, Bishop said, “It is important that I be a mentor and accessible for sharing my leadership journey with others.”

That journey started in 1966 at the Medical College of Virginia School of Nursing, where she took an active role in the National Student Nurses Association and was elected to its board. In this role, she was the first nursing student to testify before both U.S. House and Senate Committees on funding for health professions education. Bishop was also a charter member of Sigma Theta Tau International, the president of the MCV Nursing Alumni Association and a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

During her time at VCU, Bishop recalls preparing case presentations and teaching in her clinical conferences. It was during a conference that a faculty member reached out to her and encouraged her to consider a career in nursing education. “What might have been a simple observation to her was enormously important to me in developing a plan for my future,” Bishop said.

Bishop also credits her education at MCV for instilling the importance of a well-balanced health care team. “As students from all of the clinical disciplines at MCV, we ate together in a common student cafeteria, we studied together in Sanger Hall and Tompkins-McCaw Library, and we
worked together as teams in the MCV hospitals with a respect for the knowledge and skills each person brought to patient care.”

Betsy Bampton, Ed.D, RNC-E, WHNP, faculty emerita, said, “I am not surprised at what Wilsie has accomplished since she graduated from the School of Nursing. She was not only an excellent student but was also involved in many nursing activities outside the school.”

After earning her master’s in nursing at VCU, Bishop continued her studies at the University of Southern California, where she earned a second master’s and a doctorate. But, she said, VCU provided the foundation for her success.

“My nursing education at VCU was paramount in preparing me for a successful life and a successful career,” she said. “I know I received the best education in nursing available — then or now. I credit the School of Nursing for developing my ability to think critically, problem solve, set priorities and think strategically.”

Bishop still holds a close connection and thinks about her time at VCU often. “I have been wearing my college class ring every day since I received it in 1965. It is a visible connection to VCU and a reminder of what this institution means in my life. I know that my experiences as a student leader and the support I received from the dean and faculty for my personal and professional development provided the ‘value added’ to my education that made a difference for a lifetime.”

Her honors and public recognitions reflect her lifelong commitment to nursing and nursing education. She received the Altrusa Honorarium for Women and Industry Award and the Bristol Regional YWCA Tribute to Women Award and was a National Honor Initiate to Sigma Kappa Sorority, Gamma Lambda Chapter. She has over 30 years of experience as an accreditation visitor for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges and recently completed a six-year term on the Board of Trustees for the Commission on Colleges.

She has also served a three-year term as a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Academic Health. In 2013, the VCU School of Nursing named Bishop one of its 120 Visionary Leaders, and she was inducted into the Tennessee Women’s Hall of Fame that year, joining a group of distinguished women who have made “outstanding, unique and lasting contributions to the economic, cultural and political well-being of Tennessee.” Bishop was also recently awarded the 2015 VCU Alumni Star award, which recognizes alumni for their career and humanitarian achievements, as well as the infinite possibilities they bring to the future.
Hallel Basco receives Interprofessional Excellence Award

Hallel Basco (B.S.’15/N), was selected to receive the VCU 2015 Interprofessional Excellence Recognition Award. The Center for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care established the Student Interprofessional Recognition Award open to all full-time students graduating in 2015. The award recognizes students who have demonstrated significant involvement and interest in promoting interprofessional activities. Nine students were selected to receive this inaugural award.

Kay Seidenberg’s nursing postcard collection featured at VCU Libraries

The Kay Seidenberg Nursing Postcard Collection consists of American and European postcards relating to the nursing profession. Kay Seidenberg (B.S.’85/N) began collecting postcards shortly after embarking on her nursing career. While building her collection she learned about Edith Cavell, an English nurse who was executed by the Germans in 1915 for assisting Allied soldiers to escape from occupied Belgium. The “Edith Cavell: A Nurse Who Did Her Duty,” at VCU Libraries’ Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences, is now on exhibit and will run through Feb. 5, 2016.

Alumna Neva White honored as a Distinguished Diabetes Educator

Neva White, DNP, CRNP- BC, CDE (M.S.’91/N), senior health educator at the Jefferson Center for Urban Health, was recognized as a Distinguished Diabetes Educator at the 2015 American Diabetes Association’s 75th anniversary and awards celebration. At the Jefferson Diabetes Center in Philadelphia, Pa., White is the coordinator for community-based diabetes education, the lead diabetes educator for the Department of Family and Community Medicine shared medical visit, and the coordinator for the Philadelphia Chapter of Divabetic, a national diabetes support group. She also coordinates several grant-funded initiatives to address health disparities in underserved areas of Philadelphia. White is a volunteer for the American Diabetes Association and a member of Theta Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority, Inc.

Elizabeth Hoettels receives VCUAA 10 Under 10 Award

Maj. Elizabeth Hoettels, CCRN, CEN (B.S.’05/N), was recognized by VCU Alumni’s 10 Under 10 awards program, which honors alumni who earned their first VCU degree (undergraduate, graduate or professional) within the past 10 years. Hoettels, who has been deployed several times in recent years and received the Bronze Star for her service in Afghanistan, currently works at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany as a Critical Air Transport Team nurse and as an Acute Lung Evacuation Team nurse. She established an endowed scholarship in the School of the Nursing, the Per Aspera ad Astra: Emerging Nurse Leaders Scholarship.
Stephanie Ferguson inducted into the National Academy of Medicine

Stephanie Ferguson, Ph.D., RN, FAAN (M.S.’87/N), international health care consultant, was inducted as a member of the National Academy of Medicine, formerly the Institute of Medicine. Election to the Academy is considered one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine and recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding professional achievement and commitment to service. Ferguson is currently the director and facilitator of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Leadership for Change Program and the ICN-Burdett Global Nursing Leadership Institute.

Barbara Todd inducted into AAN

Barbara Todd, DNP, ACNP-BC, FAANP (M.S.’84/N), director of the CMS Graduate Nurse Education Consortia at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, was inducted as a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, one of the most prestigious honors in nursing, during the organization’s annual conference in October. Todd is a fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and received the Pennsylvania State NP Advocate Award in June 2015.

Alumna Gail Johnson inducted into GRB Hall of Fame

Gail Johnson, RN, CFE (B.S.’67/N; M.S.’76/N), founder and chairman of the board of Rainbow Station, Inc., was inducted into the Greater Richmond Business Hall of Fame in May. She joins 97 other business leaders who have been inducted into the program since it was established in 1988. Inductees are chosen for their contributions to business and the Richmond area. The program is sponsored by Junior Achievement of Central Virginia.

Alumni nominated for March of Dimes nurse of the year award

Congratulations to SON alumni who were selected as finalists for the 2015 March of Dimes nurse of the year award: Felicia L. Harris (B.S.’04/N), Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital; Kathryn E. Funk (B.S.’04/N), Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center; Chantelle Lands (M.S.’04/N), Bon Secours Virginia Health Systems; Rebecca Coviello (B.S.’12/N), HCA/CJW Chippenham Medical Center; Trula Minton (B.S.’79/N; M.S.’88/N), HCA/CJW Chippenham Medical Center; Heather Irving (B.S.’11/N), VCU Health; Sarah Jones (B.S.’10/N), VCU Health; Deborah Burnette (B.S.’08/N), VCU Health; Joel Gill (B.S.’12/N), VCU Health; Anne Hawkins (B.S.’93/N; M.S.’99/N), VCU Health; Michelle Muse (B.S.’07/N), VCU Health and Barbara Reyna (M.S.’94/N; Ph.D.’10/N), VCU Health.

Emily Drake elected president of AWHONN

Emily Drake, Ph.D., RN, CNL, FAAN (Ph.D.’05/N), associate professor at the University of Virginia School of Nursing, was elected president of the American Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), the professional organization that is the voice for more than 350,000 nurses and promotes the health of women and newborns. Drake’s three-year term began Jan. 1, 2016.
A Letter from the Alumni Chair

At the start of the fall semester I had the opportunity to participate in the VCU School of Nursing’s first vesting ceremony with the Accelerated Bachelor’s of Science Class of 2016. Watching these alumni-in-training celebrate their early progress towards a rewarding career in nursing with hugs for faculty, “selfies,” and social media posts made me realize that at any given moment a VCU alumnus is publicly celebrating in real time an accomplishment, a milestone, or simply their identity as a nurse.

Social media platforms have done more than just allow us to remain in touch with one another, they give us the ability to be a voice for our top-rated school and to be current with its latest achievements. We have a 24/7 opportunity to champion the value of a VCU nursing degree on a global stage and we can easily answer the question from nursing prospects, “Why VCU?,” by showing them the web announcements about our faculty (including alumni) honored by the Virginia Nurses Foundation’s “40 under 40” award, or that Gail Johnson, RN, CFE (B.S.’67/N; M.S.’76/N) was recently inducted into the Greater Richmond Business Hall of Fame, or draw attention to the alumni and nursing students who put their skills to use via humanitarian outreach programs in Virginia and around the world. Our connection to social media provides us with another opportunity to showcase the School of Nursing before an international audience and draw people in.

Our success as nursing alumni is worthy of global recognition. No accomplishment should go overlooked. The next time you post about a positive nursing experience, snap a selfie with your fellow VCU nursing alumni, or share a milestone achievement online, make sure to tag the VCU School of Nursing in whatever forum you are using so that we may all celebrate with you. If you want to distribute your news in a broader forum or are requesting direct SON involvement, contact the development team at vcunursing@vcu.edu.

Let’s fill that news feed!

James L. Jenkins, Jr., RN (B.S.’07/N)
Chair, VCU School of Nursing Alumni Division
Vice-President for Nursing, MCV Alumni Association
Representative for Nursing, VCU Alumni Board of Governors
VCU SON Accelerated Class of 2007

Reunion Weekend 2016 • April 15 - 17

Come back to your alma mater and join your classmates, friends and fellow alumni for a weekend of fun and catching up. Graduating classes ending in 1 and 6, grand alumni (more than 50 years past graduation), and St. Philip alumnae are invited back to campus to celebrate reunion.

Alumni from the schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy are all celebrating. Visit www.vcualumni.org/Events/Reunion/MCV-Campus-Reunion/ for more information.
Henrisa Tosoc-Haskell (M.S.’88/N; M.S.H.A.’02/AHP) was named Director of Member Quality at the United Network for Organ Sharing. In her new position, she will be responsible for monitoring performance of member institutions and their compliance with OPTN policy and bylaws and the OPTN Final Rule. She is also the winner of VCU’s excellence in leadership award.

Debbie Raines (Ph.D.’91/N) received the 2015 Dean’s Award for Excellence in Clinical Scholarship from the University at Buffalo School of Nursing in May 2015, the 2015 Evelyn Tovey Distinguished Lecturer from the University of Akron School of Nursing in April 2015 and awarded the Uber Fellow for Best peer mentoring from the SUNY Tools of Engagement Project in April 2015.

IN MEMORIAM

MARCH 2015
Carole E. Harris (M.S.’95/N)

APRIL 2015
Annie W. Harrison (Dipl.’54/N)

MAY 2015
Helen S. Birch (Cert.’47/N)
Mary W. Rebman (B.S.’51/N)
Jennifer Gail Aldridge (B.S.’78/N)
Linda Price Baker (B.S.’76/N; M.S.’88/N)

JUNE 2015
Marie Walker (B.S.’58/N)

AUGUST 2015
Ora Lee Flanagan Taylor (B.S.’53/N)

Stay Connected and Help Educate Students!

The Alumni Standardized Patient Program in the Clinical Learning Center is looking for alumni volunteers who can donate their time and expertise in the training of undergraduate or graduate nursing students through playing the role of a Standardized patient. The program will provide you with a very tangible and direct way to help our nursing students develop and become strong VCU alumni.

I’m interested in becoming a standardized patient. What should I do next?

Please email Dr. Carla Nye at cnye@vcu.edu or call 804-827-0629 to find out how to get involved!
Throughout my first year as Senior Director of Development, I have been deeply inspired by the dynamic and passionate School of Nursing community. I have seen your commitment, focus and dedication to the continued legacy of our school. Some humbling examples of the affirmation of this legacy include the $75,000 investment from Dr. Janet Younger and her husband Carter, for the pavilion in the school garden, the establishment of both the Betsy Bampton RN to B.S. Scholarship and the McCain-Grap Research Endowment, which honors the work of Drs. Bampton, Grap and McCain over a combined 100-year period, as well as the Nursing classes of 1960 and 1970 class gifts, which combined, total more than $100,000.

These gifts are in alignment with the School of Nursing’s priorities to increase funding of the following five areas: student scholarships and fellowships, professorships and chairs, Clinical Scholars Program, McCain-Grap Research Endowment, and the Langston Center for Quality, Safety and Innovation. Long-term funding of each of these areas is critical to the future success and longevity of the school.

Two successes that I am especially proud of that occurred during this past fiscal year, were surpassing our $1.5M fund raising goal by over $200,000 and achieving a 92% faculty and staff giving rate, which was the highest participation rate among all of the individual schools within VCU. Faculty and staff are proud to be part of the fabric of the VCU School of Nursing.

My goal is for these amazing examples of generosity, investment and impact in the School of Nursing to inspire you to leave your mark and ensure the legacy of your school for the generations to come. Your vision and engagement are essential to the school’s future.

Thank you for all that you do.

Kate Haydon
Community health nursing students participate in mock immunization event

Students in the NURS 416 class taught by Beth Hopkins, DNP, RN, FNP-C, clinical assistant professor, recently participated in a service learning project that involved providing over 80 flu vaccines to area residents. The students participated in a two-hour mock emergency immunization event conducted by the Chesterfield Health District at Southpark Mall in Colonial Heights. Filling the role normally performed by the Medical Reserve Corps, the students worked with emergency response and preparedness personnel from the Chesterfield Health District and the Colonial Heights Health Department.

SON hosts retirement celebration for Ann Hamric

The School of Nursing recently held a retirement celebration for Ann Hamric, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, professor and associate dean of academic programs, to recognize her impact on VCU and on nursing education worldwide. Hamric, an internationally renowned advance practice leader, retired as of Sept. 1.

Hamric joined the School of Nursing in 2011. Earlier in her career, she was the associate director of nursing for research and development at MCV Hospitals from 1982 to 1991 and also served on the faculty at the VCU School of Nursing from 1976 to 1979.

SON welcomes new associate dean of academic programs

Debra J. Barksdale, Ph.D., a nationally known educator, researcher, practitioner and advocate for improving health care, has joined the School of Nursing as professor and associate dean of academic programs. Barksdale most recently served as director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Nursing.

Candace Burton elected to NNVAWI board

Candace Burton, Ph.D., RN, AFN-BC, AGN-BC, assistant professor, was elected to the Board of the Nursing Network on Violence Against Women International (NNVAWI). The organization was formed to encourage the development of nursing practice to address the health and social effects of violence in women’s lives.
Grand opening celebration marks official launch of Langston Center

The VCU School of Nursing held a grand opening celebration for its Langston Center for Quality, Safety and Innovation, a new center housed within the school that promotes patient-centered, population-focused and cost-effective quality and safety initiatives designed to improve health care. Diana Mason, Ph.D., immediate past president of the American Academy of Nursing, was the keynote speaker. Nearly 100 people representing both VCU campuses and the health system attended the event. Seated in the middle of the auditorium was Nancy Langston, Ph.D., the former dean of the School of Nursing for whom the center is named. Marianne Baernholdt, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, is the center’s director. Read the full recap of the event at www.vculangstoncenter.org.

Patricia Kinser receives American Nurses Foundation grant

Patricia Kinser, Ph.D., RN, WHNP-BC, assistant professor, received a $25,000 American Nurses Foundation Research Grant for her study, titled “Epigenetic, social, and environmental mechanisms underlying postpartum depression.” The study explores epigenetic (DNA methylation) patterns as they relate to postpartum depressive symptomatology and explores the relationship between those patterns and maternal social/environmental characteristics.

SON STTI chapter receives leadership award

The Gamma Omega Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International recently received recognition through the Showcase of Regional Excellence. The Showcase of Regional Excellence is designed to recognize the good work of chapters in relation to the biennial presidential call to action. The chapter was awarded in the areas of connectedness for collaboration and networking towards a common purpose and for creating meaningful interactions and relationships within and outside the VCU School of Nursing.

Betsy Bampton honored for 50 years of service

The School of Nursing held a celebration at Willow Oaks Country Club recently to honor Betsy Bampton, Ed.D., RNC-E, WHNP (B.S.’60; Cert. ’80), associate professor emerita, for her 50 years of service to the school. More than 70 faculty, staff, alumni and friends were on hand to celebrate Bampton’s retirement and her impact on the School of Nursing. Bampton grew the RN to B.S. program from its start as a blended program with the traditional B.S. cohort to a weekend and satellite program, and now an online degree program.
Genevieve Beaird and Carla Nye receive Clinical Scholars Award

Genevieve Beaird, M.S., RNC-OB, clinical instructor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, and Carla Nye, DNP, CPNP-PC, CNE, associate professor and director of the Clinical Learning Center, received the Clinical Scholars Award for their project, titled “Enhancing Communication Skills in Undergraduate Nursing Students using Standardized Patient Actors.” The project aims to provide undergraduate students enrolled in the Nursing of Women (NURS335) clinical rotation the opportunity to practice their communication and interviewing skills while encountering a series of standardized patient actors simulating prenatal care and postpartum outpatient visits. This year’s Clinical Scholars Award honors Mimi Bennett (B.S.’72/N; M.S.’76/N), who was among Virginia’s first women’s health nurse practitioners. During her career, Bennett touched the lives of thousands of patients and their families, nursing students and colleagues.

Lauren Goodloe elected secretary of CCNE Board

Lauren Goodloe, RN (B.S. ‘83/N; M.S. ‘88/N; Ph.D. ‘00/N), assistant dean for clinical operations, was recently elected secretary of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) Board of Commissioners. In addition to her role at the School of Nursing, Goodloe is director of medical and geriatric nursing and administrative director of nursing research at VCU Health. CCNE is an autonomous accrediting agency that ensures the quality and integrity of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education programs and entry to practice nurse residency programs like the one at VCU Health.

Jean Giddens receives UTEP Gold Nugget Award

Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, dean and professor, the Doris B. Yingling Endowed Chair, received a Gold Nugget award from the University of Texas at El Paso during Homecoming celebrations recently. Since 1984, the University of Texas has recognized exceptional graduates from each of the University’s colleges and schools who have distinguished themselves in their professions and lives, given back to their communities and alma mater, and serve as an inspiration for future generations of Miners.

SON faculty nominated for VNF 40 Under 40 Awards

Congratulations to School of Nursing faculty who have been nominated and/or selected for the Virginia Nurses Foundation 40 Under 40 Awards. The following were selected as emerging leaders: Tara Albrecht, Ph.D., RN, ACNP-BC, assistant professor; Lana Sargent, M.S.N., RN, FNP-C, GNP-BC, assistant professor; and Shelly Orr, M.S.N., RN, CNE (B.S.’02), clinical assistant professor. The following were recognized with honorable mention: Holly Buchanan, DNP, RN, ANP-BC (B.S.’02/N; M.S.’04/N) clinical assistant professor; Rachel Cloutier, RN, ACNP-BC (B.S.’10/N; M.S.’11/N), clinical instructor; Shelly Smith, DNP, APRN-BC, clinical assistant professor; Daphne Terrell, RN, CNRN RN, CNRN (M.S.’08/N), clinical instructor; and Tracey Proffitt, M.S., RN, ACNS-BS, CCRN, clinical instructor.


Lorraine B. Anderson, Ph.D., MPA, RN, CNE, is a clinical associate professor in the Adult Health and Nursing Systems Department. Anderson most recently served as an assistant professor at North Carolina A&T State University, School of Nursing for the past three years. She earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Connecticut, a master’s degree in clinical counseling from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas, a master’s degree in public administration from the University of Southern California, and a Ph.D. in nursing from VCU. Anderson is a certified nurse educator.

Mary Falk, M.S., RN, CCRN, PCCN, CNL, is a clinical instructor in the Adult Health and Nursing Systems Department and will continue to practice at the bedside in the VCUHS Cardiac Surgery ICU. Falk most recently served as an adjunct faculty member at the VCU School of Nursing while working at VCUHS. She received both her B.S. and her M.S. in nursing from the University of Virginia.

Christina Kyrus is a research administrator, providing administrative support and project assistance for the Office of Research in the area of Pre-Award/Grant Submissions. She most recently served as a special projects coordinator for the Department of Physiology and Biophysics. Kyrus earned a business management degree from James Madison University and an M.B.A. from Old Dominion University.

Amanda Mullins is the leadership annual giving officer in the Development Office. She most recently served as an annual giving officer at Virginia Tech, where she worked with alumni, parents and supporters on behalf of the university’s annual giving program and overall fundraising efforts. Mullins received her B.S. in apparel merchandising from Virginia Tech and an M.A. in communications from Auburn University.

Hope Napier is a project coordinator and provides administrative support and project assistance for the Office of Practice and Community Engagement. She most recently served as the M3 clerkship coordinator and worked with all medical students in VCU’s Department of Surgery. Napier received a B.S. in sport management from Liberty University.

LaTina Pitts is the School of Nursing’s front desk receptionist. Her position provides administrative support and project assistance to the Office of Enrollment and Student Services and the Dean’s Office. Most recently she served as the executive administrative assistant for the executive director of Residential Life and Housing on VCU’s Monroe Park Campus.

Brittany Taylor is the development and communications coordinator, a shared position that provides administrative support to the Development and Communications offices. She most recently served as a marketing coordinator for myMatrixx in Tampa, Florida. Taylor received her B.A. in mass communications from the University of South Florida.
Welcome new alumni!

The VCU School of Nursing recognized 186 graduating students at its 2015 Fall Recognition Ceremony held on Dec. 11 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. VCU’s Commencement Exercises were held on Saturday, Dec. 12 at the Siegel Center.