COMMUNITY OF CARE

The Richmond Health and Wellness Program celebrates its tenth year and looks to what’s next (pg.6)
FROM THE DEAN

I’m proud to share that the VCU School of Nursing’s undergraduate program is ranked No. 22 in the latest U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges rankings released earlier this fall, up one spot from last year and placing it in the top 4% of all undergraduate nursing programs nationwide. I am also delighted to announce that the school has received the largest gift in its history—a $13 million gift made by Joanne and Bill Conway that will provide need-based scholarships for over 1,000 undergraduate and doctoral nursing students over the next five years. Truly, this is an extraordinary time of recognition and opportunity for our school and its programs.

I hope you will enjoy this issue—

Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
Dean and professor
Doris B. Yingling Endowed Chair

I'm so excited for this issue of Connections magazine. The following pages are brimming with some of the most exciting news in the school’s history.

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I am so excited for this issue of Connections magazine. The following pages are brimming with some of the most exciting news in the school’s history.
The VCU School of Nursing's undergraduate program ranked No. 22 in the country in its category in rankings released this fall, up one spot from last year. The School of Nursing’s undergraduate program offers two precursory pathways for students to become a nurse — the traditional B.S. and accelerated B.S., and an RN to B.S. pathway for registered nurses to obtain a bachelor’s degree.

MICHELLE EDMONDS,
DNP, MSN, RN, joined the School of Nursing at the start of the academic year as the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Program and Department Chair Family and Community Health Nursing. Prior to joining VCU, she served as Dean of Nursing, Allied Health, and Natural Science for Southside Virginia Community College. In her new role, she will lead oversight of the undergraduate nursing program to ensure the curriculum is consistent with the mission and goals of the school.

JOSEPH DeRANIERI,
DM, MSN, RN, BC-ECRN, Assistant Professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, has been appointed as the Interim Director for the Langston Center for Innovation in Quality and Safety, a center that promotes patient-centered, population-focused and cost-effective initiatives designed to improve health care. His appointment follows the retirement of Michael Bleich, Ph.D., RN, NEA-BC, FNAP, FAAN, who served as the center’s director since January 2019.

JANE CHUNG,
Ph.D., RN, Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, was recognized with the Award of Excellence in Nursing Research by the Sigma Theta Tau International Gamma Omega at-large Chapter in May 2022.

AMY SALISBURY,
Ph.D., RN, Professor and Associate Dean for Research, Scholarship & Innovation, and PATRICIA KINSER, Ph.D., WHNP-BC, RN, FAAN, Assistant Dean for Research and Endowed Professor, Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, have been received funding on a NIH R-01 grant for their project Community-based fetal ultrasound and care navigation: An approach to engaging pregnant women with substance use disorder in prenatal care and substance use treatment.

TARA TALBOTT,
RN (BS’16/N; MS’19/N) was honored by VCU Alumni as a top 10 Under 10. Tara is the Chief Nursing Officer for VCU Health Tappahannock. She earned a bachelor's in nursing and a master's in nursing administration and leadership, and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at VCU. In her current role, Talbott institutes best practices to foster more positive experiences for patients and practitioners alike.

577 DONORS MADE CONTRIBUTIONS
of $3.9 million dollars to support the School of Nursing in fiscal year 2022 including the creation of a new professorship (the Betsy A. Bampton Professorship) and four student support funds (the Ann Duffer Nursing Scholarship, the Dr. Barbara H. Dunn Nursing Scholarship, the Vicki and Charlie Tedeschi Memorial Fund, and the SON Student Emergency Scholarship & Innovation, and). The school’s faculty and staff also had the highest participation percentage in the annual VCU employee giving campaign across the university at 49.1%.

LATHIKA MOHANRAJ,
PhD, RN BMTCN, Assistant Professor, Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, was elected to the International Society of Nurses in Genetics (ISONG) Board of Directors starting November 2022.

KIMBERLY CLARK,
MSN, RN, CCRN, Clinical Instructor, Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, and MARY FALK,
MSN, RN, CCRN, PCCN, CNL, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, both received Honorable Mention for their Virginia Nurses Foundation Leadership Excellence Awards: Nurse Educator Category this fall.

The VCU Office of Student Success hosted a much-needed mid-semester caffeine break for our hard-working students on October 10.
AN INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL MODEL

In ten years the program has evolved, incorporating students from across VCU’s health science disciplines including nursing, pharmacy, medicine, social work, physical therapy, occupational therapy, health and kinesiology, and psychology. Participants can take part in clinic either with a scheduled 30-minute wellness visit or as a walk-in for unplanned or immediate needs. Mathie Fall, MSN, RN, ANP-BIC, Director of Clinical Operations for RHWP, explains that identifying gaps in care, supporting referrals, and promoting self-efﬁcacy and self-management are key services that the program delivers. RHWP is a safety net for our participants who are at high risk for negative health outcomes. Our healthcare system is complicated and can be hard to navigate when a person has limited access to transportation, technology, or low health literacy. We know that if we can connect people to services and necessary resources and provide tailored education, we can help people self-manage their healthcare needs and improve outcomes," she says.

Visits frequently center around helping residents understand their conditions, how to proactively manage them and connecting them to information and resources. “By meeting people where they are and really listening to what’s important to them, we can tailor our services to their specific needs, which makes all the difference. We’re here to advocate for people and empower them to ask for what they need. When necessary, we can step in and help them articulate their needs to providers and health care workers whether in the emergency room or in their primary care provider’s ofﬁce. We can help them tell their story,” Fall says.

REAL LIFE LESSONS

RHWP presents a range of opportunities for students to test out their future in collaborative health care. Clinic days start with a debrief from a program leader to touch on any immediate health concerns for any scheduled participants as well as general updates for the day. Then, students are given space to help participants independently, making notes on each visit using a shared secure data records platform with the program leader and staff available nearby for support. Students rotate through various positions during their time with the clinic. For example they might be assigned to assist with monitoring blood pressure or glucose one day, then provide more comprehensive self-management and education during the next visit. Following participant visits, program leaders and students reconvene to review notes and create a plan for the participants’ next visit.

Opportunities for students to integrate practice in a clinic setting like those that RHWP provides are invaluable. Kimberly Batte, Ph.D., FNP-BIC, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, describes the potential of the learning environment students experience in RHWP clinics and how it is integral to their understanding of health promotion and wellness implementation. “We have to realize with our students that everyone comes from different backgrounds. It’s important to teach students compassion, to teach them how to relate so that they can integrate into their own practice, how they think about affordability. Having [the students] ask ‘Is this realistic?’ This plan that I’m developing for my participant that I’m interacting with?” she explains. As Batte shares with those students in clinic that she supervises, the most instructive and inﬂuential lessons may come from an unexpected source. “We teach students how to listen to the participants and how they can learn from everyone,” she says.

Many students who start with RHWP to satisfy a service-learning requirement opt to continue their service. As a result, the School of Nursing is working to create an elective version of the course as well as a badge pathway so students can continue providing community service and receive either credit or recognition for their work as they move toward graduation and seek employment. The deep engagement and strong rapport RHWP has with its participants is indicative of the quality of interactions with program leaders and students. “Social isolation is a huge issue for older adults in general, particularly older adults with limited income. The pandemic absolutely made this situation worse. At RHWP, we provide a forum for an intergenerational connection between our participants and the students who are able to listen to the concerns and needs of our participants and provide tailored education and feedback,” says Fall. “I see it all the time—our participants open up to students about things they’ve been afraid to ask in the past. Maybe they’re embarrassed or haven’t been able to ﬁnd the words, but they ask the students and they get an answer.”

NEW HORIZONS

With a decade of success as its foundation, RHWP continues to grow. A recent grant of nearly $4 million in funding from the Health Resources & Services Administration will enable the program to reach new communities with the addition of a mobile van. “We are taking our program on the road,” says Batte. “We have such a history with our program that we recognize that there are hot spots for chronic disease. We look forward to bringing a prescription produce program to these areas. We look forward to bringing our Richmond Health and Wellness interprofessional educational model. And, we look forward to bringing the nursing students to these areas where we can bring our education and care coordination and start to build trust and rapport in these areas and establish these relationships,” says Batte.
The researchers are looking for children, teens and young adults who have had any symptoms from COVID-19, whether many or just one or two symptoms. Those who have not had COVID-19 are also welcome to join because they are equally important to better understand how living during a pandemic affects a person’s health and development regardless of whether they became infected.

The project is split into three phases, each with different kinds of assessments. In the first phase, the research team will survey participants on their health and well-being and collect biological samples, such as saliva and a tiny bit of blood. The second and third phases will involve clinical assessments on some participants over the next several years to assess their health, including their lungs, heart and neurodevelopment.

To make it easy for enrolled families to complete the assessments, VCU School of Nursing will create pop-up clinics in neighborhoods within Richmond and the surrounding area.

“The RECOVER project is going to help us understand long COVID so we might develop treatments for those affected by the pandemic for years to come, but it’s also going to give back to the families deciding to participate in the study by understanding important information about their children’s development, health, and mental well-being,” said Amy Salisbury, PhD., professor and associate dean for research, scholarship and innovation at VCU School of Nursing, who serves as one of the principal investigators of the RECOVER initiative. “This is an opportunity to help us find answers on how COVID-19 is impacting families over time and what we can do to minimize these effects.”

“VCU School of Nursing is leading the efforts of a research consortium made up of VCU, Rhode Island Hospital and NYU Langone Health, but the RECOVER project is enrolling people across the nation.”

“The project is part of the Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery (RECOVER) initiative, a nationwide study funded by the National Institutes of Health. Much of what is known about long COVID-19 is based on studies in adults, but less understood are the effects in children and adolescents. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that, as of February 2022, about 75% of children and adolescents in the United States have had COVID-19.

“The VCU School of Nursing supports the efforts of this research initiative, initiated in September 2021, researchers are now enrolling participants. The goal is to better understand the prevalence and impact of long-lasting COVID-19 symptoms (‘long COVID’) in children and young adults to develop effective treatments in the future.

The project is aimed at studying the long-term health effects of COVID-19 in infants, children, adolescents and young adults. In the planning stages since September 2021, researchers are now enrolling participants. The goal is to better understand the prevalence and impact of long-lasting COVID-19 symptoms (‘long COVID’) in children and young adults to develop effective treatments in the future.

The VCU School of Nursing is leading the efforts of a research consortium made up of VCU, Rhode Island Hospital and NYU Langone Health, but the RECOVER project is enrolling people across the nation.

For the VCU study site, the research team aims to recruit approximately 240 families with children, adolescents or young adults age 25 or younger in central VA.

“We know that coming downtown to our facilities is not feasible for some families. By bringing our research closer to participants, we hope to make it easier for everyone interested in this project to be involved,” said Patricia Kinser, Ph.D., endowed professor and associate dean for research at VCU School of Nursing, and co-leader at the VCU site with Salisbury. Kinser hopes the project will also attract a more diverse audience. “To ensure we develop the best treatments for everybody, it’s critical that a diversity of experiences is represented in this project,” Kinser said.

Families involved in the project are paid for their participation, as well as have access to their children’s results from the study. The pop-up clinics are equipped with privacy screens, air conditioners and heaters, among other amenities, to ensure that participants are comfortable.

Families in Virginia who are interested in participating can learn more here.

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I am willing to join the fight and make whatever degree of difference I can in the future alongside other nurses.

VCU SCHOOL OF NURSING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ADITI BHANDARI

VCU School of Nursing is a close-knit community of fewer than one hundred students who complete their courses and clinical hours with many of the same professors. She’s enjoyed the camaraderie and lessons learned with and from her classmates. “I have been surprised by how teamwork-oriented nursing or even just nursing school is,” Bhandari said, “I didn’t want to go anywhere kind of community she wanted to learn and grow in."

VCU is honored to be a part of the Conways’ great vision to create healthier communities through strengthening the nursing pipeline,” said Michael Rao, Ph.D., president of VCU and VCU Health. “With their latest gift, they help ensure that our School of Nursing graduates will be at the forefront of that work. At VCU, we put the needs of students and patients first, and this gift advances that important mission.”

“Nurses are essential,” Bill Conway said. “Joanne and I believe that, by reducing the financial burden for nursing students at VCU School of Nursing, the school will be better equipped to expand its programs to address the critical nursing shortage. When nurses face a lower debt burden, they can more easily achieve their personal and professional goals.”

“VCU is proud to graduate the largest and most diverse group of prelicensure nursing professionals in Virginia,” said Michael Rao, Ph.D., president of VCU and VCU Health. “We are excited to be part of the Conways’ great vision to create healthier communities through strengthening the nursing pipeline,” said Michael Rao, Ph.D., president of VCU and VCU Health. “With their latest gift, they help ensure that our School of Nursing graduates will be at the forefront of that work. At VCU, we put the needs of students and patients first, and this gift advances that important mission.”

THE VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH University School of Nursing received a $13 million gift made by philanthropists Joanne and Bill Conway through their Bedford Falls Foundation DAF. The gift, the largest in the school’s history, will enable the school to provide scholarships to reduce the cost of a nursing education for more than 1,000 undergraduate and doctoral students over the next five years.

Currently, over 70% of undergraduate nursing students at VCU qualify for a need-based scholarship. With the latest gift, the school can double the total amount of scholarship support for students and increase the number of scholarships awarded by 37% over the next five years.

Since 2019, the Conways have provided more than $18.5 million to support the VCU School of Nursing through their philanthropic vehicles. Their latest contribution also enables the school to welcome more students.

“The Conways’ gift comes at an extraordinary time in our school’s growth,” Giddens said. “Many of our programs will increase enrollment in the coming years. At a time when the nation is facing persistent nursing shortages, funds like these are particularly critical to ensure a strong and diverse future nursing workforce.”

A 2020 National Nursing Workforce Study confirmed a lack of diversity in nursing, with over 80% of registered nurses identifying as white/caucasian. And more than one-fifth of all nurses reported plans to retire from nursing by 2025, intensifying the current nursing shortage.

The latest gift amplifies the impact VCU’s School of Nursing has on health care in Virginia and beyond. Half of currently enrolled students are nonwhite and more than 90% of graduates work in Virginia. “VCU School of Nursing is proud to graduate the largest and most diverse group of prelicensure nursing professionals in Virginia,” Giddens said.

With a wave of nurse faculty retirements expected over the next decade, nursing schools cannot address the nation’s nurse shortage without also creating a pipeline of new nurses.

The Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing received a $13 million gift made by philanthropists Joanne and Bill Conway through their Bedford Falls Foundation DAF. The gift, the largest in the school’s history, will enable the school to provide scholarships to reduce the cost of a nursing education for more than 1,000 undergraduate and doctoral students over the next five years.

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With a wave of nurse faculty retirements expected over the next decade, nursing schools cannot address the nation’s nurse shortage without also creating a pipeline of new nurses.

“This gift will fundamentally transform the VCU School of Nursing Program, allowing us to offer much-needed financial support to our students who are the future of the nursing profession,” said Jean Giddens, Ph.D., professor and dean of the VCU School of Nursing. “The Conways’ generosity will have an enormous impact on building a diverse pipeline of early career nurses and future researchers and gives VCU the important responsibility of educating and delivering that workforce. I am deeply grateful for their commitment to our students.”

VCU SCHOOL OF NURSING RECEIVES LARGEST GIFT IN SCHOOL’S HISTORY TO FUND STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

A HISTORIC GIFT

VCU SCHOOL OF NURSING RECEIVES LARGEST GIFT IN SCHOOL’S HISTORY TO FUND STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS
TWO SCHOOL OF NURSING FACULTY SELECTED AS AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSING FELLOWS

THE SELECTED FACULTY MEMBERS WERE AMONG 250 nurse leaders chosen to join the AAN’s 2022 class of fellows.

Two faculty members from Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of Nursing received one of the most prestigious honors in nursing this fall when they were inducted as fellows of the American Academy of Nursing.

The inductees were recognized for their significant contributions to health and health care at the academy’s annual Health Policy Conference held in October in Washington D.C.

TERRY JONES, Ph.D., an associate professor, leads the Nursing Leadership and Organizational Science Concentration within the School of Nursing’s Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. In this role, she oversees a variety of courses that equip students for success today while they strive to build a better tomorrow. Additionally, Jones is involved in research that focuses on improving the nursing work environment and the quality and safety of nursing care across the health care continuum. Her work also analyzes factors that impact leadership development for health care disciplines, such as managerial coaching relationships, graduate education and service-based continuing education. She received the President’s Award for Outstanding Service from the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nursing in 2021 and the Billye Brown Award for Excellence in Leadership in 2016.

INGRID PRETZER-ABOFF, Ph.D., an associate professor and senior nurse researcher, has worked with people with Parkinson’s disease and their family members in acute care, community and research settings for more than 30 years. Her research focuses on developing interventions that optimize function and improve the daily life and independence of people with this disorder. Her contributions to this field include establishing efficacy-based, function-focused community care programs and co-founding the first nurse-managed Parkinson’s telehealth clinic in the United States. Most recently she continues her quest to improve lives of people with Parkinson’s by developing and testing a novel medical device that reduces the motor symptoms of the disease by delivering stimulation to the nervous system. Pretzer-Aboff is an affiliate scholar of the VCU Langston Center for Innovation in Quality & Safety and a fellow of the Gerontological Society of America.

THE VCU SCHOOL OF NURSING HAS MADE GREAT STRIDES in NIH research funding in the last several years. In 2017, the school was not ranked by the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research (BRIMR), an independent organization that reports and ranks schools funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In the last available rankings report, BRIMR lists VCU School of Nursing 32nd in the country in NIH funding of 85 nursing schools included in the report.

Major grants funded

**$5.4M over 4 years [NIH/RECOVER]**
Life-course examination of genomics, aecot, and neurocognitive changes following COVID-19 infection: the LEGACI cohort

**$3.9M over 4 years [HRSA]**
Mobile Health and Wellness Program

**$1.46M over 3 years [HRSA]**
Strength in Caring

**$166K [HRSA]**
Nurse Faculty Loan Program

Behind all of this momentum is the VCU SON Office of Research, Scholarship and Innovation—a team of administrative leaders and staff that coordinate resources to facilitate productive research and scholarship; provide support, host workshops and offer mentoring opportunities to researchers; and manage a full range of biostatistics/data services and biobehavioral research laboratory services.

*The growing success of the research and scholarship within the VCU School of Nursing is the cumulative result of the school’s investments in scholarship, the faculty’s passion for improving health equity in our communities, and a strategic plan to synthesize and integrate knowledge and skills with the school and across the university. The scope of research and scholarship has grown substantially through a team science approach that will foster rapid discovery and innovative solutions that promote health, prevent disease, and eradicate health disparities. The new programs and innovations will also be used to grow educational opportunities for students and sustain nursing education and workforce development.*—Amy Salisbury, Ph.D., RN, professor and associate dean for research, scholarship and innovation

**NIH DIRECT DOLLARS**

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JEAN GIDDENS, PH.D., DEAN OF THE VCU School of Nursing, co-led a revision of the education standards that students need to know when they graduate from nursing schools across the country.

As the country’s nearly 4 million nurses comprise the largest sector of the health care workforce, they are crucial to maintaining the safety of patients and ensuring they can receive lifesaving care. Schools of nursing have a responsibility to graduate nurses who are well prepared for the current and future health care environment, said Jean Giddens, Ph.D., professor and dean of VCU School of Nursing.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing released its latest version of the “Essentials” in 2021, which will guide the future of nursing education for more than 850 member nursing schools across the country.

Giddens was the co-chair of the national task force that revised educational standards for bachelor’s, master’s and clinical doctoral nursing programs — the competencies for what students should know and be able to do upon graduation.

The task force, with input from faculty, deans and nursing practice leaders nationwide, developed a new model and framework for nursing programs to ensure students are best prepared for the real world.

VCU News caught up with Giddens to find out more about how the revised standards will help nurses and, in turn, the patients they serve.

“Giving Day was an amazing opportunity for the school to give more visibility to philanthropy and how we can all make a difference when we join together in support of our students,” said Jean Giddens, Ph.D., professor and dean of the VCU School of Nursing. Clever hashtags, a giving countdown clock and gifts from 119 donors helped earn the school several challenges including an impressive 49.1% participation by the school’s faculty and staff.

The VCU School of Nursing hosted its first-ever giving day on Thursday, April 28, 2022.

During the 24-hour fundraiser filled with challenges, donor thank-yous and more black and gold emojis than you could count, the school raised a total of $54,661. The majority of funds raised supported the schools’ student emergency fund, a critical resource for one-time relief grants for current students that face unexpected financial hardship.

“My gratitude goes to everyone who gave, posted and cheered us on for our first ever VCU Giving Day. Our alumni, friends, faculty and staff showed up big for our students and I’m so thankful for everyone’s support.

– Jean Giddens, Ph.D., Dean

What led AACN to revise the Essentials?

Over the past decade, there have been multiple changes in all areas of our society – including population demographics, advancements in technology, new research discoveries – all of which have had impacts in higher education and in health care. The revised Essentials reflect the knowledge and skills needed by nurses now and into the future.

What does this transformation in nursing education look like?

The biggest changes represented in the Essentials is the transition to competency-based education, and the creation of a new two-level nursing education model. These changes will require a more intentional assessment of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our students and should lead to greater consistency among our graduates.

How is the VCU School of Nursing implementing the new Essentials?

The VCU SON has formed an Essentials implementation task force – known as NETForce – comprising committed faculty who teach in undergraduate and graduate programs. Their goal is to redesign the curriculum in alignment with the new Essentials – including a robust competency-based assessment process – by September 2023, with hopes of implementing the revised curriculum by academic year 2024-25.

What impact do you anticipate these changes will make on the nursing workforce in the near future?

For years, there have been challenges with an academic-practice gap, meaning that students who graduate from nursing schools require significant onboarding and orientation during the first year of practice. This practice readiness phenomenon is a concern raised by employers across the country, with both new nurses for practice and nurses prepared at the graduate level. We expect that the Essentials competencies will closely align with the knowledge and skills needed to enter practice. Students taught under this new framework will be ready to practice sooner, which will be key in addressing the ongoing shortage of health care professionals.

What is the future of nursing education?

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing released its latest version of the “Essentials” in 2021, which will guide the future of nursing education for more than 850 member nursing schools across the country.

As the country’s nearly 4 million nurses comprise the largest sector of the health care workforce, they are crucial to maintaining the safety of patients and ensuring they can receive lifesaving care. Schools of nursing have a responsibility to graduate nurses who are well prepared for the current and future health care environment, said Jean Giddens, Ph.D., professor and dean of VCU School of Nursing.

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McCluskey began his career as a nurse working with critically ill children at VCU Health and transitioned to hospital leadership.

From 2016-01, he served as CEO of HCA HealthCare’s Johnston-Willis Hospital in Richmond, Virginia. Under his leadership, JW was the first hospital in the U.S. to receive the Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval for brain tumor care. Prior to JW, he was CEO at Parham Doctors’ Hospital, leading it to a top 5% national ranking for orthopaedic hospitals by U.S. News & World Report. He also has served as chief operating officer at StoneCrest Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee, and associate administrator at HCA Healthcare’s CJW Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia.

McCluskey, who met his wife, Amanda, at the VCU School of Nursing, mentors VCU MHA students and is a guest lecturer on hospital operations, particularly on topics that improve patient and employee engagement. He is a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives and a member of the VCU Foundation Board of Trustees.

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GERTRUDE HARVELL CLARKE

(BSN ’46/N) celebrated her 100th birthday in 2022. A graduate of St. Philip Hospital School of Nursing-Medical College of Virginia, she relocated to New York after graduation where she remained until her retirement. During her lengthy nursing career, she was employed in the operating room and surgical services as well as teaching positions educating nursing assistants, practical nurses and registered nurses. Upon retirement from New York, she returned to Prince George County, Virginia. She is still active in sharing her experiences with the next generation of nursing students at Virginia State University, championing the importance of diversity and equitable practice in the profession and care.

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(ESD; B.S./N’71) writes, “I have three degrees: a bachelor’s in nursing from VCU, a master’s in nursing from California State University, Los Angeles (1978) and an ESD in educational leadership from Cal State Fullerton. I worked for 10 years with various responsibilities in acute-care nursing settings. I started out at MCV Hospitals, moved to Denver and Los Angeles before moving into nursing education with nursing students. I had a very fulfilling career. I am grateful to MCV/VCU for giving me my excellent foundational education and getting me started in my career.”

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Ph.D. (B.S./N’00; Cert’04/N); M.S./N’04/N; assistant dean for research at the VCU School of Nursing, is among a group of VCU researchers who are joining a national team of scientists to investigate the impacts of long COVID-19 in children, teens, young adults and their parents. The project, the “Life-Course Examination of General Affect and Neurocognitive Changes Following COVID-19 Infection,” is part of the National Institutes of Health’s research study on the long-term impacts of the virus. She and Amy Saltis, PhD, professor and associate dean of research at the VCU School of Nursing, will recruit families to see how the virus affects children’s cognitive development and mental and physical health.

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IN MEMORIAM

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Dorothy M. Shepard (B.S./55/N), of Roanoke Rapids, N.C., Oct. 9, 2021.

Judith H. Barton (B.S./51/N), of Fredericksburg, Va., May 25, 2022.
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SAVE THE DATE!

APRIL 21–23, 2023

REUNION WEEKEND

Celebrate, share memories and reconnect