



# Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Newsletter Spring 2024

## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Alumni,

Greetings! Here we are in 2024 ready for new challenges, adventures, and celebrations! This winter we've been busy working to continue our mission within the Alumni Association to support our nurses. In November 2023 we celebrated our annual Memorial Mass, which was a wonderful tribute to our Mercy Angels who have left us since Covid. We had the honor of having Father Albie celebrate the Mass with us. It was my first-time meeting Father Albie, and I was touched by his humble loving spirit, gentle ways, and his love for nurses. We are all saddened by his passing, but knowing he is with God at peace is a blessing. I am sure he is continuing his love for us, cheering us on to continue our work in caring for others the best we can.

2024 brings celebrations! Please mark your calendar to attend our SPRING FLING on April 13, 2024. The Fling will spotlight the Platinum Jubilee of Sister Carolyn Schallenberger. All are welcome to gather and reminisce on your days spent with Sister – please see inside for more details.

Nursing continues to evolve with new roles, titles, as well as creative ways we utilize our knowledge. Looking ahead, our Fall 2024 newsletter will focus on unconventional nursing roles. We discovered several alumni whose nursing careers took them way beyond what they learned at Mercy. If you have (or had) a position that utilized your nursing background in a unique way, please tell us about it. Perhaps you have a nursing story of how you impacted a patient's life. Or maybe you're volunteering for a church or charity in your community. Please share with us by sending an email to us at [mercyalums@gmail.com](mailto:mercyalums@gmail.com). Also, if you are considering going back to school or you're already enrolled, please do not forget about our Mercy Alumni scholarship availability. See inside for the application process.

We are grateful our membership continues to grow. Once again, we're offering a buy-one-get-one-free membership for new members. The membership form is in the back of this newsletter. We are asking for alumni members to assist the board – especially those who are knowledgeable about social media and websites. If you can help, please send an email to [mercyalums@gmail.com](mailto:mercyalums@gmail.com).

Looking forward to seeing you all on April 13th at the Spring Fling.

Regards,

**Marian Kowatch Bindas, 1985**

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

#### President

Marian Kowatch Bindas '85

#### Treasurer

Sister Carolyn Schallenberger, RSM

#### Director of MHSN

Angela Balistrieri '96

### COMMITTEES

#### Spirituality

Linda Dunlop Fowler '62

#### Education

Debbie Lindsey Evers '75

Maureen Melia Chadwick '84

Michele Buraczewski '86

#### Social

Theresa Brown Krzemien '73

#### Membership

Kathy Corcoran Morouse '80

#### Communication

Dorothy Kornosky Mayernik '67

Mary Ann Curley McDonough '75

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joanne Griffin Lowrie '57

Kathy Ungerman Noorbakhsh '78

Margie Thompson '84

Deborah Ehland Pesanka '89

Jennifer Simmen Stolar '96

Corie Greece Schultheis '07

## SPRING FLING APRIL 13, 2024

**Celebrating Sister Carolyn's  
70th Anniversary  
as a Sister of Mercy**

**11 am Mass  
Mercy Hospital Chapel**

**12 Noon Luncheon  
Friendship - Fun - Raffles**

## CONNECT WITH US!

Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Pittsburgh

[www.mhsnpittsburghalumni.com](http://www.mhsnpittsburghalumni.com)

Email: [mercyalums@gmail.com](mailto:mercyalums@gmail.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Mercy-Hospital-School-of-Nursing-Alumni-Association/100063573370678/>

## FROM THE DESK OF SISTER CAROLYN



Dear Friends,

Your kind words in the last newsletter were a surprise and very humbling. Thank you for sharing incidences that I had forgotten. Your comments were interesting and entertaining.

Hopefully, you can attend the Spring Fling on April 13th. The MHSN Board wants to celebrate my 70th anniversary of being a Sister of Mercy. I have one request. **Please no gifts. I have been abundantly blessed and at this time am downsizing and minimizing. I am on the downward slope of my life's journey.**

Just come and enjoy friendships and a good meal that you don't have to prepare!

It will be fun to be with you. Blessings to all.

Fondly,  
Sister Carolyn

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## UPMC Mercy Hospital School of Nursing UPDATE

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By Angela Balistrieri '96  
Director, School of Nursing

Hello Alumni Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. I am pleased to tell you that the school of nursing is doing well and continues to grow. In 2023, we saw a lot of positive changes to our school. We started a second admission class; students can now enter the program in both May and September. We doubled the September enrollment, admitting 134 students.

We brought back the tuition forgiveness program where students can receive help with their tuition while they are in the program in exchange for a work commitment with UPMC post-graduation.



We graduated 75 students in 2023. Both graduations were held at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall in Oakland. They were beautiful ceremonies where students received both their diploma and Mercy School of Nursing pin. We are proud to say that our NCLEX pass rate for 2023 was 89%. We continue to grow and change to meet the ever-changing needs of today's students and health care.

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# Mercy Angels

*Alumni who have passed away since September 1, 2023  
and alumni from previous years that family members recently wrote in to let us know*



Alverda Mullen Squires	05/29/17	1945
Leona Colarusso Bodner	02/17/23	1946
Helen L. Gallena	06/19/23	1947
Mary Clare Logan Baddington	10/16/15	1947
Elaine Newcomb Martin	06/29/23	1948
Aileen Boyle Lyons	02/15/23	1949
Helen Ventura Meehan	01/01/23	1949
Leona M. Fitsch Stout	08/09/23	1950
Jean Marie Becker Scheeser	02/04/24	1951
Rosana Reinsel Longacre	04/02/22	1951
Kathleen Reardon DeFazio	07/01/14	1951
Joan Reich McKissick	02/19/23	1952
Dolores Schreiner Iannacchione	01/12/22	1953
Constance Novak	05/04/23	1953
Margaret Sughrue Ruff	08/07/23	1953
Isabella C. Connelly Kelly	11/12/23	1953
Patricia McBride Gallager	09/20/20	1954
Ann J. Dellavechia Collette	01/04/23	1954
Joan Rosaline Colarusso	xx/xx/xx	1954
Mary Ursula Murtha Oppman Vozar	05/12/23	1955
Mary Martha Povich Jennings	10/18/23	1955
Margaret Neuhard Bridge	03/03/23	1957
Patricia McHugh Fastrich	04/18/22	1958
Helen Marie Bzinak Gibbons	05/20/23	1958
Mary Ann Kocan	06/12/22	1959
Molly Newman Winer	08/26/23	1959
Mary P. O'Donnell Koval	08/05/23	1960
Gretchen DeanA Johnson	04/05/23	1960
<del>Mary Louise McCrosby Wood</del>	<del>xxxxxx/xx/xx</del>	<del>xxxxxx</del>
Elizabeth Ann Carrera Thomas	11/04/22	1961
Patricia Pala Logan	10/28/23	1962
Patricia Hagan Murray	10/14/23	1966
Barbara Ann Sigler	12/23/23	1967
Bonita "Bunny" Easter Schmidt	02/19/23	1971
Mary Lou Bonner Anderson	04/12/23	1972
Sherri Lynn Frick Freiters	04/27/20	1982
Melissa Sasso	06/05/23	1984
Charles A. Roskos	08/15/22	1992
Kristina Price Fodge	07/22/14	2013

**If you hear sad news of a classmate passing away, please let us know so we can send a card of condolence to the family.**

# MEMORIAL MASS NOVEMBER 18, 2023

On November 18, 2023 Mercy Alumni gathered in the Mercy Hospital Holy Family Chapel for the annual Memorial Mass for our Mercy Angels. This was the first in-person event since Covid.

The altar area was decorated in a Sunflower theme. The Mercy cap was displayed on a stand next to a poster with the names of Mercy Angels from January 1, 2020 to August 31, 2023. Mercy Hospital Chaplain Father Albie Schempp offered the Mass. Father Albie's homily spoke to his deep love and respect for nurses. He reflected on how the Sunflower's face always looks toward the sun and teaches us to always look above at God's own perfect Son. The Angels of Allegheny conducted a touching tribute to our Mercy Angels. There was not a dry eye in the chapel. At the conclusion, we all sang the Mercy Alma Mater. Following the group photo, we walked over to Clark Auditorium for lunch, sharing updates, and reminiscing.

Many thanks to the coordinators of the gathering: Sister Carolyn, Linda Dunlop Fowler '62, and Theresa Brown Krzemien '73.



## NEWS & NOTES

### HELP WANTED

■ We're seeking help to manage our Facebook page and update our website [mhsnpittsburghalumni.com](http://mhsnpittsburghalumni.com). If this is something you're good at, please volunteer to help. Email [mercyalums@gmail.com](mailto:mercyalums@gmail.com)

### SPRING FLING BASKETS NEEDED

■ We'd like to have a few baskets for the Spring Fling Chinese Auction. If you would like to donate a basket, email Theresa Brown Krzemien [theresakrzemien@gmail.com](mailto:theresakrzemien@gmail.com)

### CLASS REPRESENTATIVES NEEDED

■ We continue to try to locate Mercy Alumni. Please volunteer as a Class Rep and help us locate your classmates so we can add them to our newsletter mailing list. Email us: [mercyalums@gmail.com](mailto:mercyalums@gmail.com)

### ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT ISSUE - FALL

■ "Unconventional nursing roles" will be featured. Let us know how you are using (or used) your nursing background in a unique way in either a professional position or volunteering in your church or community. We already have several alumni to write about and are sure there must be more.

■ Recent graduates, let us know how your first nursing position is going.

■ We need ideas for future events and projects.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### MHSN ALUMNA AWARDED THE BENEMERENTI MEDAL

Bishop Michael Olson announced that Pope Francis has bestowed the Benemerenti Medal on 15 Catholic faithful who have provided exceptional service to the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas.

Among the honorees was **Nancy Vaughn Eder, Class of 1978**. Nancy was recognized for her more than 25 years of "exemplary commitment to the ongoing medical care for the priests, seminarians, and the Catholic schools, and most especially her creative response and implementation of COVID-19 protocols throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth."



Nancy Vaughn Eder

Congratulations Nancy! This is such an honor for you and an honor for all of us in the nursing profession – especially Mercy nurses. You do us proud!

## SCHOLARSHIP CORNER

**The Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association awards scholarships to any alumni member who is pursuing an advanced degree in nursing.**

**Applicant must be a dues-paying member of the Alumni Association for at least 2 years, be enrolled in a BSN, MSN, DNP, or PhD program, and submit a letter of need and a copy of enrolled courses as well as the cost of said courses.**

**To Apply, please submit a letter of need and your course info to:**

**Michele Buraczewski, RN, MSN  
MHSN Alumni Association  
PO Box 53123  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Email:  
[buraczewskim@upmc.edu](mailto:buraczewskim@upmc.edu)**



Whether it's independent study, on the job training, seminars, staff development, or college courses...

**"Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses. We must be learning all of our lives." - Florence Nightingale**

# ALUMNI NEWS & MEMORIES:



Ann Ochs Slike, Carol Nelson Westwood, Molly Newman Winer, Daneen Riorden Calhoun

## ■ Dear Mercy Friends,

My dear friend and classmate Molly passed on Aug. 26, 2023.

We enjoyed 67 years of wonderful times together with travels, chats, and all because Nelson & Newman were next door to each other in our Mercy dorm. Please accept this donation in her memory.

Enclosed is a photo of 4 Mercy girls celebrating Carol's anniversary (50) in 2012!

**Carol Nelson Westwood**  
Class of 1959

■ It is with pleasure and pride I receive the alumni news through the years since graduation. Recent publications are "show stoppers" in each case. Also the offer of tuition loan forgiveness is forward thinking and useful for many. Yes, keep growing! Go Mercy Pittsburgh!

**Pat Collins Ryan '57**



WE WANT TO  
HEAR FROM YOU!



Search your closets, albums, wherever you have your old pictures and memories!

Submit what you find to:  
Mercyalums@gmail.com

We will add them to the newsletter, Facebook and/or the website. Please remember to add names and graduation years!

■ Hello,

It will soon be 3 years since I retired from Mercy/UPMC Mercy after working there for 44 years. That does not include the 2 years that I went to nursing school. Such an experience, where I met so many people, especially some very important life-long friends.

I still live in Pittsburgh but spend a lot of time traveling to New York City and St. Pete Beach, Florida where our daughters live. And more time in Florida where our two grandchildren live.

There are people and a 'few' things I miss about working, but it's so nice to have all the "PTO" you need. I worked many departments 8 MT, Recovery Room, Cath Lab, Short Stay, Outpatient Surgery, OR holding, Cardiology Stress Lab, Jack of all trades!

I will always have a special place in my heart for Mercy and cherish the memories from MHSN.

Sincerely,  
**Loretta Walsh Bucci**  
Class of 1976

# ALUMNI NEWS & MEMORIES CONTINUED

■ Greetings Mercy Alumni,

I really enjoyed the Fall Newsletter. Thank you. Nancy Panicella Weiss along with Kathleen Reardon DeFazio and I became friends 72 years ago as we began our nursing studies.

Kathleen met her eternal reward in Heaven on July 22, 2014. Nancy and I have remained good friends all these years.

We both celebrate our 90th birthdays this year. Mine in September with family & friends in Pompano Beach, FL. Nancy will celebrate her 90th Nov.11 with family and friends in Tallmadge, Ohio. We visit on occasion & frequently talk by phone. It has truly been a “blessing” seeing these three families grow.

I do hope that you will treasure the friendships you’ve made at Mercy and will continue through the years. They are ‘priceless’.

My wish for those who have remained from the Class of 1954, that they enjoy life with Health and Happiness.

Sincerely,  
**Ruth E. Zabaglo Migliorelli**  
 Class of 1954



Photo by Ruth Zabaglo Migliorelli. Nancy Panicella Weiss along with Kathleen Reardon DeFazio in 1954.

Thank you **Joann Donahue ‘56** for sharing these wonderful photos.

AUGUST 1956  
 Celebrating Graduation

50th Reunion 2006



## ALUMNI NEWS &amp; MEMORIES CONTINUED

In 1959 as a high school graduate, God and my RN mother knew better than I, what I should do with my life. Those days, girls listened to their mothers, so I entered the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing. There were over 100 nursing students in my class, ultimately 100 of us graduated in 1959! We formed a 'sisterhood' because we needed one another to help us through clinicals.

The oftentimes sad, sometimes exciting, sometimes depressing experiences I had often led me to the (pay) phone to tell my mom I was coming home, because this was SO hard. By age 19, I had delivered a baby (just me and the mom) and had patients die in my arms!

My parents always made sure I was back at school before curfew! Those three years of training made me a confident, strong, fearless, compassionate, resourceful woman, all with God's help and my mom's encouragement.

After graduation in 1959, I worked in Pediatrics at Mercy until 1969. I moved to Toledo and was Head Nurse of Pediatrics for 10 years at the Medical College of Ohio (MCO). Because we were a tertiary care unit, after 10 years, I took a position as Patient Care Coordinator in the General Internal Medicine Clinic, until I retired from there in 1996. Then as the Quality Review Nurse for Mercy Health System, I reviewed records and offices of many of the residents, both Peds and GIM, during my 25 years at MCO...a really fun job! I retired 5 years ago, at age 80, after a MARVELOUS career!

**Judy Miller Blochinger**  
Class of 1959

Just a note to let you know how excellent the training for the 1953-56 class was. I graduated in 1956. I had to take 2 buses to get Mercy from Clairton and working shifts was no picnic. In April 1957 I went to McKeesport Hospital. The Head Nurse was leaving in August (men's Medical Unit-26 bed ward). I was called to the Nursing Director's office (wondering what I did wrong). The Director said, "I would like you to replace the head nurse." I told her I couldn't because I enrolled in Duquesne and you have 4 of your McKeesport graduates working there. In essence, she told me she would pick who she wanted. After 3 calls down to her office, I accepted and went to Duquesne night school. Was Head Nurse of the men's medical unit until after my second daughter was born and I was pregnant with my third in 1963. Received many compliments from doctors during that time—all thanks to My Mercy Days. Sister Carolyn started with our class till she went to the nunnery—as she called it.

I just want you younger girls and boys to know Mercy always put out special nurses.

Thanks for keeping the Alumni going. At 88 I can't drive into the city for functions (would love to) but enjoy reading about our school & hospital. My sister, Concetta Thomas, her daughter, Sherlyn Thomas Lyons and sister-in-law, Mary Alexis Bonadio are all Mercy grads and my brother Dr. Pete Bonadio did a residency there.

P.S. Still have my cape if needed for the archives.

Take care,

**Cathy Bonadio Schehr**  
Class of 1956



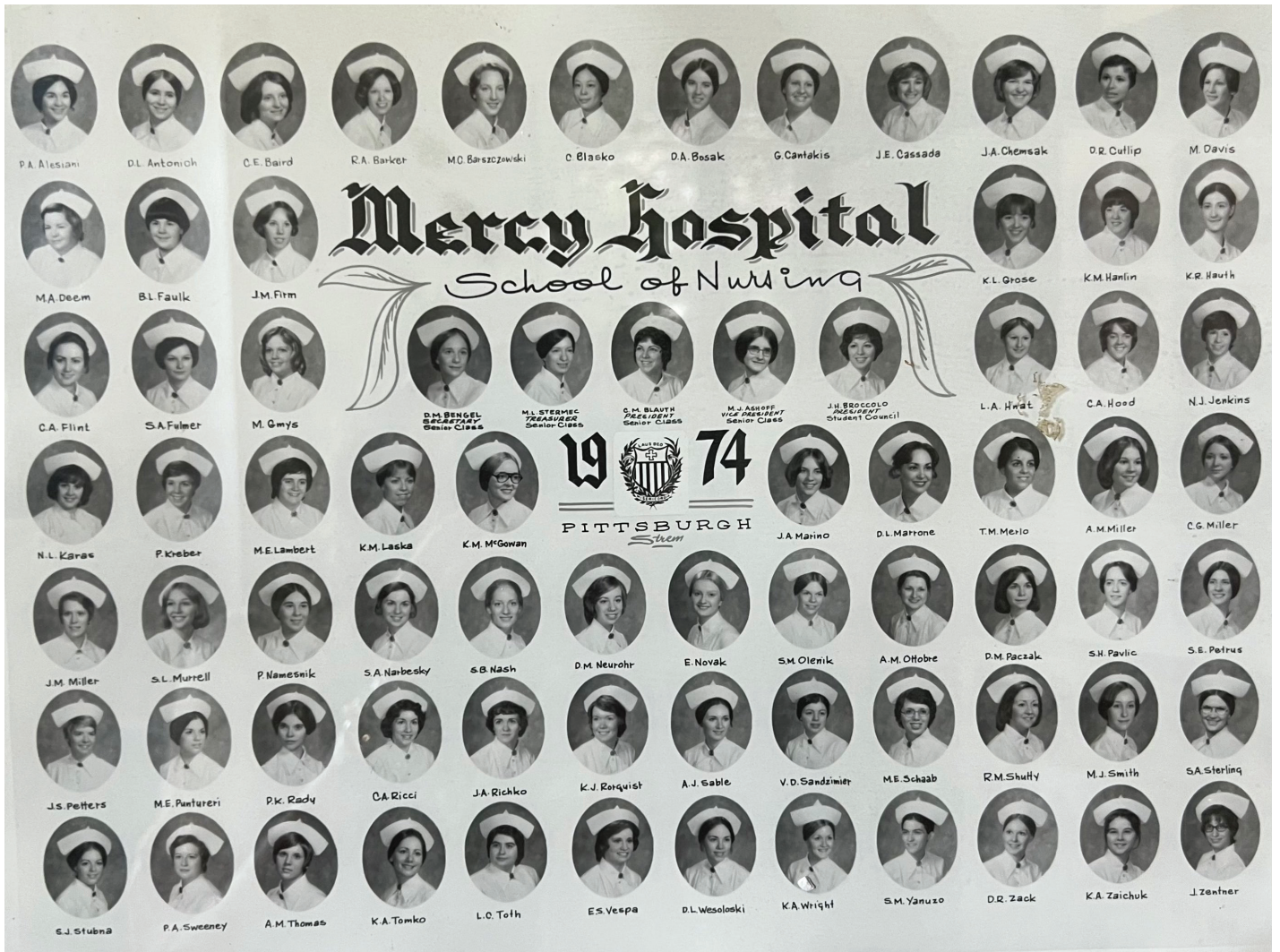
"The most beautiful things in life are not things; they are moments and memories that we keep close to our hearts forever."

- Author Unknown



CONGRATS TO  
MERCY GRADS  
CELEBRATING  
JUBILEE  
ANNIVERSARIES

1974 - 50 YEARS  
1999 - 25 YEARS



# HOW TO PLAN A CLASS REUNION

## By Theresa Brown Krzemien '73

Are you thinking of planning a reunion but don't know where to start? Start by remembering WHY you would like to get together again. Reunions reinforce that special common bond that was shared as a Mercy nursing student. It is an opportunity to renew friendships. Meeting again reinvigorates the spirit. It is a time to talk about the good old days and laugh about unforgettable antics.

The time spent as a nursing student was intense. Wonderful friendships were formed as we helped each other get through the rigorous classes and clinical training. Mercy's exceptional educational experience is the reason we grew and developed into the professional nurses we are today.

I have had the pleasure of being involved with diverse types of reunion parties. Each reunion has been a beautiful experience and well worth the effort.

Here are other considerations for planning a reunion:

### WHO IS INVITED?

- A small group of friends
- The hallway of friends in the dorm
- The entire graduating class
- Employees you worked with at Mercy Hospital
- Directors of Nursing/Instructors
- Spouses

### WHAT TYPE OF GATHERING?

- One day
- Long weekend
- Week visit
- Destination vacation
- Breakfast, luncheon or dinner
- Picnic
- Pot-luck dinner
- Restaurant
- Sporting event gathering
- Cookie exchange
- Tea party
- Mercy Hospital Dining Hall

### WHEN?

Check Pittsburgh calendar of activities for functions that may affect hotel accessibility and prices.

### WHERE?

- Pittsburgh or suburbs
- Destination get-a-way location
- Hotel suggestions

### HOW?

- Assume responsibility for coordination and delegation of duties or choose a lead coordinator.
- Pick an all-star group of classmates that will work well together.
- Make planning a collaborative effort.
- Choose delegation of duties based on skills, talents, availability and willingness to do the task.
- Assign tasks with a timeline and due date.
- Keep of list of things to do and review at each committee meeting.

### ACTIVITIES

- Avoid over scheduling the day of the reunion (include time for reconnecting, talking, reminiscing and laughing)
- Mass in the Chapel and School of Nursing Tour
- Suggest other activities to enjoy before the day of the reunion (strip district/ casino/ ballgame/ museum/ festival/ zoo/ theater/ shopping/ concert)

### EVENT COMMUNICATION

- Mercy Alumni Facebook page
- Email
- Phone
- Word of mouth
- Alumni newsletter

The biggest challenge is contacting classmates. Divide and conquer the task with committee members. If this is a class reunion, find your graduation picture to refresh your memory and take it to every committee meeting. Use a copy of the picture to write in name changes. (Name tags are a MUST! Use the graduation portrait on each individual name tag including maiden and married name IN LARGE PRINT.)

Finding classmates is an investigative endeavor. Use google search, people finder, white pages, places of employment and the alumni records.

There are more details that I can share with you from my experiences to make your reunion a fun and memorable event, such as, making your invitation, creating a theme, preparing for Mass in the chapel, meal planning, table centerpieces, gift basket raffle, and helpful Mercy Hospital contacts.

Give yourself ample time to plan the event.

And my final advice is...Join, support and participate in the Mercy Alumni Assn. to keep the legacy of THE MERCY NURSE alive. Every meeting and social function is a mini reunion and brings your heart and mind back home.

To get your party started, feel free to contact me at [Therasakrzemien@gmail.com](mailto:Therasakrzemien@gmail.com)

To increase Alumni membership in 2024, the Board has decided to offer a Buy One Get One sale! You can bring a Mercy graduate (who is currently not a member) into the Alumni for free with your \$20 yearly paid dues. It's as easy as adding her/his name and address to the attached dues form. Thank you for helping to expand the number of registered Alumni.

**Alumni Association Dues Renewal 2024**  
**Please detach and return with your dues/donation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**First Maiden Last Class**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email address Phone number

**I am gifting a free 1-year membership to:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**First Maiden Last Class**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email address Phone number

\$20 membership \_\_\_\_\_ Donation to MHSN Alumni Association \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check payable to MHSN Alumni Association**

**Mail to:**

**MHSN Alumni Association, P.O. Box 53123, Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

**SPRING FLING - APRIL 13, 2024**

11 am Mass - Mercy Hospital Chapel Name \_\_\_\_\_

12 noon Luncheon, Fellowship,  
 Chinese Auction Class of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Celebrate Sister Carolyn!

**RSVP before April 1, 2024** Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form with check for \$35. City State ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: MHSN Alumni Association  
 P.O. Box 53123 Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Check for \$35 enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

**MHSN Alumni Association**  
**P.O. Box 53123**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15219**