



## Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Newsletter Fall 2024

### FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Alumni,

I write to you on this fall day reflecting on our past events of 2024. It has been quite a year for the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association.

Our Memorial Mass of 2023 was our first in person Mass since Covid. It was a remarkable way to honor the memories of our Mercy Nurses who have passed away. Father Albie presided, we sang and reflected on our nurses, their sacrifices, as well as their love and compassion of the nursing profession. We also had with us the Angels of Allegheny, who conducted a touching tribute to our Mercy Angels. I look forward to our next Memorial Mass on November 16, 2024. See inside for more details.

I am grateful for those who attended the Spring Fling in April 2024. We had such a nice turn out. It was quite a special event honoring Sister Carolyn's jubilee year. I must admit it was a fantastic party and very enjoyable. We are planning another Spring Fling in 2025. I look forward to a day of celebration as we gather and have fun being part of the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association, but we also want to emphasize the need for self-care for you as a nurse... stay tuned for more details.

Our Spirituality Committee continues to send cards to the families of our deceased Mercy Alumni. We appreciate your emails and notes about those who have passed away.

Our Scholarship donation was very generous this year. We received an anonymous donation for \$10,000.00 which we gave to the School of Nursing Scholarship Committee in September of 2024. We appreciate the donations and support of our Alumni Association nurses in addition to our nursing students at the school of Nursing. Any donations are greatly appreciated and can be sent to us via MHSN Alumni Association, PO Box 53123 Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

New business to review: We are considering converting the newsletter from paper to all electronic. Your feedback will be appreciated, so please send an email to us at [mercyalumni@gmail.com](mailto:mercyalumni@gmail.com). Please note, we post our newsletter to both our Facebook page and website.

We hope you like the articles sent in by our fellow Mercy alumni on their "unconventional" nursing roles, along with personal and professional updates.

Once again, we are offering buy-one-get-one-free membership for new members, so please sign up one of your classmates or workmates. The membership form is in the back of the newsletter. Your membership is very important to all of us. Dues provides financial support for all that we do as a group, and new members bring us new and better ideas. Remember, our purpose is to keep the mission of the School of Nursing alive, support our alumni, and reflect on the good times and good life of being a Mercy Nurse.

All are warmly invited to attend the Memorial Mass on November 16. Looking forward to seeing you.

Regards,

**Marian Kowatch Bindas '85**

### MEMORIAL MASS

NOVEMBER 16, 2024  
11 A.M.

MERCY HOSPITAL CHAPEL  
FOLLOWED BY A LUNCHEON  
IN THE CLARK AUDITORIUM

RSVP FORM ON PAGE 15

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Marian Kowatch Bindas '85

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Sister Carolyn Schallenberger, RSM

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## FROM THE DESK OF SISTER CAROLYN

September 6, 2024

Dear MHSN Alumni,

My grateful heart is overflowing with requested blessings for each of you.

It began with the happy activities of the Spring Fling. The many comments that were heard are all of gratitude and happiness. As far as I know, everyone had an enjoyable day. I thank you for making everyone full of joy.

I thank you all for your prayerful expressions for the repose of the soul of my sister, Judy Fisher, Class of 1960, who died suddenly on August 27th, with what I believe was a massive myocardial infarction. I call it a blessing because there was no long illness or hospitalization.

Thank you all for being prayerful, compassionate and competent persons who share, or shared, your talents caring for God's people.

I love you all.

Blessings,

Sr. 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,

Our School of Nursing continues to thrive and grow. We are proud to announce our most recent NCLEX Score of 89% for 2023.

We just admitted 180 new students on September 3rd, taking us to over 300 students in the program.

We had an August graduation at Soldiers and Sailors. Connie Henry, Director of Nursing UPMC Mercy; and a Mercy Alumni; was our graduation speaker. She provided many thoughtful words and insight regarding her love of nursing and her nursing career.

We continue to be grateful for all your support of the students, school and alumni.

Best,  
**Angela Balistrieri '96**



August 15, 2024 — 49 students graduated from UPMC Mercy School of Nursing. Join us in congratulating them!

As a gift to the new Mercy Hospital School of Nursing graduates, the Alumni Association continues to honor the tradition of gifting their first year's dues to the Association.  
A warm welcome to our newest alumni!  
Best wishes as you begin  
your professional lives as Mercy Nurses!

# Mercy Angels



## NEWS & NOTES

■ Many items these days are affected by “shrinkflation”. The Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association Newsletter – thanks to your written and photographic contributions – is not suffering from the “Shrink,” but we are affected by the “Inflation.”

With the latest printing and postage increases, each newsletter edition will be close to \$2 each to print and mail to the 2,263 alumni on our mailing list.

To help defray these costs we are requesting to please notify us if you would like an email version or if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter. Also, if you have an address change, please inform us as the post office does not return undelivered mail. The Alumni Association can be reached at PO BOX 53123 Pgh. PA 15219 or [mercycalums@gmail.com](mailto:mercycalums@gmail.com). As always, please share your newsletter with other Alums and have them join the Association.

■ **The Class of 1975** will be planning a 50th reunion sometime in 2025. If you're interested, please contact Eve Rozinsky Medich – [Evierose123@aol.com](mailto:Evierose123@aol.com), Deb Lindsey Evers – [Dlevers@carlow.edu](mailto:Dlevers@carlow.edu), Mary Ann Curley McDonough – [macm915@gmail.com](mailto:macm915@gmail.com), Joan Andrulonis DeAngelis (no email), or [mercycalums@gmail.com](mailto:mercycalums@gmail.com). Visit our Facebook page: Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Class of 1975.



Stop reading for a minute and please remit your dues!

Dorothy Smith Haley	06/23/24	1947
Jane Laber Criner	04/04/24	1950
Janet Eichner Carns	02/09/22	1950
Delores Kilvady O'Brien	12/27/13	1951
Joan Kelly DeRosa	01/09/22	1951
Frances Collins "Dee" Reck	05/16/24	1951
Elizabeth Scarsellato Jawelak	04/15/24	1954
Mary Martha Povich	10/18/23	1955
Shirley Anne Stephenson Geary	08/31/24	1955
Elaine Kocal Koon	02/08/24	1956
Julia D'Andrea Castelnuovo	01/28/24	1959
Carol Jordan Johnson	03/23/24	1960
Carol Komara Arendas	09/06/21	1960
Judith Schallenberger Fisher	08/27/24	1960
Nellie Hogan Brown	03/03/24	1961
Mary Gallagher McCluskey	02/22/24	1962
Anna Kathryn Vajentic	06/17/23	1965
Maxine Rosemary O'Brien Vargo	08/31/24	1965
Mary Lou Yocky Joseph	04/30/24	1967
Sally Anne Timlin	02/21/24	1984
Mary Frances Walsh Eberz	03/07/24	1984
Elaine Thomas	03/18/23	1985

*Please accept our sincere apologies for the error in the Spring issue listing Mary Lou McCosby Ward.*

*We received her email letting us know she's very much alive! A triple-check system is now in place so this doesn't happen again.*

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

## CONNECT WITH US!

Mercy Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Pittsburgh

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

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

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



# SPRING FLING 2024

Celebrating

Sister Carolyn's 70th Anniversary as a Sister of Mercy!





# SPRING FLING 2024 CONTINUED





# ALUMNI NEWS & MEMORIES:



Judy Meneice Dillon, Judy Murphy Harwood, Linda Dunlop Fowler, Julie Homan Hovis

## ■ Hi...1962ers

Our Alumni Association could use some funds!  
Why don't we as a CLASS make a difference!!!

Let's make a donation to our ALUMNI ASSOCIATION to provide scholarships to our alumni working on a BSN...MSN...or a Doctoral degree... Every little bit helps!

We can make a difference!!!

## Memorial Mass – November 16, 2024

*"To everything there is a season,  
a time for every activity under heaven."*

It is a season for rekindling old friendships, making new ones, and remembering those who have passed before us. Such is the purpose of the Memorial Mass. This year our celebrant is one of our own! Fr. Jim Dowds is the son of Mary Jo Stewart Dowds '42 and brother of Maggie Dowds McWilliams '76. AND he's the former Musical Director at Mercy Hospital.

**Memorial Mass  
November 16, 2024**

**Mass @ 11 am in Mercy Hospital Chapel  
Luncheon in Clark Auditorium**

*Chicken Parmesan, Pasta, Salad, Rolls, Cake*

Please RSVP with your \$25 payment before  
November 2, 2024.

Fill in and mail the RSVP form on page 15.

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'll add them to the newsletter, Face-  
book and/or the web site. Please remember  
to add names and graduation years!



Tyler Nobles and Colin Quinn '20

## ■ Tyler Nobles '20

I currently work as a dialysis nurse for DaVita and Fresenius Kidney Care. I also work as a school nurse for Baltimore County public schools.

Two classmates I keep in touch with are Nate Maving and Colin Quinn. Colin graduated with me in August 2020. Picture of us above.

One suggestion is you guys could plan a reunion or gathering at a restaurant or park for past students and teachers to attend.

# ALUMNI NEWS & MEMORIES CONTINUED

## ■ Peggy Powell Prather '64

Confession: Sometime during our senior year (1963-1964) a few of my close classmates and I learned that "Dial M for Murder" would be the feature on the late night movie on TV that evening. As many of you will remember, we were to be in our rooms at 10 pm with lights out shortly after. We decide we wanted to watch the movie and knew the house mother, Kay, would never permit us to watch in the Smoker (lounge) where the TV sat. So we decided we would steal the TV, a big heavy console, and set it up in one of our rooms. That's exactly what we did. Someone made popcorn and this small band of miscreants watched the movie. During the returning of the heavy piece of furniture, Kay turned up on rounds. We were all in the Smoker in the dark and the TV was sitting in the middle of the room. We told her we just couldn't sleep, and a couple quickly lit up cigarettes. She turned the overhead light on and never noticed the TV being out of place in the middle of the room. She told us to get to bed and went about her rounds. Once she was gone, we returned the TV to it's rightful place and went to bed. We were never caught, but who knows what might have happened had we been!

## ■ Linda Ghenne McNeil '63

In the early 1960s nursing students could not be married and were required to live on campus in the dormitory floors of the nursing school building. We were expected to attend Mass at 6 am. There were house mothers who did "bed checks" at night to ensure we were not out past 9 pm. If we left campus, we had to sign out and say where we were going and with whom. The majority

of our instructors were nuns wearing white habits - the ones that covered all but their face and hands. They were strict with everyone, Chief of Staff to janitors. I have a vivid memory of the month spent at St. Francis for Psych serve. At that time electro shock therapy was used - shocking to observe it - it appeared to improve schizophrenic symptoms. Students wore caps, graduates had caps with a long gold pin through back. Meals were in the cafeteria (fried baloney was frequently served). Doctors, residents and interns were good to the students. My favorite serve was the Operating area. I worked at Sunrise in Las Vegas Nevada, St. Mary's in Long Beach, California, St. Joseph's in Phoenix, Arizona, V.A. in Seal Beach, California (that was a favorite). I retired as Chief of Nursing at Arizona State Student Health. No regrets, loved every minute.

## ■ Debbie Kimmel Fountaine '72

I was fortunate to have done many interesting things as a Mercy grad and here's one of them. I was a supervisor for an Adult Day Care in Kent, OH. The hockey team's season from Kent State was canceled (the reason unknown to me) and the hockey players came to volunteer at the Adult Day Care. We would sometimes go to the ice arena, and the players would push the clients around the ice in their wheelchairs or chairs. What fun everyone had, and it was a joy to see. The social studies students and special ed students would also come and volunteer so that the clients had a diverse group of volunteers to assist them. It was a learning experience for me also. Any job I had I tried to involve students so they could have first hand experience. When I worked as a visiting nurse I had the Kent state nursing students help with wellness clinics and flu clinics.

## ■ William Brody '18

I'm living in Fort Lauderdale and am admitted into Barry University's CRNA program expecting to graduate in May 2027. Once I graduate, I will have my DNP and also be an APRN per Florida state practice law. I moved to Florida the day after taking the NCLEX, began working on a telemetry floor, transitioned over to the medical ICU in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and then later moved into the CVICU at a Level 1 facility in October 2021. At this unit, I obtained my CCRN, took care of advanced heart failure, heart transplants, CABG, valve replacements, vascular surgeries, and various devices ranging from CRRT to ECMO. I wanted to advance my professional practice because I love the science and art of surgery, pharmacology, pathophysiology, and the amount of training and respect that follows being a nurse anesthetist. *Regards,*  
William Brody, BSN, RN, CCRN, SRNA

## SCHOLARSHIP CORNER

**"Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses.**

**We must be learning all our lives."**

*-Florence Nightingale*

The Alumni Association awards scholarships to any alumni 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 your course information to:

Michele Buraczewski, RN, MSN  
MHSN Alumni Association  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Email:  
buraczewskim@upmc.edu

# UNCONVENTIONAL NURSING ROLES

*un•con•ven•tion•al adjective*  
*definition: not based on or*  
*conforming to what is generally done*

The mission of Mercy Hospital School of Nursing is to foster the development of an entry-level graduate nurse who is prepared to transition to practice as a member of the inter-professional healthcare team...in the delivery of safe, quality nursing care.

We learned that many Alums built on their great education to branch out in other healthcare settings. Here are some Mercy Alumni who went above and beyond.



■ **Grace Hogan '41**  
*submitted by her daughter Donna Calvert, PT, PhD*

My mother, Grace Hogan graduated from the Mercy Hospital nursing program in 1941. She then worked at Mercy Hospital until she joined the Navy Nurse Corps in August 1943, entering as a Lieutenant JG. While in the Navy for WW II, she served in the Pacific

on the hospital ship, the USS Benevolence. In early 1946 she was one of only 20 nurses who volunteered to be present on-board ship at the Bikini Atoll (a coral reef island in the Pacific Ocean) for the July 25, 1946 Operation Crossroads, an atomic bomb test. The bomb was detonated 90 feet underwater. Radioactive sea spray caused extensive contamination. My mother died in 1989 after a lifetime of chronic illness from the radiation exposure she experienced at this atomic test. *Read more in Wikipedia about this historic testing.* Grace served as a Navy nurse for 8 years, both on active duty and in the reserves. We thank Grace for her brave service to our country.



■ **Patricia Collins Ryan '57**

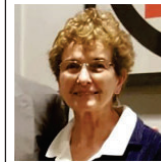
I stepped on the Pennsylvania Railroad Pullman car on the evening of July 1, 1959 in the suburb of Emsworth, PA with a ticket to Chicago, Illinois. It was my first of many train travel adventures. The next day I formally accepted the position I had interviewed for and been offered by the Northern Pacific railroad—I had responded to a posting in the American Journal of Nursing for a position as a Stewardess Nurse. On July 3, in uniform, I boarded train # 27 of the North Coast Limited in Union Station (Chicago) on my first shift bound for Seattle, WA. We were on duty for three roundtrips between Chicago and Seattle each month. Our role was to greet and welcome passengers and to add to the safety and confidence for everyone whether across the state or across the continent. A serendipitous bonus was reuniting to work and room with another Mercy graduate, Joann Peduzzi!



■ **Julia Lynn '58**

I graduated from Mercy in 1958 and returned to Mercy in 1965 to work in the first ICU there. Over the next 30 years I was a nurse manager and a case manager. In or around 1997 I joined Mercy's Parish Nurse Program and was assigned to St. John Vianney Parish on the Southside Hilltop. I covered the parish and the community, including Allentown, Beltzhoover, Mount Oliver, Arlington, Carrick, and Baldwin. At this time, Parish Nursing as a specialty practice was in its infancy, founded in 1985 by Rev. Dr. Granger Westberg. In 1992, Mercy became one of the first health systems to open a Parish Nurse Program to provide outreach to the community. Being such a new concept, there was no job description at that time. So, I along with the

Social Minister Sr. Rosemary Fleming did a community assessment and then did whatever we identified as was needed. Eventually the Lutheran, Methodist, and African Methodist Churches in those communities came together to form Hill Top Health Ministries. With their volunteer help I coordinated annual health fairs; Women to Women programs to educate in healthy eating and exercise; and parenting programs using expertise from Mercy Hospital. With the help of a Volunteer Trainer and volunteers, I also visited homebound parishioners and community residents who were isolated and at risk. In 2003, we received the Health Care Heroes Award, beating out UPMC and Highmark. I retired in 2004, but these 7 years were some of the most enriching of my career and I will always be grateful for the opportunity.



■ **Linda Dunlop Fowler '62**

With a nursing career spanning over 60 years, I have been given and earned opportunities to expand my knowledge. Twenty years into my career, as the Director of Inservice Education, when the electronic health record didn't exist, I was assigned to sit in Medical Records with insurance adjusters to review itemized bills. I was basically working for the defense (hospital) and showing the documentation of care provided. I discussed chart reviews with the in-house nurse/attorney. I was directed to the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants (AALNC). I joined to learn. While raising my children, I continued with my education. My terminal degree is a Doctorate in Public Health. Having experienced a middle management layoff, I tested and became a nursing home administrator. With my academic credentials and work experi-

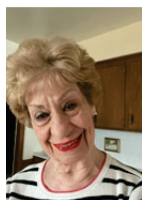
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## UNCONVENTIONAL NURSING ROLES CONTINUED

ence, I was ready to jump into Legal Nurse Consulting. The experienced Legal Nurse Consultants mentored me through my initial cases. At the height of my LNC career, I had over 95 open cases in various stages of litigation. As my career, now, is winding down, I can look back with pride that I AM A MERCY NURSE.

### ■ Nancy Freyer Wolford '64



I was a TourGuard Nurse for Gulf Oil Corporation! There were 12 of us and we traveled throughout the United States inspecting service stations for safety and cleanliness. It was a wonderful experience, and I met my husband in Texas.

### ■ Barbara Sigler '67 submitted by Dorothy Kornosky Mayernik '67



My childhood friend and Mercy classmate Barbara Sigler passed away last December, around the time we got

the idea of featuring unconventional nursing positions in this newsletter. Barb had an amazing career, and I'd like to share what I remember of it, with a little help from LinkedIn because Barb rarely talked about herself. Immediately following graduation in 1967, Barb started working at Pittsburgh's Eye and Ear Hospital. In 1971 she started classes at Pitt working on her BSN. In those days Pitt School of Nursing did not award any credits or allow challenging exams for diploma grads, so Barb had to earn all 130 credits, graduating in 1977. For the next 20 years, she was a Clinical Nurse Specialist, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, based at Eye and Ear Dept. of Otolaryngology. Here she worked with academic physicians in the office and hospital providing teaching and care for patients with head and

neck cancer. She served as president of the Society of Otorhinolaryngology and Head and Neck Nurses and began the journal *ORL – Head and Neck Nursing*, serving as editor for 15 years. In a casual conversation with Barb, I learned that she also wrote chapters on this topic in various Med-Surg books. I was dabbling in writing myself, so all of this really impressed me. Unknown to each other, in 1996 we both interviewed for the same position with a nursing book publisher. For me it was a shot in the dark, so I wasn't surprised to receive a rejection letter. The next time I saw Barb, she told me about her new job as Director, Book Publishing, for the Oncology Nursing Society at their national headquarters here in Pittsburgh. No wonder she got the job! As Director, Barb was responsible for identifying book topics and authors, acquiring book contracts, and supervising a staff of copy editors, content editors, administrative assistants, and a graphic designer. Barb also did technical/content editing herself, and during busy times she gave me technical editing jobs as a consultant. I loved working with Barb on those books. After 28 years with ONS, Barb retired. She continued her volunteer work on the board of directors of a nursing home, and I know a few individuals with health problems that she was helping...there were probably more. Barb was a wonderful example of a Mercy nurse who made significant contributions to our profession and cherished her many friends – especially Group 4, R - Z hallway, Class of 1967.

### ■ Sandie Wilson Colatrella '73

One of the advantages of being a nurse is the ability to evolve and reinvent your career. Opportunity sometimes comes in unexpected ways and so it was with me. While working as a Practice Manager and Director of an Outpatient Surgery Center, I also was consulting on health care design projects for at least 10 years. Clients were



looking to pull together design teams that had a stake in developing innovative care environments that were not just about building materials and paint colors. During this same period, I completed a certificate course to become a Legal Nurse Consultant concentrating on environment of care standards, compliance, and risk mitigation. These interests, along with a series of fateful events, found me being approached by an architect to start a business together focused on healthcare design and so, 18 years ago, Avanti Architecture was born. My primary responsibility is to be a liaison with the Owner's administrative and clinical staff, driving the design from the end-users' perspective. I oversee the clinical aspects of the design including patient and staff safety, infection control during construction, clinical equipment planning, and regulatory compliance. In the beginning, there was no clear job description, and I found myself reaching out to other nurses working within healthcare design; nurses who were also architects or engineers, nurse interior designers, nurses who work with contractors, nurses who worked in clinical equipment and healthcare furnishing research and development. I was fortunate to connect with a diverse and inspiring group of nurses that worked together to found and support the Nursing Institute for Healthcare Design. I have watched this group and the AALNC grow and define the role of the nurse specialists in both fields. When I'm asked how I qualify to contribute to space design, I tell them to look at what an architect and nurse have in common. Both are good at problem solving, are skilled in effective communication, and must be adaptable. Combining this with each profession's technical skills, it makes for a collaborative design team that is best able to create a dynamic, restorative environment which is rooted in evidence-based design. My work has led me to opportunities in both design research and writing in clinical design and medical-legal

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## UNCONVENTIONAL NURSING ROLES CONTINUED

fields. After 50 years as a nurse, I know the key to finding a rewarding, intellectually stimulating and satisfying career is to learn something new every day; to stay focused on your specialty but to network with passionate individuals, even if their passion is not yours; and to always keep your eyes open for a fork in the road that might lead you in a new and exciting direction. As they say, you won't find something if you don't look. *Sandie Colatrella, RN, BSN, CLNC, Avanti Architecture, VP, Healthcare Planning & Research*

### ■ Pat Crooks Liebman, '73



In the mid 70s, I was working as a team leader on 2 West when the JCAHO (then the JCAH) decided to add quality audits to the accreditation requirements. I was tapped and thus began my career in quality. It led me to the Professional Standards Review Organization, St Margaret Hospital and eventually Managed Care at the Traveler's Insurance Company. There I met another nurse with an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania who also focused on good patient care. When she became President/CEO of Keystone West (Highmark's managed care company) she asked me to join her. She had the utmost integrity and taught me how to develop quality provider networks, and review quality and utilization of resources with a focus on patient care.

When Presbyterian Hospital (MHCD, a predecessor of UPMC) decided to form a network (Tri-state) I was hired as the first executive. Tri-state eventually became the UPMC Health Plan and I was fortunate to be part of the development of what today is a very successful Health Plan. The focus was always on quality patient care as taught by Mercy Hospital School of Nursing. I learned to never stray from that goal, regardless of business goals. Patients and their care matters.

### ■ Ann Finch Lytle '73

What a ride this Vocation has Been!

After graduation I was employed in Mercy's Cardio Vascular Recovery Room, working alongside great physicians, residents and nursing management. The next 30 years was nursing in a small rural town in Western PA: Staff Nurse, Head Nurse of I.V. team, and Ambulatory Care. I went into the Management role and oversaw Ambulatory Care, Ambulatory Treatment (Endoscopy), and 4th Surgical. This encompassed: staffing, evaluations, capital, operational and personnel budgets.



Next I was given the opportunity as Nurse Consultant for building a free-standing Surgery Center. Architecture 101 was not a class offered in nursing school! This entailed overseeing construction/policy procedures, making a company logo, employee application, job descriptions, competency tests, physician block scheduling to name a few. Procuring all equipment and supplies for a free-standing multi-specialty 3 operating rooms and Endoscopy Suite. Upon opening became Clinical Director of Indiana Ambulatory Surgery Center for 6 years. Our consultant group then developed a second Surgery Center in St. Marys, PA. After being involved in numerous inspections with the Department of Health, Life Safety, Medicare deemed status and Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, I became a Nurse Surveyor for AAAHC in 2009.

For the past 15 years, I have been surveying Ambulatory Surgery Centers throughout the United States. This involves reviewing: Patient Rights and Responsibilities, Governance, Credentialing and Privileging, Peer Review, Administration, Quality of care provided, Quality Management and Improvement, Clinical Records and Health information, Infection prevention and Safety, Facilities and Environment, Anesthesia Care Services, Surgical and Related Services, Pharmaceutical Services, Pathology and Medical Laboratory Services, Diagnostic and other Imaging Services and

Health Education. As I stated in the beginning, these 50 plus years have been an Adventure! Thank You Mercy Hospital School of Nursing for this life!

### ■ Frances Mutolo '73

When I began my nursing studies in August 1971, I never dreamed that I would end up as an ordained clergy person! After graduation in 1973, I worked at Mercy Hospital, first caring for Head and Neck Cancer patients, then general Med-Surg on 10SE with Mrs. Schuster, and finally in the CCU under Julie



Lynn. I married Michael Malivuk, who was working as a Nursing Assistant in the ICU across the hall from CCU, and I left Mercy to do home care nursing out of East Suburban Hospital in Monroeville. After Michael graduated from the University of Pittsburgh Dental School, we moved to Uniontown and set up a dental practice. That was when I became an Office Manager.

In a small one-doctor office, job descriptions can be somewhat blurry, so it wasn't unusual for me to take x-rays, clean children's teeth, assist Mike with dental procedures, and call in prescriptions to pharmacies, as well as schedule, check-in and bill patients, and order supplies. There were also emergencies and anxious patients, staff issues, and accounting. All of this done without benefit of either computers or cell phones!

To dip my toes back into medicine, I taught CPR and Standard First Aid classes at the local Red Cross office. I also volunteered on the hotline for the Women's Abuse Shelter. Our children came to us through adoption from Korea, and I became a SAHM (stay-at-home-Mom).

In 1994 we moved to Colorado, and I continued teaching classes for sever-

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## UNCONVENTIONAL NURSING ROLES CONTINUED

al months. The children were getting older, and Mike joined a group practice, so I was no longer involved. Following a trip to Israel, I felt called to pursue Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church. I began my studies in 1996 and was ordained in 2000 at the age of 47. I worked with unhoused people and at food banks. I ran clothing and toy drives, was part of the weekly worship services, and supported the priest in caring for the church congregation. One activity of which I am most proud is joining the priest in collecting non-perishable food for the food bank. Every Thursday, she and I and my dog, Oliver, would pull a large wagon around the little town of Manitou Springs. We called it the Red Wagon Ministry, and we collected hundreds of pounds of food over four years.

I'm retired now, but nursing has given me confidence to pursue challenges throughout my life, as well as enabling me to care for the people in my life during their times of struggle (my Mom when she was dying, Michael after his motorcycle crash, and the children growing up). I will always be grateful to Mercy Hospital School of Nursing for enabling me to have a wonderfully rich and fulfilling life!

#### ■ Debbie Scheller Koch '73

Having graduated from Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, I learned from



my training how important it is to care for a person's spiritual needs. I worked for many years in traditional roles of nursing: neuro-surgical, ER, psych evaluation nurse, outpatient, and

home care. My pastor introduced me to Joy Conti who was manager of the Mercy Parish Nurse program which is how I discovered Parish Nursing – now referred to as Faith Community Nursing. I originally became involved volunteering at my own church – providing educational topics in the monthly

newsletter and holding blood pressure screenings during social events. I loved the concept of integrating body, mind, and spirit as a basis for educating others in managing their health.

Through the 30-hour Parish Nurse Training Course, I learned more about the fundamentals of Parish Nursing. A parish nurse assists and supports individuals focusing on the whole person with health promotion and disease prevention, with education to assume responsibility for their personal and family health, connecting them to resources, and by being their advocate when needed. Eventually I was hired for a paid position with the Mercy Parish Nurse program, serving the South Hilltop of Pittsburgh. The position was ecumenical working with 5 churches: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist and African Methodist. I was able to incorporate the fundamentals of Parish Nursing through providing health screenings and information through a yearly health fair which required planning and collaborating with various providers. At the local food bank, I provided blood pressure screenings and health information and worked in collaboration with Duquesne University pharmacy students who provided guidance with medication questions and health screenings. Focusing on wholistic care, I held monthly support meetings on timely topics, sometimes preparing my own and other times having guest speakers. I provided monthly health topics to be shared with all the churches through bulletins or newsletters and would speak at their services and social events as well as participate in community events. For those needing more individual attention, I made home visits and collaborated with physicians and community agencies, providing resource coordination. Working closely with recruiting and training volunteers in the churches and general community, we were able to provide friendly visits and transportation services.

The decision to be a Parish Nurse is

more about helping others than salary, more about connecting through faith which is a significant part of the wholistic approach. Healing takes into consideration the spiritual, physical, psychological, and social aspects of an individual to create a sense of balance with self, others, the environment, and a higher power to create wholeness, health, and a feeling of well-being. *For more information about Faith Community Nursing: [www.westberginstitute.org](http://www.westberginstitute.org)*

#### ■ Susan Pendrick Bainbridge '77

I worked for 19+ years as a Steel Mill nurse. Yes, I donned my hard hat, steel-toe shoes, and green protective jacket as I often had to go into the plant. Eventually becoming certified in Occupational Health, Case Management, Hearing Conservation, Spirometry, and Professional DATIA collector. I never dreamed about that in my white nurse's uniform back in 1977. Thank you Alumni Association for all you do!

#### ■ Andrea Tomich '86

In 1999 I started working in the field of developmental disabilities as a medical coordinator for 32 people living in intermediate care facilities for people with intellectual disability (ID). I did not know much about the population and can't say that I chose to work in this area. I had left hospital nursing and was picking up shifts at various places through a staffing agency, reviewing medical orders at group homes for people with ID. Eventually that agency hired me as their nurse. I found my niche there and have never looked back.

The agency had never had a nurse on staff, and so I designed and implemented a nursing program for the 32 people in these group homes. I wrote policies and procedures and trained caregivers and self-advocates (individuals with ID) in best practices and various medical conditions. The agency moved from a provisional license to being fully licensed and accredited in that area. That was one of the most satisfying moments in my career, and I knew that I had made a difference for these people. I learned so much

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## UNCONVENTIONAL NURSING ROLES CONTINUED

about this population and the disparities they face, and I knew there was more to do. I moved on to a healthcare quality unit (HCQU) in order to have a bigger impact. The Commonwealth of PA developed HCQUs to focus on improving health access and outcomes for people with ID. There are 8 HCQUs in PA, and no other state has a program of this type. Staff work directly with caregivers.

I have worked in the SW PA HCQU for nearly 20 years. I currently manage 7 nurses across our 8-county service area. We provide training to caregivers and self-advocates, disseminate information and resources, and work with teams who are facing difficulties supporting the person. I became a certified DI nurse in 2006 and require all our nursing staff to become certified.

It can be very difficult for caregivers to support someone with multiple challenges on a daily basis. When we work with care teams and they begin to understand who that person is and how they can help, their “aha moment” is so rewarding. People with ID are vulnerable and have had their share of disparity in many areas of life. They deserve the best we as healthcare professionals have to offer. This unconventional nursing role, working with caregivers to increase their understanding and support this population is every bit as important as providing direct nursing care, and it is very rewarding. Thank you for allowing me to share my story and the work I am so passionate about.

#### ■ Jennifer Stoudnour Nagg ‘92



Have you ever considered a role as a registered nurse in clinical research? As a 1992 graduate of Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, I did not; but 32 years later, I am the Associate

Director of Clinical Research Site Support for Illingworth Research Group. Clinical research nurses are on the front lines of medical innovation, testing the latest medications, vaccines, devices,

treatments, and procedures. The role of a research nurse may vary daily depending on specific studies or trials you are participating in.

In 2004, I achieved my BSN at the University of Pittsburgh and in 2007, I achieved my MSN Ed from the University of Phoenix. I was welcomed back to Mercy to complete my master's thesis on how communication in patient care settings has changed over the years with the increase in use of technology/ cell phones.

My nursing career has led me to practice in many areas: hospital bedside adult, hospital bedside pediatrics, pediatric medical office, school nursing, academic educator/ pediatric clinical instructor, university-based clinical research and CRO research. Each career move has supported my growth and development as a registered nurse.

In 2010, I received a call from a friend of mine conducting clinical trials at the University of Pittsburgh asking me if I would consider coming to work with a Principal Investigator in the Graduate School of Public Health looking to hire a registered nurse for a National Institute of Health (NIH) grant funded project. I interviewed, was offered the position and accepted this new role.

My role as a clinical research nurse coordinator at the University of Pittsburgh gave me the best of both worlds – pediatric clinical care which I was familiar with and loved, while working with a team of researchers seeking answers for the best treatments. While at Pitt, I assisted teams conducting research in maternal child health, acute care pediatrics (AOM, Sinusitis, UTI, Influenza), well child vaccines, and Cystic Fibrosis.

In 2018, I took the Association of Clinical Research Professionals exam and was officially certified as a Clinical Research Coordinator (CCRC). During my career, I have been involved in many NIH and Industry funded studies that have been published in the New England Journal of Medicine. When Covid shut down the country, our team was chosen to conduct one of the first

Covid vaccine trials. This was an intense time but exciting to be a part of research which ultimately enabled the country to open back up again.

Now in this phase of my career, I work with a team of over 200 RNs conducting research visits globally in participant's homes and on the site of the clinical trial. I am thankful for the clinical trial participants who are trail blazers for others dealing with the disease process we are studying. Clinical Research Nurses are changing healthcare and powering advancement of human health.

#### ■ Renee Stinelli ‘96



Hello - I saw the newsletter is looking for unconventional roles for the Fall issue. I graduated as class Vice President MHSN Class of 1996. I have had over 20 years of pediatric experi-

ence and have been with UPMC Children's Community Pediatrics for the past 8 years. With CCP I have been a manager of 2 Children's Express Care locations and then transitioned to the Clinical Improvement Specialist Team where I've been the past 6 years. There are 5 of us that focus on quality/ training/ process improvement for over 60 offices by doing on-site visits and a simulation lab for new staff. I developed curriculum and taught 3 separate medical assistant training courses to help staff our offices with healthcare worker shortages. After each 8-week program, the students were guaranteed FT positions in an office within 30 minutes of their home. In July I was promoted to Manager of Clinical Operations for CCP.

*Always remember people who have helped you along the way, and don't forget to lift someone up.*

**Roy T. Bennet**  
author of “The Light in the Heart”

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## UNCONVENTIONAL NURSING ROLES CONTINUED



### ■ Sarah Sieber Dietz '05

I am writing to express my deep gratitude for the education and training I received at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, which played a pivotal role in preparing me for my current role as a Registered Nurse and educator at A.W. Beattie Career Center.

The comprehensive curriculum and clinical experiences provided by Mercy Hospital School of Nursing equipped me with not only the essential nursing skills but also the ability to adapt and apply these skills in a variety of settings. The hands-on learning and patient care opportunities allowed me to develop a strong foundation in nursing practices, which I now impart to my high school students in the Health and Nursing Sciences program.

The program at Mercy emphasized the importance of critical thinking, patient-centered care, and a commitment to lifelong learning – all of which are principles I strive to instill in my students. My time at Mercy taught me the significance of compassion in healthcare and the impact that well-trained nurses can have on their patients and the broader community. These lessons have been invaluable as I guide the next generation of healthcare professionals.

I am proud to be an alum of Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, and I carry the lessons I learned there into my teaching every day. Thank you for the exceptional preparation that has enabled me to succeed in this rewarding career.

*Sarah Sieber Dietz, MSN, RN-B*



### ■ Melony Murray '10

I always thought my path was working my way up to become a Unit Director. In 2010, when I graduated from MHSN, many

of my instructors told me that I should be in leadership, that I would succeed with my positive attitude and drive to help others. My Mom, a 1977 MHSN graduate was a UD at one point in her career, so it was fitting that becoming a UD was my path. In 2021, I finally became one of the Unit Directors of the Emergency Department and Observation at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. I was so excited and ready for the challenge. MHSN prepared me for this role in various ways: discipline, having high expectations of myself and my staff, holding others accountable, and collaborating with others outside of nursing.

Shortly after becoming a UD, I started to feel a void: I missed directly helping children and I could not be myself in this role. One major lesson I learned at MHSN that I still take seriously is to be your authentic self. At MHSN, there were rules, standards and ideas that were non-negotiable, but we were always allowed to be our true selves. Our personalities were celebrated for our differences, which is why I was able to succeed through school, and ultimately become the President of the Class of 2010. I so badly wanted to continue in my UD role because I knew I could make positive changes to practice and operations, support my staff and ensure each patient had a positive experience.

In late 2023, I had a lightbulb moment – this was not my path. I was miserable, felt very empty in this position and it exhausted me. I lost my passion, my drive and questioned whether I wanted to continue in nursing. This prompted me to do two things: complete a mission trip to Honduras to find my purpose in nursing again, and to search for new positions.

In February 2024, I took over a program at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh that allowed me to be my authentic self, directly care for pediatric patients, and to continue to find my purpose in nursing. The ED Affiliation Program at CHP is a program that aims to increase pediatric readiness in adult emergency departments. Approximately 70% of pediatric patients that go to general EDs have poor outcomes. It is my duty to help these gen-

eral EDs become pediatric ready, help guide them to find the best way for them to treat pediatric patients, and to help them evolve to ensure appropriate pediatric emergency care. Currently, there are 25 affiliations that I oversee in the UPMC system. I work directly with physicians, nurse leaders, and other team members to improve the quality of pediatric care in their departments. Being the pediatric nurse expert for these facilities has given me a new sense of purpose: to be the leader in pediatric care in all UPMC's facilities. MHSN has prepared me greatly for this position: hard work, discipline, confidence and compassion. If you know me, you know that I am an "unconventional" person to my core, so an unconventional position is not surprising. The ED Affiliation Program at CHP is one of four of its kind in the United States. It is the only program that has a nurse that can be directly contacted, at any time of the day or night, for pediatric issues and support. This program provides services specifically tailored to the needs of each individual ED.

UPMC Mercy Hospital School of Nursing is the reason I've made it to the level that I have and have achieved great success in my career. It is the reason that I have core values that I apply every day, the reason I thought I knew my path, and the reason I was able to diverge from the path I thought I wanted to the path I was meant for. Professional Updates: Getting DNP at Chatham University – Anticipate Graduation April 2025. Went on a medical mission trip to Siguatepeque in 2024.

*Melony Murray, MSN, RN, CPEN, CPN*



### ■ Sara Nelis '16

Since graduating from Mercy, I worked in L&D before going into a leadership role on the same unit. In early 2022, I left the hospital and joined the Jewish Healthcare

Foundation as a project manager to run their maternal health projects. I closed out a local Black maternal health project

## UNCONVENTIONAL NURSING ROLES CONTINUED

last year and now my sole focus is being the Program Manager for the PA PQC (Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative). The PA PQC (<http://www.papqc.org>) engages birthing hospitals and NICUs across the commonwealth to implement quality improvement projects to improve maternal and neonatal health. My job is very different from anything I've ever done. I have opportunities to work with stakeholders from perinatal community organizations to state and federal government agencies. I love what I do and how important the work of the PA PQC is to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality. I also love telling nurses about project/program management. Nurses make AMAZING project managers - the project management process is really the nursing process with different vocabulary.

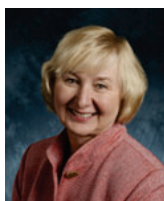
#### ■ Richard Stoops '18



After working 3 years in PCU, ICU, and ER units, I worked a contract for the CDC which focused on long-term care with a focus on infectious disease outbreaks, infection prevention and control, and education. I was an Emergency Response Team RN with primarily Infection Preventionist duties, functioned secondarily as a Clinical Educator. There was a significant amount of local travel all over the southwestern region of PA with some office days and some work from home days. It was a challenging assignment but also rewarding in being able to make care for our elderly safer. I've moved on from that position to make the transition back to traditional nursing for now while I finish my PSM in Forensic Science at Arizona State University.

*Rich Stoops, BSN, RN, PHRN, IPC*

**Nursing...it's not just a job,  
it's an adventure!**



#### ■ Patricia Drogus O'Donoghue '62

Patricia (Pat) Drogus O'Donoghue's career includes numerous leadership roles with a significant focus on higher education - in nursing but also in broader roles across entire colleges/universities. Pat began her clinical life as a student at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing and continued her love of clinical involvement as she served as faculty, researcher and preceptor of several unique nursing programs. She was one of the first nurse practitioners in the country, having learned the role at Terrace Village (now Matilda Theiss Health Center) in Pittsburgh and serving as faculty and preceptor for University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. She achieved a PhD in Nursing from the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. Her research, conducted at Magee Hospital, focused on the development of premature babies. Pat served in multiple leadership positions. As Provost and Executive Vice President at Carlow College (now Carlow University), she established Weekend College for Nurses, RN to BSN. She was Vice President of Academic Affairs and professor of nursing at LaRoche College. Subsequently, Pat developed the nursing program at Mount Mary College (now Mount Mary University) in Milwaukee where she is now President Emerita. From Wisconsin, she went to DePaul University in Chicago where she last held the position of Interim President. Currently, Pat serves on the Board of Trustees of Seton Hill University. Pat credits her decision-making skills and her accountability to her strong professional foundation at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing.

Along this significant journey as a clinician, researcher and leader, she met and married her husband, Jim. They have two sons who have gifted them with three grandsons. Pat has been particularly committed to Catholic ed-

ucation, especially for women. Personally, she acknowledges the importance of family, friends, faith and profession in her life. Faith is paramount, as is her family and her lifelong commitment to nursing and to the friends she has made throughout the journey. Pat Drogus O'Donoghue has most certainly had a profound impact on many, and her Mercy alumni congratulate her on her successful life and career.



#### ■ Mary Ellen Wachter Myers '64

As a Mercy Grad of 1964, nursing career choices were limited to hospital nursing in various areas, home health, or office nursing. New grads were usually advised to start with med-surg hospital nursing as a foundation to future choices, which I chose for the first four years of my career, followed by a BSN from the University of Pittsburgh. After this graduation, I married, moved to other locations and enjoyed many other nursing positions.

While living in Florida, a Senior Day Care on the campus of a large, thriving, popular Catholic Church community was created which required a director of therapeutic activities. I was approached for interest in this position and with reservation said "OK".

Thus became the setting of a most unconventional, yet most loved nursing position, which I was fortunate to experience for 23 years - until I retired! I believe I gained more than I gave during those years. The "nursing" aspect was primarily health monitoring. But, being a "social" model, the emphasis was mental, spiritual and physical stimulation, relevant to abilities and needs of clients. Dealing with a mixed need population, a place of acceptance, friendship, and security was created.

A lifetime is composed of innumerable experiences. The "Golden Years" are meant for reflection and reverie, which are so vital for contentment, and happiness in the "Gold", so says Erick Erickson in his stages of life theory! In short summary, my "OK" response was a gift to me as well as those I served!



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 addresses 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

Please fill in the information below for the alumnus

First	Maiden	Last	Class

Address

Email address

Phone number

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

Include photos and notes with your Mercy Memories and Updates!  
Please make checks payable to MHSN Alumni Association and mail to:  
MHSN Alumni Association, P.O. Box 53123, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

## Memorial Mass – November 16, 2024

11 am Mass – Mercy Hospital Chapel  
12 noon – Luncheon and Fellowship

RSVP before November 2, 2024

Mail this form and check for \$25 to:

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

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