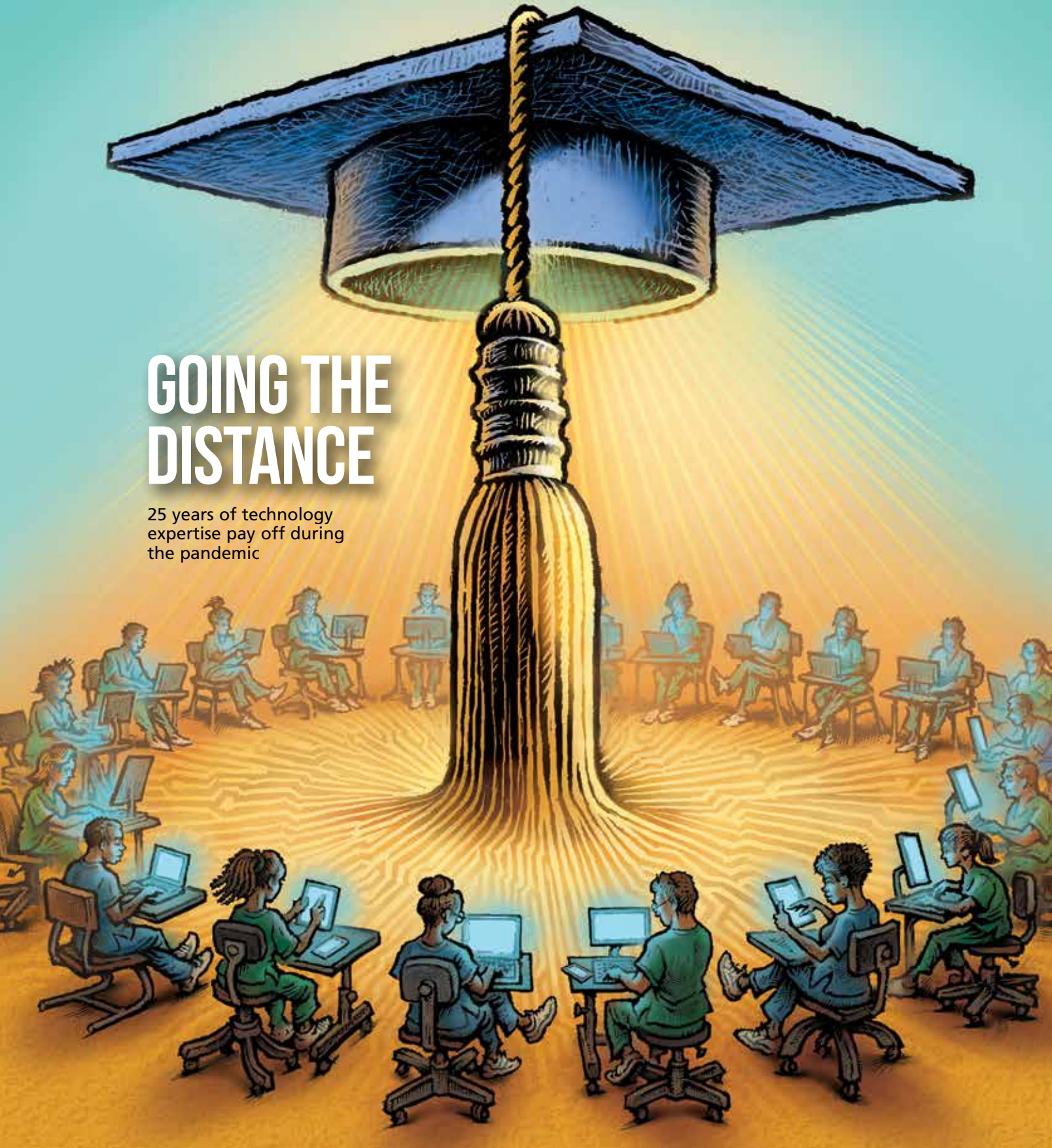


SUMMER 2021

vanderbiltnurse

GOING THE DISTANCE

25 years of technology expertise pay off during the pandemic



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CHANGING LIVES

Thanks to generous scholarship support, **Hannah McGrew, MSN'20**, earned a top-notch education from Vanderbilt's premier Nurse-Midwifery/Family Nurse Practitioner combined program. She is already paying it forward in her role at a federally qualified health center, serving communities that traditionally lack access to midwifery services.

To learn more about supporting nursing scholarships, contact Chris Cloar, associate director of development, at 615-875-1704 or VUSNgiving@vanderbilt.edu.



VANDERBILT
SCHOOL OF NURSING

MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENT

The mission of Vanderbilt University School of Nursing is to lead in education, evidence-based practice, scholarship, and research in order to provide optimal health care to diverse communities through innovation, inclusion, and compassion.

vanderbiltnurse

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Dear alumni, colleagues and supporters,

After 16 long, hard months, we have turned the corner on the pandemic. As I write this, more than 50 percent of American adults have had at least one COVID-19 vaccine. On June 1, Vanderbilt University relaxed the protocols for masking and physical distancing for those who are vaccinated. Best of all, the university announced that it would resume in-person classes for fall. For the School of Nursing, that means we will be able to see each other without using Zoom! All of our MSN, DNP and PhD block classes will be held on campus as well as having our PreSpecialty and Nurse-Midwifery students here each week. Everyone is looking forward to a very vibrant fall semester.

Not surprisingly, COVID-19 will still be a topic for awhile. The cover story in this issue of *Vanderbilt Nurse*, "Going the Distance," explores how VUSN's pioneering use of distance learning in the 1990s positioned the school for a smooth transition to remote learning during the pandemic. Innovations developed by our faculty and staff were key to continuing students' education when on-campus sessions weren't possible.

Elsewhere in this issue you'll read an article featuring three researchers determined to improve maternal health, a spotlight on our two Commencements, and sadly, a tribute to School of Nursing alumnus and professor Tom Christenbery, who died unexpectedly in February. We also introduce you to two Vanderbilt alumni instrumental in fighting COVID-19 in the Navajo Nation. Their fascinating story first appeared online late last year, but we include it here for those who missed it.

In exciting news, our Around the School section contains an introduction to the School of Nursing's incoming dean, Pam Jeffries. Pam is a distinguished educator, scholar and leader, and an outstanding choice for the school's ninth dean. Pam and I have known each other for years, and I am confident that VUSN will reach greater heights under her leadership. I leave VUSN in excellent hands.

This is my last column for *Vanderbilt Nurse*, and there is so much I would like to write to all of you. Being VUSN dean has been the greatest adventure and opportunity of my career. To be able to facilitate the work of our faculty, staff and students in the mission of education, practice, research and scholarship of an institution like VUSN has been inspiring, fulfilling and wonderfully challenging. I have had the privilege of meeting and working with incredible alumni, taking part in educating a new generation of nurses, and guiding and supporting talented, dedicated faculty and staff. It has been an honor to serve

as dean of Vanderbilt University School of Nursing and as Vanderbilt faculty for decades. I am grateful. Thank you for your support over the years and as I start the new chapter of my life.

Best regards,



Linda D. Norman, DSN, RN, FAAN

Dean

Valere Potter Menefee Professor of Nursing



DANIEL DUBOIS

It has been an honor to serve as dean of Vanderbilt University School of Nursing and as Vanderbilt faculty for decades. Thank you.

News Around the School

COMMUNITY RESEARCH OUTREACH SCIENCE FACULTY TECHNOLOGY



JENNIFER HUNT

MSN students celebrate the end of a clinical rotation at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

U.S. News & World Report rankings keep VUSN among nation's best

Vanderbilt University School of Nursing was again named a top-10 graduate nursing school, as ranked in the 2022 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Graduate School survey released in March. The Master of Science in Nursing advanced to be the nation's No. 8 program, and the Doctor of Nursing Practice program ranked No. 6. Additionally, its Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner MSN program repeated its 2021 position and remained ranked No. 1.

Other MSN specialties achieved top-5 rankings as well. Both the Family Nurse Practitioner and Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner programs gained the nation's No. 2 spots. Nursing and Health Care Leadership moved up four places to the No. 4 position. The

Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner program is No. 5. Individual specialty assessments are based 100 percent on peer nursing schools' evaluations.

In addition to Vanderbilt's overall DNP program ranking, two DNP specialties were ranked. Its DNP with a focus on Executive Leadership and DNP with a focus on Adult-Gerontology Acute Care both ranked as the country's No. 2 programs.

The *U.S. News* organization has stopped ranking some specialties in which VUSN programs were ranked previously, and, as a result, the school had only five MSN and two DNP specialties eligible for ranking.

"The last 12 months have demonstrated the importance of advanced practice nursing education. From providing hands-on COVID patient care to setting

up massive testing sites and managing nursing workforces for hard-hit health systems, advanced practice nurses have been the backbone of our nation's pandemic response," says Linda D. Norman, DSN, FAAN, VUSN dean and the Valere Potter Menefee Professor of Nursing. "It is an honor to be considered one of the profession's best educators of these remarkable women and men."

Norman says that the school's excellent showing reflects the work of its faculty and staff over many years, including the difficult one just past. "Despite the tremendous challenges of the past year, our stellar faculty and staff have remained focused on preparing Vanderbilt students with in-depth knowledge, practice expertise, evidence-based methods, and the leadership skills that today's global health environment demands," she says. "These rankings are attributable to them and their commitment."

The overall rankings are determined from a variety of criteria, such as research activity, faculty credentials, percentage of faculty members with important achievements, faculty/student ratios, faculty participation in nursing practice, and nursing specialty-specific measures. They take into account the assessment of peer nursing school experts and, new this year, nursing professionals.

The *U.S. News & World Report* data comes from statistical surveys sent to administrators of 597 accredited schools of nursing which offer master or doctoral programs. Specialty program rankings are based on assessments by nursing school deans and deans of graduate programs. They identify up to 15 schools offering the best programs in each specialty area. The surveys and assessments were conducted from late summer 2020 to early 2021.

Pamela Jeffries named dean of School of Nursing

Pamela R. Jeffries, PhD, RN, FAAN, ANEF, FSSH, an internationally recognized leader and innovator in nursing and health care education, will become dean of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, effective July 1.

Jeffries, professor and dean of the George Washington University School of Nursing in Washington, D.C., succeeds Linda Norman, who will step down from her leadership role on June 30.

“Pamela Jeffries has transformed lives with her visionary leadership and expertise in nursing education,” Chancellor Daniel Diermeier says. “We could not be more delighted to welcome her to Vanderbilt at a time when the expertise of our nursing faculty, students and alumni is needed more than ever. I’m confident that she will drive path-breaking discoveries and expand the impact of our outstanding School of Nursing.”

Jeffries was appointed the second dean of the George Washington University School of Nursing in 2015, five years after its establishment as a standalone school within the university. A proponent of strengths-based leadership, Jeffries’ priority was to expand the infrastructure and build upon the processes and standards for the young, emerging school, which experienced a significant period of growth

during her tenure. As dean, Jeffries also charged a task force with examining issues related to diversity and inclusion, which resulted in the formation of a diversity council and other initiatives to build an inclusive and diverse community.

Prior to being named dean of George Washington University School of Nursing, Jeffries served as the inaugural vice provost for digital initiatives at Johns Hopkins University. She also held faculty leadership roles at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing and Indiana University School of Nursing earlier in her career.

“I am honored for this opportunity at a world-renowned university and the Vanderbilt School of Nursing—with its rich history of excellence in nursing education, practice and research,” Jeffries says. “I’m excited to build on the strong foundation provided by Linda Norman and help set the school’s ‘next chapter’ with broad engagement of community partners who champion its mission and vision.”

Jeffries is a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, the NLN’s Academy of Nursing Education, the Society of Simulation in Healthcare and an alumna of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellows program. Other honors include the Sigma Theta Tau International Edith Moore Copeland Award for Excellence in Creativity, the NLN’s Mary Adelaide Nutting Award

for Outstanding Leadership in Nursing Education, the Virginia Nurses Association Foundation Leadership Excellence Award for Nursing School Dean, and induction into the Sigma Theta Tau International Researchers Hall of Fame.

She holds a bachelor of science in nursing from Ball State University and a master of science in nursing and doctorate in nursing from Indiana University.



Pamela Jeffries, PhD, FAAN, ANEF, FSSH, will serve as VUSN’s ninth dean.

“I am honored for this opportunity at a world-renowned university and the Vanderbilt School of Nursing—with its rich history of excellence in nursing education, practice and research.”

– Pamela R. Jeffries



DINA BAHAN

Faculty, staff, students and Vanderbilt leaders took part in a Day of Remembrance honoring George Floyd in September 2020.

School of Nursing adds anti-racism language to its official diversity and inclusion position statement

Vanderbilt University School of Nursing has revised its diversity and inclusion statement to include language that specifies the school's rejection of racism and commitment to racial equity and equality.

The revised statement now incorporates the following paragraph:

We reject racism of any kind, be it systemic, institutional, or individual. We acknowledge the painful histories related to racism even within the nursing discipline, including education, practice, and research. We pledge to not let an unjust past continue to determine the future. We will enact practices which promote anti-racism and social justice across all entities within VUSN.

The revision was developed after discussions and town halls with the VUSN community regarding racism and social justice. Using input from students, faculty and staff, the school's diversity and inclusion committee drafted the

statement. Its final version was approved by the executive committee of the school, the VUSN Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Dean Linda Norman, DSN, FAAN.

"Our previous statement implied the school's commitment to racial equality and anti-racism, but we wanted to be more explicit," says Rolanda Johnson, PhD'98, VUSN assistant dean for equity, diversity and inclusion. "As individuals and as a school, we commit to not just fostering diversity and equity, but to rejecting racism, the root of inequality and social injustice."

VUSN's anti-racism commitment aligns with Vanderbilt University's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. It is part of the School of Nursing's comprehensive EDI plan, which includes social justice activities, an inclusion campaign, education, training, and classroom and community activism.

AAMN again names Vanderbilt a best school for men in nursing

For the third consecutive year, the American Association of Men in Nursing has named the School of Nursing an AAMN Best Nursing School/College for Men in Nursing. The honor recognizes a nursing school for significant efforts in recruiting and retaining men in the nursing profession.

In order to be considered for the honor, nursing schools demonstrate their efforts to support men in nursing. Information can include how the school meets the needs of male students and faculty, recruitment efforts, school climate, data on student pass rates, and demographics and statistics on male students, faculty and staff. Vanderbilt's application also included information on local AAMN activity, including community outreach, chapter events and marketing.



JOHN RUSSELL

From left, VUSN students Victor Nyame, Danilo Parra, Jeffrey Boon and R. Mansfield

School of Nursing earns national HEED award for diversity

Vanderbilt School of Nursing received the 2020 Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine in November. The award recognizes schools and universities in health care education that demonstrate outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

“This is a wonderful recognition, and one that honors the hard work of many,” says Linda Norman, dean and Valere Potter Menefee Professor of Nursing. “VUSN’s deep diversity and inclusion commitment stems from the nature of nursing and from the beliefs and vision of School of Nursing faculty, staff, students and alumni. As nurses, we are called upon to care for all people and seek equity for our patients. As educators, we are dedicated to delivering nursing education—and health care—that incorporates the values and experiences of diverse populations.”

INSIGHT Into Diversity is the oldest and largest diversity-focused higher education publication. Representatives from the magazine evaluate all award applications in detail to determine

honorees. VUSN joins peer institutions such as Duke University and Johns Hopkins University schools of nursing in receiving the 2020 award.

“Our colleagues at the School of Nursing are most deserving of this significant honor, which acknowledges the school’s longstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion in many forms—from hiring and recruiting to research and patient care,” says Susan R. Wente, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. “The timing of the award is especially meaningful, as Vanderbilt is deeply focused on advancing equity across our university, and also—in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic—as our community continues to



“Achieving diversity, inclusion and equity is a journey, and VUSN continues to pursue and integrate additional initiatives.”

– **Rolanda Johnson**

rely on the School of Nursing’s expertise and innovation more than ever.”

VUSN Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Rolanda Johnson, PhD’98, spearheaded and oversees VUSN’s strategic plan for diversity. “Achieving diversity, inclusion and equity is a journey, and VUSN continues to pursue and integrate additional initiatives,” Johnson says. “The voices of our students, staff and faculty continue to inspire the VUSN diversity, inclusion and equity momentum.”

Barroso named Julia Eleanor Blair Chenault Professor of Nursing

Professor Julie Barroso, PhD, ANP, FNAP, FAAN, has been named to the Julia Eleanor Blair Chenault Chair in Nursing at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.

“Julie Barroso’s life work is helping people with HIV/AIDS. Her research into HIV-related fatigue and the stigma of living with HIV is significant,” says Linda Norman, DSN, FAAN, VUSN dean and the Valere Potter Menefee Professor of Nursing. “I am pleased that she has been named to an endowed chair and look forward to her continued contributions to nursing science as well as VUSN’s research priorities.”



Barroso

JOHN RUSSELL

Endowed chairs are the highest honor a university can bestow upon its faculty. They are presented to distinguished scholars as both recognition of their scholarship and support for their research. University leaders cite them as key to recruiting and retaining exceptional faculty.

“This will allow me to continue my research on topics related to HIV infection and to expand my research in the area of COVID-19 infection, specifically those suffering from Long COVID (the long-term effects of COVID-19, also known as chronic COVID syndrome or long-haul COVID),” Barroso says. “It will also give me the opportunity to mentor students who are interested in these areas.”

At VUSN, she teaches in the PhD program and mentors doctoral students. She has received awards for her mentoring and teaching, including the Outstanding PhD Faculty Member from Duke University School of Nursing.



Left, Naomi Chang, Amy Lee, Eileen Yin and Katie Wayne provided leadership for the school’s active Asian American/Pacific Islander Student Nurses group.

CAROLINE TAYLOR

New academic directors and leaders named

The School of Nursing announced the appointment of four new academic specialty directors for its Master of Science in Nursing program, as well as a new director of program evaluations and director of the PhD in Nursing Science program.

Associate Professor Terrah Foster Akard, MSN'01, PhD'08, FAAN, has been named director of the PhD in Nursing Science program at the School of Nursing. Akard, a Vanderbilt University Chancellor Faculty Fellow and noted scholar in pediatric palliative care, had been co-director with Professor Sheila Ridner, MSN'00, PhD'03, FAAN, the Martha Rivers Ingram Professor of Nursing, who stepped down to focus on research.

Associate Professor Debbie Arnow, MSN'96, DNP'11, has been selected as the new academic director for the Nursing and Health Care Leadership specialty in the Master of Science in Nursing program. Arnow is an accomplished senior nurse executive with experience in delivering successful clinical outcomes, financial performance and personnel management. Arnow succeeds Associate Professor Richard Watters, PhD, RN, who will retire later this year.

Professor Sharon Karp, MSN'99, PhD'08, has been appointed director of program evaluations. In this role, she will direct efforts to measure overall program effectiveness for the school and use the outcome data to drive continuous improvement in program quality. Karp succeeds former director Tom Christenbery, MSN'87, PhD'04.

Associate Professor Brenda Kulhanek, PhD, has been appointed academic director for the school's Nursing Informatics specialty. Kulhanek is an experienced nurse informaticist with extensive academic and corporate expertise, including serving as president of the American Nursing Informatics Association. Kulhanek succeeds Patricia Sengstack, DNP'10, FAAN, who became senior associate dean for informatics in January.

Assistant Professor Aggie Read, DNP, has been named academic director for the school's ASN to MSN program, which provides an accelerated path for registered nurses with diploma or associate degrees to become advanced practice nurses. Read takes over program leadership from Professor Sarah Fogel, MSN'94, PhD'01, who is retiring in June.

Assistant Professor Kim Steanson, DNP, MSN'98, will become academic director of the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner–Acute Care specialty, effective Aug. 1. Steanson has taught in the PNP–AC program for 10 years and has more than two decades of experience in pediatric intensive care. Steanson follows Instructor Sheree Allen, DNP, MSN'03, who is stepping down as specialty director after 10 years in the role.



Akard



Arnow



Karp



Kulhanek



Read



Steanson

Senior Associate Dean Pam Jones receives inaugural chancellor's award

Vanderbilt Chancellor Daniel Diermeier announced the establishment of a new faculty honor, the Chancellor's Award for University Service, on April 1, and the first recipient was VUSN's Pam Jones, BSN'81, MSN'92, DNP'13, senior associate dean for clinical and community partnerships.

"It goes without saying that the past year has demonstrated how profoundly the university relies on the tireless service and leadership of faculty who dedicate

their expertise and talent to the mission of the university as a whole—and thereby to every faculty member within it," Diermeier says. "This year, the Chancellor's Award for University Service will be given to recognize a faculty member's truly exceptional and selfless service to benefit the entire university community. It will be the first award that recognizes faculty service at the university level beyond service through the senate or other faculty governmental body."



Jones

Jones received the award for her work as co-commander of Vanderbilt's Public Health Central Command Center, set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The university said that without Jones' leadership, "a successful return to campus would not have been possible. Moreover, she has helped to create a state-of-the-art emergency response model that can be employed at Vanderbilt and beyond in unforeseen challenging times to come."

Right, Class of 2021 Adult-Gerontology Acute Care NP graduates Michael Booth, Austin Rockenhaus and Ashley Allington celebrate.

T W I C E

T H E

Hope

Celebrating the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021



Class of 2020 banner bearer Gwendolyn Godlock, DNP'20, and classmates adjust their hoods following a ceremonial group hooding.

After a 12-month wait, the Vanderbilt School of Nursing Class of 2020 celebrated—and was celebrated—in person during Investiture ceremonies held on campus May 2. The intimate ceremony for graduates, family and friends was both traditional and innovative as it accommodated COVID-19 safety protocols while still retaining appropriate pomp and circumstance.

In her address to graduates, Dean Linda Norman, DSN, FAAN, observed that they had been working as advanced practice nurses and leaders in the time since they finished their degrees, and as such, they had experienced the COVID-19 pandemic on the frontlines and in the trenches of patient care.

“COVID-19 will not be the last public health emergency the world will see. It may not even be the last public health emergency you or I will see,” Norman said. “When the next emergency hits—and it will—nurses will again be ready with knowledge, compassion, skill and perseverance. That is what nurses do. That is who nurses are.

“I told you last year that the world needs you more than ever. I meant it, and I still do,” Norman said. “You are the present, you are the future, and you are the hope of nursing.”

The ceremony also included a video message from Provost Susan Wentz and recognition of the School of Nursing 2020 Founder’s Medalist, Jane Mericle, DNP’20, and the class’s banner bearer,



Class of 2021 Founder’s Medalist Rebecca Silvers, MSN’13, DNP’21, with Dean Linda Norman and Program Director Terri Allison.

Gwendolyn Godlock, DNP’20, who also served as the class representative in planning the previous year’s virtual events and current ceremonies.

In a change from Investiture tradition, graduates donned their own hoods at the same time in a group hooding ceremony rather than have their hoods put on them by faculty. The graduates then walked across the platform individually as their names were called, collected an apricot rose symbolizing the nursing discipline and were photographed with Norman and their program director.

The Class of 2020 included 328 Master of Science in Nursing and 70 Doctor of Nursing Practice graduates who finished their programs in August 2019, December 2019 and May 2020. An additional three PhD in Nursing Science graduates were honored in Vanderbilt Graduate School ceremonies.

Class of 2021

Under a tent covering most of Recreation Field 1 on Vanderbilt’s east side, the Class of 2021 reassembled for Investiture on May 15. The joyful celebration reflected a mix of tradition and variations necessitated by pandemic precautions, and marked the first time some participants had been on campus since COVID-19 hit in March 2020.



All ceremony attendees were required to sit six feet apart.



Banner bearer Melina Handley, DNP'21, led a procession—including Dean Linda Norman, DSN, FAAN; student marshals Michael Booth, MSN'21, and Sarah Hodges, MSN'21; alumni association president Hannah Lowe, MSN'14; new faculty emeriti and faculty—past seated family, friends and graduates, who did not process into the tent due to safety precautions.

Chancellor Daniel Diermeier conferred graduates' degrees via video, commending them for opening their minds to new ways of thinking and instructing them to go forth and provide healing care for humankind.

Norman began her remarks by thanking the graduates for their patience, adaptability and can-do attitudes during the changes brought about by the pandemic.

In what would be her final Investiture address as dean, she also charged graduates to work for health equity and full practice authority for advanced practice nurses. "Health inequities have played a major role in the course of this pandemic, and that is wrong. Social determinants of health influenced who became infected, who got sick, who was hospitalized, and who died," said Norman, who is also the Valere Potter Menefee Professor of Nursing.

"All of us must work to overcome health disparities, combat social determinants of health, improve access to care, and change policy," she said. "Nurse-centered care can, and does, make a difference in improving health equity for individuals and communities. It is my hope that full-scope authority will be enacted in every state as a result of the lessons learned from the pandemic."

In a change with tradition, the school incorporated a pinning ceremony into the Investiture for those graduates finishing their programs in May and those who had not yet participated in a pinning event. Norman gave background on the significance of pinning for the nursing profession, explaining that the school presented pins to MSN graduates and lavaliers to DNP graduates in a tradition traced back

to Florence Nightingale. She then formally welcomed them to the nursing profession.

The ceremonies included recognizing five distinguished faculty members who had been named emerita by action of the Board of Trust at the request of the dean, provost and chancellor. Susie Adams, PhD, FAANP, FAAN; Ann Minnick, PhD, FAAN; and Sheila Ridner, MSN'00, PhD'03, FAAN, were named professor of nursing, emerita. Betsy Weiner, PhD, FACMI, FAAN, was named professor in the School of Nursing, emerita, and senior associate dean of informatics, emerita. Melanie Lutembacher, PhD, was named associate professor of nursing, emerita. Additionally, Norman was honored by the Board of Trust with dean emerita status effective July 1, 2021, as she will step down as dean at the end of the academic year.

Senior Associate Dean for Academics Mavis Schorn, PhD, FACNM, FNAP, FAAN, recognized Norman's impact on Vanderbilt and nursing.

Norman introduced Class of 2021 Founder's Medalist Rebecca Silvers, MSN'13, DNP'21, as the class's outstanding student. Silvers, who earned a doctor of nursing practice degree and certificate in global health, is a pediatric critical care and neurosurgery nurse practitioner at University of California San Francisco Benioff Children's Hospitals. She intends to continue that clinical practice, her faculty position at UCSF School of Nursing, and global health development work with the UCSF Institute of Global Health.

Traditional investiture activity of hooding by program directors was replaced with a group hooding ceremony. Graduates put their academic hoods over their own heads before being called individually to walk across the platform to be recognized. In lieu of their physical degrees, graduates received apricot roses symbolizing the nursing discipline.

The 2021 VUSN class included 347 Master of Science in Nursing and 46 Doctor of Nursing Practice graduates. Three PhD in Nursing Science students were awarded doctorates in Vanderbilt University Graduate School ceremonies.



Dean Linda Norman leads the 2021 procession.

"It is my hope that full-scope authority will be enacted in every state as a result of the lessons learned from the pandemic."

– Dean Linda Norman

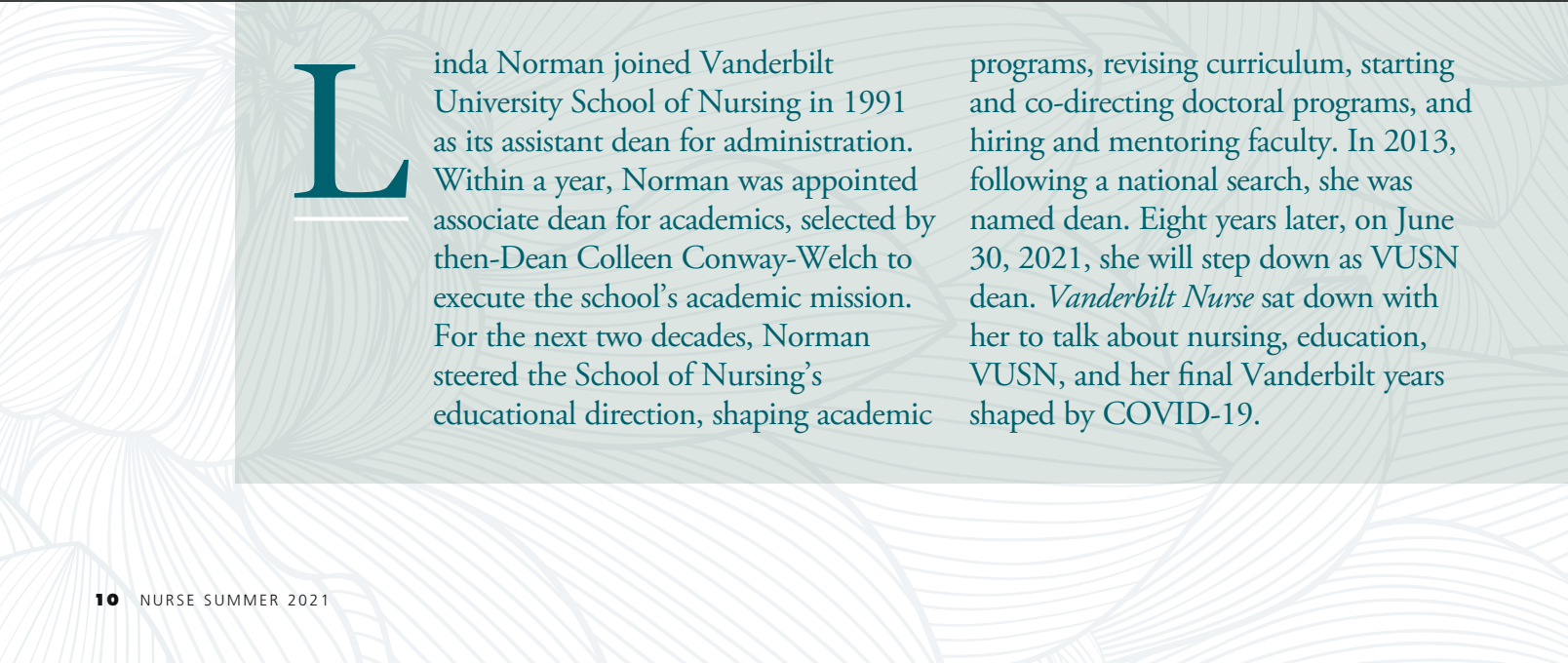


Change *of* Shift

A conversation with Dean Linda Norman on stepping forward *and* stepping down

Linda Norman joined Vanderbilt University School of Nursing in 1991 as its assistant dean for administration. Within a year, Norman was appointed associate dean for academics, selected by then-Dean Colleen Conway-Welch to execute the school's academic mission. For the next two decades, Norman steered the School of Nursing's educational direction, shaping academic

programs, revising curriculum, starting and co-directing doctoral programs, and hiring and mentoring faculty. In 2013, following a national search, she was named dean. Eight years later, on June 30, 2021, she will step down as VUSN dean. *Vanderbilt Nurse* sat down with her to talk about nursing, education, VUSN, and her final Vanderbilt years shaped by COVID-19.



You had been at VUSN for 22 years before being named dean, so you knew the school pretty well. What surprised you when you took on the job?

I was surprised—and pleased—by the type of interface that you have with the rest of the university. At Vanderbilt, it's the dean who is interfacing with nine other deans and the university leadership. It was interesting learning about more of the inner workings of the university as a whole. It was nice to have other dean colleagues to collaborate with personally and to determine how VUSN could work with their schools.

Within the school, it was awareness of the responsibility you have when you sit down behind that desk, and realize, "Oh, my gosh, you are responsible for the School of Nursing." You've got a thousand students. You've got almost 200 faculty. You've got almost 100 staff. And you're the one that is supposed to be responsible for knitting all that together and to promote what you're doing not just on your university campus, but also what you're doing at a national level.

How has VUSN changed since you joined the school in 1991? What has stayed the same?

When I first came, we admitted about 75 new students in our special two-year program for people without a nursing background and we admitted fewer than 75 new people who came with a BSN. We had no doctoral students. We now have almost a thousand students, about 750 people pursuing master's degrees, about 150 pursuing the doctor of nursing practice and about 30 with the PhD program.

In 1991, we had one nurse practitioner program. It was the family nurse practitioner and the rest of our programs were clinical nurse specialties. In the early '90s, as the nurse practitioner movement was taking hold, we converted all six of our clinical specialist programs to advanced practice nurse practitioner, which required revising our curriculum and clinical education. Then we increased the number of our programs to 14. Our nurse-midwifery program came in the early '90s as well. We've expanded our educational programs as health care needs have changed.

All of that was driven by our commitment to health and to improving health care delivery. Underlying that was our commitment to improving nursing, whether through our research, academic programs, practice or informatics.

The core of how and why we've changed since the early 1990s is that we have kept that mission of improving nursing as part of improving health care delivery. When I came here, we had a slogan, "Traditionally ahead of our time." I think we're still that way. We keep the tradition of our discipline, but we try to be on the cutting edge of what's going on within health care delivery and in education.

You accomplished a lot in your 30-year Vanderbilt career. What three things are you most proud of?

The construction and opening of the new School of Nursing building are probably the best. That came from many years of us being really frugal and saving money, putting it away. When it came time to be able to plan our expansion, we had the funds to do it. So, while the building was started in 2017, it was a long time coming. And it's fabulous. It has smart classrooms, a state-of-the-art simulation lab, and cutting-edge technology. While this hasn't had much use in the past 14 months, it's also designed for wellness and self-care. It has lighting that reacts to human circadian rhythms, the monumental staircase to encourage walking, a rooftop outdoor area, and a spacious atrium dedicated to Dean Colleen Conway-Welch that's meant for socializing and communicating. So that's one.

Another is developing the block curriculum for our specialty programs in the early '90s. Back then, if people wanted to come to VUSN, they had to move to Nashville or live within a commutable

distance. Well, people who had BSNs also had jobs and families, and they couldn't move here. We had a problem with enrollment. So we put our classes in a different format where the students only come to campus three to four times a semester for four to five days at a time, and the rest of their course of study is distance learning. The outcome is that every year, we have students who come from over 40 states. It has allowed us to be more influential on the national front.

It also changed the scope of learning. About half of our students live in Middle Tennessee. The other half come from other states. When they're together, the non-local students get to know what's going on—patient-wise—in Nashville. And the Nashville people get to see what's going on all across the U.S.—what's happening in rural Colorado, what's happening in Alaska (and every year we really do get somebody from Alaska). They exchange information about different populations that they normally wouldn't encounter. So it has enriched the curriculum. When our students finish, they can go anywhere because they've had this kind of experience. That's also put VUSN on the map as a distance learning leader. We used technology to deliver coursework. It has exponentially improved over all this time because we began in 1996. We were a pioneer nationally. And certainly with COVID, we have been able to share a lot of the things that we've been doing related to a technology-enhanced education. So that's another.

The third is what we've done related to scholarship. Over the last eight years, we have exponentially increased the number of tenure-track faculty and they are conducting groundbreaking research. Simultaneously, we developed a clinical scholarship program for non-tenure-track faculty so they have an opportunity to get internal funding to explore areas of scholarship. We've had almost 25 percent of the non-tenure-track faculty participate in it. The number of national and international presentations, as well as publications, by our faculty has been on a steep curve upward. Our faculty are impacting nursing, health care and science. Now we're on a mission to increase the number of senior researchers that we have. I think increasing research and scholarship is a significant VUSN accomplishment.

The Vanderbilt School of Nursing stepped forward to help the university respond to the COVID-19 crisis and played an important part in the successful Return to Campus plan. How did that come about?

When the pandemic hit back in early spring 2020, Interim Chancellor Susan Wenthe asked me if I'd chair the university's public health COVID-19 task force. "We were charged with advising the university and determining best practices for safety protocols. That was a challenging time, with all the schools transitioning to remote learning; students, faculty and staff working from home; and the university consulting closely with us, our colleagues at the Medical Center, and local and national public health officials. Then it morphed into advising regarding on-campus protocols and discussions on whether in-person classes were going to occur for the fall.

I am a member of a coalition of peer nursing school deans from across the country. Several of the other deans said they were helping their universities with contact tracing. I thought that was something our faculty and students might like to do.

I told one of our vice chancellors that the School of Nursing would be happy to help with contact tracing if the university would like to have help. Well, as we began to look at it, he said that they needed more than just help with contact tracing—that they really needed a group to take it on and lead it.

"We've expanded our educational programs as health care needs have changed. ...that was driven by our commitment to health and to improving health care delivery."

– Linda Norman

So I had a conversation with Pam Jones, our senior associate dean for practice and community partnerships. I didn't want to commit VUSN to something that was beyond our capabilities. And Pam said, "I think we can do this."

When we were setting this up, we looked at what other universities were doing. They were partnering with their health departments for the contact tracing, but the time delay between when somebody got their positive test result and when a contact tracer was able to connect with them was often five days or longer.



We set it up so our contact tracers are able to talk to students within 24 hours of when they get their positive result. We've been able to protect the university population and get people who are close contacts into quarantine quickly so that we can decrease the spread of COVID-19.

Pam became co-commander of the university's Public Health Central Command Center, and set it up so we have a whole division now within our practice entity that handles contact tracing for any student who tests positive for COVID or who has been exposed. The university has teams that work on getting the students tested and facilities set up to isolate or quarantine them, and our VUSN nurse practitioners and students handle contact tracing, and check on anyone in quarantine every day. This nursing model makes our care different from typical contact tracers. We're asking "Other than physically, how are you doing? How are you coping with being in quarantine? Are there other needs you have?" Then we can link them with other resources on campus. That has been reassuring to parents, because there's somebody knowledgeable checking on their student every day.

On the education side, what were the challenges the School of Nursing faced?

In March when the university said to go completely online, we had to shut down all our clinical practice because most—almost all—of our clinical agencies said they couldn't handle students. We had to figure out how to keep our prelicensure students engaged in clinical decision-making and clinical learning in a virtual environment. And I have to say, I've never seen so much creativity in my

life! Thank heavens that we have that great simulation lab in the new building because it was utilized quite a bit.

Our faculty figured out how to flip the clinical decision-making using clinical simulation. Typically, in simulation clinical learning, the student would be in the same lab with our great computerized mannequins and the faculty would watch what they were doing. The faculty turned it around so the student had to tell the faculty via Zoom what they would have been doing had they been here. They kept developing their clinical decision-making skills, and their studies kept moving along on schedule.

We were a little worried about whether the students would have the necessary skill set when they were able to get back into the clinical environment later that semester. We found that there was no gap. The proof of the pudding was when the students took their licensure exams. Our licensure exam pass rate was as good as, or better than, what we had in the past.

The other part is that all our lecture classes had to be converted to virtual. In order to keep students physically distanced, our classroom seating was reduced—for example, our 225-seat classroom could now only seat 56. So most of our lectures are still delivered virtually. Zoom has been our best friend.

I believe some of these changes will be permanent. The faculty and students have looked at what types of things work well in that virtual environment. We also are evaluating how many times we need to have our specialty-year students come to campus. We had been doing it three to four times a semester. Faculty members are looking at whether that's necessary.

“I believe that people have realized what nurses really do. ...we've made strides in dispelling some of the myths about nursing care.”

– Linda Norman

How has the pandemic changed the overall role of nurses, and the nursing profession, for the long term?

On a global level, nurses have been recognized as the health care provider who is with patients all the time. That's regardless of whether they're in the ICU, a regular patient care unit, or clinics. I think the value of nursing as far as its contribution to patient care has gone up exponentially.

I believe that people have realized what nurses really do. In the past, they might have thought, “Oh, nurses don't do a lot of decision-making.” Or that nurses only operate on what the physician says. That has been dispelled through COVID. We've made strides in dispelling some of the myths about nursing care.

Nursing research has also received greater attention. There's been an increased interest in research, in what patients are experiencing with it and with long-term effects. Nurses look at how people cope with health and illness. Nurses who are in COVID units have a good viewpoint of what's happening to the patient, be it the physical things or the results of the different types of treatments occurring. I think, truthfully, this is going to give a lot of understanding about palliative care. We'll learn from those nurses working with patients that they knew were not going to make it. We can learn what interventions were most important, such as, what was done to help the person when their family couldn't be with them. What are those lessons learned that helped as people were going through their end-of-life experiences?

The pandemic may also impact policy. Some states loosened oversight for nurse practitioners so they could practice independently due to COVID. We have some Vanderbilt nurse researchers who delved into what happened with nurses who had that oversight removed and how that affected their practice. Now we're going to have more evidence as opposed to opinion about what nurse practitioners can do independently.

Additionally—and our nursing informatics friends will be happy to hear this—nursing will be looking at what data is absolutely essential to collect, whether in inpatient or outpatient settings. The information could change situations where patients have to come into the office for things like getting their blood pressure checked. Maybe they don't need to have so many office visits with utilization of telehealth and new devices. I think nurses are going to be heavily engaged with engineers in design, and I am looking forward to that.

What would you like your legacy at Vanderbilt to be?

I think, perhaps, that I've been able to value and expand academic opportunities, practice opportunities, and research and scholarship—those are the things that I've worked on since July 1, 1991.

What happens July 1, 2021?

I'm going to do a sabbatical for a year, and the nurse part of me is going to do a deep dive into all the data that we've collected from our COVID experience with our student population here at Vanderbilt. I will be working with partners on that.

The fun side is that Don [Dean Norman's husband] and I are going to be able to travel when we want to, not just according to the Vanderbilt schedule. We love to travel. We hope one of these days we're going to be able to get back on that Viking River Cruises boat and do the Danube trip that we have put off now three different times. We're looking forward to getting to do the travel that we like.

Accolades & Accomplishments

- Brought more than 25 years of experience as a nurse educator to VUSN when she arrived in 1991.
- Secured nearly \$5 million in gifts to underwrite the construction of the School of Nursing Building.
- Led the school to improved rankings during her tenure as dean, with the Master of Science in Nursing program moving from a *U.S. News & World Report* ranking of No. 15 in 2013 to No. 8 today. When *U.S. News* began ranking Doctor of Nursing Practice programs in 2017, VUSN's DNP program was listed at No. 10, but now ranks No. 6.
- Chosen as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in 2004.
- Received the National Black Nurses Association's Trailblazer Award in 2005.
- Spearheaded a partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine to introduce students in its Undergraduate Health Sciences Academy to health careers. The program aims to increase diversity in health care providers.
- Launched the VUSN Dean's Diversity Lecture series to introduce students and faculty to international authorities with expertise regarding diverse populations. Among topics were care for transgender people, reaching Hispanic/Latinx communities, and recruiting LGBTQ people for research studies.
- Serves on the board of the Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research, an organization that raises awareness and support for the NINR.
- Served as a member and chair of the Deans' Nursing Policy Coalition, an organization of prestigious nursing school deans who interact with policymakers on the federal level.
- Responsible for more than \$14 million in external funding of curriculum design and nursing education.

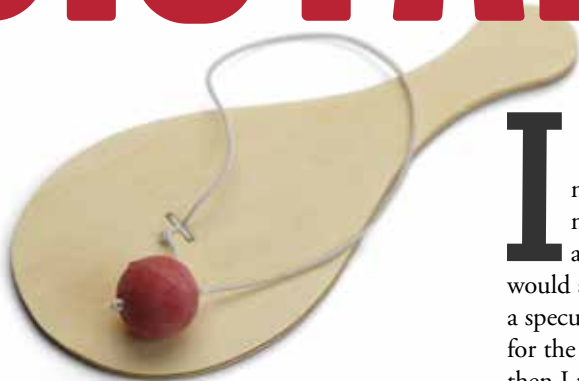


Women's Health NP Specialty Director Ginny Moore considered using paper towel tubes and other easily obtained supplies to construct pelvic models when students couldn't come to campus.

BY JAN READ

LAST SPRING Associate Professor Ginny Moore, DNP, MSN'90, stood in her kitchen with empty paper towel tubes in hand, puzzling over the challenge in front of her. As director of the Women's Health Nurse Practitioner Specialty, she was trying to figure out the best way to build a makeshift model of a woman's pelvis using household items like the paper towel tubes. The COVID-19 pandemic had shut down Vanderbilt's campus, and her students in the School of Nursing needed a way to develop their hands-on skills at home.

GOING THE DISTANCE



In search of a durable solution, Moore moved on to PVC pipe, adding a skein of yarn—the open center would allow students to practice inserting a speculum—and then a rubber paddleball for the cervix. “First I used a dog toy, then I thought about superballs,” Moore remembers. “But the rubber paddleball worked perfectly because we could bore a little hole in it for the endocervix.”

Feeling that she was on to something, Moore sent a picture of her prototype to Mavis Schorn, PhD, FACNM, FNAP, FAAN, senior associate dean for academics.

Dean Linda Norman, DSN, FAAN, green-lighted the project midsummer, and Moore brought in simulation lab director Jo Ellen Holt, DNP, to help improve the model.

“Once the decision was made to move forward, things went really quickly,” Moore says.

Holt, an engineer before entering nursing, tweaked the model, swapping the yarn for a dishwashing glove before settling on a latex balloon, and later adding a nylon trouser sock to represent skin. When everyone was satisfied with the model, Holt's team reproduced them in assembly

line fashion, even designing a foldable cardboard stand to hold the model when the student practiced.

By August 2020, 30 models for exam kits were ready to be shipped to students around the country. “I stamped them with ‘Vanderbilt University School of Nursing Simulation Lab,’ and included an instruction manual,” Holt says. “I thought that would help if the post office X-rayed a package.”

Moore says the project was a success, and not just for the pandemic. “The students did really well with it,” she says. “It’s the first time they’ve had unlimited practice with the model they were tested on. We will continue to use this even when we return to in-person learning.”

The exam kit was so successful that faculty from other areas asked for their own. “Midwifery wanted in, and then the sexual assault nurse examiners asked for a version,” Holt says. “It’s exciting to me that this seemingly simple model allowed students to bridge the learning gap caused by the shutdown.”



The Skills and Simulation Lab team was vital to student learning during the pandemic. L, Eric S. Hall, Diana Kelley, Lilian Pringle, Tia Coleman and Jo Ellen Holt.



Due to its durability, PVC pipe eventually won out over paper towel tubes as the base for the models. The kits sent to students included the supplies a nurse practitioner would use during a pelvic exam.

PIVOTING IN THE PANDEMIC

The brainstorming on the development of the exam kits is just one example of why the School of Nursing has long been a leader in innovative education and distance learning. The nursing school pioneered distance learning in 1996 and remains on the leading edge of educational innovation more than two decades later. When the pandemic hit in the spring of 2020, the school was better positioned than most to pivot to fully remote learning while keeping students on track.

“Most classroom teaching was already done at a distance,” says Betsy Weiner, PhD, FACMI, FAAN, the longtime senior associate dean for informatics and architect of the school’s innovative education program. “And

our faculty happily thinks outside the box.”

Schorn agrees. “We already had a collegial and supportive network in place,” she says. “That combined with our practice of always putting students first got us off to a good start.”

That’s not to say that the pandemic pivot was simple. The goal was clear, but the question was how to execute. The impact on students was top of mind for everyone.

“Right before spring break in 2020 [late February], we were in crisis mode like everyone else—figuring it out day by day,” Schorn says. “The spring semester is a very busy clinical session for our students with experiential learning, which is essential to their education.”

Due to the spread of COVID-19, students’ clinical education in hospitals,

“We already had a collegial and supportive network in place. That combined with our practice of always putting students first got us off to a good start.”

**– Mavis Schorn,
senior associate dean**



PHOTO ANNE RAYNER

In March 2020 simulations, some faculty acted as student aviators while others directed the learning scenarios from the Simulation Lab’s control rooms. Clockwise from bottom left are Instructors Lacey Cross, Lesley Ann Owen, Jennifer Hicks and Angela Weaver.

clinics and other facilities was suspended in mid-March of 2020, followed quickly by the suspension of all in-person classes campuswide.

“When we made the decision to pull all the students out of clinical placements, our No. 1 focus was student safety,” Schorn says. “This was the biggest crisis I’ve had to deal with in my professional career. We were running full tilt at maximum. It tested all our leadership skills.”

“The philosophy at VUSN has always been ‘think about the way it could be’ instead of ‘this is the way we’ve always done it.’”

– Abby Parish, associate professor

With the shutdown, the nursing school’s state-of-the-art simulation lab, the jewel of the \$23.6 million building expansion in 2018, was off-limits to students. To make up for the loss of hands-on teaching, PreSpecialty clinical faculty worked with Holt and her team to create virtual simulations to support pediatric, adult, obstetric and psychiatric-mental health care. For the first one, faculty members acted as avatars in the lab as students directed their actions over videoconference. A second faculty member observed and led a reflective debrief after the simulation.

“The student couldn’t just instruct the faculty avatar to take the patient’s vitals,” Schorn says. “They had to be specific, asking for which vitals they needed and how they should be obtained and why, before the avatar would act. That’s because faculty needs to see that the student knows all the steps.”

The real test of the fully virtual clinical experiences would be with the students’ licensing exams. “We had already determined with the national accreditation body that the virtual learning would count hour for hour for hands-on training,”

Schorn says. “But the exam results would prove whether the virtual learning worked.”

Despite the pandemic upheaval, the students didn’t miss a beat. “They did fine,” Schorn says. “Our pass rate for the exams was 97 percent—better than last year and rivaling the highest pass rate we’ve ever achieved.”

Lectures also took on a new look as faculty hastened to get all their instruction moved online. Associate Professor Abby

Luck Parish, DNP, MSN’05, FNAP, named director of education innovation in fall 2020, appreciated the mix of formal faculty development along with colleagues simply helping colleagues.

“We knew who had great ideas in each trench and we helped each other,” Parish says. Closed captioning was added to many recorded lectures, and transcripts were more often available. “Those changes increased access for students with disabilities, and students without disabilities also reported appreciating the flexibility of multiple lecture formats,” she adds.

Parish says that faculty also used the transcripts to edit their presentations and then recorded shorter, more concise lectures with better graphics. “Students often have to spend more time on online classes, and a lot of that has to do with the professor’s delivery,” she says. “We’ve found that a longer face-to-face lecture often can be cut down to a more succinct version for online consumption, and the students’ experience is better when it’s shorter.”

Parish also pointed to the online course design institute held by Vanderbilt University’s Center for Teaching. “The faculty participants were forced to be

students as they experienced remote learning,” she says. “It’s always a great experience for educators to step back into the shoes of students.”

Parish, who favors a “backward design” approach to curriculum development, saw the concept being deployed repeatedly as faculty rushed to adapt their classes to the new environment. “It’s such a learner-focused approach,” she says. “You begin with the goal—what students need to learn from this course—and work backwards from there.”

Many of these teaching adaptations are here to stay, Parish says. “We all realized pretty quickly that these changes weren’t going to go away after the pandemic,” Parish says. “We’ve been given the opportunity to be really intentional and innovate. From the day I started here 11 years ago, the philosophy at VUSN has always been ‘think about the way it could be’ instead of ‘this is the way we’ve always done it.’”



The 1997 cohort of PMHNP students were pioneers in distance learning.

EARLY ADOPTERS

The nursing school's distance-learning roots go back to 1996, when then-Dean Colleen Conway-Welch charged Professor Susie Adams, PhD, PMC'13, FAANP, FAAN, with expanding the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program beyond Middle Tennessee. Adams would need to recruit students from all over, but most prospects had jobs and families, making relocation to Nashville a huge barrier.

Adams hit on the concept of a modified distance-learning program. "What if students came to campus for just a few days each semester?" Adams says. "We could deliver the lectures online, and they could do their clinical rotations at home."

The initial idea was to video stream the lectures. But the internet of the late 1990s with its dial-up modems couldn't deliver, especially in rural areas. After just one day of choppy service and lagging videos, Adams and her team switched to

pressing the recorded lectures onto CDs and mailing them out overnight.

Conway-Welch knew the school's distance-learning program needed to continue to evolve. In December 1999, she reached out to Weiner, then the director of academic computing at the University of Cincinnati. Weiner had an impressive education innovation track record. She had received one of IBM's first grants for innovative education in the late 1980s, and created, along with collaborators, an award-winning, informatics-based labor and delivery simulation that changed the way that nursing students prepared for their clinical obstetrics experience. Nearly all nursing schools in the country included the videodisc in their curricula.

In their first meeting, Weiner handed the dean a one-page statement outlining her vision for the first decade of the program, accompanied by a requirement that the dean commit to ongoing resources. "To do



Specialty Director Susie Adams with student Nancy Trevor during 1997 pinning ceremonies for the first distanced PMHNP class.

it right, I had to have a team and I had to have resources," Weiner says.

Weiner joined the leadership of the nursing school in 2000 as the senior associate dean for informatics, the first person in the nation with that title. Weiner, who retired in late 2020, was at the leading edge of VUSN's progress during her 20-year tenure.

"When [Conway-Welch] hired me, she also signed on to having these resources available," Weiner says. "It was a strategic decision. There was an actual budget for creative new ideas."



Senior Associate Dean for Research Ann Minnick, PhD, FAAN, teaches PhD students via Scopia videoconferencing in the early 2010s.



Behind the school's immersion in distance learning was a commitment to the resources needed on the technology end, whether equipment or talented personnel.

“Remote learning can’t replace all the hands-on training, but we’ve learned how much it can enhance it.”

– Patricia Sengstack, senior associate dean

Her foresight is apparent throughout the school with the tech-friendly infrastructure, top-notch simulation labs, and a constant enthusiasm for education innovation. Under her leadership, the IT team grew from four people to more than 30, including web developers, instructional designers, graphic artists, videographers, simulations staff and informatics faculty.

Also built into the system is a lasting pledge to quality, from both an organizational commitment and framework. That vow is evident from the yearly review of software and hardware used in the nursing school to the annual start-of-school personal device configuration sessions for students, faculty and staff.

For more than a decade, the school has subscribed to the Quality Matters

framework, developed by educators to measure and guarantee the quality of courses, specifically those offered online. The globally used QM approach evaluates coursework with a rubric of design standards and a peer-review process. The IT team uses QM’s eight research-based standards to continuously evaluate and improve their efforts.

The philosophy is to approach curriculum development from a learner’s point of view. “You don’t use technology

just to use technology,” Weiner says. “You ask yourself first: What is the problem I’m trying to solve? Then you develop possible answers.”

Adams and the PMHNP faculty and staff worked closely with Weiner’s IT team over the years to integrate interactive

learning, imbedded case studies, simulated cases, online testing, discussion boards and other emerging strategies. “We were pioneers,” Adams says. “The IT team was always bringing us new ideas to pilot. With their support, we were fearless early adopters of online teaching-learning strategies.”

During the nursing school’s two decades setting the national pace for distance learning, its rankings have steadily risen. In the 2022 *U.S. News &*

World Report Best Graduate School survey released in March, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing was again named a top-10 graduate nursing school. Vanderbilt’s Master of Science in Nursing advanced to be the nation’s No. 8 program and its Doctor of Nursing Practice program ranked No. 6. Additionally, the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner MSN program repeated its 2021 position and remained ranked No. 1. Other MSN specialties achieved top-5 rankings as well.



Syncing different types of PDAs was just one small challenge Betsy Weiner’s IT team faced as technology evolved.



Middle right: Instructor Susanna Rudy, MSN’14, DNP’16, teaches suturing skills to students across the U.S. Bottom right: Assistant Professor Erin Rodgers, DNP, MSN’86, BSN’82, and Instructor Taneesha Reynolds, MSN’10, congratulate a student after a successful simulation assignment.



Left, in non-pandemic years, students like Cynthia Tran (now MSN'17) would practice on the school's pelvic models. Below left and right: PreSpecialty students participating via video give directions to faculty "avatars" performing patient care tasks during simulations designed to support clinical learning during the early days of the pandemic



'HOW MIGHT WE' MINDSET

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, senior leadership at the nursing school stepped into action. Norman, dean and Valere Potter Menefee Professor of Nursing, was tapped to lead the university-wide Public Health Advisory Task Force that served as a resource for Vanderbilt during the pandemic. She also set up a communication plan that included regular strategy sessions with associate deans and faculty-wide town halls.

Meanwhile, nursing faculty and staff leaders collaborated formally and informally to take the brakes off hands-on learning. As the ideas that bubbled up from front-line instructors tied into strategies set by the leadership, everyone had a role to play.

"I saw renewed camaraderie and enthusiasm for innovation," says Betsy Babb Kennedy, BSN'89, MSN'93, associate dean for non-tenure-track faculty affairs and advancement. "Faculty members were sharing their varied expertise, whether it be clinical, teaching approaches or technology.

"We also really saw how much support we have through our IT team— instructional experts, academic support, tech experts and more," she adds. "This crisis highlighted how collaborative and innovative their work is."

Kennedy echoes Parish's belief that the pandemic presented a unique opportunity. "I was so proud of everyone that in such a time of disruption and uncertainty, they doubled down on their commitment to innovation and excellence," she says.

As campus prepares to return to regular schedules for the fall 2021 semester, the nursing school faculty is ready to move forward. Kennedy says the first step will be a look back. "We'll take a pause and do a debrief, just like we do after clinical sessions with students," she says. "We'll closely examine what we did and what informed our decisions, then we'll integrate that with our data and outcomes. That will drive us forward."

Patricia Sengstack, DNP'10, took over as senior associate dean for informatics in January 2021. She stresses that the school was able to perform during the shutdown because of Weiner's vision. "Other schools were scrambling, while it really was more of the same for us, with a twist, of course," Sengstack says. "Betsy positioned the school so we were ready to handle this."

Going forward, Sengstack sees that faculty will continue to use these new tools in their teaching toolbox. "Remote learning can't replace all the hands-on training, but

we've learned how much it can enhance it," she says.

Moore has been gathering data on the success of the pelvic model. "We knew fairly early on that we would want to share the project with other schools and organizations," she says. "We've had lots of positive feedback from the students."

Holt appreciates the camaraderie and innovation galvanized by the pandemic's challenges. "This brought my team together with a 'how might we' mindset to achieve awesome feats with our faculty and instructors to provide a safe, immersive learning experience," Holt says. During the shutdown her team created several different kits to be mailed to students, including one for practice of small procedure skills like treating abscesses—all to give students a realistic learning experience. "My team really bridged the gap, meeting with the faculty and instructors many times to get their visions to come to life."

It is this sort of creative problem-solving for which the school has long been known. The obstacles in rolling out remote-learning tools—from the early days of dial-up internet and on through the pandemic—have only helped to strengthen the school's mission and point the way forward.

"This has given us new inspiration to continue leading in distance learning," Kennedy says. "No one wants to go back to the way it was. We have learned so much, and backwards isn't where we are going."



GRANDRIVER, E+, VIA GETTY IMAGES

*A Navajo elder wears
a face mask to protect
against COVID-19.*

BY JAN READ

IN THE THICK OF IT

Colleagues Annie Moon, MSN'03, and Jill Moses, MD'91, confront a continuing COVID-19 crisis as they deliver health care to the Navajo Nation

As a high school student who excelled in science and health, Annie D. Moon, MSN'03, wanted a career that would challenge her and give her the opportunity every day to make a difference in people's lives.

Nursing fit the bill, and she has worked her entire career on the Navajo Nation reservation where she grew up, first as a registered nurse, then as a leader and manager after earning her master of science in nursing.

Now a pediatric nurse practitioner, Moon supervises the Department of School and Health

Services at the Indian Health Services' Chinle Service Unit in Arizona, overseeing the delivery of clinical services to underserved Native American adolescents in five high schools and three middle schools. One of her colleagues and friends is fellow Vanderbilt alumna Dr. Jill Moses, MD'91, public health director of the Chinle Service Unit.

Even before the pandemic, their days were challenging and full. But when COVID-19 struck the Navajo Nation in the spring of 2020, Moon says, "Everything changed."

“We were doing so well over the summer with new case numbers in the single digits. People relaxed a little, and family gatherings started happening. Then it started all over again.”

– Annie Moon

The coronavirus hammered the area, which already was contending with widespread poverty and poor health conditions. During the spring surge in 2020, the Nation’s infection rate per capita was the highest in the country, exceeding that of even hard-hit New York and New Jersey.

The Navajo Nation fought back with strict lockdowns and mask mandates. By summer’s end, the curve was flattening. But during the fall, pandemic fatigue grew across the country and COVID numbers began to rise.

The Navajo Nation was no exception. By mid-November, the case count rose above the May peak. Full-on lockdowns and special weekend curfews were issued, while visitors and tourists were banned and only essential businesses were allowed to open, albeit with shortened hours. Despite these efforts, the upsurge in case

numbers continued, and the health care system strained under the demand.

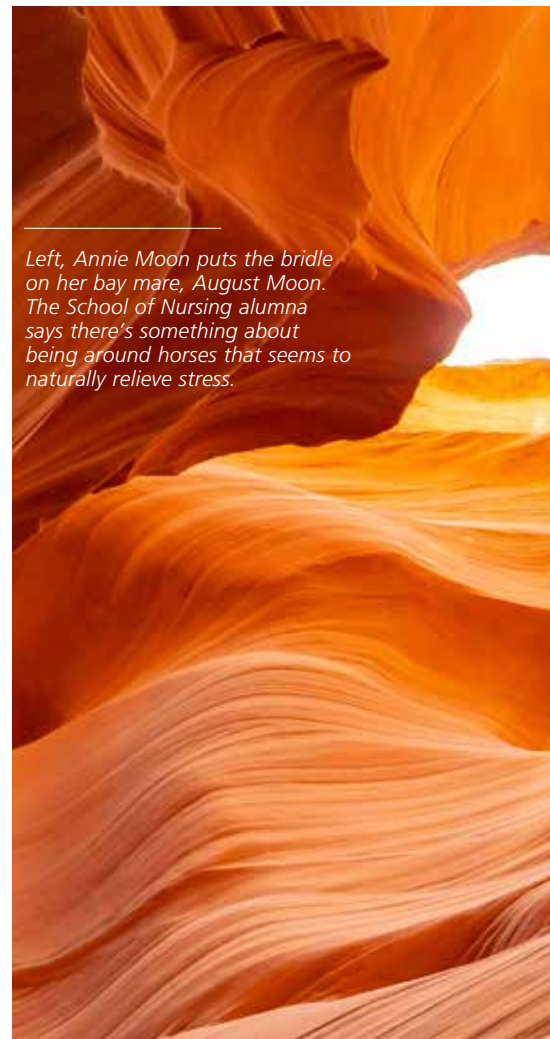
“We are really in the thick of it again,” says Moon, as 2020 draws to a close. “We were doing so well over the summer with new case numbers in the single digits. People relaxed a little, and family gatherings started happening. Then it started all over again.”

With schools going virtual, Moon’s in-school clinics became phone visits, and her focus switched to fighting the pandemic. Now her long days start and end with virtual meetings of the public health response team.

“We talk about cases and clusters and what we are seeing,” she says. “Because we went through this in April and May, we are more prepared this time. We know what to expect and how to do certain things.” But she adds, “I hate to think about what the next few months will be like.”



RYAN GOLDTOOTH



Left, Annie Moon puts the bridle on her bay mare, August Moon. The School of Nursing alumna says there’s something about being around horses that seems to naturally relieve stress.

CHALLENGES FOR THE NATION



RYAN GOLDTOOTH

Moon and Moses continue fighting COVID among the Navajo into the winter months.

The Navajo Nation, established by treaty in 1868, is the largest Native American reservation in the United States. While wholly part of the U.S., the Nation has its own government and is home to more than 250,000 people. Its borders encompass 27,000 square miles—somewhere between the size of South Carolina and West Virginia—much of it in the high desert regions of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

Despite having a relatively low population density, the Navajo Nation has faced a unique set of challenges in slowing coronavirus. Underlying health conditions, a lack of infrastructure, poverty, a health care system stretched beyond its limits, and certain cultural practices that are common among the Navajo all have been factors in its spread.

The health of Native Americans ranks lower than the nation's overall. According to the Indian Health Service, diabetes is 300 percent more likely in American Indians and Alaska Natives than the general U.S. population. That, paired with high rates of prediabetes, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, substance

use disorder and depression, presents a significant health care challenge in the time of COVID.

Adding to these pressures are the infrastructure issues that plague the region. About 15,000 of the 55,000 homes on the reservation do not have electricity (making up 75 percent of all un electrified households in the U.S.). The Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources estimates that about 30 percent of the population does not have access to clean, reliable drinking water. One in three Navajo citizens do not have indoor plumbing. Of the more than 14,000 miles of roads crossing the Nation, less than a quarter are paved.

In addition, food insecurity affects more than 75 percent of households in the Navajo Nation. With only a dozen or so grocery stores on the reservation, many have no choice other than the unhealthy fare available at convenience stores and trading posts.

"A significant percentage of our households are extremely impoverished," Moses says.

Altogether, nearly 40 percent of the Navajo Nation live in poverty, and the unemployment rate is at least three times the national average. But even those who have jobs find themselves in a difficult predicament. They go to work, virus or not.

"Despite the pandemic," Moses says, "they can't afford not to work, and they don't have access to telework."

And to complicate matters further, Navajo often live in small family clusters of several homes. The close-knit nature of the culture, which would normally be a strength under different circumstances, actually makes the Nation more vulnerable to the disease's spread.

"The families are interdependent," Moses explains. "The younger generation gathers wood and cares for the elders. One house may have running water that all the family members use. They may share a refrigerator or kitchen. Family is everything here, but these crowded households are not good when you are trying to control the spread of COVID."

Lower Antelope Canyon, also called the Corkscrew, is part of the Navajo Tribal Park lands. It and all others are still closed to tourists due to the pandemic.

Jill Moses first came to the Navajo Nation to do a rotation as a Vanderbilt School of Medicine student.

FROM VANDERBILT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

Jill Moses was first introduced to public health during her time at Vanderbilt University Medical School, when she did a rotation on the reservation.

Moses still appreciates her mentors on the Vanderbilt faculty, including Dr. Kathy Edwards, the Sarah H. Sell and Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Pediatrics; Dr. William Schaffner, professor of health policy and professor of medicine; Dr. Marie Griffin, professor of health policy, emerita; and Dr. Lewis Lefkowitz, professor of preventive medicine, emeritus.

Moses went on to residencies in pediatrics and preventive medicine at Johns Hopkins University, where she also earned a master's in public health in 1995.

"At Hopkins, a couple of my mentors were giants in the field of public health, and they both had their start in the Indian Health Service," Moses says.

She returned to the Nation in 1996 and now is director of the Chinle Service Unit, which is part of the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. The IHS is the principal federal health care provider and health advocate for American Indians and Alaska Natives; its goal is to raise their health status to the highest possible level.

Within the Navajo Nation, Moses and the IHS work with agencies on the federal, state and tribal levels, as well as nonprofits and community organizations, to coordinate health care delivery for the



Navajo. She finds that practicing within a public health system is perfect for her.

"I can practice in the best possible way," she says. "Issues such as 'Can my patient afford this medicine?' don't exist. I'm working in a system that can put the priority not on the bottom line but on improving the health of the population. To me, it's the best way to provide health care."

Under her leadership, the office has increased its staff from 14 to more than 80 and established programs in immunizations, injury prevention, nutrition, health promotion, disease prevention and school-based clinics. She also still sees pediatric patients at the Chinle clinic.

FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

Moses and Moon have been colleagues and friends for more than 20 years. They met when Moon was a pediatric nurse at a satellite clinic.

“She became our first pediatric case manager,” Moses says of Moon. “We worked together, our kids were the same ages—we’ve gone through a lot together.”

When Moon talked about wanting to get her master of science in nursing, it was Moses who suggested Vanderbilt School of Nursing. Moon packed up her two sons and moved to Nashville for the intensive year of study.

“Looking back, I can’t believe I did that,” Moon says. “I was a single mom, and people normally don’t go off the reservation and do things like that.”

She recalls that Moses’ mother, Linda, took her under her wing. “She would have us over for dinner, and she would pick up the boys from school when I was busy at Vanderbilt,” Moon says. “I never would have finished without the Moses’ support. I can’t say enough good things about them.” (Jill’s father, Dr. Hal Moses, MD’62, professor of cancer biology, emeritus, founded and served as director of Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center.)

After earning a master of public health and a public health training certificate in American Indian health from Johns Hopkins in 2015, Moon launched Yéigo! (Navajo for “with spirit”), a scalable initiative to promote healthy lifestyles among tweens and teenagers aimed at breaking the cycle of obesity and diabetes. She also led the Chinle Service Unit’s HPV vaccination campaign in 2018. The Nation’s 82.7 percent vaccination rate was among the highest in the country.

Under Moon’s leadership, the school clinic network in the Navajo Nation has grown in number of schools served and quality of care provided while adding new services, including mental health support. She is also trained as a sexual assault nurse examiner to help victims of sexual violence.

Moses, who expanded Chinle’s Office of Native Medicine, celebrates Moon’s work while also acknowledging key support from native healers. The HPV

vaccine, which protects against the sexually transmitted human papillomavirus, was a hard sell for area parents.

“We worked with native healers to develop some messaging that was culturally sensitive,” Moses says. “Girls here go through a puberty ceremony, so we developed materials that tied getting the vaccine to this important declaration of adulthood.”

Moon, bilingual in English and Navajo, is one of the only Navajos serving on the medical staff at Chinle Hospital. She looks for ways to integrate modern medicine with the Navajo traditional way of life.

Both women have been recognized for their efforts. Moon was the inaugural winner of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing’s Alma Gault Alumni Award for Public Service in 2018. She also received the Navajo Area Director’s Award for Outstanding Healthcare Provider. Moses was awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award in 2011 from her undergraduate alma mater, Carleton College.

The duo also were recognized together in 2018 by the Association of American Cancer Institutes, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Cancer Society, for the HPV vaccine campaign.

FIGHTING COVID...AGAIN

Since the pandemic has reemerged, Moses has focused on scaling up the Chinle Service Unit’s response.

“We’ve been in a state of emergency since spring. Our numbers were really low in August and September,” Moses says. “We were reopening, restrictions were being eased across the reservation. But the region around us started to get worse. A lot of people work off the reservation and do a lot of shopping off the reservation. Things just exploded again when the weather turned.

“The reservation is not an island,” she adds, “but it might be easier if we were.”

Her days are now dominated by the virus, as she coordinates education

and disease control measures with vaccination plans.

“We have a lot of competing priorities we will have to juggle,” Moses says. “We’ve done most of our flu vaccination, and we are well into prepping our vaccination plans. We’re working on how we will provide health care during the pandemic—ER visits, hospitalizations. We were short on nurses before COVID started, and now we’re competing with health systems across the country.

“It is challenging to contemplate what the next few months will bring.”

For her part, Moon leans on the skills she learned at Vanderbilt during this protracted fight against COVID-19. “My MSN program still helps me so much,” she says. “Learning how to prepare, how to manage people and patients—along with the science, those are the things I keep with me.”

The pandemic has impacted Moon on a very personal level. Even though she lives just 200 yards from her parents, her visits have been few—and masked. But she hasn’t lost hope.

“Navajos have been through a lot: historical trauma, wars, the Long Walk [when they were forcibly relocated by the U.S. government in the 1860s], diseases. We’ve always managed to survive,” she says. “We are resilient. I’m just focused on getting through this wave, people getting the vaccines and moving forward!”

Editor’s Note:

Since this story was written, the Navajo Nation has continued to fight COVID-19 so successfully that national experts say it may be the first area in the United States to reach herd immunity. As of April 2021, the area led the country in vaccinations, with more than 65 percent of its people vaccinated. Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez is a prominent advocate, one of the first to receive his shot and promoting the need for the vaccinations.

by Marissa Shapiro

Maternal Health Crisis

Promising research focuses on the mother's health to ensure her—and her child's—well-being in the short and long term

The tie between mother and child is never closer than while the child is in the womb.

Recognizing the importance of this time in human life, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing has chosen to make **Pregnancy Outcomes, Mother and Infant Health, and Family Health** one of its four signature areas of research. Research currently underway by four VUSN research faculty aims to improve maternal health, with its far-reaching impact on health outcomes affecting multiple patients across generations.

Mulubrhan Mogos, PhD, assistant professor of nursing

Pregnancy is like being engaged in heavy exercise and functions like a natural stress test on the cardiovascular system, explains Assistant Professor of Nursing Mulubrhan Mogos. When the cardiovascular system fails, mothers can develop hypertensive disorders of pregnancy. Among the most common of these disorders are chronic hypertension, preeclampsia (a sudden spike in blood pressure) and eclampsia (seizures or coma resulting from preeclampsia), preeclampsia superimposed on chronic hypertension, and gestational hypertension.

Mogos has shaped his research around how these pregnancy-related cardiovascular health issues affect maternal and child health. His studies have looked at hospital admissions related to hypertensive disorders of pregnancy and heart failure during pregnancy. The resulting analysis concludes that women who experience hypertensive disorders of pregnancy are more likely to be readmitted into the hospital within six weeks of giving birth, causing untold distress and trauma, sometimes even death. Mogos and colleagues also found that the condition of heart failure, often thought of as a cardiovascular disorder affecting older people, occurs in pregnant women.



JOHN RUSSELL



Left: Researchers James Muchira, Jeremy Neal, Mulubrhan Mogos and Julia Phillippi each study different aspects of maternal health, a serious national health issue. The U.S. maternal mortality rate is higher than that of any other developed country.

Importantly, he found that almost 60 percent of pregnancy-related heart failure diagnoses occurred during the postpartum period, even though the postpartum period represents less than 2 percent of pregnancy-related hospitalizations.

“These interrelated findings were quite surprising and have led to my current interest in identifying early signs of poor cardiovascular health that a woman might experience late in pregnancy and shortly after delivery,” says Mogos, who also is a pediatric nurse practitioner. “If we can identify women at increased risk of complications early during gestation, we have a greater chance to prevent or reduce short- and long-term health and economic burdens.”

Mogos advocates for a move toward using 24 hours of home-based blood pressure monitoring in high-risk pregnant women, in addition to routine, clinic-based blood pressure monitoring. Rhythmic changes to blood pressure known as night dipping or morning surge are predictive of cardiovascular risk but are rarely measured, he says.

Through a pilot project funded by the School of Nursing, Mogos is currently recruiting women within 20 weeks of gestation to measure 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure data. In this work, Mogos and his team intend to generate pilot data that test the utility of 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure profiles as a way to identify women at increased risk before the occurrence of the traditional signs and symptoms of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy.

Before starting his research career, Mogos practiced nursing in a neonatal intensive care unit in Eritrea. He noticed that almost 95 percent of neonatal hospitalizations are related to events that happened during pregnancy or childbirth—and just how difficult it was to treat a baby without understanding its mother’s pregnancy and events surrounding childbirth.

“There are some things that can easily be prevented if the mother is well taken care of,” he says, “but as a third-world country, Eritrea’s maternal mortality rate is very high.”

Once in the U.S., he discovered the

stark reality that the American maternal death rate is also high when compared to other developed nations. He decided to use pregnancy as a window of opportunity to identify women who are at increased risk of cardiovascular disease, one of the leading causes of maternal morbidity and mortality in the U.S. By identifying women who are at increased risk of future cardiovascular disease, he believes providers can provide tailored, evidence-based postpartum care beyond the traditional six-week postpartum period.

Julia Phillippi, PhD, director of the Nurse-Midwifery Specialty

Julia Phillippi, PhD, MSN’99, CNM, FACNM, FAAN, directs Vanderbilt’s No. 1-ranked Nurse-Midwifery Specialty in the school’s master of science in nursing program. She is also a researcher focused on how the format and content of prenatal care influence a mother’s desire to access care. By looking at birth locations, either at birth centers or hospitals, and at health care providers present during the birth, Phillippi measures the influence of those choices on birth outcomes.

Her research has shown that with midwives present during the labor and delivery, women with low-risk pregnancies have better outcomes.

“Midwives are well-trained to be present and to perform interventions that help women have a birth experience where they feel safe and comfortable,” Phillippi says.

Acknowledging the positive predictive value of measuring outcomes of low-risk pregnancies, Phillippi highlights the importance of the relationship between care providers and mother. A relational, wraparound experience throughout the pregnancy that builds trust helps women feel safer with their care provider, particularly if a complication were to arise during labor.

“Perinatal care is a fine line, and it is difficult to tell what is normal. If expectant mothers have someone whom they trust and feel comfortable sharing their experience with, those care providers can intervene earlier, keeping mom and baby safe,” Phillippi says.

“Midwives are well-trained to be present and to perform interventions that help women have a birth experience where they feel safe and comfortable.”

– Julia Phillippi

As a teenager, Phillippi knew that midwifery was her calling. From age 16, she worked in a rural birth center in Sweetwater, Tennessee, a critical access point for women in the region to access prenatal care. The birth center taught Phillippi to be a present and attentive caregiver, and serendipitously, it was the final clinical site during her training as a nurse midwife at Vanderbilt. After years of providing full-scope midwifery care, Phillippi transitioned to intrapartum care and a research and teaching position in the School of Nursing.

“Teaching is a lot like midwifery. We have to create safe learning environments where people can flourish while they are doing all of the hard work,” Phillippi says.

Phillippi is interested in measuring hospital and home birth outcomes using a database large enough to identify meaningful differences by site. She also is studying access to treatment for opioid use disorder during pregnancy—a particular problem in Tennessee, where overdose is the leading cause of maternal death. Ensuring women have access to person-centered models of care so they can have the best possible pregnancy outcomes is the foundation of her work.

James Muchira, PhD, assistant professor

Assistant Professor James Muchira is conducting a study of intergenerational transmission of cardiovascular risk. Working with 73-year prospective multigenerational data from the longitudinal Framingham Heart Study, Muchira looks at patterns of cardiovascular disease segmented by population groups and risk factors.

His research, recognized for its impact by the American Heart Association and the European Association of Preventive Cardiology, has shown that favorable heart health of mothers can delay the first onset of

heart disease, stroke or heart attack in their young adult children by as much as nine years.

By looking at the signatures of cardiovascular health—diabetes, high blood pressure, body mass index and blood glucose levels—in parents by gender, Muchira found that it is the health of the mother—rarely the father—that has a significant impact on

Muchira is looking at a holistic, life course view of cardiovascular health. His second current project is investigating heart health of children between 1 and 5 years old in an effort to understand the connection between a mother's cardiovascular health and a child's risk for obesity.

“The only way to break the cycle of intergenerational cardiovascular disease and

guidelines—contribute to higher rates of interventions aimed at accelerating labor progress and to higher rates of cesarean birth. This is unnecessary and puts women at risk.”

His primary focus when arriving at Vanderbilt in 2014 was to translate a physiology-based labor assessment partograph to incorporate current evidence and to provide clinicians with a common approach for assessing labor progress and diagnosing slow labor progress among low-risk women. The partograph would allow a woman and her provider to graphically visualize labor progress in the context of population norms, providing a platform for patient-centered, shared decision-making and control.

Today Neal also is investigating whether there are physiological or systemic practice patterns that contribute to cesarean rate disparities between Black and white women: 30 percent of Black women with low-risk, first-time pregnancies have cesarean births compared with 24.7 percent of white women. “This area of science is important because these low-risk women are presumably admitted to labor units with the same baseline risk for cesarean birth, yet their outcomes are often very different,” Neal says. This research, among the first of its kind, is being funded by a grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

Neal worked his way through his maternal-child health training as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. “With the U.S. being as developed as we are in many ways, we have among the poorest labor and birth outcomes among developed countries,” he says. “That is devastating for women and society. Our nation's health is only as good as maternal-child health.”

“The high burden of heart disease and diabetes pushed me forward because so little was known in that area, especially when I was a nurse clinician in Kenya.”

– James Muchira

a child's heart health and consequently, the onset of heart disease.

“These findings resulted in our strong recommendation for interventions that improve maternal health,” Muchira says. “The studies have also led me to my current research path: looking into how early these risk factors begin and how epigenetic markers of cardiovascular disease are passed from mothers to their children.”

His work is providing some of the first quantifiable data proving that intergenerational transmission of risk factors for cardiovascular disease is passed from mother to child. The data are essential to the broad acceptance and resources required to improve current health conditions for mother and child.

“The high burden of heart disease and diabetes pushed me forward because so little was known in that area, especially when I was a nurse clinician in Kenya,” Muchira says. “I was involved in screening of heart disease and diabetes, and I observed high prevalence of cardiovascular disease. That kept me asking questions about why we have a challenge we did not think we had at that time.”

ensure healthy development of offspring is to look at young children and their parents,” Muchira says.

Jeremy L. Neal, PhD, CNM, assistant professor of nursing

Jeremy Neal, assistant professor and co-director of the School of Nursing Postdoctoral Program, is focused on improving labor and birth outcomes for mothers and babies, specifically through limiting the use of interventions aimed at speeding labor progress among women who are already progressing adequately in labor, as well as by safely decreasing cesarean births. In 2019, cesarean births accounted for 31.7 percent of all deliveries in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Since the mid-1950s, expectations of labor progress have been much faster than what is physiologically normal for women,” Neal says. “Holding women to unrealistic cervical dilation rate expectations based on outdated research—and inconsistently applying more contemporary labor progress

“Holding women to unrealistic cervical dilation rate expectations based on outdated research—and inconsistently applying more contemporary labor progress guidelines—contribute to higher rates of interventions aimed at accelerating labor progress and to higher rates of cesarean birth. This is unnecessary and puts women at risk.”

– Jeremy L. Neal

by Morgan Kroll

Legacies of Pioneering Deans Fuel Recent Graduates to Follow Their Passions

When Karina Maza, MSN'19, was working as a Spanish language interpreter at Vanderbilt University Medical Center a decade ago, she would sometimes find herself interpreting for School of Nursing students.

"I was impressed by how well they performed their tasks as students," Maza says. "They were total pros—their work was excellent."

Intrigued by their professionalism and expertise, Maza went to lunch with one of the students, who told her about the PreSpecialty master's entry option for students with a bachelor's in a field other than nursing. Maza, a native of Caracas, Venezuela, had earned her undergraduate degree in journalism from Universidad Central de Venezuela, but was ready for new horizons.

The lunch date proved to be auspicious. Maza soon was inspired to apply to Vanderbilt, and her friend became a mentor to her throughout the process. Maza was accepted and attended the School of Nursing with support from the Julia Hereford Scholarship, a need-based scholarship for graduate students established in 1944 by the Alumnae Association (as it was then called).

At the time, the Alumnae Association was led by Julia Hereford, BSN'35, a School of Nursing faculty member, and later, dean. During her tenure as dean in the 1950s and 1960s, she brought significant changes to the nursing school's curriculum. Hereford was instrumental in developing VUSN's graduate program, the first graduate nursing program in Tennessee. Decades later, the Alumnae Association Scholarship was renamed in her honor.

At the School of Nursing, Maza made her mark as one of the first leaders of the school's Hispanic Latino Student Nurse Association, founded in 2018, and now known as the Hispanic/Latinx Student Affinity Group. The student group offers support and mentorship to its members and explores how nurses can provide culturally appropriate care for Hispanic and Latinx populations. At the August 2019 Pinning, Maza received the Women's Health Nurse Practitioner Specialty Outstanding Student Award, recognizing her outstanding achievements and demonstrated leadership.


Today, Maza works as a nurse practitioner for Metro Nashville Public Health, where most of her patients are uninsured or underinsured. "It's very rewarding to help people who are

underserved," Maza says. "Working with these patients is my way of giving back. I'm happy and fulfilled in this role that helps keep women healthy."

Maza began her position with Metro in March 2020, right as the pandemic started to grip the local area. Over the past year she has been involved with the city's COVID-19 Task Force and often can be found administering vaccines at the Music City Center on weekends.

"It has been very fulfilling for me to do this work for the community during this unprecedented time," Maza says. "My education prepared me for this moment, and I am grateful for that."

She also expresses gratitude to those like Julia Hereford and others who came before her and helped provide the resources for her to thrive.



"The impact of my scholarship is so meaningful, and it goes beyond an education."

— Karina Maza

SUSAN URMY

“The impact of my scholarship is so meaningful, and it goes beyond an education,” she says. “My education helps me and my fellow Vandy grads at Metro to make an impact in the community. It’s just so amazing that there are so many donors who are willing to help us.”

“THE COOLEST JOB EVER”

Almost all Vanderbilt nursing students qualify for financial aid. Christina Echternach, MSN’17, was no exception. The Oregon native attended Vanderbilt with funding from the Colleen Conway-Welch Scholarship, which was established in 2013 to support graduate students.

Colleen Conway-Welch served as dean of the School of Nursing from 1984 to 2013, making her the longest serving dean of any U.S. nursing school. Her many achievements include opening the Ph.D. program in 1993 and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program in 2008; establishing the national standard for advanced practice training for nurses and successfully integrating information

technology into curriculum delivery. Conway-Welch had been a scholarship recipient herself and credited the financial assistance as integral to her success.

Echternach was drawn to the School of Nursing for its excellent reputation and because it offered the Nurse-Midwifery/Family Nurse Practitioner dual specialty program that was not available at many other schools. Receiving the Colleen Conway-Welch Scholarship, she says, “eased the burden of nursing school and allowed me to follow my passion.”

“Nursing school was challenging but we were well supported, and I made some fabulous friends there,” she recalls. “Tonia Moore-Davis (MSN, CNM, FACNM), was an incredible teacher. She relayed information in a way that was understandable and approachable. She

is such a smart and exceptional midwife. Everyone who learned from her wanted to be a midwife like her.”

After graduating, Echternach began working at a collaborative women’s health practice in Portland, Oregon. “It’s hard to imagine being anything other than a midwife. It’s the coolest job ever,” Echternach says. “Midwifery is special in that you get to be a part of this vulnerable and exciting time for people. It can be hard and scary. It can be happy and exciting. You get to walk this line in medicine where you are promoting normalcy and well-being, but you still have the skills and ability to respond if challenges come up.”

Both Maza and Echternach’s lives and careers were deeply impacted by the generosity of donors and the legacies of

“Creating a planned gift was a meaningful opportunity for me to continue to support students for decades to come.”

– Dean Linda Norman



“It’s important that people are supported in careers that are focused on helping others.”

– Christina Echternach

leadership from pioneering deans Julia Hereford and Colleen Conway-Welch.

“It’s important that people are supported in careers that are focused on helping others,” Echternach says. “I hope that more and more opportunities exist for people that need it.”

Current VUSN Dean Linda Norman, who has led the school to become one of the nation’s top-ranked graduate nursing programs, plans to continue her support for Vanderbilt nursing students long after she steps down as dean this summer. She and her husband established a charitable trust to support endowed scholarships in perpetuity.

“Scholarship support ensures students can apply their studies to follow their passions without financial burden,” says Norman, who is also the Valere Potter Menefee Professor of Nursing. “Creating a planned gift was a meaningful opportunity for me to continue to support students for decades to come.”

PROVIDED



Tom Christenbery

School of Nursing mourns loss of Tom Christenbery, beloved professor and champion of compassion in nursing

“He made each and every one of us feel like we were special and could make a difference in the future of nursing.”

– Pam Jones

Thomas L. Christenbery, MSN’87, PhD’04, CNE, professor of nursing and director of program evaluation at the School of Nursing, died unexpectedly in his sleep Feb. 16. He was 66.

The popular Christenbery was legendary for his friendliness, kindness and encouraging nature. In his two decades at Vanderbilt, he taught and mentored hundreds of students and colleagues, encouraging them to reach for new possibilities.

“Tom made everyone—faculty, staff and students—feel like they had an unlimited horizon of possibilities. He fueled our passion to contribute and be the best,” says Pam Jones, BSN’81, MSN’92, DNP’13, FAAN, VUSN senior associate dean for clinical and community

partnerships. “He made each and every one of us feel like we were special and could make a difference in the future of nursing.”

Dean Linda D. Norman, DSN, FAAN, brought Christenbery to Vanderbilt in 2000. “Tom left a mark on everyone he encountered with his friendly smile, quick wit, compassion for all, deep thinking and love for nursing,” she says. “He forged warm bonds with colleagues and students alike. We will deeply miss him and grieve his loss.”

Christenbery grew up in Kentucky and earned a bachelor of science in nursing from Murray State University. He earned his master of science in nursing from VUSN in nursing administration in 1988. In 2004 he earned a PhD in nursing science from Vanderbilt.

Friends say that he loved people and he loved VUSN. On the day before he died, Christenbery moderated a school-wide discussion for VUSNPride, an LGBTQ+ student affinity group he helped establish and for which he proudly served as faculty adviser. He also founded and advised the Middle Tennessee/Vanderbilt chapter of the American Association of Men in Nursing.

Associate Dean for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Affairs and Advancement Betsy Kennedy, PhD, BSN'89, MSN'93, was one of Christenbery's closest friends. "Tom was an extraordinary educator, generous colleague and dear friend. It didn't matter what topic was on the course schedule, what he really taught was a way of thinking and of being as a nurse," Kennedy says. "He made everyone around him better and then joyfully applauded their successes. He was the most genuinely thoughtful and grateful person I have ever known. I will deeply miss his warmth, humor and guiding wisdom."

Christenbery recently had announced his retirement from VUSN, effective at the end of the academic year. "I feel as if I have been at a long, delicious, and satisfying meal and now it is time to push my chair back from the table," he wrote several friends and colleagues. "Nursing has been a nourishing career and a wise choice for me." He is survived by his husband, David Frese, BA'66, and several generations of nieces and nephews. Two scholarships honoring Christenbery have been set up, one for students from underrepresented groups in nursing and a second for LGBTQI+ students or students who work with that community. Those wishing to support Christenbery's legacy can email VUSNgiving@vanderbilt.edu or call 800-288-0082.

It was with sadness that the School of Nursing also learned of the deaths of these former faculty and benefactors.

Ken Wallston, professor of nursing, emeritus

Professor of Nursing, Emeritus, Kenneth A. Wallston, PhD, MA, regarded internationally as one of the founders of health psychology, died in Asheville, North Carolina, Oct. 27, 2020. He was 78. A faculty member at the School of Nursing for more than 40 years, Wallston worked widely in the transdisciplinary arena called behavioral medicine. In addition to his appointment at the School of Nursing, Wallston was a professor of psychology in the College of Arts and Science and professor of psychology and professor of human and organizational development at Peabody College. During his decades at Vanderbilt, he also was a Kennedy Center member, research associate at the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, and longtime director of the VUSN Health Care Research Project. He also was an active member of the Institute for Medicine and Public Health at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Wallston is survived by his wife, Jonatha Gibaud, PhD'78, and two children.

Patricia Champion Frist, BA'61

Patricia Champion Frist, 81, died Jan. 5 in Nashville. A notable philanthropist and community volunteer, Frist and her husband,

Thomas F. "Tommy" Frist Jr., BA'61, underwrote the construction of the Patricia Champion Frist Hall at the School of Nursing. The 25,000-square-foot building allowed VUSN to implement new technologies for enhanced classroom and distributed learning. In recognition of her impact, VUSN named her an honorary alumna in 2009. Frist served on the boards of a variety of nonprofits and was president of the Patricia C. Frist and Thomas F. Frist Jr. Foundation. She is survived by her husband, three children and nine grandchildren.

Camille Legeay Cook, BSN'48

Alumna Camille Legeay Cook, 95, died Feb. 17 at her home in Washington, D.C. After graduating from the School of Nursing in 1948, Cook joined the U.S. Foreign Service as the first nurse assigned to the American Embassy in Tokyo. She worked as a nurse consultant at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and later for the U.S. Public Health Service in Washington, D.C. Vanderbilt continued to be very important to her throughout her life. She made a tremendous impact on countless students through the creation of a scholarship at VUSN, and donations may be made in her memory to the Camille Legeay Cook Scholarship by contacting VUSNgiving@vanderbilt.edu.

Class Notes

60s

Carrol "Ditto" Smith, BSN'64, retired from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Charlotte McDaniel, BSN'67, published a book, *Stories Untold: Oral Histories of Wives of Vietnam Servicemen*, in December 2019.

70s

Claudia Reaves Stoffel, BSN'72, retired in May 2020 from West Kentucky Community and Technical College in Paducah, where she was professor and practical nursing program coordinator.

Diane Lauver, BSN'75, co-authored "How Could Nurse Researchers Apply Theory to Generate Knowledge More Efficiently?" which became a 2020 top download for the *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*. She is former director of the PhD program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and recipient of the Norma Lang Excellence in Nursing Research Award from the Wisconsin Nurses Association.

Sherrie Raby Nichols, BSN'75, is senior medical analyst and adviser at Overbrook Consultants in Nashville.

Marilyn Dubree, MSN'76, received the 2020 Advocate State Award for Excellence for Tennessee from the American Association of Nurse Practitioners.

Lesley Mortimer, MSN'76, is a contributing author of the book *Pandemic Home Care, revised for COVID-19*, published in 2020.

Christina Nyirati, MSN'78, is chair of the Department of Nursing and director of the nursing program at Heritage University in Toppenish, Washington.

Becca Sander Walters, MSN'78, is owner and provider at Choose Life 2 Live clinic in Castle Rock, Colorado.

Randolph Rasch, MSN'79, was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing in October 2020. He was appointed to a task force created by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to study the impact of COVID-19 on Black and brown residents of Michigan.

Jim Rhudy, BSN'79, is an assistant professor of neurology at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine in Memphis.

80s

Pam Orebaugh Jones, BSN'81, MSN'92, DNP'13, was named to *Nashville Medical News Women to Watch Class of 2020*.

Elizabeth Burgess-Dowdell, BSN'84, is lead author of "Risk Behaviors of High School Students Who Report Knowing Someone Who Self-harms," published in January 2020 in *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*. She co-authored "Using the Word 'Healthy' in an Emergency Food Pantry: An Unexpected Response," published in *Public Health Nursing* in September.

Susan Germann Yackzan, BSN'86, is chair of the 2021 meeting of the National Oncology Nursing Society and director of clinical oncology practice for Baptist Health's Cancer Service Line in Lexington, Kentucky.

Judith La Gorce Bright, BSN'87, was featured by *StyleBlueprint* in December 2020 among Nashville jewelry businesses owned by women.

Betsy Babb Kennedy, BSN'89, MSN'93, was promoted to associate dean for non-tenure-track faculty affairs and advancement at VUSN in September 2020.

Deborah Dalhouser Williams, MSN'89, is a women's health nurse practitioner at Hendersonville Obstetrics & Gynecology in Tennessee.

90s

Mary Lou Cameron Fornehed, MSN'90, is on faculty at the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville.

Ginny Moore, MSN'90, was appointed to the editorial advisory board of *Women's Healthcare: A Clinical Journal for NPs* for a two-year term beginning January 2021.

Laura Hammond Powell, MSN'90, is a family nurse practitioner at Greenville Pediatric Services in North Carolina.

Karen Larimer, BA'86, MSN'91, is principal investigator of a study funded by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering of the National Institutes of Health to develop an "AI-based COVID-19 Decompensation Index Digital Biomarker to Address the Rapid Decline of High-risk COVID-19 Patients." She is director of clinical development for physIQ in Chicago.

Marla Price Moore, MSN'91, is a family nurse practitioner at Cumberland Family Care in Sparta, Tennessee.

Carolyn Wood Smeltzer, MSN'92, is a pediatric and family nurse practitioner at Desert Shores Pediatrics in Gilbert, Arizona.

Pam Waynick-Rogers, MSN'92, PMC'96, was named treasurer of the Tennessee chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nursing in December 2020.

Donna Elrod, MSN'93, was named to the Great 100 Nurses Foundation's annual list of top nurses in Arkansas, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Texas in April 2019.

Susan Honeycutt Furtwengler, BS'91, MSN'93, is a nurse practitioner at Family Practice of Madison in Alabama.

Karla Luker, MSN'93, is a family nurse practitioner specializing in internal and family medicine at Murfreesboro Medical Clinic and Surgicenter in Tennessee.

Kelly Ambrosi Wolgast, MSN'93, was named director of the Pennsylvania State University COVID operations control in July. She is assistant dean for outreach and professional development, and associate teaching professor in the College of Nursing.

Sarah Fogel, MSN'94, PhD'01, received the Spotlight Award from the Vanderbilt University Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Life for her advocacy of LGBTQI health.

Jack Garrett, MSN'94, is a nurse practitioner with Maury Regional Medical Group Pain Management in Columbia, Tennessee.



Rumay Alexander, MSN'77, received the 2020 Alumni Award for Diversity and Inclusion from the VUSN Alumni Association in October. A professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing, she is immediate past president of the National League for Nursing.

Alyce Goodman Abraham, MSN'95, received the American Association of Nurse Practitioners' 2020 State Award for Excellence for Kentucky.

Chris Kristufek Crabtree, MSN'95, is a family and pediatric nurse practitioner at VIP Midsouth Children's Clinic in several locations throughout Middle Tennessee.

Tammy Shockley Keown, MSN'95, was named 2019–20 VUSN Women's Health Preceptor of the Year. This is the second time she received the award.

Tena Simmons, MSN'95, is a family and pediatric nurse practitioner at VIP Midsouth Children's Clinic in Hendersonville and Portland, Tennessee.

Debra Arnow, MSN'96, DNP'11, was elected treasurer of the board of directors for the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board, 2020–23.

Melissa Geist, MSN'96, EdD'04, received the Alumni Award for Innovation in Health Care from the VUSN Alumni Association in October. She is a professor at the Tennessee Technological University Whitson-Hester School of Nursing and a board-certified family and pediatric nurse practitioner.

Sheridan Whalen Miyamoto, MSN'96, was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing in October 2020. She is an assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University College of Nursing and director of the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Telehealth Center.

Debi Camp, MSN'97, is a peer reviewer for the *Journal of Informatics Nursing*.



Kuei-Ru Chou, PhD'97, received the 2020 Lulu Wolf Hassenplug Award for Distinguished

Career in Nursing from the VUSN Alumni Association in October. She is distinguished professor and dean of the Taipei Medical University College of Nursing in Taiwan.

Stephanie DeVane-Johnson, MSN'97, was named to the Vanderbilt University Diversity Council in October.

JoAnn Ferland, MSN'97, is a family nurse practitioner at NorthCrest Family Healthcare in Springfield, Tennessee.

Gayle Botbyl Pitts, MSN'97, is a family nurse practitioner at the Allergy, Asthma & Sinus Center in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Courtney Watson Wilson, MSN'97, is a family nurse practitioner at Consults in Wellness in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Jessica Manke Dieseldorff, MSN'98, is associate director of advanced practice clinicians/training at Planned Parenthood Mar Monte in California.

Carol Foley, MSN'98, is a family nurse practitioner at Marshall Center for Primary Care in Placerville, California.

Rolanda Johnson, PhD'98, was named a member of the Vanderbilt University Dean's Diversity Designates. She was promoted to associate dean for equity, diversity and inclusion at VUSN in September.

Steve Leonard, MSN'98, serves patients in long-term care facilities in Western Kentucky through his private practice, Leonard Health Services. In Middle Tennessee he has similar patients and those who are homebound.

Megan von Grep Morgan, BS'97, MSN'98, is a nurse practitioner at Mercy Clinic Family Medicine and Obstetrics in Rogers, Arkansas.

Molly Payne Ainsworth, MSN'99, is a nurse practitioner at Birmingham Heart Clinic in Trussville, Alabama.

Christina Chisenhall Dozier, MSN'99, is a family nurse practitioner at Vanderbilt Primary Care Clarksville in Tennessee.

Jennifer Ezell Wilbeck, MSN'99, PMC'06, received a 2020 Certified Nurse Award from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

00s

Terri Allison, PMC'00, was named the 2020 Distinguished Alumna of Auburn University School of Nursing in August. She is assistant dean for academics and director of the doctor of nursing practice program at VUSN.

Russ Branch, MSN'00, is lead author of "Environmental Surface Hygiene in the OR: Strategies for Reducing the Transmission of Health Care-associated Infections," in the October 2020 *AORN Journal*. He is a nurse anesthetist at Gastroenterology Anesthesia Associates in Atlanta and earned his doctor of nursing practice from the University of Alabama in Huntsville in December.

Heather Carter-Templeton, MSN'00, was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing in October 2020. She is an associate professor at the University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing.

Tara King Holmes, BE'96, MSN'00, is a nurse practitioner at Valley Health's Urology Clinic of Winchester in Virginia.

Amanda Bailey McNeely, BE'98, MSN'00, published "It's So Hard to Say Goodbye to Yesterday!" in the October/December 2020 issue of *Plastic Surgical Nursing* and wrapped up her tenure as president of the International Society of Plastic and Aesthetic Nurses.

Lateesa Posey, MSN'00, is a nurse practitioner at DeVito & Alvarado Pediatrics in Brooklyn and Staten Island, New York.

Sheila Ridner, MSN'00, PhD'03, retired from her role as Martha Rivers Ingram Professor of Nursing and director of the VUSN PhD in Nursing Science program in December.

Kimberly Arnold Currier, MSN'01, is a nurse practitioner specializing in gastroenterology, hepatology, nutritional deficiencies and weight loss at the Vanderbilt Center for Human Nutrition in Nashville.

Cara Osborne, MSN'01, recently joined the faculty in the Department of Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Venture Innovation at the Walton College of Business, University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, as a professor.

Heather Quaile, MSN'01, received the 2020 Alumni Award for Clinical Achievement in Nursing from the VUSN Alumni Association in October. She is medical administrator and nurse practitioner at WellSpring Living for trafficked youth, founder/owner/chief medical officer of The SHOW Center and clinical nursing faculty at Georgia State University in Atlanta.

Laura Swann Craddock, MSN'02, is a nurse practitioner at Vanderbilt Digestive Disease Center in Nashville and Vanderbilt Hepatology, Hepatobiliary Surgery and Liver Transplant in Madison, Alabama.

Michelle Dillow Schramm, BS'99, MSN'02, is a women's health nurse practitioner at University Health Services in New Jersey, serving the Princeton University community.

Liz Sharpe, MSN'02, was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing in October 2020. She is an associate professor and director of the neonatal nurse practitioner specialty at Ohio State University in Columbus.

Marie-Louise Miesel, MSN'03, has been a nurse practitioner for 12 years at Regents Medical Center in Pleasant View, Tennessee. She became a certified health and wellness coach in 2017 and is a diplomat of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine.

Rachel Goad Smith, MSN'03, is a nurse practitioner at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Medical Center in Little Rock.

Tanya Sorrell, MSN'03, was named assistant director of the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Drug Abuse Clinical Trials Network—Great Lakes Region in July 2020. She is an associate professor of psychiatry at Rush University in Chicago and owner/provider at Yuma Mental Health & Wellness Center in Arizona.

Tiffany Street, MSN'03, DNP'18, represents VUSN on the board of the Vanderbilt University Alumni Association, as of July 2020.

Mollie Palmore Weinman, MSN'04, is a pediatric nurse practitioner at VIP Midsouth Children's Clinic in Springfield and Pleasant View, Tennessee.

Beth Barry, MSN'05, is a nurse practitioner specializing in family medicine at Crestwood Medical Group in Huntsville, Alabama.



Nalo Hamilton, MSN'05, is a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Nurse Faculty Scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she is an assistant professor.

April Kapu, MSN'05, DNP'13, was named president-elect of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners in April 2020.

Heather Hair Meissen, MSN'05, was appointed commissioner to the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation in Practice Transition Programs in August 2020. She is a student in the VUSN doctor of nursing practice executive leadership program.

Abby Luck Parish, MSN'05, was named director of education innovation at VUSN in September 2020.

Kathryn Scoville, MSN'05, is a nurse practitioner in the Dartmouth-Hitchcock health system in Winchester, New Hampshire.

Megan Simmons, MSN'05, DNP'13, PMC'13, welcomed a son in July 2020.

Victoria Soltis-Jarrett, PMC'05, was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing in October 2020. She is the Carol Morde Ross Distinguished Professor of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Missi Willmarth Stec, MSN'05, DNP'10, is a tenure-track professor at the State University of New York Downstate College of Nursing in Brooklyn.

Missy Travis, MSN'05, is founder of IP&C Consulting, a provider of classes and educational resources about infection prevention.

Raven Dedrick Wentworth, MSN'05, is president of District 6 of the Tennessee Nurses Association, associate professor at Freed-Hardeman University, and a nurse practitioner in central West Tennessee.

Tamara Batson, MSN'06, is a family nurse practitioner at NorthCrest Family Healthcare in Springfield, Tennessee.

Julie McFarlane Hamm, MSN'06, was named president-elect of the Tennessee Nurses Association in December 2020. She is manager of the adult urology clinic at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville.

Shawna Johnston Marion, MSN'06, was named deputy director at Micmac Family Health Clinic, an Indian Health Service facility in Presque Isle, Maine, in August 2020. She had been assistant medical director for the Alamo Navajo Health Center in New Mexico.

Allyl McClure, MSN'06, is a nurse practitioner at Scripps Health in San Diego.

Priscilla Simms-Roberson, MSN'06, was named to the board of the Tennessee Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nursing in December 2020. She is assistant professor at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and founded the state's first domestic violence examiner program.

Otobong Udoudoh, MSN'06, is a pediatric nurse practitioner in Pediatrix Medical Group's Neonatology Associates of Atlanta.

Amber Worrell Vermeesch, MSN'06, was named a fellow in both the National Academies of Practice in Nursing and the American College of Sports Medicine in 2020. She is an associate professor at the University of Portland School of Nursing in Oregon.

Stacy Fuqua Ward, MSN'06, is a family nurse practitioner at NorthCrest Orthopaedics in Springfield, Tennessee.

Kathryn Wyatt, MSN'06, is a family nurse practitioner at Allergy, Asthma and Clinical Immunology Specialists in Huntsville, Alabama.

Anila Bhimani, MSN'07, is a nurse practitioner at Georgetown Pediatrics in Cumming, Georgia.

Erin Castellano, MSN'07, is an advanced practice registered nurse and board-certified adult nurse practitioner specializing in cardiovascular health at Gross Family Practice in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

Elizabeth Cooper, MSN'07, DNP'11, is an associate professor at the Jeanette C. Rudy School of Nursing and Health Professions at Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee.

Jasmine Good Geisinger, BS'03, MSN'07, is a nurse practitioner at VIP Midsouth Children's Clinic in several Middle Tennessee locations.

Jennifer Lorton, MSN'07, is a nurse practitioner specializing in neonatal-perinatal medicine in Oklahoma at Ascension Health's Newborn Specialists of Tulsa.

Cynthia O'Neal, PhD'07, was named the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, School of Nursing Alumna of the Year in October 2020.

Elizabeth Bumpus Parnell, MSN'07, was named president of the Tennessee Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nursing in December 2020.

Holly Pierce, MSN'07, is an assistant in medicine specializing in preventative cardiology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville.

LeTizia Baxter Smith, MSN'07, earned her doctor of nursing practice at Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University in May 2020.

Rose Vick, MSN'07, welcomed a daughter in October 2020.

Keith Adkins, MSN'08, is a nurse practitioner at The Heart Center of Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville, specializing in cardiology.

Laura Devor, MSN'08, is a nurse practitioner at Rocky Mountain Restorative Medicine in Montrose, Colorado.

Tracey DeWire, MSN'08, is a nurse practitioner in surgical oncology at Vanderbilt Breast Center in Nashville.

Michelle Drew, MSN'08, is a nurse practitioner in obstetrics and gynecology at ChristianaCare Wilmington Women's Health in Delaware.

Ingrid Larson, MSN'08, is one of 20 members named to the 2021 American Organization for Nursing Leadership's Young Professional Voices.

Keith McKernan, MSN'08, joined the faculty of Aspen University School of Nursing and Health Sciences in Denver as an adjunct professor in September 2020.

Corrie Logan Morris, MSN'08, joined the staff of Baptist Health Medical Group Cardiology in Lexington, Kentucky, as a nurse practitioner in October 2020.

Teresa Reske, MSN'08, was promoted to associate dean of graduate and doctoral studies for the school of nursing at the College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee, Massachusetts, in September 2020.

Matt Schroer, MSN'08, received the 2020 VUSN Daisy Award for Small Group Facilitator at the MSN Level in June.

Monica Greenwald Dohrman, MSN'09, is owner and provider at Front Porch Pediatrics in Phoenix.

Dana Parry Estevo, MSN'09, is a certified nurse-midwife at Mendocino Community Health Clinic in Ukiah, Lakeport and Willits, California.

Courtney Hammond, MSN'09, joined Concordia Life Plan Community in Oklahoma City as Concordia's first on-site nurse practitioner in September 2020. She is an expert in INVU Care telemedicine.

Jenny Slayton, MSN'09, was promoted in July 2020 to senior vice president for quality, safety and risk prevention at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville.

Lindsey Caldwell St. Cyr, MSN'09, is a nurse practitioner at Cleveland Clinic Canada in Toronto.

10s

Jeaninne Blackwell, MSN'10, MTS'11, is a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner at Child & Family Services in New Bedford, Fall River and Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Patricia Estes, MSN'10, was named University of Kentucky Healthcare's first assistant chief nurse executive for informatics. She also oversees enterprise health information management, regulation and patient safety in health information technology.

Sarah Flanigen, MSN'10, is a nurse practitioner at Tidewater Orthopaedic Associates in Hampton, Virginia.

Tara Fox, MSN'10, is a nurse practitioner at TRF Pediatric Health in Indianapolis.

Katy McNeill Jackson Lanz, DNP'10, received the 2020 Alumni Award for National Leadership from the VUSN Alumni Association in October. She is founder and CEO of TopSight LLC, headquartered in Pittsburgh, and national director of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Manola Valverde Vides McCain, MSN'10, is a certified nurse-midwife at West End Women's Health Center in Nashville.

Laura Millener, MSN'10, is a nurse practitioner at One Medical in Walnut Creek, California.

Kelly Odum, MSN'10, is a nurse practitioner at TriStar Medical Group's Spring Hill Physicians in Tennessee.

Anika Phillips, MSN'10, is a certified nurse-midwife and family nurse practitioner at Lakeview Birth & Women's Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Michelle Ruslavage, MSN'10, DNP'13, received the 2020 Alma Gault Award for Public Service from the VUSN Alumni Association in October. She is a captain in the U.S. Public Health Service, a public health analyst with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and instructor at VUSN. In spring 2020 she deployed to operationalize and perform COVID-19 screenings at the Boston Logan International Airport quarantine station.

Lindsay Piper Tedder, MSN'10, is a gynecologic oncology nurse practitioner at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida. She recently was appointed to the advanced practice provider committee of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology.

Kim Kuebler, DNP'11, was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing in October 2020. She is founder and director of the Multiple Chronic Conditions Resource Center.

Lauren Barlew, MSN'12, is a women's health nurse practitioner at OBGYN Centre of Excellence in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Kalisha Bonds, MSN'12, is an instructor in Oregon Health & Science University's Layton Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Center in Portland and is pursuing her PhD at OHSU School of Nursing. She was accepted into the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Minority Fellowship Program.

Asa Briggs, MSN'12, was named to the external advisory council of Clemson University's Center for Research on Health Disparities in late 2020.

Kate FitzPatrick, DNP'12, was promoted to chief nurse executive officer at Jefferson Health in Philadelphia in December 2020. She had been senior vice president of nursing professional practice and clinical development.

Tamika Hudson, MSN'12, was named assistant dean for student affairs at VUSN in October 2020.

Laurie Lackland, MSN'12, is an adult nurse practitioner with HouseCallsMobile in central California.

Susie Adams, PMC'13, was inducted into the University of Kentucky College of Nursing Hall of Fame in September 2020.

John Derrick, MSN'13, was appointed as the first clinical director for Washington State's MedFest, an event during which athletes are medically evaluated for participation in Special Olympics. He specializes in neonatology, autism spectrum disorders and neurodevelopmental delays at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital & Health Network in Tacoma.

Valerie Garcia, MSN'13, is founder of Chosen Medical Staffing, a nurse-owned staffing agency in Nashville.

Karen Hande, DNP'13, accepted an Oncology Nursing Foundation award as well as a National League for Nursing scholarship.

Cathy Karunaratne, MSN'13, is a clinician at AdventHealth's Center for Sleep Disorders in Central Florida.

Ben Small Jr., MSN'13, is a research nurse at the Vanderbilt Center for Undiagnosed Diseases in Nashville.

Ebony Smith, MSN'13, is a nurse practitioner at Regional One Health in Memphis, Tennessee, working in ambulatory and inpatient care for high-risk pregnancies.

Shannon Morris Stevenson, BA'11, MSN'13, welcomed a baby girl in November 2020.

Jennifer Tourville, MSN'13, DNP'16, is a clinical assistant professor at the University of Tennessee Knoxville College of Nursing.

Laura Bowling, BA'12, MSN'14, is a pediatric nurse practitioner at VIP Midsouth Children's Clinic in Hendersonville and Portland, Tennessee.

Melody Castillo, MSN'14, is a certified nurse-midwife and family nurse practitioner at Golden Valley Health Center's women's health clinic in Merced, California.

Meredith Chin, MSN'14, is a family nurse practitioner at Scripps Health in Solana Beach, California.

Hannah Wachtmeister Kestner, MSN'14, DNP'16, welcomed a baby boy in August 2020.

Christian Ketel, DNP'14, was named interprofessional education co-director for the Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance in September 2020. He is an assistant professor at VUSN and clinical director of the Clinic at Mercury Courts in Nashville.

Clint Leonard, MSN'14, received the 2020 VUSN Daisy Award for Small Group Facilitator at the PreSpecialty Level in June.

Carrie Reale, MSN'14, received the Harriet H. Werley Award from the American Medical Informatics Association in November 2020. She is an informatics nurse specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

Laura Reviere, MSN'14, is a women's health nurse practitioner at Womens Group of Franklin in Tennessee.

Amanda Rhoads, MSN'14, is a nurse practitioner at One Medical's The Works Office in El Segundo, California.

Lauren Siniscalchi, MSN'14, is a family nurse practitioner specializing in neurology and cognitive disorders at Foothills Neurology in Phoenix.

Kelly Smerling, BA'12, MSN'14, is a pediatric nurse practitioner at Longwood Pediatrics in Boston.

Barbara Wadsworth, DNP'14, was promoted to chief operating officer at Main Line Health in Philadelphia in October 2020. She is the system's first COO and will maintain her role as senior vice president and chief nursing officer.

Reese Williams, MSN'14, is chief clinical practitioner in the division of cardiothoracic surgery at Commonwealth Health in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. In August 2019 she completed the requirements for her doctor of nursing practice from Drexel University.

Desiree Clement, PMC'15, DNP'17, received the 2020 Winter Awards: Heart of the Students Award at Emory University's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, where she is director of the family nurse practitioner program.

Allison Davis, DNP'15, was named interim associate dean for the undergraduate nursing program at Union University in Hendersonville, Tennessee.

M. Elizabeth Deel, MS'12, MSN'15, was named assistant clinical director at Austin State Hospital in Texas.

Kelly DeWyer, BA'10, MSN'15, is a nurse practitioner at Northern Virginia Hematology & Oncology Associates.

Jane Geyer, MSN'15, is editor of the book, *NASPAG's Protocols for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology: A Ready-Reference Guide for Nurses*, published by Springer in October 2020.

Natalie Studdard, BA'13, MSN'15, is a nurse practitioner at the Ascension Saint Thomas Midtown Joint Replacement Institute in Nashville.

Jessica Walker, MSN'15, DNP'17, received the 2020 Catherine Hanley Class of 1912 Rising Star Alumni Award from the VUSN Alumni Association in October. She is an assistant professor at VUSN.

Sarah Bochner, BS'15, MSN'16, is research nurse coordinator at Saint Joseph's Children's Hospital in Tampa, Florida, where she specializes in pediatric oncology.

Christina Cardy, MSN'16, DNP'17, received a 2020 Certified Nurse Award from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

Carissa Caryotakis, MSN'16, is a family nurse practitioner at Elica Health Centers in Sacramento, California.

Colleen Conway-Edwards, MSN'16, joined Brattleboro Internal Medicine in Vermont, a division of Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, as a nurse practitioner.

Sarah Estopinal, BA'12, MSN'16, stars in a naloxone training video for the Jefferson County Department of Health in Birmingham, Alabama.

Anna Goddard, PhD'16, was named Pediatric Nursing Certification Board's 2020 Kelly Reed Advanced Practice Community Impact Award recipient in May. She is an assistant professor at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, and is a representative on the Connecticut Association of School-Based Health Centers board of directors. She also received the 2020 Rising Star Award from the School-Based Health Alliance.

Jonathan Igo, MSN'16, is a nurse practitioner at Pacific Dermatology in California.



Victoria Morgan Golden, MSN'16, was deployed with the California Medical Assistance Team to help Princess Cruise passengers quarantined in Asilomar State Park due to a COVID-19 outbreak on their ship. She was the only provider on duty during the first 24 hours.

Emily Kritzler, MSN'16, is a certified nurse-midwife and family nurse practitioner at the Federico F. Pena Southwest Family Health Center and Urgent Care in Denver.

Sarah Lizotte, MSN'16, is a psychiatric mental-health nurse practitioner at St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville.

Kayla Pelfrey, MSN'16, is a family nurse practitioner at Fast Access Healthcare in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Kristin Cummins, DNP'17, is vice president of quality and patient safety at Children's Health System in Dallas.

Kristian Dambrino, MSN'17, performed in *Have Yourself a Delta Little Christmas!*, a livestreamed benefit concert for the Grammy Museum Mississippi in December 2020. She is a psychiatric nurse practitioner in Nashville.

Nora Elderkin, BA'15, MSN'17, is a nurse practitioner at Planned Parenthood Mar Monte in California.

Casey Marie Hillenbrand, MSN'17, was named director of nursing at Brentwood Springs Hospital, a mental health and addiction treatment facility in Newburgh, Indiana. During 2020 she worked with businesses and health care organizations in parts of Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky to develop COVID-19 preparedness, response and control plans.

Cerrissa Hugie, MSN'17, DNP'18, welcomed twins in early 2020. She started a company called MyNDSpace to provide mental health education and consulting to promote mental health awareness in underserved communities.

Chinassa Iwuoha, BS'16, MSN'17, is a nurse practitioner at Children of Joy Pediatrics in Hackensack, New Jersey.

Alvin Jeffery, PhD'17, was elected to a three-year term as a director on the national board for the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses in July 2020.

Elissa Ku, MSN'17, is a nurse practitioner in family medicine at Dignity Health Medical Group Inland Empire in San Bernardino, California.

Courtney Lombardi, MSN'17, is a nurse practitioner at Ohana Women's Center in Yakima, Washington.

Lynnea Myers, PhD'17, earned a second PhD at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden, exploring dysmorphology in children with autism spectrum disorders. She is an assistant professor of nursing at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota.

Sara Best, MSN'18, is a family nurse practitioner at The People's Clinic in Clarksville, Tennessee.

Tiffany Chance, DNP'18, is one of two women's health nurse practitioners in the Okinawa, Japan, outpatient clinic that supports the U.S. Air Force's largest combat wing in the Pacific. A paper she wrote on ureaplasma led to the implementation of testing throughout the USAF. She directed a cervical cancer awareness project and spoke about it on Armed Forces Network radio, reaching 30,000 active-duty soldiers, 1,400 civilians and 25,000 family members.

Elizabeth Marino Condit, MSN'18, spent 14 weeks and over 900 hours in a COVID-19 intensive care unit in the Bronx. She also went to El Paso and San Antonio, Texas, to assist with COVID relief. In January 2021 she started a post-master's certificate in acute care.

Nhan Dinh, MSN'18, is a nephrology nurse practitioner at the University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque.

Maggie Halloran, MSN'18, is a nurse practitioner specializing in gynecology at Women First in Darby, Pennsylvania.

Elizabeth Blanchard Hills, MSN'18, is a psychiatric nurse practitioner at the Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center in Kansas City, Missouri. She serves on the legislative committee of the Kansas State Nurses Association and is a board member for the American Psychiatric Nurses Association Kansas Chapter.

Jennifer Keck, MSN'18, is a nurse practitioner at Grand Rapids Women's Health in Michigan.

Laura Logan, MSN'18, is a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago.

Chelsea Lytle, MSN'18, is the neuroscience program coordinator at Piedmont Healthcare in Atlanta, where she is launching a neuro intensive care unit and developing a comprehensive stroke center.

Rebecca Palmer, MSN'18, is a certified nurse-midwife and family nurse practitioner specializing in obstetrics and gynecology at Gundersen Health System's Viroqua Clinic in Wisconsin.

Alice Proia, MSN'18, is an adult nurse practitioner at Adelante Healthcare in Phoenix.

Sabrina Stover, MSN'18, is a nurse practitioner specialist at CHI Memorial Infectious Disease Associates in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where she incorporates mind, body and spirit in caring for the HIV population and works through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program.

Emily Thermos, BS'17, MSN'18, is a family nurse practitioner at Penobscot Community Health Care's Brewer Medical Center in Maine.

Jaime Young, MSN'18, is an adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner in the office of Anthony E. Jones, MD, in Oakland, California.

Ladonna Brown, DNP'19, is co-founder and treasurer of nonprofit DNP's of Color. She is a certified registered nurse anesthetist with North American Partners in Anesthesia in Virginia.

Laura Flanagan, MSN'19, is a women's health nurse practitioner at The Women's Health Pavilion in Queens and Long Island, New York.

Kendall Jefferson, BA'15, MSN'19, is a nurse practitioner at Planned Parenthood Mar Monte in California.

Kaitlyn McGowan, MSN'19, is an adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner at El Camino Health Primary Care in Mountain View, California.

20s

Ashley Johnson, MSN'20, has a YouTube channel, prettywhnpashley, where she shares her experiences on various topics, from tips for mastering nursing school to interviewing for a job, racism, COVID challenges and dating.

Olivia Patterson, MSN'20, is a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner at Blessing Hospital in Quincy, Illinois.

Cody Pike, MSN'20, welcomed a baby in July 2020. He works in an urgent care setting and as a firefighter in Oneida, Tennessee.

Atlee Quarrier, BA'18, MSN'20, is a psychiatric nurse practitioner at Dana Group Associates in Needham, Massachusetts.

Stephanie Queen, DNP'20, recently became senior vice president of clinical services and chief nursing officer at AirMethods, an air medical transport company headquartered in Greenwood Village, Colorado.

IN MEMORIAM

Barbara Ricard Longley, BSN'48, of Port Charlotte, Florida, and Boscawen, New Hampshire, Nov. 7, 2020.

Mary Floreen Lankford Pullen, BSN'48, of Little Rock, Arkansas, Nov. 9, 2020.

Lucille Turner Ouzts, BSN'49, of Elberton, Georgia, June 4, 2020.

Laura Beatty Rosser, N'51, of Sanford, North Carolina, Nov. 22, 2020.

Evelyn Igarashi Blaylock, BSN'55, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Dec. 6, 2020.

Jane Carter Kern, BSN'56, of Palatine, Illinois, Sept. 5, 2020.

Kitty Temple Silverman, BSN'57, of Spartanburg, South Carolina, Dec. 18, 2020.

Judith James Coleman, N'58, of Lebanon and Franklin, Tennessee, July 21, 2020.

Jo Ann Faulkner Davis, N'59, of Hixson, Tennessee, Dec. 17, 2020.

Ann Wheeler Wagner, BSN'59, of Hillsboro, Illinois, Aug. 3, 2020.

Joanne McBride Rawson, BSN'60, of Davidson, North Carolina, July 29, 2020.

Nancy Barden Junkin, N'63, of Franklin, Tennessee, July 25, 2020.

Anne Teutenberg Richardson, BSN'66, of Webster Groves, Missouri, Sept. 12, 2018.

Sue McConnell Jones, BSN'67, of Nashville, Aug. 29, 2020.

Barbara Callander Davis, BSN'69, of Amarillo, Texas, on March 11, 2020.

GINNA CORTS, BSN'70, MSN'73, of Nashville, on Feb. 15, 2021.

Carolyn Keith Burr, BSN'71, of Pompton Plains, New Jersey, Oct. 30, 2020.

Sara Hutchison Hampshire, BSN'71, MSN'75, of Nashville, May 2, 2020.

Abby Braxton McCarthy, N'73, of St. Louis, June 10, 2020.

Betsy Flitcraft Larsen, BSN'74, of Dayton, Ohio, June 3, 2020.

Florence Roberts, MSN'81, of Dahlonga, Georgia, July 19, 2020.

Carol Ann Seeger, MSN'81, of Oswego, New York, June 1, 2020.

Denise Ann Daniel, BSN'82, of Hendersonville, Tennessee, Jan. 19, 2021.

Reita Varney, MSN'84, of Akron, Ohio, May 10, 2020.

Laura Walsh Forrest, BSN'86, of Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, Aug. 22, 2020.

Doris Billhorn, MSN'92, of Chicago, May 7, 2020.

JoAnn Rietveld, MSN'92, of Clarks Grove, Minnesota, Jan. 1, 2021.

Pearl Bransford, MSN'93, of Franklin, Tennessee, Nov. 27, 2020.

Diana Storey, MSN'93, of Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, June 22, 2020.

Katherine Bechtle Broadway, MSN'97, of Nashville, Sept. 15, 2020.

Latisha Lochabay, MSN'97, of Henrico, Virginia, Oct. 19, 2020.

Heather Robb, MSN'98, of Memphis, Tennessee, May 1, 2020.

Beth Anne Baus Connaway, MSN'09, of Marietta, Georgia, July 28, 2020.



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Dean Colleen Conway-Welch and Norman in 2013, a few months before Conway-Welch retired. Conway-Welch recruited Norman to VUSN in 1991; the pair worked side by side to advance the school for 22 years.



In 2006, Norman talks with students participating in a Lipscomb University-VUSN partnership that allowed them to take nursing courses at VUSN and earn bachelor of science in nursing degrees from Lipscomb.



One of Norman's first Vanderbilt profile photos, taken in 1994.



Vanderbilt's mascot, Mr. C (for Commodore) and Norman. The dean is a big VU sports fan, cheering on the team at home games whenever possible.

Norman considers the new School of Nursing Building to be one of her greatest accomplishments. She was actively involved in construction decisions and took part in weekly meetings with the construction and facilities team.



Left, Professor Jennifer Kim, Dean Linda Norman, Assistant Professor Melissa Smith and Associate Professor Leslie Hopkins commemorate Norman's final commencement as dean. All three faculty are also alumni who earned their Vanderbilt MSNs while Norman headed academics.

Retrospective

In her 30 years at Vanderbilt School of Nursing, Linda Norman has been teacher, administrator, researcher, leader, colleague and dean—and always a nurse. These photos represent a few of those roles and memorable occasions. More photos can be seen at nursing.vanderbilt.edu/news/photo-gallery-summer-2021.



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