

FALL 2020

FORWARDNURSING

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON | SCHOOL OF NURSING

REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW AGE OF NURSING



ForwardNursing
Volume 6, Issue 2
Fall 2020

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Front cover: The cover image represents a modern nurse reflecting on the history of nursing, perhaps catching a glance in the literal reflection of a hospital window. The creative style was influenced by Loveis Wise, an illustrator and artist based in Los Angeles. Illustration by Alexander André, School of Nursing.

Inside front cover: In a typical year, students congregate in the Curran Commons, which boasts a fireplace, numerous cozy seating areas, copious sunlight, and frosted glass panels that often manifest the inner workings of their minds. Photo by Alexander André, School of Nursing.



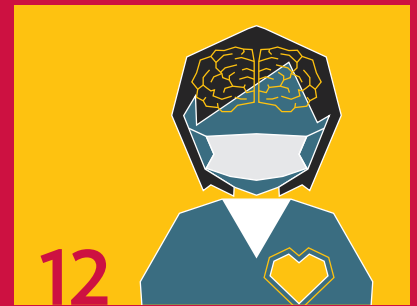
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THE NEW AGE OF NURSING

Badger nurses embrace and expand upon Florence Nightingale's legacy.



IN THE FIGHT

When pandemics hit, nurses are at the forefront.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

Connecting health and environment is fundamental to nursing.



A PIN WITH A PROMISE

Laura Block '20 continues a legacy created by Nancy Seegers Schaper '57.

Dean's Letter

The year 2020 was designated by the World Health Organization as the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, to commemorate the 200th birthday of Florence Nightingale and recognize the contributions of nurses to health care. No one could have known the threats to health that would change the course of this year; but it has been evident that nurses, guided by the legacy of Nightingale herself, are critical to addressing them.

Nursing has a historically important role in fighting infectious disease. Nightingale served as a nurse in the Crimean War during the cholera epidemic. In addition to caring for wounded soldiers, she approached health challenges as an administrator, statistician, and scientist to improve nursing practice and infection control. As she assessed the environment to identify its impact on health, Nightingale discovered that more soldiers were dying from infection than injury. With appropriate intervention and healthier environments, she was able to save more lives.

The new age of nursing reflects the holistic scope of Nightingale's approach to improving health and well-being. We see her legacy in modern practices used to fight the physiologic pandemic of COVID-19, and it is also apparent in nursing interventions for health disparities caused by the sociologic pandemic of structural racism. The inclusion of social and environmental health determinants in research, prevention, and care are consistent with the approaches Nightingale pioneered and the principles that guided her. Born in 1820 and credited as the founder of nursing, she is a timeless inspiration for those who aspire to improve health for all.

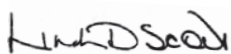
The School of Nursing (SoN) has an opportunity and a responsibility to meet challenges faced in the profession and society by educating nurses who are truly prepared to transform and lead in the delivery of equitable care. As dean, I see our potential to do so. Despite the gravity of these times, I believe you will find hope and pride inside the pages of *ForwardNursing* as you read about SoN faculty, students, and alumni who have followed their passion as nurses to make a difference in the lives of others.

This issue of *ForwardNursing* is a celebration of nursing and the legacy of Florence Nightingale. It features Badger nurses who change lives through research, education, practice, advocacy, volunteerism, policy making, and more. I am proud of the examples highlighted: our alumni working on the front lines of the pandemic and SoN researchers studying the role of "place" through the lens of environmental and planetary health, to discover how it contributes to health disparities.

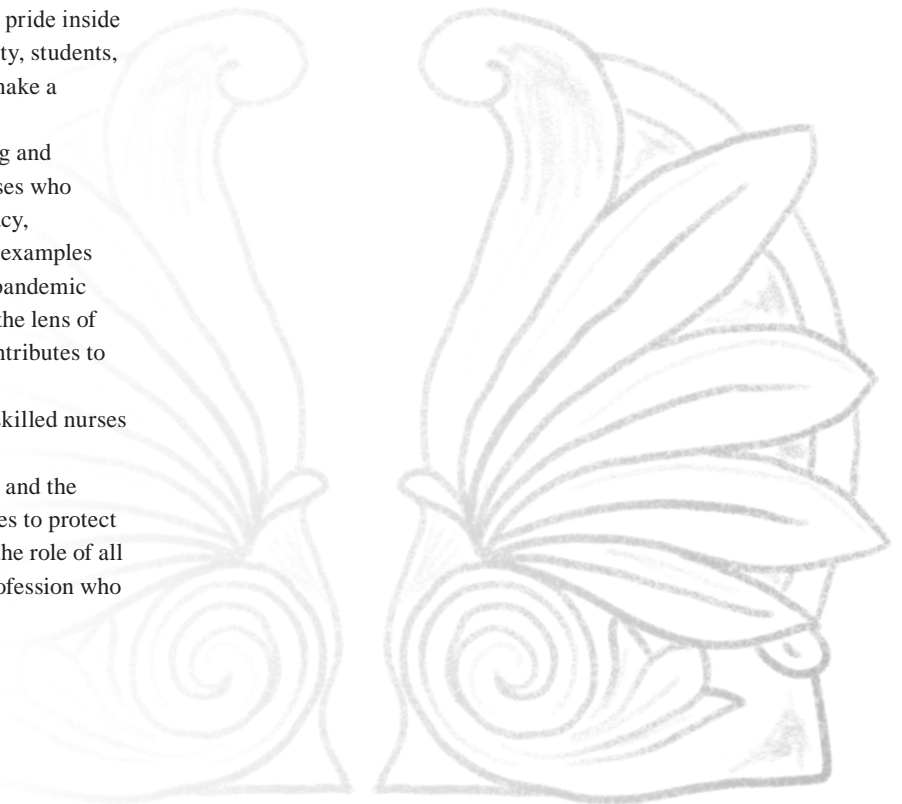
They are samples of the countless stories of dedicated, skilled nurses who call the SoN home.

Though it is not what we planned, the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife has made clear that the high level of trust in nurses to protect and improve health is well placed. I honor and appreciate the role of all nurse scientists, educators, clinicians, and others in the profession who address complex needs in our society.

Sincerely,



Linda D. Scott



Dean Scott Recognized for Achievements and Contributions to Health Care



Dean Linda D. Scott, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FNAP, FAAN, has been recognized for her ongoing contributions and professional achievements

in health care with an election into the National Academies of Practice (NAP), as well as earning the Pioneering Spirit Award from the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN).

In recognition of her significant and enduring contributions to professional health practice, Scott was elected as a Distinguished Scholar and Fellow of NAP in March.

Founded in 1981, NAP is the only interprofessional group of health care practitioners and scholars dedicated to supporting affordable, accessible, coordinated, and quality health care for all. Fellowship in NAP is an honor presented to those who have excelled in their profession and are devoted to furthering leadership in practice, scholarship, and policy in support of interprofessional care. Those elected join a distinguished team of professionals focused on advancing interprofessional health care by fostering collaboration and advocating for policies in the best interest of individuals and communities.

Along with her election as a NAP Distinguished Scholar and Fellow, Scott was also the recipient of the 2020 AACN Pioneering Spirit Award, conferred upon her in May.

The annual award recognizes significant contributions that influence acute and critical care nursing. Recipients exemplify a pioneering spirit within the area of acute and critical care nursing by addressing or resolving a significant issue on a regional or national scale. Previous recipients come not just from health care, but from business and academia, as well. Founded in 1969, AACN is the largest specialty nursing organization in the world and represents interests of more than half a million acute and critical care nurses with over 200 chapters throughout the United States.

One of just four recipients of the award in 2020, Scott was honored in recognition of her sustained and pioneering work in studying the impact that nurses' work hours, fatigue, and work environment have on nurses' and patients' safety, as well as her focus on diversity in the nursing workforce.

Dean Scott appreciates that her work has contributed to affordable, accessible, coordinated, and quality health care. "My career as a nurse clinician, scientist, administrator, and academician has focused on improving the safety and well-being of nurses and patients, and on developing the nursing workforce for the best care of all populations," says Scott. "I am honored that my contributions are recognized for their positive impact on nurse and patient safety, and the advancement of the nursing profession."

Traci Snedden Awarded NCAA Grant



Assistant Professor Traci Snedden, PhD, RN, CPNP-PC, CNE, has been selected as a recipient of the

2020 NCAA Innovations in Research and Practice Grant. The grant program supports research and data-driven pilot projects designed to enhance student-athlete psychosocial well-being and mental health, and creates sustainable models that can be adopted by other institutions.

"Academic performance for collegiate student-athletes is a critical component of overall achievement," says Snedden. "However, sport-related concussions may pose a risk to success, as they can cause alterations in cognitive ability that result in learning challenges. Recent guidelines encourage 'return to learn' plans that support a student-athlete's learning needs. However, there is little data-driven guidance regarding how to best implement these plans. This project will allow us to design a toolkit using data that examines implementation at the campus level, instructional team involvement, and the quality of the student-athlete experience."

School of Nursing Receives Major Grant to Support Accelerated Degree Program

A grant from the esteemed Helene Fuld Health Trust will make a significant impact on scholarship opportunities for students pursuing a degree within the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program at the School of Nursing.

The \$700,000 grant will be utilized exclusively to create an endowment to fund scholarships for students who aspire to become bachelor's-prepared nurses through the accelerated program. Of the total grant, \$560,000 will be held in an endowment fund. This will allow the School of Nursing to award \$140,000 to students over a three-year term, with future scholarships distributed from the endowment to students in the ABSN program.

The Helene Fuld Health Trust is the nation's largest private funder

devoted exclusively to nursing students and nursing education. The trust establishes endowed scholarships for students in accelerated baccalaureate and graduate programs at selected nursing schools through an invitational process, and focuses on supporting and promoting the health, welfare, and education of student nurses.

"We are grateful to be selected by such a revered foundation to receive this grant to support students in our ABSN program," says Dean Linda Scott. "The financial aid we will award as a result of the Helene Fuld Health Trust will create greater access to nursing education, allowing the School of Nursing to educate more bachelor's-prepared nurses for the workforce. It is an honor to be selected as a recipient school by this respected foundation."

Two New Doctor of Nursing Practice Specialties Introduced

The School of Nursing has announced two new specialty tracks in the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. With the new additions, nurses looking to advance their careers in health care can discover new possibilities in advanced nursing practice through two unique online DNP tracks in either Population Health or Systems Leadership and Innovation.

The announcement comes during a pivotal time in health care as the industry finds itself facing an increasing need for advanced-practice nurse leaders. Customized to a nurse's experiences and career goals, each program builds the skills nurses need to think critically and proficiently as expert clinicians with advanced knowledge in systems, leadership, program evaluation, informatics, and health policy.

Both new additions to the DNP lineup will be online, offering both the flexibility and convenience for students to complete their respective programs over the course of three years. DNP Program Director Pam McGranahan, MS'04, DNP'12, RN, is thrilled about the new opportunities, adding, "These new tracks are set to prepare the nurses we need to help resolve some of the greatest challenges we're facing as a society: rising rates of chronic disease, figuring out how to adequately and affordably care for an aging population, health

disparities, access to care and the skyrocketing costs of that care, addiction, climate change, emerging infectious diseases, and a global pandemic. The opportunities to make a difference are endless."

The DNP in Population Health is designed to provide a course of study that will foster the development of competencies to lead population health improvement across health care, public health, and community systems. This advanced practice nursing program of study emphasizes the values of the nursing profession, applying an upstream perspective on health, coordinating care across providers and sites, collaborating with other professionals and community stakeholders, and advocating for the well-being of individuals, communities, and populations. Graduates of this program will be well prepared to shape population health improvement and lead population health programs.

The DNP in Systems Leadership and Innovation is devised to provide an agile, customized course of study that will support the development of advanced practice nursing leaders for a variety of health care roles who understand multifaceted human-environment and systems factors for systems innovation. Leaders who join the program will incorporate the values of the nursing

profession in positions of influence, and will build the knowledge and skills necessary for health care transformation, innovation, and effective leadership in a wide variety of settings. Graduates of this program will be well prepared to leverage a broad perspective on systems innovation, and to design and lead new models of care delivery.

With health care constantly evolving and changing, the DNP program focuses on further developing clinical expertise in a chosen population area while helping individuals build upon leadership skills to advance their career in nursing and better meet the changing demands. The doctoral-level advanced practice degrees emphasize critical thinking and evidence-based practice, positioning graduates as leaders capable of facilitating organizational change that leads to improved operations, greater workforce satisfaction, increased efficiency, and better patient care. Graduates of the programs go on to advance the nursing discipline and practice through research, education, policy, management, and leadership.

LEARN MORE
at nursing.wisc.edu/dnp

Meet the New DNP Staff



Kelli Jones, PhD, RN, CPH, joins the faculty as a clinical associate professor and leader for the new online DNP in population health program. Jones received a bachelor's degree in nursing, a master's degree in nursing and health care systems leadership, and a doctorate in nursing from Marquette University. Deeply experienced in academic nursing, Jones also has a wealth of practice experience as a local and state level public health nurse, a program director at the state level, and an executive director of a non-profit organization. In addition, she holds a certification in public health. Jones will assure currency and relevance of course content, teach courses, and lead the implementation of the DNP in Population Health.



Roberta Pawlak, PhD'11, RN, NEA-BC, joins the faculty as a clinical professor and leader of the DNP in systems leadership and innovation program. Pawlak earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from D'Youville College, a master's degree in nursing administration from SUNY at Buffalo, and a doctorate in nursing from UW-Madison. She holds ANCC certification as a Nurse Executive Advanced, and has deep experience in nursing education in academic and professional development settings. Pawlak will guide course content and lead the implementation of the new systems leadership and innovation program, as well as mentor DNP students in their scholarly projects.

1916

The UW Extension Division and the Wisconsin Anti-Tuberculosis Association co-sponsored Public Health Nursing, one of the earliest courses of its kind.

1955

Signe Skott Cooper established the Department of Nursing within the Extension Division and traveled throughout Wisconsin, meeting educational needs of nurses.

1968

"Nursing Dial Access" was launched, connecting nurses to UW-Madison by phone to hear pre-recorded mini-lectures detailing new breakthroughs and techniques.

1985

The UW Extension Department of Nursing integrated with UW-Madison and the School of Nursing.

1992

The Collaborative Nursing Degree Program, established by 5 University of Wisconsin campuses (Eau Claire, Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, Oshkosh) offered a BSN completion program using various media (later called BSN@Home).

2016

The UW-Madison School of Medicine & Public Health, School of Pharmacy, and School of Nursing launched the Interprofessional Continuing Education Partnership (ICEP) after being granted accreditation as a provider of continuing education from Joint Accreditation™.

2020

Continuing Education in Nursing transitions to Nursing Professional Development, representing our commitment to life-long, self-directed learning.

104 years. The oldest sustained effort by any university in the nation. The mission? Improvement of nursing care and the health of populations through continuing education of registered nurses in Wisconsin.

After a century of technology, design, and delivery innovations, our reach expands beyond Wisconsin and beyond the nursing profession. Today, we partner with our health science colleagues in delivering accredited continuing education around the globe, increasing

the skills and strategies of nurses and interprofessional health care teams, preparing them for collaborative practice and the future of health care. Our core mission remains the same: to improve the health of patients and communities in Wisconsin and the world.

What has changed? Our name: from Continuing Education in Nursing to Nursing Professional Development. This name change reflects our belief in fostering a culture of lifelong learning. We believe nurses can and

should accept responsibility for their own learning, gaining competencies they need to provide care for diverse populations across the lifespan. We commit to providing accessible and relevant education that supports continuing professional development.

We invite you to join us on this journey of aspiration and inspiration, where we seek to elevate the practice of nursing to meet the health care needs of the future.

Find us at nursing.wisc.edu/nursing-professional-development



UW-Madison School of Nursing is offering two new online DNP tracks, specializing in **Population Health** and **Systems Leadership and Innovation**.

Visit nursing.wisc.edu/dnp to learn more



ALUMNI & CURRENT STUDENTS JOIN THE BADGER NURSE NETWORK!

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- Network with other health care professionals
- Celebrate your achievements and life events
- Be inspired by stories of Badger nurses changing lives

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[NURSING.WISC.EDU/ALUMNI](https://nursing.wisc.edu/alumni)



ALUMNI@SON.WISC.EDU



BADGER
NURSE NETWORK



*By Caitlin Clark and
Megan Hinnners*

Illustration by Alexander André

THE NEW AGE OF NURSING

From providing tests and contact tracing, to administering patient care and leading interdisciplinary teams, nurses and midwives have been essential to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic response. While nurses and midwives have always been at the core of the health care workforce, their heroic actions during the pandemic have garnered attention around the globe. It seems only fitting that this is occurring during “The Year of the Nurse and the Midwife.”

The World Health Organization recognizes “The Year of the Nurse and the Midwife” as a celebration of the work of nurses and midwives, highlighting the challenging conditions they often face, and advocating for increased investments in the nursing and midwifery workforce. The 12-month initiative also marks the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale’s birth. Nightingale paved the way for nurses as health care professionals, educators, public health advocates, and statisticians — contributions that cemented her legacy as the founder of modern nursing.

Nurses and midwives have since expanded upon the groundwork Nightingale laid. The workforce is more diverse than ever, and these professionals are no longer treated as “doctors’ assistants.” In honor of this momentous year, we want to highlight some of the outstanding Badger nurses who are continuing Nightingale’s legacy in the new age of nursing.

Aniqueka Scott Moulton '19



“I think one’s feelings waste themselves in words; they ought to be distilled into actions which bring results.”
— Florence Nightingale

Aniqueka Scott Moulton graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Nursing in May 2019 as a member of the first cohort of the accelerated bachelor of science in nursing (ABSN) program, but she will be the first person to tell you that she didn’t always consider a career in nursing.

“Although two of my sisters are registered nurses, I never imagined that I, too, would become a registered nurse,” Moulton admits. “After losing our father suddenly to a massive heart attack in 2003, my family became more health conscious. We wanted to help others to lead healthier lives, as well. I became involved in church health fairs, youth groups that visited sick people at the local hospital, and assisting with health education seminars.”

While her path to a career in nursing has led her down multiple roads, it has been a journey that is deeply rooted in volunteerism and service to others. Born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago, Moulton became more involved in health care when she left

her home and headed to Mexico to be a missionary English teacher at the Centro Misionero de Salud (Missionary Health Center) in Nuevo Leon.

There, Moulton taught English at the center’s secondary and elementary schools. After hours, she found herself receiving training in hydrotherapy, herbal treatments, massage therapy, spiritual care, plant-based cooking and baking, and leadership. “I had several opportunities to practice these skills at free community health fairs and churches,” says Moulton. “Eventually, I taught community members simple, natural remedies and techniques they can apply at home. Although I was not at a conventional medical center, I was intrigued by the use of simple, natural remedies for health promotion and prevention of lifestyle-related illnesses.”

It helped spark an interest within that would eventually lead her to her current career path.

Throughout the year she spent at the lifestyle center, she visited the University of Morelos (UM) and met her now friend and mentor, fellow Trinidadian, Dr. Zeno Charles-Marcel. “At the time, he was the director of the School of Medicine and Public Health at the university,” Moulton says. “He talked to me about the master of public health (MPH) program with an emphasis in health administration, and encouraged me to apply. The MPH piqued my interest, and I felt that my previous training in administration would combine well with health care.”

Moulton applied to the program and was welcomed with open arms. After completing her studies at the UM, she was given the opportunity to work at Haiti Adventist Hospital in Port au Prince, Haiti, where she worked as the director of education and training, teaching English and basic computer skills to hospital staff every evening after work.

“Haiti was a challenging, yet amazing, experience,” Moulton confesses. As she was developing training plans, schedules, and calendars for hospital staff, she was also spending time organizing Red Cross blood donation drives and free community health clinics. “Health care in Haiti is expensive, and access is limited, particularly for persons who live in rural areas,” Moulton points out. “The hospital’s administration was

supportive of hosting these health clinics, but did not have funding for it. That is when I had the idea of buying Haitian paintings to raise funds for community health clinics.”

In the end, she was able to raise over \$7,000 and had clinics up and running in a few months. It instilled a desire in her to want to do more and be more involved with patient care. This led to her decision to enroll in the ABSN program and join the ranks of Badger nurses.

Moulton is now a registered nurse for UW Health, working in the acute medical/progressive care unit where the team specializes in respiratory illness, including patients with cystic fibrosis and COVID-19.

“I enjoy interacting with patients the most and offering them hope,” says Moulton. “I often ask patients about themselves and what they like to do. I take the time to get to know them and take their minds off their current stressful situation for a moment. This is even more important for me now that I work with COVID-19 positive patients who do not have access to much human interaction.”

At a time when cultural competency is a proficiency that is needed more than ever in nursing, Moulton is using her diverse background and experiences to connect with patients on a deeper level in her day-to-day interactions. “I have learned to appreciate my background and allow others to learn about other cultures through me,” Moulton explains. “I see everyone as human beings worthy of respect and excellent care, regardless of their background, race, country of origin, sexual orientation, or education level. People often ask where I am from and I think that also helps them to realize that we are part of a global community.”

Moulton’s foundation in volunteerism drives her to continue to give to others through service so she can provide patients with the best care possible. “Throughout my experiences in my home country of Trinidad and Tobago, in Mexico, and in Haiti, I have seen firsthand how health care workers can help underserved populations by volunteering to do health screenings, and health lectures, or just by giving information of where people can access resources,” Moulton adds. “Nurses can make a positive impact through volunteerism.”

Amy Hermes '10



“Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses... we must be learning all of our lives.”

— Florence Nightingale

For Amy Hermes, the decision to build a career in nursing was easy.

“For as long as I can remember, I have wanted to help people,” says Hermes, a 2010 graduate of the UW–Madison School of Nursing’s rigorous BSN@Home program. “I started my career in a local nursing home while I was in high school working as a nursing assistant. I knew immediately I wanted to become a nurse. I fell in love with it because, while it can be challenging at times, it allows you to make a difference in the lives of other people. In the nursing profession, you can deal with so many aspects of patient care. It is a profession that constantly drives you to learn and think outside of the box so you can provide the best care possible.”

Hermes has seen it all after working in the field for over three decades. As she has taken on new roles and responsibilities, both in her career and within her organization, her constant driving force has been to never become complacent. While she finds plenty

of fulfillment in her daily work, Hermes constantly pushes herself to step out of her comfort zone and find new ways to improve through professional development. “I am a firm believer in lifelong learning. It is critical for maintaining and elevating competency, leading to better patient and personal outcomes,” she says. “I have always enjoyed the stimulation of the academic world and set goals for myself in continuing education.”

Her journey through professional development and continuing education has provided her with new opportunities and growth. After receiving her associate degree from Southwest Technical College in Fennimore, she began her career in nursing as a staff nurse. Hermes always knew that her academic endeavors would not stop there, and her desire to continue to grow in her career led her to the School of Nursing where she obtained her bachelor’s degree in nursing through the online program.

When she was appointed to an associate vice president role within her organization, Hermes felt it was the right time to pursue her graduate degree; she completed her master of science in nursing (MSN) in 2014 from Benedictine University’s online program. “I considered graduate degrees in either business or nursing,” she explains. “Given my passion is in nursing, I felt that an MSN program with a concentration in nursing leadership would be the most appropriate for me.”

Hermes’ endeavors to further her education have stretched beyond the classroom through an expansive network of memberships in various associations and organizations. She is currently a member of the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA), American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA), and American Nurses Association (ANA). In addition, she is a member of the Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders (WONL), where she acts as their liaison on the Wisconsin Center for Nursing (WCN) Board. She is also on Herzing University’s and Edgewood College’s Nursing Advisory Boards. “The value of networking is the most important reason why I try to be involved in a variety of associations and organizations,” she explains. “Membership in these different groups has afforded me a large resource base of experts that have helped me advance

my knowledge and skills. It has helped me stay on top of best practices and standards, and promote excellence in patient care within my organization. My memberships have also given me a more comprehensive understanding of health policy, allowing me to be a stronger, more informed advocate for legislative decisions impacting nursing, which I in turn share with my team.”

Now in her 34th year at Stoughton Hospital, and her third as chief nursing officer (CNO) and vice president of patient services, Hermes’ appetite for learning has not slowed down, admitting, “Even in my current position, I learn something new almost every day from colleagues and our patients.”

This synergistic learning environment has helped Hermes appreciate the immense value in not just her own professional development, but in encouraging those around her to pursue the same. “As a leader in my organization, I feel it is imperative for me to be a good role model,” she adds. “I believe it is important for me to be supportive of continuing education for our employees, as well as continuing my own education. Continuing my education has given me credibility in our organization and has allowed me to be a strong nursing advocate as well as a strong leader.”

Encouraging her colleagues and team members to seek out their own professional development opportunities is an endeavor that is close to her heart. “At this point in my career, what I am probably most passionate about is helping create and shape the next generation of nurses,” she says. “We need to continually attract new nurses into the field as well as ensure they are properly educated and remain nurses for years to come.”

Hermes’ passion connects her to a long list of nurses with the same excitement and enthusiasm, beginning with Florence Nightingale who said, “Nursing is a progressive art such that to stand still is to go backwards.” For Hermes, it means continuing the pursuit of learning and growth in the profession she loves, while also inspiring those around her to never stop with their own professional development. “I am a firm believer in lifelong learning,” she concludes. “It is critical for maintaining and elevating competency, leading to better patient and personal outcomes.”

Phuoc Hong Nhan '20



“Were there none who were discontented with what they have, the world would never reach anything better.”

— Florence Nightingale

Phuoc Hong Nhan grew up in Hyattsville, Maryland, an ethnically diverse city with over 18,000 residents. Nhan says that even in a city as diverse as his hometown, he was a minority. “There wasn’t a lot of Asian people there; it was mainly Black and Hispanic populations. Growing up around those cultures was interesting and exposed me to a lot. I had a very eclectic experience with everyone, and I grew up in different ways that I think are unique to my personal experience,” says Nhan.

During his senior year of high school, Nhan’s guidance counselor nominated him for the Posse Scholarship Program, one of the most comprehensive and renowned college access and youth leadership development programs in the United States. After three months of interviews, he was accepted into UW–Madison’s Posse Program, and he had to complete nine months of training before coming to campus. “I didn’t know UW–Madison existed until I received

the scholarship,” Nhan admits. “I hadn’t visited until I came here for SOAR [Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration].” Soon after arriving, though, he began to fall in love with the campus, especially the lake, and felt more at home the more he learned about the university.

Similarly, nursing was not on his radar when he arrived in Madison. He initially started his undergraduate career as a math major. He learned quickly, however, that his interests were elsewhere. “I always knew I wanted to help people. When I did my internship as an EMT, I got to be at the bedside. I got to do small nursing skills such as taking vitals, and it really cemented my interest [in nursing]. It just felt right to me.” Nhan joined the pre-nursing program his sophomore year and then the traditional bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) program his junior year.

Coming to an unfamiliar university in a brand-new state can be challenging for anyone, but being a multicultural student added additional challenges for Nhan. “I can’t say that it [was] easy. Adapting and acclimating to this climate [was] kind of hard being, you know, the minority on campus and navigating your way through a predominantly white institution,” he says.

“I [was] fortunate enough to be in the Posse Scholarship Program. It gave me the tools and the right people to help me navigate this campus and kind of make me feel [at] home here on campus.” Nhan also credits School of Nursing diversity officer, Mel Freitag, PhD, as a vital member of his support system. From declaring himself as a pre-nursing student through graduation, Freitag continually provided guidance, resources, and support to ensure his needs as a minority nursing student were met.

Naturally curious and tenacious, Nhan sought out numerous opportunities for personal and professional growth during his undergraduate career. He spent a summer as an intern at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, researching speech and language disorders, specifically using measures to correctly diagnose children with such disorders. In his senior year, he was a resident assistant at Sellen Hall; worked as a certified nursing assistant on the internal general medicine unit at UW

Health; and served as president of the Multicultural Student Nurse Organization. On top of that, he graduated from the School of Nursing Honors Program in May amid the coronavirus pandemic.

With classes moving to remote instruction and in-person clinicals being cancelled, Nhan took advantage of having limited outings and personal interactions by using the time for self-reflection. “I feel as if the pandemic has put me on a straighter path to my career plans. Being inside gave me a lot of time to think and reflect on what I want to do, what I want to be, and how I can improve myself. It also gave me a lot of extra time to study for and take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX).”

“When I was a CNA at UW Health, I was on the COVID unit. It was a little jarring because in the earlier stages of the pandemic, no one knew what was going to happen and how we were going to handle it,” says Nhan, who is now a registered nurse at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. Fortunately, Nhan has not been overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients during his first few months on Johns Hopkins’s infectious disease unit. However, the experiences he went through in his final months as a student are helping him maneuver through uncharted territory. “The ones that I’ve seen have been through a lot. It hurts to see someone who had no previous health conditions deteriorate so much, even after the infection has cleared.”

Nhan’s biggest challenge since entering the workforce is seeing patients struggle to receive care due to financial strains. “I want to advocate and help as much as I can, but there is only so much that I can do with my role,” he says. “Though, it does give me the opportunity to build strong relations with the social worker and case management to find solutions for my patients.”

Like Nightingale, Nhan is not content with the status quo and continuously seeks ways to improve himself, his community, and the nursing profession. For now, he is soaking up every opportunity presented in the infectious disease unit. In the future, he hopes to gain experience working with all patient populations, especially pediatrics, before entering a Family DNP program.

Melanie Krause '06, PHD'10



“Let whoever is in charge keep this simple question in her head (not, how can I always do this right thing myself, but) how can I provide for this right thing to be always done?” — Florence Nightingale

***Disclaimer: The views and responses below are the opinions of the subject and are not intended to reflect the views of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General (OIG).**

An ordinary day for Melanie Krause is anything but ordinary. As the assistant inspector general (AIG) of management and administration for the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (VA OIG), Krause wears many hats. In her role, she is responsible for providing comprehensive services throughout the VA OIG. “For all intents and purposes, I am my agency’s chief operating officer because I oversee day-to-day business functions,” she explains.

Krause was appointed to her position in January 2018 after serving as the acting

AIG since July of 2017. At the age of 32, she became her agency’s fourth-ever female senior executive. Now, at 35, she oversees a team that is essential to her agency’s continued ability to meet their mission. “Currently, I oversee nearly 140 staff who provide comprehensive administrative services, including human resources, contracting, information technology, space and facilities, and budget/financial services. I also oversee the OIG’s Hotline, which receives, analyzes, and dispositions over 30,000 contacts per year regarding VA programs and services, as well as a team of data analysts and contractors who provide analytic files and predictive analytics support to further OIG oversight activities involving the detection of fraud, waste, and abuse.”

One of the first seven nursing students to have joined the School of Nursing’s early-entry PhD program upon its inception in 2003, Krause earned her PhD from the School of Nursing in 2010. Beginning with her work as an RN in Dane County at an assisted living facility, and carrying through to her work in the federal government, she has found herself on a career path that allows her to make a bold impact on quality of care. By blending her interests in research, policy, and advocacy, as well as nursing and health care delivery, she has been able to develop a career firmly rooted in supporting her interest in long-term health care systems.

Krause emphasizes that nurses bring unique traits to the table when it comes to working in the federal government, including being able to tackle complex issues and shift gears at a moment’s notice. “Nurses tend to be exceptionally flexible and adaptable to meet whatever surprises, challenges, or opportunities come our way,” she points out. “To that end, learning how to quickly ‘figure it out’ is a core aspect of our training due in part to the fact that medicine and nursing practice are constantly evolving, and it’s imperative that we stay ahead of the curve. In addition to serving me well while I was in clinical practice, my ability to get up to speed quickly and hit the ground running helped me to climb the ranks in the federal government.”

For Krause and her team, the opportunity to make a broad scale lasting impact on quality of care is where the true reward lies.

“Nurses have a vital role in OIG’s oversight of the quality of care provided to America’s veterans,” she says. “We have teams of nurses who regularly travel to inspect VA health care facilities, review patient records and lead other data collection activities to identify gaps in services, and formulate actionable recommendations to improve services for veterans. Nurses’ training and clinical experience make them uniquely qualified to identify areas of concern within the health care system and then communicate those concerns to policy makers in a manner they can understand and use. Also, the rigor of nursing education can prepare a student to pursue higher education in different fields, including law and public policy.”

Like Florence Nightingale, Krause understands that her team’s work and efforts are affecting positive change that has a lasting impact on items both large and small. Always looking for intellectually stimulating challenges in her work, she says she is ready to take on whatever comes her way. “Because I moved up so quickly, it wasn’t until I started in my current position that I had an opportunity to really learn, stabilize the status quo, and partner with my team and other stakeholders to innovate,” she admits. As she continues to guide her team to innovate and create change that will positively impact the future of her organization’s work and efforts, Krause is excited about what the future has in store. “I don’t know what those new challenges will entail,” she says. “But I can assure you that it will be interesting, that I will learn a lot, and that I will work very hard to be successful.”

When asked what her advice would be to those who are considering a career path that focuses on health care delivery, research, policy, and civil service within the government ranks, Krause says, “I would encourage them to take a deep breath, lean in, be kind, work hard, and bloom where they are planted. Nurses tend to be highly flexible, adaptable, and resourceful. To that end, nurses often have ample opportunities to reinvent themselves if they hit a dead end, so there can be great value in taking some risks and trying new things.”

Andrew O'Donnell '11, DNP'14



“Apprehension, uncertainty, waiting, expectation, fear of surprise, do a patient more harm than any exertion.

Remember he is face to face with his enemy all the time.”

— Florence Nightingale

Andrew O'Donnell inherited two things from his family: a love for the University of Wisconsin–Madison and a passion for helping others.

While O'Donnell grew up in the Twin Cities, he was born and raised a Badger. His parents, grandparents, and wife are all UW alumni. His mother, Lori Padgham O'Donnell '83, and his wife, Keeley Houlahan O'Donnell '14, are both School of Nursing alumnae. After completing his own bachelor's degree in nursing, coming back to UW for his doctor of nursing practice (DNP) degree was an easy choice. “I feel incredibly fortunate to have a world-class university and nationally recognized DNP program in my backyard,” says O'Donnell. “The DNP program at UW is unmatched in its value when compared to other programs around the country.”

Similarly, O'Donnell credits his family as the guiding light for his career. His mother's career as a nurse started him on his own career path. His father, Dennis O'Donnell, also spent his career in a variety of health professions, including physical therapy, hospital administration, and digital health. “My parents set the example for me when it comes to the foundational competencies of nursing: compassion, respect, empathy, advocacy, and determination,” says O'Donnell. He adds, “My wife [Keeley] is also a nurse and most definitely my smarter and more compassionate half. She challenges me to be a better nurse leader and human being.”

Nowadays, O'Donnell is working on the front lines of COVID-19 as the interim co-manager of the Trauma Life Support Center (TLC), a 24-bed medical/surgical intensive care unit (ICU) at UW Health. This unit was designated as the COVID-19 ICU in March, and his team was tasked with leading the ICU-level preparation for managing the pandemic in the community. In a very short period, they expanded their ICU capacity, trained staff to care for COVID-19 patients, and implemented new systems and protocols to meet an unprecedented demand for ICU-level care. His primary responsibility is to support a staff of 120 employees, including 90 ICU nurses. He works closely with an interdisciplinary group of physician, nursing, pharmacy, and respiratory therapy leaders to support daily ICU operations; identify, triage, and address opportunities for improvement; and support frontline workers caring for patients and families.

“UW Health and our ICU team's response has been nothing short of remarkable,” says O'Donnell. “What has been most inspiring is the response I've seen from frontline staff. This international pandemic has brought anxiety, fear, and uncertainty about our future. It has challenged our health care system like never seen before in my lifetime. I have witnessed incredible teamwork, innovation, and bravery from the frontlines. We've had an overwhelming response from current and former ICU nurses asking, ‘How can I help the team? What can I contribute as we weather this storm together?’ Additionally, it has been inspiring to see the outpouring of support from our community. Everyone is rallying around our health

care heroes to fight this virus and keep our community healthy and thriving.”

Prior to this role, O'Donnell worked at the bedside as an ICU nurse in the TLC for five years, and then as a program manager of the Critical Care Nurse Communicator Program for three years, a program O'Donnell and April Buffo '09, DNP'20, designed and implemented at UW Health in 2017.

As Florence Nightingale observed, “Apprehension, uncertainty, waiting, expectation, fear of surprise, do a patient more harm than any exertion.” O'Donnell, Buffo, and their colleagues observed that poor communication, inadequate emotional support, and a failure to focus on the patient's goals, values, and treatment preferences lead to excessive use of life sustaining therapies at the end of life.

“ICU patients are often incapacitated and unable to make their health care decisions known. Subsequently, surrogate decision makers are often required to make complex, high stakes, end-of-life decisions for their loved one under immense stress,” says O'Donnell. “Additionally, evidence suggests that communication between patients, families, and clinicians in the ICU is often delayed and inefficient, coupled with frequent missed opportunities to support the emotional needs of surrogates, particularly at the end of life.” The Critical Care Nurse Communicator Program aims to tackle these issues head-on by having two palliative-trained critical care nurses work as patient and family navigators to support the informational, emotional, and spiritual needs of patients and families.

Whether running a COVID-19 ICU unit or leading an interdisciplinary team of health professionals to improve systems and quality of care, O'Donnell says his training as a nurse has been an asset: “Nurses bring a special set of skills to the table. We have developed our skills closer to the bedside, the patient, the family than most health professionals. This experience provides a perspective few other health care leaders have. It is this intimate knowledge of the patient and family experience that makes nursing leaders dynamic, innovative, and absolutely vital to designing effective and sustainable solutions.”

In the Fight

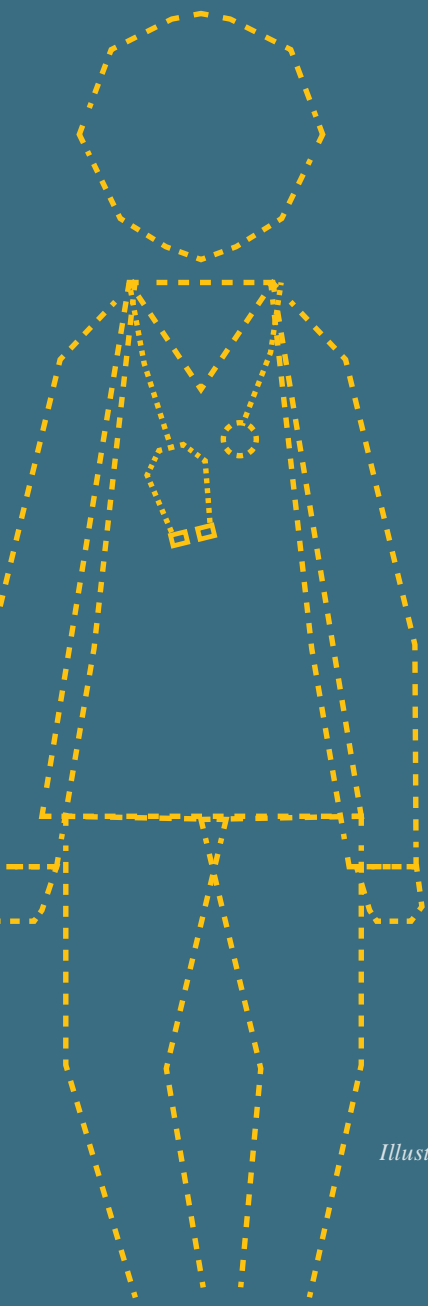
When pandemics hit, nurses are at the forefront

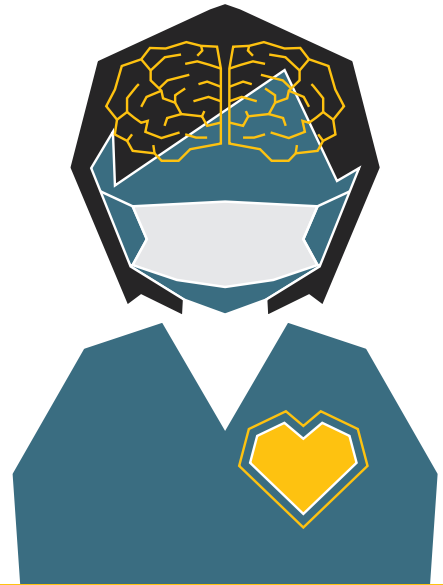
By Jenny Price

During the Crimean War in the 1850s, Florence Nightingale saved the lives of hospitalized British soldiers in danger of contracting and perishing from infectious diseases by deploying a powerful weapon we use today: basic hygiene.

A lesson from the earliest days of nursing has carried forward to one of the most powerful messages to fighting COVID-19. When the history of pandemics is written, nurses always play a central role, most visibly on the front lines at the bedsides of patients. But through their expertise in epidemiology and public health, they also improve care, give people tools to protect themselves, and help policymakers understand why some can't always take those steps.

Illustrations by Jackapan Pairin





A nursing heart and a medical mind

When we do it best you don't even know we're there

When someone tests positive for a communicable disease, the best way to prevent it from spreading is to chase down every contact they've had while contagious. That work is typically done by public health nurses, says Pam McGranahan, MS'04, DNP'12, a clinical associate professor and director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program.

Public health nurses focus on what's known as the three C's: case finding, contact tracing, and containment of community spread. Earlier in her career, McGranahan did that job, which included going to a local high school to inform teenagers they'd contracted a sexually transmitted disease, ensure they had access to treatment, and determine who else they could have passed it on to. This case finding effort is especially critical in a pandemic, when the consequences of community spread can be fatal.

"These same strategies have been key to controlling other life-threatening pandemics for which we don't have a vaccine, like TB and HIV," McGranahan says. "Nurses in the community have been essential to the success

of those efforts." More than 150 years ago, the reality of contracting communicable diseases that we rarely see today was very different, she says. In rural Jackson County, Wisconsin, an 1870s smallpox cemetery holds 10 graves, several from one family. About two miles down the road are the graves of a family who all died from diphtheria. Before vaccines were developed for those diseases, public health nurses educated people about how they spread and how to protect themselves, McGranahan says.

Public health nurses also quarantined households and did home visits to keep sick people from going into the community and built on those relationships to organize and implement mass immunization clinics, ensuring that people didn't die from diseases that have killed millions, she says. "Nurses were how we got on top of that," she says.

"The trick with public health is that, when we do it best, you don't even know we're there," she says. "You go to the movies and you don't worry that you know you've just caught measles. And you don't ever dream that you could lose a child to diphtheria."

If we really do our job as leaders, we're thinking ahead

As COVID-19 cases were on the rise in the spring, clinical professor and interim associate dean for academic affairs Barbara Pinekenstein '73, DNP, was interviewing candidates for fall admission to the School of Nursing, many of whom were already working as nursing assistants in hospitals or long-term care. "I was so inspired," she says. "They are stepping up in a really challenging time and are really clear about the importance of nursing and providing care."

Pinekenstein started her career in direct patient care — first as a staff nurse, then as a clinical nurse specialist. She later spent two decades as a chief nursing officer and vice president for clinical informatics, including implementing electronic health records and other innovative technology. She has seen firsthand the leadership, teamwork, and critical thinking skills that nurses bring to emergency situations. The School works to instill those values in their students through active learning and case-based emergency scenarios so they go into the field knowing how to set priorities and make decisions in fast-paced environments, she says.

“The nurse is the one person who’s at the bedside 24 hours a day when somebody’s hospitalized,” she says. “A critical part is to coordinate that patient’s care both while they’re in the hospital setting and when they go home.”

The School’s curriculum focuses on ensuring future nurses are able to adapt, be resilient, gather the right information, communicate in a crisis, and collaborate with patients and their families, she says. “If we really do our job as leaders, we’re thinking ahead and we’re being proactive in designing responses to scenarios before they occur,” she says.

Pinekenstein says leading during a crisis causes both emotional and physical fatigue due to longer hours, significant stress, and uncertainty. Strategies for mitigating fatigue that work well outside of a crisis — including rest breaks, self-care, clear communication, and contingency planning — are even more important when we’re in the middle of one.

“With this pandemic, it is a marathon, not a sprint,” she says.

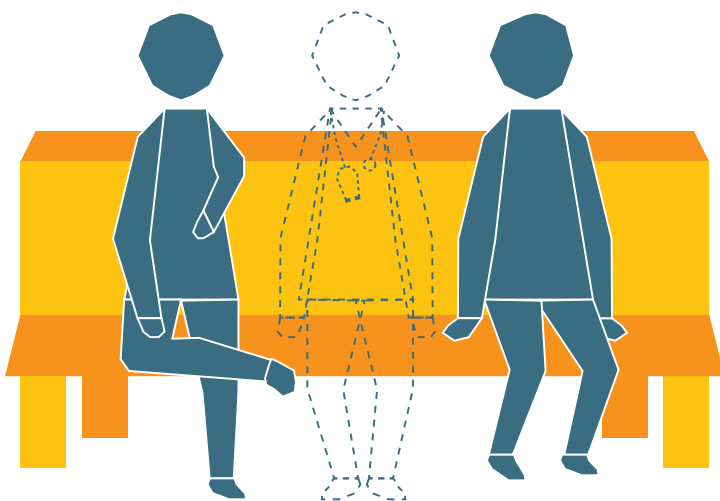
A nursing heart and a medical mind

Meghann Martin, DNP’15, is part detective and part caregiver in her role as a nurse practitioner at University Hospital monitoring, diagnosing, and treating infectious disease in patients with HIV, tuberculosis, viral infections, and other conditions. Some have COVID-19 and some do not.

A self-proclaimed “microbiology nerd,” Martin worked as a nurse at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison before enrolling in the School of Nursing to earn her DNP with a focus on infectious disease. “I like bugs,” she says.

Her days have become more challenging as she works to determine if respiratory failure in her COVID patients is strictly from the virus or from another organism that’s also infecting them. “They need lots of imaging, they need a lot of hands-on attention,” Martin says. “So it becomes much more complicated and they have a higher risk of mortality.”

“The trick with public health is that, when we do it best, you don’t even know we’re there.” — Pam McGranahan



It also means a renewed focus on effective and compassionate communication with patients who don’t have COVID-19 yet but worry about contracting the virus while in the hospital. “The constant anxiety that is swelling in the hospital, that makes it different and a little scarier,” she says.

“We wear face masks and shields for every patient. And you’re trying to make sure that patients understand that this is for their protection, not that we’re afraid of them.”

It also means providing strong support for her colleagues, including giving her cell phone number to residents in her service to call and talk through questions.

“We have a lot of fear and anxiety within the medical community during these types of pandemics,” she says. “With a new respiratory failure, the first thing you think of is, ‘Oh, my gosh, now they have COVID.’ But it’s on us to communicate with teams and say, ‘We still need to look for the typical things that happen to hospitalized patients.’”

Martin says she learned her effective and collegial communication skills through her experience at the VA and in her graduate studies at the UW. “I think that my nursing background in the DNP program really did prepare me to still have a nursing heart and a medical mind. The anxiety and the fear is so real, it’s palpable.”

Ask ‘Why?’ a lot

Carrie Bennett, MS’03, DNP, was early in her career when the H1N1 pandemic hit in 2009. “I don’t think I fully realized nor appreciated the preparatory and response work being done,” she says.

As a certified clinical nurse specialist (CNS), she’s played a role in supporting and promoting workflow changes for nursing staff at UnityPoint Health-Meriter Hospital. Bennett, a lead member for the Adult/Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist DNP cohort, maintains a clinical practice focused on complex elderly patients who were still being admitted to the hospital in the spring during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The core function of the CNS in this climate isn’t much different,” Bennett says. “We’re constantly juggling multiple priorities and adding new or changing priorities as the climate around us changes.”

Bennett also supervises the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP), through which more than 60 volunteers provide support to elderly patients to help minimize hospital-acquired delirium and functional decline. When coronavirus pandemic restrictions meant volunteers could not come to the hospital, she found ways to redeploy staff to provide the support patients needed. “CNSs tend to have a big-picture view of situations, ask ‘Why?’ a lot, and have a sound understanding of how to carry out quality improvement work, so because of that we find ourselves starting and joining multiple teams and workgroups,” she says.

Bennett was recently pulled into one hospital working group developing a plan for patients to virtually communicate with their families. Her HELP team had navigated that process prior to the pandemic to help elderly patients who occasionally need to hear and see their loved ones when anxious and/or delirious. “I had learnings I could share, as well as a pretty well-ironed out process that could be replicated to support all patients in need of virtually connecting to their loved ones,” she says.

We have to understand the context in which people are living their lives

Pandemics can teach us a lot about existing social disparities and how health and wealth inequities affect transmission and outcomes, says Megan Zuelsdorff, PhD, an epidemiologist and assistant professor in the School of Nursing.

Zuelsdorff studies the social-biological pathways and mechanisms that underlie cognitive health disparities later in life, and is focused on the ways that various social structural factors influence health. “Risk exposures don’t occur randomly for most people,” she says. “Usually, advantage or disadvantage in one area will be compounded by advantage or disadvantage in another part of your life.”

In a pandemic, social conditions shape the risks people experience as well as their

health outcomes, she says, noting the higher prevalence of COVID-19 cases and deaths experienced by African Americans. That includes “everything that we come into contact with, the things that we have to do versus the things we can change, and the protective resources that we have in place.”

When the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention first released social distancing guidelines after cases surfaced in the United States, she says, it sounded as if you needed a three-bedroom home with a master bathroom to isolate a family member with the virus from other people in their household. “That’s not a reality for a lot of people,” she says.

**Ask a lot of questions.
Understand the context.
Bring nursing to the
forefront.**

Zuelsdorff says epidemiologists and public health experts can look to maps and big data as well as community health providers and qualitative data to identify socio-behavioral phenomena and barriers that explain why some people may not follow social distancing or other guidelines. “If we want people to be able to follow these kinds of very general guidelines that we set out, we have to understand the context in which people are living their lives and adapt the messaging,” she says.

And although she doesn’t have a nursing background, her social epidemiology work fits squarely within the School’s focus on centering patients and their care within not only their families, but also their larger support networks and lives as a whole, she says.

“Nurses place care planning into a patient’s life, imagine what that’s going to look like, and imagine what the difficulties are going to be and what the facilitators might be as well,” she says. “So I find that my colleagues are already 10 steps ahead of me a lot of times.”

This will bring nursing to the forefront and show people what we really do

Amber Statz ’16 had been working as a nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital for just one year when the neurology intensive care unit she works in was designated to care for COVID-19 patients. Prior to the outbreak, she already knew how to care for patients on ventilators, including people who had experienced strokes and spinal cord injuries.

The difference now is that doctors rarely go into the rooms of COVID-19 positive patients to limit their exposure and that to other patients they see, she says. “I think this will bring nursing to the forefront and show people what we really do and the autonomy that we have,” she says. “We’re with the patients the most and our assessments are so vital to the team in making their decisions about care.”

There’s a lot to keep track of. Statz must keep her eyes on the patient and the monitor while simultaneously keeping track of the numbers and data coming in. “It’s happening all at the same time. Eventually it all kicks in.”

Through it all, Statz and her fellow nurses keep patients top of mind with the photos and personal details shared by family members displayed on poster boards in their rooms. “We’ve been trying to reach out to our patients’ [families] at least once a day, calling them with updates, encouraging them to call whenever, letting them know that we’re there for their patient.”

She’s staying mentally healthy by reaching out to other people on her unit for support, as well as walking her dog and reading on her days off to escape reality a bit. “It feels unreal,” she says. “Sometimes you wake up and you think it’s a dream, but it’s real.” But Statz says there’s nowhere else she wants to be. “I am young and healthy,” she says. “I should be out there on the front lines helping these people because I can do that right now.”



*Illustrations by
Alexander André*

The Importance of Place

By Megan Hanners

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies climate change as “The Greatest Threat to Global Health in the 21st Century.” While it is widely accepted that the effects of climate change are detrimental to the health of our global climate, it is the corresponding effects on the health of the global community that are ultimately driving the conversation of environmental justice forward in the nursing community. As the most trusted profession in the United States, nurses are uniquely positioned to improve population health by using their training, knowledge, and theories to educate people on the important connection between person and place.

Clearing the Air

In April 2019, Los Angeles was named the smoggiest city in the United States by the American Lung Association, a title that it has won 19 of the last 20 years. Almost a year later, on March 16, 2020 — three days before the state of California called for Safer at Home orders due to the spread of COVID-19 — the city was still shrouded in a haze of smog hanging low over the region.

However, as communities began to shelter in their homes, the region quickly found air quality numbers bouncing back. Twenty-two days later, Los Angeles saw a 20 percent improvement in overall air quality across southern California. According to IQAir, a Swiss air quality technology company that monitors pollution levels in cities worldwide, Los Angeles found itself experiencing the longest stretch of “good” air quality in the area since 1995.

With scientists all over the globe scrambling to better understand the data quickly pouring in about COVID-19, it did not take long to find a correlation between increased exposure to higher levels of airborne particulate matter in the environment and an increase in mortality rates from COVID-19. The connection between the environment and its effects on public health grabbed the attention of not just the public health sector, but the population-at-large, opening up new questions about just how much climate change is affecting the health of not just our planet, but our people.

You can't have healthy people on a sick planet

Air pollution has long been proven to travel deep into the respiratory system, resulting in numerous conditions such as irritation of the eyes, nose, throat, and lungs, as well as causing coughing, sneezing, and shortness of breath. Long term exposure has also been linked to chronic bronchitis, reduced lung function, and increased mortality from lung cancer and heart disease.

“We know that air pollution affects every organ system in our body, it’s not just our lungs,” says Jessica LeClair ’05, clinical instructor and PhD student at the School of Nursing. “It also affects our heart and our cardiovascular system. It affects our brain health. It affects our pancreas. It puts us at risk for diabetes. All of the different health issues that are being raised as putting people at risk for COVID-19 can also be the result of pollution.”

The effects of a toxic environment on a community are not just limited to pollutants in the air, either. A WHO assessment of potential health impacts of climate change on human populations, provided the human race stays on its current course with little to no positive change, estimates that climate change will cause an additional 250,000 deaths per year between 2030 and 2050 due to heightened heat exposure, increased infections and diseases amplified by warmer conditions, increases in catastrophic weather events, and malnutrition from droughts or floods that impact crop production.

In the early part of her nursing career, LeClair worked for Dane County as a public health nurse. She quickly found that the health of her community was being negatively affected by massive flooding that had happened years earlier, which was especially evident in an ever-increasing number of children who developed asthma due to toxic mold growing in previously flooded basements. The higher rates of flooding due to increasing rainfall in the region all pointed back to one thing: “I realized that this was climate change playing out right before our eyes.”

For LeClair, the study of place and the significance that the environment plays on the health of a community is where her passion lies. “As a public health professional, you’re working to help assure that people can have the healthy choice be the easy choice,” she explains. “It shouldn’t be difficult to build health into our lives, and our environment should make that easy just by matter of principle.”

Connecting the dots between people and place

The connection between people and place is nothing new. Nurses have been making the connection between public health and the environment in which they live for centuries. Florence Nightingale’s theories on environmental impact helped strengthen the foundation of modern nursing practice as we know it, emphasizing that the environment had a strong influence on positive patient outcomes. Her work utilizing the environment to assist in a patient’s recovery helped prove that the external factors of fresh air, pure water, efficient drainage, cleanliness, and sunlight directly affected a patient’s life, development, and healing for the better.

Two centuries later, the effects of the environment on public health is making its way into conversations about climate change. However, LeClair suggests that there has been a lack of continuity in keeping environmental justice at the forefront of conversations in nursing.

“Nurse researchers have been writing and talking about environmental health since the beginning of nursing. This is nothing new. But recently, nursing has become so medicalized that it feels like we have almost lost that side of ourselves that looks at health holistically through a social justice lens. Even when we’re at the bedside in a hospital setting, assessing and keeping in mind things like the home environment that we’re sending our patients back into, we need to remember that health happens outside of our clinical environments. Health happens in the places where people live, learn, work, and play. For some people with marginalized social identities, these places can be degraded by environmental racism and other social injustices.”

LeClair adds that interest in getting back to looking at the importance of environmental justice in nursing is growing, especially with the younger members of the workforce and up-and-coming nurses. “I think we’re coming back to our roots in that way, and our students are hungry for it,” she says. “They get it and they’re truly interested in it, especially because of climate change. I think nurses are reawakening to these fundamental aspects of our discipline, and that’s exciting to me.”

Owning the first step toward change

While even the smallest efforts can make a difference, LeClair stresses that true impact requires action. “What I’m realizing is that environmental justice really hasn’t been defined yet for nursing,” she says. “We’ve defined environmental health, but I’m seeing some inconsistencies with how we’re talking about environmental justice

work and really owning it as a profession. I’ve looked at decades of research and have found that the same sort of conversations are happening again and again over time. But while nurse researchers have been researching and talking about this for decades, it seems like it’s a conversation that is revolving and ongoing. More nurses need to start applying environmental justice nursing research recommendations in order to directly impact nursing practice and environmental issues. There are a lot of conversations about what we should be doing, but not a lot of studies around what actually works.”

LeClair is confident that nurses can make positive, essential change on environmental justice issues worldwide, and it all begins with the holistic connection of people to place as the driving force behind taking the first steps to make an impact. “We need to remember that health happens outside of our clinical environments in the places where people live, learn, work, and play,” LeClair concludes. “You can’t have healthy people on a sick planet.”

“You can’t have healthy people on a sick planet.”

— Jessica LeClair



The World Health Organization estimates that dirty air, both indoors and out, cuts short seven million lives worldwide every year.

Get involved.

Join the Nurses Climate Challenge.
Nursesclimatechallenge.org



SCENES

Celebrating the Class of 2020

Traditionally, our Scenes section is filled with photos of events and student life from the previous semester. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, all Spring 2020 classes and events were moved online or cancelled—including Commencement. As part of the School's virtual Commencement and Graduation Celebration for the Class of 2020, we asked graduating students to submit photos of their favorite School of Nursing memories for a digital photo album. And now we are sharing some of those submissions with you.





An Investment in Mental Health Research

Barbara Abrams '69 spent over 40 years of her career practicing in community and mental health. In the fall of 2019, Abrams journeyed to Madison for her 50th class reunion and returned home to Palm Springs, California, feeling inspired and ready to make an impact. Using her passion for mental health as her guide, Abrams generously established the **Barbara Leadholm Abrams Community Mental Health Research Fund** at the School of Nursing.

Originally from the small northern Wisconsin town of Amery, Abrams is a lifelong Badger and one of three children to attend the University of Wisconsin–Madison. During her extensive career, she worked in Chicago, the District of Columbia, New York City, and Boston. While in Boston, she served stints as a psychiatric nurse clinician, a state policy maker, and the commissioner of the Department of Mental Health for Massachusetts.

“Throughout my entire career, my driving objective has been on improving mental health services and policies to promote individuals’ and families’ well-being.” — Barbara Abrams

“Throughout my entire career, my driving objective has been on improving mental health services and policies to promote individuals’ and families’ well-being,” says Abrams.

The Abrams Research Fund will in large part support the work of Earlise Ward, PhD, a professor at the School of Nursing. Ward, a



Earlise Ward

licensed psychologist, conducts community-based clinical research that focuses on mental health issues within the African American community. Her research examines the perceptions of mental health and how these beliefs may create barriers for individuals seeking mental health services and ability to cope with mental illness.

“I have witnessed firsthand in my clinical practice the impact of mental health disparities on minority communities,” says Ward. “I believe my life purpose is to help people understand, appreciate, and engage in their healthiest life, physically and mentally.”

Abrams says Ward’s research caught her attention “because her approach and focus is on identification of the barriers that African Americans face in accessing services — she’s identifying key factors that impede access to services, while adapting and offering interventions to treat depression. Her approach is critical to addressing health disparities in mental health, and frankly, all health.”

To learn more, visit **supportuw.org** or email Scott Fletcher, director of development, at **scott.fletcher@supportuw.org**.

Keeping up with Alumni

The 1960s

Mary Behrens '64 was one of six guests on a special round table episode of the *Movement is Life Podcast*. "Marking National Nurses Week 2020 and the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale's birth, nurse advocates and leaders from across the U.S. meet to celebrate the nursing profession and discuss many topics, including its diversity, future aspirations, and their nursing heroes."

The 2000s

Lucy Mkandawire-Valhmu PhD'06, a UW-Milwaukee associate professor of nursing, is leading a research team creating a project that will serve thousands of Native American survivors of sexual assault. The team, which also includes UW-Madison alumna **Jeneile Luebke '02, MS'09**, has received a \$2 million federal grant for the project, which will support increasing access to medical forensic care and also training to help mainstream health care providers and victim advocates deliver culturally sensitive services.

Badger Nurses on the Front Lines of COVID-19

When UW Health called on retired nurses to help during the coronavirus pandemic, **Beth Sommerfeldt '81** was ready and willing to answer. Sommerfeldt and other retired nurses were asked to answer the phones of the COVID-19 hotline. She was featured in the "Frontline Heroes: National Nurses Week" series from *NBC 15 WMTV*.



Marcela Hanson

'20, then a nursing assistant at University Hospital, discovered her colleagues were struggling to find childcare. She decided to organize a list of fellow nursing students who were still in Madison, despite moving to a distance learning format, and willing to provide those services. Her efforts were featured on Wisconsin Public Radio, and she was selected as the Nurse of the Week by DailyNurse®.

Recent graduate **Geoffrey Watters DNP'20** was featured in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article, "Wisconsin Medical Students are Graduating onto the Front Lines of Coronavirus." In his interview, Watters highlighted how health care is not immune to the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, noting that others in his specialty of psychiatric nursing were struggling to find secure employment. "There's a lot of uncertainty," Watters said. "It seems counter-



J.J. Rosin

intuitive that health care workers would be losing their jobs in the middle of a pandemic, but it's happening."

Current senior **J.J. Rosin** was recruited by the State of Illinois



to provide support for those affected by COVID-19. His nine week contract started at McCormick Place in Downtown Chicago where the 3,000-bed facility was used to provide 24/7 care for those with mild symptoms of COVID-19 and for those finishing their treatment regimen. During this time, he was primarily a paramedic on the CODE/Airway team. Once this deployment was finished, he moved to Ludeman Development Center, a state-run disability facility, where about 80 percent of the residents had COVID-19. Nurses, doctors, and paramedics provided around the clock care to these individuals to ensure a rapid recovery. They also worked closely with the facility's staff to implement PPE standards and provide infection control.



Amber Statz

The Wisconsin Alumni Association's "What Badgers Do" series featured **Amber Statz '16**, who currently works on a neuro ICU unit at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Statz said, "Working on a neuro ICU unit, we transitioned to a COVID ICU unit. Then we've had new people working next to us. And so, it's just been a lot of new faces and working together as a team—even though we might not have met each other before. It's just been a lot of teamwork and cooperation, which is pretty neat to see."

A Pin with a Promise

Laura Block '20 continues legacy created by Nancy Seegers Schaper '57 *by Jordan Langer*



According to Schaper's family, her business card read: "Nancy Schaper, RN, BSN, MOF." She was a pillar of Caldwell County's medical community in Princeton, Kentucky; a loving wife; and a devoted mother of five daughters. One of her greatest contributions was founding the first rural home health program in Western Kentucky. Thanks to her efforts, Caldwell County Home Health has provided necessary health care services to thousands of individuals in the community and is a keystone of the Caldwell Medical Center today. Schaper's dedication to care was

For many Badger nurses, the tradition of a pin being passed from one nurse is threaded with a promise to carry on a legacy. School of Nursing alumna Nancy Seegers Schaper passed away on September 1, 2017. Before her death, she donated her nursing pin back to the School of Nursing with instructions to pass it on to a deserving nurse who both emulated the Wisconsin Idea and had an infectious passion for nursing.

Designed in 1926 by Helen Denne Schulte, the School of Nursing's first director, the pin consists of the university's seal on a maroon cross with a caduceus. The pattée dates from the Middle Ages when it was worn by the Knights Hospitaller, a nursing order. Its wings represent a bird covering its young, symbolizing protection and nursing. A caduceus, two snakes winding around a staff, symbolizes medicine. Each year, select pins are passed on from alumni to new graduates in recognition of the recipient's achievement and future promise. Laura Block, a 2020 graduate, received Schaper's pin this past May.

"I hope to continue in the strong tradition of nurses before me, including Nancy, who have touched so many lives over the years." — Laura Block

Block expressed her sincere gratitude on being selected: "I am deeply honored and humbled to receive this pin, which not only symbolizes nursing leadership and service, but also provides a meaningful connection to its donor. I hope to continue in the strong tradition of nurses before me, including Nancy, who have touched so many lives over the years. Graduating in the year of 2020—the Year of the Nurse—amidst a global pandemic that highlights both the role of the nurse and the vulnerability of our health care system and communities also holds incredible meaning. In the spirit of this pin, I look forward to contributing to this incredible profession, working across multiple generations of nurses to come alongside communities, and promoting health and equity."

apparent in all aspects of her life: if there was a need, she tried to fill it.

Similarly, Block has been described as humble, kind, and approachable, with many peers noting that she is quick to reach out to offer help or mentorship at any time of day. Block helped School of Nursing faculty organize food and housing resources for older adult communities experiencing increased insecurity due to COVID-19. She also spends her free time talking with isolated nursing home residents through virtual social visits. Block will continue her nursing journey as a second-degree student at UW–Madison, with Schaper's pin, reminding her of her legacy to come.

In Memorium

We offer our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those who have passed away.

Ruth Joanis '44, January 10, 2020

Shirley Svenson '44, December 11, 2019

Barbara Borman '48, December 17, 2019

Jean Johnson '48, October 26, 2014

Barbara Jones '50, June 12, 2020

Dolores Houden '51, August 30, 2018

Edna Luckow '52, June 25, 2020

Lois Angle '54, December 5, 2014

Donna Stauber '54, April 2, 2020

Nancy Michael '55, January 11, 2019

Nancy Barbo '57, May 16, 2020

Nancy Seegers Schaper '57, September 1, 2017

Gail Grorud '60, August 15, 2019

Judith Groeneweg '61, November 29, 2019

Helen Jacobs '64, October 27, 2019

Elizabeth Swiggett '64, DOD Unknown

Mary Bradley '65, MS'71, November 9, 2019

Phyllis Jacobs '65, January 10, 2020

Dorene Quady '65, June 13, 2020

Susan Black '66, July 28, 2020

Mitzi Duxbury '66, MS'70, PhD'72, February 1, 2020

Mary Denyes '67, May 25, 2020

Diane Kjervik '67, January 27, 2020

Joy Calkin MS'68, PhD'80, April 21, 2020

Sally Valentine '68, May 19, 2020

Elaine Babitz '70, January 10, 2020

Madge Polidora '73, MS'77, November 26, 2019

Beverly Daniels '74, MS'77, June 22, 2019

Sharon Bloodgood MS'75, January 21, 2020

Claire Kircher '77, March 31, 2020

Monica Bolle '78, April 26, 2018

Sandra Fragleasso MS'79, DOD Unknown

Susan Frerks '80, June 27, 2020

Bonnie Foley '82, March 19, 2020

Diana Girdley MS'82, Retired Clinical Faculty, May 17, 2020

Sally Greene '83, February 4, 2014

Jamie Luke '83, August 24, 2015

James Bersalona '90, March 24, 2020

Teressa Anderson '94, February 14, 2020

Lucinda Ughetti '94, January 10, 2020

Lynn Shauger '95, April 19, 2017

Stephanie Sieger Opper '02, March 9, 2019

Paul Cox '10, June 10, 2020

Hortense A. Momou '18, March 5, 2020

Emily Bentley Campbell, Professor Emerita, May 24, 2020

Helen Fern Marsh, Professor Emerita, January 21, 2020

Awards

Sarah Endicott, DNP'13, and **Barbara King, MS'87, PhD'10**, were named Distinguished Educators in Gerontological Nursing by the National Hartford Center of Gerontological Nursing Excellence.

Certifications

Clinical instructor **Jennifer Athanas** attained the Certification in Nursing Education (CNE) credential in March 2020.



Jennifer Athanas

In the News

Dean Linda D. Scott was featured in a *Wisconsin State Journal* article called "Wisconsin's Nursing Shortage in the Spotlight as Hospitals Face Influx of COVID-19 Cases." The article was originally published on March 26, 2020.

Barbara Pinekenstein '73, DNP, was featured in a *FOX 47 Madison* article entitled "Pandemic Further Bottlenecks Nursing Students' Path to Frontlines." The article was originally published on July 8, 2020.

The **Wisconsin Public Health Research Network (WPHRN)** was one of several groups to collaborate with researchers at the School of Medicine and Public Health to provide zip code-level data on the susceptibility of residents to severe complications from COVID-19. **WPHRN**, which is co-chaired by associate dean for faculty affairs **Susan Zahner, DrPH**, distributed the project's reports to more than 270 members from state, local, and tribal health departments, academic institutions, and professional organizations across Wisconsin.

Presentations



Barb Pinekenstein

On May 5, 2020, **Barbara Pinekenstein '73, DNP**, was a featured guest on the UW Now Livestream hosted by the Wisconsin Alumni Association. During the event, she discussed the challenges nurses faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and how the public can best support them.

New Hires

Rachel Gicquelais, PhD, and **Elliot Tebbe, PhD**, joined the School as assistant professors. **Roberta Pawlak, PhD'11**, joined as a clinical professor. **Lacey Alexander '12, MS'14, PhD'18**, **Melissa Anibas, EDS**, and **Kelli Jones, PhD**, joined as clinical assistant professors. **Angela Baker** and **Anna Kohl** joined as clinical instructors.



Melissa Anibas

Peggy Rynearson joined the School as a marketing specialist, working with Nursing Professional Development (NPD) and the Nursing Research and Sponsored Programs (NRSP) office.

The Office of Institutional Affairs welcomed **Megan Hinners** as a communications specialist and **Jordan Langer** as the alumni relations officer.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs welcomed **Nicci Schmidt** as a research administration specialist. New research project staff members include **Molly Schwebach** as a research coordinator, **Antwon Clipp**s as a project coordinator, and **Sydnee Livingston** as a research specialist.

The Office of Academic Affairs welcomed **Stacy Davison** as the clinical placement coordinator and **Mariah Allen** as the graduate academic services coordinator.

Promotions

Sarah Endicott, DNP'13, was promoted to clinical professor. **Julie Astrella, DNP**, and **Chandra Norder-Brandli '01, DNP'15**, were promoted to clinical associate professor. **Jessica LeClair '05**, **Britta Lothary**, **Heidi Neuhauser**, and **Paul Schwartz** were promoted to clinical instructor II. **Earlise Ward, PhD**, was promoted to professor.



Sarah Endicott

Kelli Richards was promoted to director of the nursing learning center. She continues her role as the BSN@Home coordinator.



Paul Schwartz

Darby Sugar was promoted to director of advising and student services.



Earlise Ward



Inside back cover: Prior to the pandemic, the Signe Skott Cooper Hall atrium was a bustling hub of student life. UW Badgers could observe red-tailed hawks, sandhill cranes, and even foxes outside the atrium windows. We hope to all return to Cooper Hall soon!

Back cover: Little did we know at our photo shoot with Hanna Braaten '20 in February that it would be the last of the year. Braaten's nursing school experience inspired an exhibit of stitch art that adorned the Enroth Hall gallery walls. For more about Braaten's story and artwork, visit nursing.wisc.edu/q-a-bsn-senior-hanna-braaten/

Photos by Alexander André, School of Nursing.



School of Nursing

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