

NURSE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE ALUMNI OF THE UF COLLEGE OF NURSING



Sharing their Knowledge: Alumni Preceptors Continue the Gator Nurse Circle

Dan Hendrix is an alumnus of the College who also serves as a preceptor to Suzie Archer who is currently pursuing her master's degree as an Acute Care Nurse Practitioner.

For pediatric nurse practitioner Anne Perantoni's (MSN 1992) patients, it is not unusual to see Anne with a young nursing student in tow, observing Perantoni's patient assessments, reviewing charts and learning about her diagnoses.

Since Perantoni graduated from the UF College of Nursing with her master's degree in 1992, she has precepted students while in practice. This includes a private practice at Shands at Starke, where she has been for the past nine years.

"Yes, they hooked me early," Perantoni chuckles. "But it wasn't a hard sell. I realize how important it is for these students to learn as much as they can in a clinical setting while still being students. They get to be independent while still dependent."

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Perantoni is one of more than 400 preceptors who volunteer time to mentor UF College of Nursing students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. One of countless Gator Nurse preceptors, alumni of the UF nursing programs, she stays continually connected to the College through her service to students.

“I want these students to be prepared as possible and that means me educating them the correct way. They will be my future colleagues,” Perantoni said. “The best reward is if I am able to help the student and help to improve the program.”

Perantoni is one of 12 providers at her practice and one of three nurse practitioners. Many of her loyal patients return with children of their own to see her.

“The College of Nursing could simply not do what we do without our excellent preceptors. It is not surprising then that so many of them are our own graduates.”

— Dean Kathleen Ann Long, PhD, RN, FAAN

Sandra Milner, a pediatric nurse practitioner student who also graduated with her BSN from UF in 2008, is one of the students Perantoni is precepting this semester.

“Anne is someone to look up to,” said Milner, who originally hails from South Africa, where she says the nurse practitioner role is foreign to many, including members of her own family. “Every day she practices she has students with her. She has such a commitment to continuing to educate those who will become pediatric NP’s who will hopefully improve care for patients.”

When asked if she would precept after she graduates, Milner smiled, and said “Of course, because of the impact I have seen Anne make on her students.”

“Profound effect on our students...”

Preceptorship at the University of Florida is a structured arrangement for mentoring students to help ensure that each student is prepared to enter the nursing profession. Preceptors and students are paired in the clinical environments for which students hope to prepare themselves.

The preceptor lays the groundwork for that future by providing opportunities to learn with gradually diminishing supervision.

The College utilizes anywhere from 200 to 300 preceptors a semester. They stretch from as far south as Miami to Georgia, depending on where the students complete their clinical experiences.

“The College of Nursing could simply not do what we do without our excellent preceptors,” said Kathleen Ann Long, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean of the College of

rotation. Whether it’s how to do a stitch or deal with a parent, they will only get out of it what they put in,” Perantoni said.

“I appreciate being able to be a part of their future...”

“Being a preceptor is also a learning experience for me,” observed **Dan Hendrix (BSN 1997, MSN 1999)**.

Hendrix graduated from the RN to BSN program, went on to receive his MSN as a Family Nurse Practitioner and returned to UF to receive his post master’s certificate in acute care in 2008. He currently works for the Department of Surgery at Shands at UF in the Thoracic and Cardiovascular unit.

For Hendrix, who has worked as a preceptor for UF students for about nine years, the opportunity to mentor future nurses has kept him active in the role.

He hopes the knowledge he has gained throughout his career will significantly augment the educational experience his students receive while working with him. Hendrix has worked as a surgical nurse in the surgical intensive care unit (SICU) at Shands at AGH, as an emergency nurse at Munroe Regional Medical Center, and as a flight nurse at Shands.

“I appreciate being able to be a part of their future,” Hendrix said. “While I was a nursing student at UF, my faculty members provided me the opportunity to excel, which I hope I can do for my students. I hope that the knowledge I gained throughout my career will help to enhance their educational experience.”

Hendrix focuses on critical care management for patients who have undergone thoracic surgery. Early in the students’ clinical rotation, he provides opportunities for them to explore their own knowledge and how they would react to specific situations. Although he is available for guidance, he often lets his students work independently. He allows them to familiarize themselves with the patients in the Intensive Care Unit.

Following the students’ independent work, Hendrix discusses the treatment plan with the students. Students also

Nursing. “They have a profound effect on our students and shape their clinical experiences. It is not surprising then that so many of them are our own graduates. Having had an excellent experience here inspires them to give back.”

Perantoni admits that students have changed since she first started precepting. The age of the average student has crept lower, which usually translates into very bright and capable students who may not have as much clinical experience. That is why she is so passionate about the preceptorship experience and why she has dedicated herself to it for 17 years.

“I tell my students that I want them to have learned at least one new thing every time they come out of their clinical

“While I was a nursing student at UF, my faculty members provided me the opportunity to excel as a student, which I hope I can do for my students. I hope that the knowledge I gained throughout my career will help to enhance their educational experience.”

—Dan Hendrix (BSN 1997, MSN 1999)



receive hands-on experience like learning how to place a chest tube in a patient.

In addition to precepting UF nursing students, Hendrix volunteered his time to mentor two Korean nursing students who came to UF as part of an exchange with Chungnam National University. These students had the opportunity to shadow him and learn the workings of the U.S. health care system, especially the role of the advanced practice nurse, which is new in Korea.

“It is very much a reciprocal relationship between the preceptors and their students,” said Maxine Hinze, Chair of the Department of Adult and Elderly Nursing. “I think preceptors choose to do this because they can still keep in touch with academia, especially for our alumni who can connect with the College. The students open their eyes to the latest in education and they, in turn, of course lend their clinical expertise and knowledge.”

“A role model for students...”

From the hospital to a preceptor’s own practice, students learn in all patient care settings. Preceptor **Wanda Liddell (MSN 1995)** opened her own practice, Tri-County Primary Care in Cross City in 2001. Her practice cares for patients of all ages, from newborns to elders.

“Currently our youngest patient is six weeks old and our oldest is 97 years old,” Liddell said. “So as you can see the students I precept get to observe a range of patients and conditions.”

After receiving her MSN as a Family Nurse Practitioner, Liddell worked as the nursing supervisor in the Emergency Department at Shands at UF for several years and later as a nurse practitioner for a private practice in Dixie County. Liddell then took the leap and opened her own practice. Now, eight years later, she has a bustling private practice with a variety of providers.

Liddell’s entrance into preceptorship was a bit untraditional. In fact, current students approached her to become their preceptor. Besides being flattered, Liddell recognized the impact she might have on both the students and the profession.

As a nurse practitioner with her own private practice, Liddell has made the most of her opportunity to mentor many UF nursing students. Precepting since she entered practice, Liddell credits each student with bringing something new to the practice.

Students not only assist with direct patient care but with other parts of the practice, including referrals to social work

services, for supplemental support which benefits many low-income patients.

“I don’t want them to do what they have always done; I want them to learn,” Liddell said.

Liddell still keeps in contact with many of her former students. She has even hired several for part-time positions in her practice.

“I hope I can be a role model to students and show them that nurses can work in a variety of settings and even own their own practice!” Liddell said.

“...From preparation to profession...”

For **Karin Prussak (MSN 1989)**, it was an outstanding and memorable experience with her preceptor that inspired her to try and provide that for other students.

“I had an excellent preceptor that took me from preparation to profession, and I wanted to offer that to students,” said Prussak, who will be a part of the first class of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) graduates this spring.

After completing her master’s degree, Prussak moved to Jacksonville to work as procurement coordinator for the UF Transplant Team. She then began working in the acute and long-term acute setting where she remained for 10 years.

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Anne Perantoni, MSN, ARNP, alumna and preceptor, talks to David Ross about his granddaughter Rochelle's ear infection. Sandra Milner, MSN student, looks on and will confer with Perantoni on her assessment.

“These students will be my future colleagues. The best reward is if I am able to help the student and help to improve the program.”

— Anne Perantoni (MSN 1992)

After leaving acute care, she began working at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville first as an ARNP in Radiation Oncology and electrophysiology. Since beginning at the Mayo Clinic in 2000, Prussak has precepted Jacksonville-based UF MSN students during their clinical rotation. Although she only works with the nursing students for a short time period, she takes her position as a preceptor very seriously and wants to develop a good clinical experience for her students.

Prussak credits the excellence of her MSN and DNP program to both faculty members and her clinical rotation in the

ing, implementing a plan and researching more information if needed on a diagnosis, medication or treatment guideline,” Prussak said.

If possible, the student may be able to see the patient back for a second visit during the semester if scheduling allows.

By the end of the semester, the students go from novice to experts in abnormal heart rhythms such as atrial fibrillation, atrial flutter, (and) PVC's (premature ventricular contractions).

Although Prussak will graduate in May with her DNP, she is eager to con-

members were both demanding and challenging, Parry believes that her time spent as a student at the College fully prepared her to enter the nursing field. In particular, one professor made a difference in the direction of her career.

“Dr Jo Snider [Associate Professor] was my professor both as a BSN and MSN student,” Parry said. “She inspired me to become a psychiatric nurse practitioner and I think it is her impact on me that leads me to precept students and hope I make that much of a difference in those coming after me.”

For the past four years, Parry has been mentoring Jacksonville-based psychiatric nurse practitioner students as a clinical preceptor. The clinical rotation with students usually last about a month; however, students do have the option to stay longer. One of her students decided to work with her for an entire year.

Although Parry does not supply a specific curriculum for her students to follow, they have to meet certain criteria during the evaluation process. She prefers her students to first shadow her while counseling patients. After the student feels more comfortable, she will give her or him the chance to work directly with patients.

“Our Gator Nurse preceptors exemplify that there are so many ways to give back as an alumnus of the College,” Dean Long said. “In this case, it is their valuable time and wealth of experience that they share with our students. They complete the Gator Nurse circle.”

“I had an excellent preceptor that took me from preparation to profession, and I wanted to offer that to students.”

— Karin Prussak (MSN 1989, DNP 2009)



cardiovascular program. She learned so much from that rotation that she wants to replicate that for her students.

Prussak has each new student she mentors write goals and objectives at the beginning of rotation based on the student's interest. Throughout the rotation, she checks to make sure they are meeting both the students' objectives and desired clinical experiences are being realized.

“The goal is for the student to be comfortable with interviewing, diagnos-

tinue working as a preceptor in order to mentor future nursing students.

“I hope I can make a difference...”

“I wanted to give back to the program that gave me so much,” said **Rebecca Parry (BSN 2000, MSN 2002)**. It was this mindset and her love for teaching that led Parry, a psychiatric nurse practitioner at a private practice in Jacksonville, to begin precepting nursing students.

Although the curriculum and faculty

Uncertain Economic Times Strengthen the Dedication and Passion of Gator Nursing

Recently, I have had an unexpected opportunity to communicate with many of our remarkable and accomplished alumni who have a deep passion for Gator Nursing. Unfortunately, the occasion for our exchanges was the rumored (but not accurate) decision to eliminate our baccalaureate degree program. Items in our local newspaper indicate a possible end to undergraduate programs at several colleges at UF, including the College of Nursing. Specifically, an article appeared in *The Gainesville Sun* in February citing possible plans for the UF Colleges of Education and Nursing to eliminate their undergraduate programs. When I spoke to the paper's reporter on the topic, I indicated this was only **one of the many** alternatives being discussed in this time of severe budget cuts and an uncertain economic climate.

I am happy to report that **this alternative is no longer being considered. We will continue to offer our excellent BSN program at the University of Florida.**

If we are forced to deal with additional substantial budget cuts, we may need to decrease our undergraduate enrollment over time. This, unfortunately, is the same situation faced by nursing education programs across Florida and the country. However, we remain committed to providing the highest quality BSN program for our students and for the nursing profession.

As we have reported in recent issues of *The Gator Nurse*, the University of Florida, including our College of Nursing, has faced several rounds of budget cuts in the past two years. More cuts are likely given the state and national economy. These are challenging times that have required difficult decisions and the thoughtful engagement of our administration, faculty, students and staff to determine the best ways to deal with current circumstances. Plans and time frames for how UF will deal with impending budget cuts are still uncertain.

Perhaps it is heartening that even the mention of reductions in nursing education at UF has sparked great interest and concern. I have had many alumni contact me offering support and suggestions as well as recounting examples of the ways in which their UF nursing education shaped them. This is much appreciated.

As we have communicated to our alumni and friends in the past, our College of Nursing has a strong and growing emphasis on graduate



KATHLEEN ANN LONG
PHD, RN, FAAN

Following the lead of our founding Dean, Dorothy Smith, our College community has never stepped away from challenges or risks. We have embraced them and found opportunities to become better and stronger. I am confident that we will do the same during this difficult economic period.

education and research, which is appropriate given the overall mission of the University of Florida and the College's nursing leadership role in Florida.

We, of course, remain extremely proud of the quality of our undergraduate program and the excellent alumni who graduate from it. **Over 70 percent** of our BSN graduates do go on to graduate study, many of them here at UF. Following the lead of our founding Dean, Dorothy Smith, our College community has never stepped away from challenges or risks. We have embraced them

and found opportunities to become better and stronger. I am confident that we will do the same during this difficult economic period. We remain committed, first and foremost, to preparing nurses at all degree levels who "Care, Lead, Inspire."

Please continue to send us your questions. Help us garner private resources to supplement state dollars. More than ever we rely on your advice, suggestions and support. And, stay tuned—we are at an interesting place in our journey toward nursing excellence.

Please contact me or Anna Harper, Development Officer (352-273-6360 or aemiller@ufl.edu) with any questions or concerns.

Please also be assured of our ongoing commitment to excellent nursing education at all levels.

Kathleen Ann Long

YOU'RE HIRED:

College of Nursing Hosts Career Fair for Students and Alumni

Articulate. Prepared. Professional.

UF Nursing students are all of the above, according to employers who attended the College of Nursing's Annual Career Fair during early spring semester.

The event was sponsored by Florida Hospital, Shands Healthcare and the North Florida South/Georgia Veterans Health System. More than 20 health care agencies from all over Florida and the Southeast participated in the event. The Career Fair, held every spring, is a great networking opportunity for both students and health care agencies.



accomplishments in brief

Assistant Professor Sheau-Huey Chiu recently conducted a pilot study comparing two developmental screening tools for use with homeless children. The study was published in the *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*. Dr. Chiu also presented her study, "Maternal Relation Response During Skin-to-Skin Contact: A Feasibility Pilot Study."

Assistant Professor Debbie Popovich and Clinical Assistant Professor Allison McAlhany's article, "Scurvy, Forgotten but Definitely Not Gone," is in the process of being published in the *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*.

Clinical Assistant Professor Jane Gannon recently had her article, "The Clinical Nurse Leader: A Catalyst for Improving Quality and Patient Safety," published in the *Journal of Nursing Management*.

Assistant Professor Charlene Krueger's article, "Exposure to Maternal Voice in Preterm Infants: A Review," is currently in the process of being published in *Advances in Neonatal Care*. Another article, "A longitudinal description of heart rate variability in 28-34 week preterm infants," is also in the process of being published in *Biological Research for Nursing*. Along with co-authors, Dr. Krueger also presented posters titled "Variation in Care Practice and Discharge Timing in Preterm Infants" and "Response to Recurrent Maternal Speech: A Longitudinal View" at the Southern Nursing Research Society in February 2009.

Clinical Associate Professor Pam Pieper presented her poster, "Early Health-Related Quality of Life Outcomes After a Mild Traumatic Brain Injury from Child and Proxy Perspectives," at the Southern Nursing Research Society in February 2009. She has also success-

fully defended her dissertation titled "Early Outcomes from Mild Traumatic Brain Injury from Child and Proxy Perspectives" at Barry University.

Clinical Assistant Professor Leslie Parker recently presented her poster, "The 6 C's of Online Learning: Perspectives of a Doctoral Cohort," at the Southern Nursing Research Society in February 2009. Dr. Parker also passed her written and oral PhD qualifying examinations.

Charlene Krueger, Sheau-Huey Chiu and Leslie Parker presented their poster titled "Variations in Care Practice and Discharge Timing in Preterm Infants," at the Southern Nursing Research Society in February 2009.

Associate Professor and Department Chair Susan Schaffer had her poster, "Clinical Trial of Topical Vicks Vaporub for Toenail Onychomycosis," accepted for the 35th Annual Meeting of the National Organization for Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

DNP student Megan Weigel Barrett recently had his article, "Prescribing Generic Antiepileptic Drugs: Issues and Concerns for the Nurse Practitioner," accepted for publication in the *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*.

PhD student Kim Cox's article, "Healthcare Providers Decision-Making about Mode of Delivery after Previous Cesarean," accepted for presentation at the Normal Labor and Birth Research Conference. The conference will take place on June 10-12, 2009 in Lancashire, England.

A Gator Nurse Journey: Megan Weigel Barrett



As we get ready to celebrate another commencement in the College of Nursing, a very special milestone marks the Class of 2009. This spring, we will graduate our inaugural class of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students. To commemorate this historic event, we want to illustrate some of our remarkable DNP graduates. In our next issue, we will prominently feature some examples of this class.

In this issue, we will allow the words of one of its graduates, Megan Weigel Barrett, to tell the story. She will soon receive her 3rd degree from the College of Nursing as a member of the first DNP class. Here, in her own words, she discusses her journey at the College of Nursing...

My name is Megan Weigel Barrett—I am a nurse practitioner and a Gator Nurse who bleeds orange and blue.

In 1993, my parents drove me to the University of Florida from Maryland to begin my career as a Gator. You may say, “1993...that was quite a long time ago...have you graduated?” Indeed, I have. In fact, I am scheduled to graduate this spring, as a part of the inaugural class of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. It will be my third degree earned through the College of Nursing.

When I graduated from the BSN program in 1998 and headed to California for my first nursing job, one of my professors Dr. Jennifer Elder said to me, “You’ll be back!” Sure enough, a year and a month later, I was back to start the Master of Science in Nursing program to become a family nurse practitioner. I graduated in 2000 knowing that I would eventually obtain a terminal degree of some sort.

Four years ago, while considering DNP programs, I decided to trust my roots and return again to UF. Here’s the thing about the College of Nursing at UF that goes above and beyond its reputation as a top-ranked nursing program: it tends to start to feel like home. Even though the building may be new, the faces are warm and familiar and enthusiasm for our profession is in the air.

Each time I travel to Gainesville, my heartbeat quickens when I enter the College of Nursing. I become excited to walk the halls, look at old composite pictures, and find out which faculty members are available to chat. Many of them have known me since I was 19. I like walking up to Dr. Jo Snider’s door, seeing a young nursing student leave her office after a pep talk or an idea-generating meeting, and being ushered in as if the ten years had not passed.

I owe my continued interest in the profession of nursing to my faculty’s dedication to nursing education. In this complex health care environment, we nurses know how important it is to continue to instill excitement for excellent patient care, leadership, and research in each new generation of nurses. It is my sincere hope that I can emulate all Gator Nurses in what they do best: Care, Lead, and Inspire!

(Megan’s inspiring story also appears in a letter that was sent to all College of Nursing alumni as part of the Florida Fund Campaign.)



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Skin-to-Skin Contact is Beneficial for Women with Breastfeeding Difficulties

Although previous research has shown race and ethnicity may play a vital role in early breastfeeding cessation, a recent study by a College of Nursing researcher shows that regardless of racial or ethnic background, most mothers who experience breastfeeding difficulties in the early post-partum period will continue to breastfeed when given effective skin-to-skin contact intervention shortly after their child's birth.

It is well documented that breastfeeding is beneficial to mothers and their infants. More and more government and advocacy groups assert that outcomes are even more beneficial when infants receive breast milk exclusively. In 2004, the breastfeeding rate was 72% for white and 50% for black infants upon hospital discharge; 54% of white and 43% of black infants were still being breastfed at six months. These figures fall far short of the 2010 national goal of 75% breastfeeding rate upon hospital discharge, 50% at six months, and 25% at one year.

“We found that skin-to-skin contact (SSC) is an important aspect of early postpartum care because it promotes breastfeeding for mothers and their babies.”

“Each hospital varies in how much emphasis is placed on breastfeeding, especially beginning early in the first hour postbirth and continuing for several hours thereafter. This is a critical time to promote breastfeeding,” said Sheau-Huey Chiu, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor. “We found that skin-to-skin contact (SSC) is an important aspect of early postpartum care because it promotes breastfeeding for mothers and their babies.”

The study, published in a recent issue of *Breastfeeding Medicine*, was a secondary analysis of a study conducted in 2002 by College of Nursing Emeritus Professor, Dr. Gene Anderson, at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Chiu was co-investigator of this study.

With a sample of 48 culturally diverse women who experienced difficulties breastfeeding their infants post-birth, Dr. Chiu sought to examine the relationship between race/ethnicity and breastfeeding difficulties. In the original study, an SSC intervention (or “Kangaroo Care,” as it is informally known) was implemented to assist each mother as soon as she was identified as having breastfeeding difficulties.

This intervention consisted of three consecutive skin-to-skin breastfeeding sessions on Day 1 post-birth and a fourth session, approximately 24 hours later, prior to hospital discharge. Two



follow-ups occurred at one week and one month post-discharge.

Breastfeeding results in this study compared favorably with those reported in the literature. This was remarkable, given that these 48 dyads were all having breastfeeding difficulties in early postpartum and were thus at high risk for cessation. Twenty-three of the mother-child pairs were at even greater risk because they represented racial/ethnic minorities. Even so, their outcomes exceeded those from national surveys which included all breastfeeding mothers, whether or not they were having difficulties.

“I strongly advise physicians and health care providers to encourage skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding opportunities beginning immediately after birth and continuing for several hours thereafter,” Dr. Chiu said. “If mothers hear it from their health care providers, they are more likely to initiate it and continue it. In addition, hospitals need to be particularly sensitive to this.”

the healing paw

Nursing Students Conduct Pet Therapy at Shands AGH
for Honors Project *By Jessica Metzger*

See Chelsea run.

See Chelsea play.

See Chelsea visit patients.

Chelsea, a 7-year-old corgi-sheltie mix, is a therapy dog used in a nursing honors project, Healing Paws, by seniors Jessica Reinhold, Charlotte Simmons and Ashley Hoover.



During the Fall 2008 semester, they brought Chelsea to Shands at AGH to visit patients and their families

on the oncology and cardiac floors, in the lobby, and in the family rooms.

The purpose of the project was to gather observational data of how patients reacted to the presence of a dog in the hospital and how the animal visibly affected their anxiety levels.

They spent two hours at the hospital each week, visiting between 20 and 30 patients, family members and hospital staff, Reinhold said. For some patients, Chelsea would perform tricks, like waving good-bye, sneezing on command or rolling over. With others, she would sit patiently and be petted, sometimes hop—upon invitation—into a patient's hospital bed.

"A dog is a good icebreaker," said Reinhold, Chelsea's owner. "It's something that really takes a patient's mind off illness and gives them something warm and comfortable."

Reinhold recalled one particular visit with an elderly gentleman on the oncology floor, who was missing a leg. He was alone in the hospital room and appeared withdrawn.

However, he lit up when Chelsea came into the room, immediately inviting her up into the bed so he could pet her.

"He told us his life story," Reinhold said. "And he looked less stressed."

Hoover, 22, said that for a lot of people, having an animal in the room is relaxing.

"It helps with homesickness and relieves anxiety in a hospital," Hoover said. "It took away the cold hospital setting."

Hoover said one of her best experiences came from visiting a young African-American family.

The father was ill, and he and his wife were visibly stressed. Once Chelsea was brought into the room, the children, ages 2 and 4, immediately began to play with the dog.

"The parents got a little time to themselves," Hoover said. "And the father was very thankful. He was stressed about keeping the kids occupied (while he was sick in the hospital)."

Simmons, 21, said an animal's presence also can help relieve the "white coat syndrome," in which many patients associate doctors in white coats with painful procedures or unpleasant treatments.

Hoover, Reinhold and Simmons designed Healing Paws because they wanted to be able to interact with patients as part of their honors' project. Because Reinhold had a trained dog, they decided to try dog therapy.

Chelsea was certified as a therapy dog by Therapy Dogs Inc., Reinhold said. Chelsea had to pass basic obedience tests and be observed four separate times interacting with people. She also had to be very calm and well-behaved at all times.

Simmons said they were not allowed to collect any numerical data for their project, such as reading blood pressure or monitoring heart rates. But, in the end, they felt the project was successful.

"It helped patients' anxiety and relief, things which can often be overlooked in a hospital," Simmons said. "Therapeutic tactics should be used more, especially by volunteers."



(L-R) Ashley Hoover, Jessica Reinhold and Charlotte Simmons with Chelsea, Reinhold's dog, who visited patients as a part of the students' honors project.

This Year's Honors Program Largest in its History

This was one of 21 honors projects conducted by 58 students enrolled in the undergraduate honors program, the largest group ever to participate in its 28 year history.

The honors program provides opportunities for students to participate in faculty research or develop and carry out service projects.

Students need to meet a GPA to qualify for the program and are expected to complete an honors thesis and public presentation. This year, three sets of students presented posters on their projects at national conventions, usually a rare feat for undergraduate students.

"We were one of the first colleges of nursing that had a structured honors program," said Dr. Jo Snider, associate professor and coordinator of the program.

"Our students are quite proud to have graduated from a program with such a rigorous curriculum."

Professor Emeritus Betty Hilliard's Memoirs Show Her

"Labor of Love"

In honor of Dr. Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Hilliard, CNM, PhD, founder of the College of Nursing's nurse midwifery program, the UF College of Nursing hosted a book signing event in January at the Oak Hammock retirement community.

The book depicts, through vivid recollections spanning her earliest days as a nursing student to retirement from the University of Florida, the struggles and accomplishments of one woman's colorful nursing career. Each chapter is a story told in a voice reminiscent of a female Mark Twain, replete with detailed descriptions of the events, discoveries, and evolution of the nursing profession through the eyes of an accomplished historian and nursing pioneer.

The book signing event honored Dr. Hilliard's hard work and dedication to her recently printed memoirs, *A "Labor" of Love*. Many nursing faculty members, current nursing students, colleagues and residents of Oak Hammock attended the event to honor Dr. Hilliard and to be the first to receive a signed copy of her book.

"*A Labor of Love*' is a compilation of memoirs from a truly accomplished and inspirational career and life. Dr. Hilliard was one of the earliest faculty members at our College of Nursing—a true leader and role model," said Dean Kathleen Ann Long at the book signing.

Dean Long and the entire College are proud of Dr. Hilliard's accomplishments and wanted to personally recognize her lifelong dedication to the field and to the College, by printing her manuscript.

Dean Long recognized many people who were in attendance, including Betty's sister



the Nurse-Midwifery program at the UF College of Nursing, and she served as coordinator until she retired in 1990. Today it is recognized as one of the best in the state and the nation.

Since its founding, the program has produced hundreds of new nurse-midwives who have had a lasting impact on health care for women in Florida and the nation.

After retirement, Dr. Hilliard chose to remain in Gainesville and she continues to be an important part of the College.

The memories that were shared in this novel are truly inspi-

"A Labor of Love' is a compilation of memoirs from a truly accomplished and inspirational career and life."

Barbara and her friend Jim, and current coordinator of the nurse midwifery program, Alice Poe. In addition, Mary Hughes, Oak Hammock resident and dear friend to Betty, made a few remarks.

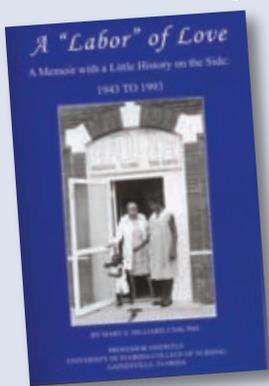
Once the book signing began, attendees lined up to receive a signed copy from the author. Dr. Hilliard enthusiastically signed more than fifty books, writing a personal message in each.

Dr. Hilliard, now Professor Emeritus of the College, was one of only three practicing nurse midwives in the state of Florida in 1960. Through her work at the Reddick Clinic, the Maternal-Infant Care project and various other ventures, she improved health care for a largely underserved population of women and infants and served as a role model for students. She doggedly pursued the establishment of

rational and this book is a remarkable story of one nurse's journey through the field of nursing.

As part of Dr. Hilliard's dedication to the College of Nursing and to nurse-midwifery, she has made a substantial bequest to the UF College of Nursing to support the continuation of the nurse-midwifery program. Her bequest establishes a professorship in nurse midwifery, the first in the nation. Donations from alumni and others will help fully endow the professorship. This professorship honors Dr. Hilliard and will help the College of Nursing attract a premier faculty member in the field of nurse-midwifery.

If you are interested in contributing to the professorship or obtaining a copy of Dr. Hilliard's memoirs, please contact Anna Harper at 352-273-6360.



Loyal Alumna Gives Back to the College of Nursing



“During these challenging times, it is critical for the College of Nursing to have the support it needs to maintain the high quality of their program.”

Alumna Karen Hanson MSN, RN (BSN 1966, MSN 1986) recently gave a \$30,000 gift to the

College which she wished to be unrestricted so funds could be used to benefit priority areas. The Karen Hanson Dean’s Discretionary Fund is an unrestricted fund whereby the Dean and the College can choose where funds may be most needed.

“Dean Long has shared with us that there is insufficient funding for certain areas of the College, such as cancer nursing,” Hanson said. “I decided to have my donation be applied to the Dean’s discretionary fund, so she can use it to support faculty or other needs as they arise.”

Hanson has remained very active in the College since graduating. She is currently President-Elect of the College of Nursing Alumni Council and serves on the Campaign Advisory Board.

After graduating with her bachelor’s degree, she continued her education earning her MSN degree from the College’s Orlando campus (now closed).

Hanson credits her excellent nursing education to her instructors; the vast impact the College has had on Hanson’s career inspired her to give back to the College.

“I hope in some small way, I can enable others to obtain an excellent nursing or graduate education to continue to positively impact quality patient care. In addition, I would really like to challenge all alumni to support the College,” stated Hanson.

Hanson recently retired from Florida Hospital but remains active in the Florida Association for Healthcare Quality, serving as their Treasurer and Continuing Education Coordinator for the state. Retirement has given her the opportunity to spend more time with her family, which includes her three children and five grandchildren. Hanson has held UF season football tickets for over 30 years and continues to remain a devoted fan!

Tough Economic Times Inspire Other Ways to Give Back

In this current economic downturn, many of our alumni and friends would still like to support the College the best they can. Some ways that you can help without cash out of pocket now are through bequests and real estate gifts.

Bequests

A bequest can be made to the UF College of Nursing through legal documents, a will or a revocable living trust. Bequests may be designated for the unrestricted use of the College or restricted to a specific purpose of your choice. To be recognized as part of the University of Florida Bequest society, please contact Anna Harper at aemiller@ufl.edu or 352-273-6360.

Did you know that many alumni and friends leave gifts to the College of Nursing in their wills, but do not document it with us? If you have not done so, please contact Anna and she will make sure the proper paperwork is completed so that you are recognized appropriately.

Real Estate

Gifts of real estate — including personal residences, vacation homes, commercial buildings, farms, and parcels of land — are a generous and valued way to show your appreciation for the UF College of Nursing. The following are ways you can give real estate as a gift to the College:

Outright – You deed the property directly to the UF Foundation, Inc./College of Nursing. You qualify for a charitable income tax deduction (based on a qualified appraisal) and avoid all capital gains tax that would have been due if you sold the property.

Retained Life Estate – You deed your home, vacation home or farm to the UF Foundation, Inc./College of Nursing but retain the right to live in it for the rest of your life. You will be eligible



to receive a charitable income tax deduction based on your age and the value of the property interest of UF Foundation, Inc.

Life Income Arrangement – You deed the property to your trustee through a charitable remainder trust. The trust will allow your named beneficiary(ies) to receive income for life or for a certain number of years. At the end of the trust, the trust principal is distributed to the UF Foundation, Inc./College of Nursing.

Bequest – You complete a will directing your gift of real estate. Your gift of real estate can be made as a specific gift, a percentage of your estate, or as part of the residual of your estate being given to the UF Foundation, Inc./College of Nursing.

Any and all ways our alumni and friends give back to the College of Nursing benefits the future of our profession and upholds the excellence of Gator Nursing. For more information about any of the above ways to give, contact Anna Harper, Associate Director of Development at aemiller@ufl.edu or 352-273-6360.

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The UF College of Nursing is grateful for recent gifts of generous individuals and organizations from July 2007 to December 2008 to benefit our Florida Tomorrow Campaign. These contributions are helping to change the lives of students, faculty members and the patients for whom we care and are indicative of the continuing enthusiasm for our college. A tradition of excellence in education, research and practice continues to thrive, due in large part to the generosity of these philanthropic individuals and organizations.

alumni news

1970s

Kathleen Freudenberger Jett (Scott), BSN 1976, MSN 1984 and PhD 1994. Kathleen is an Associate Professor at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida. She has co-authored two books, revisions to *Toward Healthy Aging* (2008) and *Gerontological Nursing and Healthy Aging* (2005). She was also inducted into the Distinguished Academies of Practice in 2006. The 3rd edition of the latter is due out in spring 2009. She has also recently joined the staff at NIH/NINR as a Program Director in Bethesda Maryland.

1980s

Rita Kobb, BSN 1981, MSN 1996, was invited to present at the American Telemedicine Association's Annual Meeting and Exhibition. The presentation will be a one hour panel discussion on the topic of "Developing Evidence-based Disease Management Protocols for Home Telehealth."

1990s

Jennifer Rowland, BSN 1993. Jennifer and her husband, Brett, recently welcomed a new addition to their family, Jake. Jake is also an avid Gator fan!

Deonys de Cardenas, BSN 1999. After nursing school, Deonys went to work at Shands in the SICU for a year. She was then a traveling nurse in Atlanta at Emory and then St. Vincent's and Cornell in New York. She worked in CICU, MICU, Neuro ICU and SICU. She ended up at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta in the Neuro ICU and was the charge nurse there for three years. Next she worked in Interventional Radiology at Piedmont and became their educator and resource nurse. After nine years of nursing, Deonys decided to go to law school at UF. She is currently in her second year. She also founded an organization called the Health Care Law Society

and hopes to foster a relationship between the medical and nursing colleges and the College of Law at UF. Her career goal is to become a health care law attorney.

2000s

Sean G. Smith, BSN 2006. Sean is an Intensive Care Nurse / Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) Specialist at Shands at the University of Florida. In addition to recent MENSA membership, Sean has earned industry standard certifications in Critical Care (CCRN) Emergency Nursing (CEN) and Flight Nursing (CFRN). Besides regularly volunteering as a paramedic, Sean is very active in the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) and frequently lectures through out North Central Florida on topics in critical care nursing and emergency medicine.

Amanda Pavlock, BSN 2006. Amanda graduated with her master's degree in 2007 from the University of Pennsylvania Pediatric Program. She also passed the Pediatric Nursing Certification board in 2007. She has since moved back to Tampa and is now working for pediatric cardiology associates as a pediatric cardiology nurse practitioner. The practice provides Cardiology care for children with congenital heart disease.

Brittany Dion, BSN 2008. Brittany is currently working at Citrus Memorial Hospital with quite a few other Gator nurses. She enjoys working night shifts in the Women's and Children's unit and the Labor and Delivery Unit.

Do you have an update to share?
Please contact Tracy Wright
at tracyb@ufl.edu or
call (352) 273-6421.



Without the
opportunities

that were given to me
through the university,
I would be a completely
different person and have
a completely different
future ... I have a future
available that's going
to let me be successful
and let me be who I
want to be — it makes a
world of difference.

— JOSHUA FAIR, UF STUDENT

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IN MEMORIAM



Claudia Crena
1954 – 2009

Crena (BSN 2005, MSN 2006) passed away on March 8, 2009 after a long battle with ovarian cancer. Claudia was both a College of Nursing graduate and faculty member.

Claudia's love for helping people was evident throughout her life and first inspired her to become a physician in her native country Argentina. There, she was able to interact closely with her patients. After moving to the United States, however, she discovered it was primarily nurses who were making these connections, and this motivated her to apply for the Accelerated BSN program at the UF College of Nursing. While in the program, her efforts earned her the award for Academic Excellence.

After graduating in 2005, she decided to continue her education by pursuing a master's degree in Psychiatric/Mental Health nursing. Despite undergoing chemotherapy during the bulk of her graduate studies, Claudia maintained her superior academic standards, again earning an award for Academic Excellence.

Claudia began working part-time as a clinical assistant professor at the UF College of Nursing in 2006, after earning her MSN. She also provided mental health services to underserved clients in rural North Central Florida through the College's association with AHEC.

Outside of her life as a nurse, she served as a high school teacher, an insurance agent, a choir director, a youth group leader, a friend, a sister, a mother, and in many other capacities. Claudia is survived by her husband, Hector, and her children, Juan and Lucila.

Susan Thompson
1945 – 2009

Thompson (BSN 1966) passed away in March after a long and courageous battle with Multiple Sclerosis. Most recently a resident of Maitland, Fla, Thompson began her career in nursing at the pediatric burn unit nurse at Shands at UF. She also served as a school nurse and devoted stay-at-home mom. She met her husband Tommy at UF and they have two children, a daughter, Buffy, and son, Steven.

president's message

Dear Gator Nurses,

2009 started out with a bang for the Gator Nation as the UF Football team captured its second national title in two years! I know that this achievement brought pride and happiness to many in the Gator Nation, including Gator Nurses.



BONNIE PEPPER

But it's not just on the field where we can take pride. Even in these tough financial times, it is wonderful to see the passion and dedication of our students, faculty and alumni for Gator Nursing and for our profession. These are challenging times for all of us, and this includes the University of Florida and our College of Nursing. I can assure you that I have the utmost confidence in our Dean and faculty. They will steer our College in the right direction to weather this storm and come out stronger than ever!

In addition, you—our alumni and friends—play an important role in ensuring our College's success. In this issue, we read about the many alumni who serve as preceptors for our undergraduate and graduate students.

Thank you to all of you who donate your time, financial resources, and advice to the College of Nursing. We simply could not do it without you.

I am very excited that our College of Nursing Reunion is approaching. I encourage you to "save the date" for this fun and worthwhile event, taking place November 6 and 7 when the Gators will take on Vandy. This year's theme, "Learn, Play, Connect," emphasizes the wonderful opportunities for gaining knowledge, having fun, and making lifelong connections the Reunion Weekend offers to those who attend. Not only is it an occasion to return to campus, watch Gator football and reconnect with former classmates and faculty members, but the educational offerings provided are stimulating and prove why the best in nursing excellence is right here at UF. I hope to see you there!

Go Gator Nurses!
Bonnie Pepper

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The Gator Nurse is produced three times a year for the alumni, friends, faculty and staff of the University of Florida College of Nursing.

Dean

Kathleen Ann Long,
PhD, RN, FAAN

**Director, Alumni Affairs and
Public Relations**

Tracy Brown Wright, MAMC
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Gator Nursing Reunion 2009



learn → play



connect

Nov. 6 –7 2009

watch for materials coming your way soon

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