When it comes to UF College of Nursing’s first class of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) graduates, their backgrounds and expertise are as varied as they come. Among them are a nurse midwife interested in the use of water in birth and labor; an acute care nurse practitioner studying outcomes of an outpatient atrial fibrillation clinic; and a pediatric nurse practitioner focusing on support groups for obese children. But all 14 graduates shared a common purpose: contributing to knowledge in their profession and advancing standards of care for patients.
Fourteen DNP students established themselves as “pioneers” this spring as they became the first UF graduating class of DNP students.

“The DNP degree is essentially doctoral education for advanced nursing practice,” said Karen Miles, EdD, RN, Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs at the UF College of Nursing. “The focus of the program, which began in 2006 and was one of Florida’s first, is on innovative and evidence-based practice,” Miles said.

The DNP’s focus on evidence-based practice involves making treatment decisions based on the latest clinical research, said Stefanie Coffey, a nurse practitioner and one of the new graduates of the program.

“Most of us didn’t have sufficient evidence-based background to be an expert in our field,” Coffey said. “This program helped us broaden our area. We can contribute more to our patients.”

The degree was a national initiative led by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing that called for a transformational change in the education of professional nurses who practice at the most advanced level of nursing. Universities have traditionally offered master’s degrees in nursing to prepare nurses for advanced practice.

Megan Weigel Barrett, a nurse practitioner and another new graduate, said the demand for the degree came from nurse practitioners who wanted more clinical knowledge.

“We wanted to be much better prepared for the complexity of the health-care system, informatics and patients, nursing research and political advocacy, such as advocating for patients’ needs and health-care system changes,” Weigel Barrett said.

A Level Playing Field...

Karen Theoktisto, a pediatric nurse practitioner and graduate, also recognized that the DNP degree would facilitate a level playing field with other health care professionals.

“We work more and more in interdisciplinary teams where all of my counterparts—physicians, audiologists, physical therapists, pharmacists, to name a few—have doctorates,” Theoktisto said.
“I absolutely believe this degree will make a difference for patient care and for the nursing profession. If nursing wants to be a full partner on the health care team with other professions, then those of us at the highest level of practice should hold a doctorate.”

— Karen Theoktisto, DNP, ARNP
A member of the first class of DNP graduates

“It only makes sense for advanced practice nurses to have doctoral level education as well.”

As a practice doctorate, the DNP has a clear distinction from traditional research based doctorates, or PhDs. In fact, Melanie Barriger Wilson, an adult nurse practitioner working in cosmetic and laser surgery, had always sought more education but didn’t want to focus primarily on research, as the PhD does. The DNP was a natural fit.

“The DNP program focused on providing us with more critical leadership skills to advance our practice, as well as ways to use research in the clinical setting to improve quality outcomes,” Wilson said.

In addition, a strong focus on health care policy, a closer scrutiny of professional ethics and an increased emphasis on nursing informatics enriched the students’ experiences, Theoktisto said.

“One area I learned a lot more about was informatics, which I think will be extremely valuable and relevant in our practices,” Theoktisto said. “This absolutely will impact health care in the future and already has—x-rays, patients’ records, even lab results are all going digital. Nurses have to be at the forefront of this technology and new knowledge.”

Another valuable asset was interacting with her fellow students who came from such diverse backgrounds, said Jane Houston, a nurse midwife working at a group practice in Gainesville.

“They were extremely remarkable people with such different backgrounds and perspectives. I think that was one of my favorite parts of the program. I enjoyed discussing issues with those practicing in different areas of health care.”

Applying their Knowledge

As part of the program, students completed a final applied clinical practice project. Barriger Wilson assessed whether there was patient demand for a new skin treatment. Coffey replicated in Florida a Kentucky study investigating how much time it took nurse practitioners to get physicians to sign off on controlled substances. Houston investigated the use of water in labors and births. Weigel Barrett conducted a descriptive study on multiple sclerosis, doing her own original research. Theoktisto investigated whether peer-support groups for obese children would impact weight and self-esteem.

Theoktisto can attest to the benefits of a DNP degree. She believes it helped her obtain her new position as Pediatric Nurse Practitioner at Shands Eastside Community Practice in Gainesville. Theoktisto is the first full-time pediatric specialist at the clinic.

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DNP by the NUMBERS

2015 – the year that the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) will be recommended for all new advanced practice nurses as entry level to practice.

92 DNP programs are currently enrolling students at schools of nursing nationwide, and an additional 102 DNP programs are in the planning stages.

6 – number of DNP programs in Florida; 2 – number of those programs offering direct entry BSN to DNP (Including UF)

18 – the number of students who were enrolled in the UF DNP program in Fall 2006

124 – the number who will be enrolled in the DNP program in Fall 2009. Of that number, 44 will comprise the first class of BSN to DNP students.
“I don’t think I would have gotten the position without my degree,” Theoktisto said. “So I absolutely believe this degree will make a difference for patient care and for the nursing profession. If nursing wants to be a full partner on the health care team with other professions, then those of us at the highest level of practice should hold a doctorate. It makes a big difference.”

Beyond the tangible benefits, Houston said the program really brought all the students together.

“The students in the program will be friends for life,” Houston said. “It’s a lot of hard work, but it’s really well worth it in the end.”

Weigel Barrett said she got more out of the program than she expected.

“I feel like I am prepared to accept a large number of challenges like financial problems, quality management, and electronic management. I feel much more capable and prepared for all levels of problems rather than just basic, direct patient care,” Weigel Barrett said.

The Adventure is Only Beginning…

Beginning in Fall 2009, the BSN to DNP program will begin, which will allow those with a bachelor’s degree in nursing to enter directly into the DNP program. The Postmaster’s DNP option will continue to be offered.

For the fall semester, 59 students will enter the DNP program. These include 44 students in the BSN to DNP program.

Miles said the new education programs, like the DNP program, are not deterring people from pursuing careers in nursing, but rather increasing interest.

“There are so many ways that the DNP can impact education and practice. The DNP can help to prepare future faculty members, who are needed desperately in light of our growing faculty shortage. Nursing is a vital part of our growing and changing health care system, and highly educated advanced practice nurses, at the doctoral level, will be prepared to improve practice, educate new clinicians, and elevate our profession,” Dr. Miles said.

For more information on the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree at UF, visit our Web site at http://www.nursing.ufl.edu/prospective/prospective_dnp.shtml

“These highly educated advanced practice nurses, at the doctoral level, will be prepared to improve practice, educate new clinicians, and elevate our profession.”

— Karen Miles, EdD, RN, Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, UF College of Nursing.
Commencement Ceremony affirms “why we do what we do”

Even after almost 14 years as Dean of the College of Nursing, I never cease to be amazed at the incredible accomplishments and passion of our students, alumni and faculty members. Commencement at the College of Nursing is such a special time of year for all of us in the College. It simply affirms “why we do what we do.” We celebrate the passage of our baccalaureate and graduate students through their programs and the achievement of earning their first (or second, third or even fourth) degree from our College. But beyond commencement, we celebrate their futures and the impact they will have on nursing and health care.

This year’s commencement ceremony was particularly significant because we recognized some important milestones and had the pleasure of welcoming distinguished special guests. We conferred degrees on our very first graduating class of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students. These 14 new graduates are now prepared to practice at the highest level in their specialized areas. It was truly inspiring for us to learn about their DNP projects that spanned a broad array of interventions to improve patient care.

UF’s president, Dr. Bernie Machen, was able to attend our commencement ceremony this year, and it was very meaningful for our graduates and their families to have him welcome and congratulate those receiving nursing degrees. One of the most remarkable parts of our commencement ceremony was recognizing our Alumna of the Year, Ms. Ann Lurie, who received her BSN in 1966 from our College. Ms. Lurie, who currently resides in Chicago, has since gone on to make an indelible mark on global health care through her community-based philanthropic work. (You can read more about Ms. Lurie on page 8). Ms. Lurie’s biography and accomplishments are so extraordinary, she was given a standing ovation when accepting her award at the College ceremony. I was also very honored to accompany her when she received her honorary doctorate in public service from UF at the University’s Advanced Degree Ceremony.

It is quite clear that Ms. Lurie’s background in nursing and health care has guided her philanthropy, which focuses on empowering communities and insuring real world results. One of her most important projects has been the establishment of an HIV-AIDS clinic in Kenya that provides health care and education to 100,000 Maasai living in a very rural area. In 2002 the clinic began as one Airstream trailer towed by a used Land Cruiser. In the past six years, African Infectious Diseases (AID) Village Clinics has continued its mobile outreach and now includes a fixed-base compound with a number of varied services for patients.

In a period of budget cuts and program reductions, some may think that the job of dean is very difficult. However, at the UF College of Nursing it continues to also be very rewarding. I know that each new baccalaureate graduate, whose hand I shake at commencement, is well prepared to improve nursing care and enhance our profession. Our master’s and doctoral degree graduates will lead in changing the practice of nursing for the better. Every day, my experiences with our alumni and faculty remind me that the UF College of Nursing has been and continues to be a remarkable institution precisely because of our continuing tradition of preparing professional nurses who truly Care, Lead and Inspire.
The 2009 College of Nursing Commencement Ceremony graduated one of its largest groups of students this spring, including a milestone for the College: the first class of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students.

Fourteen DNP graduates were hooded and walked across the stage with their faculty mentor. President Bernie Machen was in attendance and able to shake all the graduates’ hands as their degrees were announced. The ceremony took place May 1, 2009 at the Curtis M. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.

An especially inspiring moment came when the College awarded its 2009 Alumna of the Year award to Ms. Ann Lurie (BSN 1966). Ms. Lurie has committed herself personally to philanthropy focused on improving the health, education and welfare of individuals and communities across the nation and the world. In addition, Ms. Lurie received an honorary doctorate of public service from the University of Florida at the Advanced Degree Ceremony. (For more on Ms. Lurie, see page 8).

At the Curtis M. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree graduates walked across the stage to enter the next stage of their nursing careers.

A number of other retired and emeritus faculty members, as well as friends of the College were also in the audience.

The College honored outstanding students with College of Nursing Excellence Awards, chosen by faculty members and based on students’ performance in the care of particular patient populations as well as research. In addition, awards were given by Sigma Theta Tau, Alpha Theta Chapter, and the class of 2009. The Academic Excellence awards were given to the top scholars from the Generic, Accelerated and RN to BSN tracks, as well as the MSN, DNP and PhD programs.

Students from the graduating class gave out the Outstanding Faculty Award to Associate Professor Jo Snider.

In addition, special recognition at the ceremony was given to the VA-UF Nursing Academy partnership, a national VA initiative addressing the nursing shortage. Graduating students who had completed the VALOR (VA Learning Opportunities Residency) program were given special red, white and blue cords to wear with their caps and gowns.
College of Nursing Excellence Awards

- Audrey Clark Quarles Award for Clinical Excellence in Maternal-Newborn Nursing:
  Heather Varnum
- Jennet M. Wilson Award for Academic Excellence in Maternal-Newborn Nursing:
  Lisa Frier
- Excellence in Pediatric Nursing:
  Kimberly Moreno
- Virgie Pafford Award for Excellence in Community Health Nursing:
  Suzanne Aparicio
- Catherine Bell Award for Excellence in Psychiatric Nursing:
  Theresa Lesniak and Nicole Ritsi
- Excellence in Community Service Award:
  Alisa Fallow
- Excellence in Research Award:
  Sydney Vandevier
- Dr. Mary Elizabeth Hilliard Midwifery Award for Leadership and Scholarship in Nurse Midwifery:
  Paige Oxley
- Excellence in Medical-Surgical Nursing Award:
  Ashley Powell
- The Lois Knowles Award for Excellence in Gerontological Nursing Award:
  Uloma Onubogu and Judy Campbell

Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society Excellence in Clinical Practice Awards

- BSN Generic: Rebecca Schwarz
- BSN-Accelerated: Lindsey Boegehold
- MSN: Andrea Wrassmann

Student Awards

- Excellence in Doctoral Studies Awards:
  Kimberly Cox (PhD) and Megan Weigel Barrett (DNP)
- Outstanding Faculty Award recipient (voted by Class of 2009):
  Dr. Jo Snider
- Nursing College Council Recognition Award:
  Bernadette Antle
- UFNSA Recognition Award:
  Jillian Krickovich
- Outstanding Senior Student:
  Kelly Lyons
- Outstanding Senior Mentors:
  Courtney Paskiett and Brittany Hamachek

Academic Excellence Awards

- BSN Generic Track: Lisa Frier
- BSN Accelerated Track: Katherine Baley
- RN to BSN: Erin Boyd
- MSN: Callie Lenfest
- DNP: Megan Weigel Barrett
- PhD: Kimberly Cox
With these simple words, Ms. Ann Lurie accepted the award as the 2009 UF College of Nursing Alumna of the Year, and what followed was one of the greatest receptions for any alumna given this honor: a standing ovation from those in attendance at the College of Nursing Commencement Ceremony.

Ms. Lurie, a 1966 BSN graduate, has not only achieved an exemplary career in which public service has been emphasized, she has continued to commit herself personally as a philanthropist whose focus on improving the health, education and welfare of people has stretched from communities across the nation to those across the globe. In addition, the University of Florida lauded her work with an honorary doctorate of public service at the Advanced Degree Ceremony.

Ms. Lurie is originally from Florida and currently resides in Chicago where she is president of Lurie Investments; president and treasurer of the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Foundation; and president of Africa Infectious Disease (AID) Village Clinics, Inc., a US-based charity. Following the death of her husband, Robert H. Lurie in 1990, she devoted herself to raising their six children while distinguishing herself as a committed and knowledgeable benefactor to a number of important causes.

Before starting a family, Ms. Lurie worked in public health and pediatric intensive care nursing in Florida and at Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

“Ms. Lurie’s approach to meaningful and results-oriented philanthropy mirrors many of the values we hope to instill in our nursing graduates,” said Dean Kathleen Ann Long. “She was a great inspiration to all those attending our commencement ceremony.”

Ms. Lurie has a deep commitment to global philanthropy including support of the UK charity, Riders for Health, which creates and sustains health care delivery systems in Africa. She founded and personally oversees the operation of AID Village Clinics, a communicable disease initiative offering comprehensive medical clinics for a population of 100,000 Maasai in rural southeastern Kenya.

In cooperation with Save the Children and ONE Love Africa, she funded construction of 30 rural schools in Ethiopia. She supports HIV/AIDS initiatives on the Burma/Chinese border and Rwanda.

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A record number of graduating baccalaureate students took part in a newly honored tradition at the UF College of Nursing. Hosted by the Nursing Alumni Council, the pinning ceremony was held on campus at the historic University Auditorium. One hundred and forty-five graduating students from the BSN, RN to BSN and accelerated BSN nursing programs were presented with their College of Nursing pins to signify their passage from student to alumnus and professional nurse.

The nursing pin is a tradition that dates back to 1880 when Florence Nightingale chose the Maltese cross as the badge to be worn by the first graduating students at her school of nursing. As the nursing profession developed, each school of nursing developed a pin unique to their school for presentation to the graduating students.

The UF College of Nursing pinning ceremony signifies the ending of the graduate’s time as a student embarking on a career as a professional nurse and alumnus of the University of Florida.

Bonnie Pepper, UF College of Nursing Alumni Council President and Dean Kathleen Ann Long welcomed the students and spoke of the importance and significance of the event. The ceremony continued with the recognition of the students and later the pin presentations, introduced by Dr. Karen E. Miles, Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs. The students, pinned by members of the alumni council, donned their pins attached to orange and blue ribbons.

Florida Hospital, a sponsor of the College of Nursing, gave an outstanding student award to BSN graduate Nicole Ritsi. In addition, District 10 of the Florida Nurses Association, which represents the Gainesville and surrounding areas, donated beautiful white roses to be given to each student.

Jillian Krickovich, graduating senior and President of the UF nursing student Association, spoke on behalf of the student body about the significance of the pinning and Casey Vera, graduating senior and President of the Nursing College Council, led the students in the Pledge for Professional Nursing, a revised form of the original Florence Nightingale Pledge.

In concert with her commitment to medical research and child related health issues, Ms. Lurie endowed the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University and committed the lead funding for the Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center of Northwestern University. At Children’s Memorial Hospital, she endowed a chair in Cancer Cell Biology; donated $1.3 million to fund the Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS research; and in 2007, pledged $100 million to construct the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago at Northwestern University.

In tribute to her mother, also a nurse, Ms. Lurie endowed the Marion Elizabeth Blue Professorship in Children and Families in the School of Social Work at Northwestern.

“Ms. Lurie’s gifts have clearly had a major impact on improving health professions education and research, as well as directly improving health care at the grassroots level for some of the neediest and most vulnerable populations. The UF College of Nursing is extremely proud to count her as a Gator Nurse alumna whose compassion and leadership inspires others around the world,” Dean Long said.
College News

College Bids Farewell to Longtime Staff Members

The College of Nursing bid a sad farewell to two longtime staff members who have been dedicated and beloved members of the College. Jean Anderson and Sammie Brooks retired from the University of Florida with more than 50 years of service between them.

Jean Anderson served as Senior Clerk and has been with the College of Nursing for 25 years and with UF for more than 30 years. Sammie Brooks was a Program Assistant who had been with the College for 10 years. Both were indispensable parts of the College and will be greatly missed.

accomplishments in brief

Associate Professor Bryan Weber, Associate Professor Saun-Joo “Sunny” Yoon, and Clinical Assistant Professor David Derrico collaborated on a manuscript about Web-based health information featured in the Journal of Clinical Nursing.

Assistant Professor Donna Neff was recently appointed as the Co-Chair of the VANA Advisory Board. The June 2009 Health Affairs publication featured an article by Dr. Donna Neff in conjunction with others titled “Nursing: Key to Patient Satisfaction.” Dr. Neff also presented her work regarding “Internationally Educated Nurses in Florida: Practice and Patient Outcomes” at the February 2009 SNRS conference.

Dr. Sunny Yoon was selected to receive a University of Florida Research Foundation (UFRF) Professorship award. The term of her award is 2009-2011. Dr. Yoon was honored by the McNair Scholars Program with a plaque recognizing her commitment to the McNair Program and for serving as a Council member.

Assistant Professor and Department Chair Susan Schaffer and Dr. Yoon, along with colleague Immo Zadezensky, collaboratively published “A Review of Smoking Cessation: Potentially Risky Effects on Prescribed Medications” in the Journal of Clinical Nursing.

Assistant Professor Lori Thomas had an article published in the May 2009 issue of Applied Nursing Research on “Effective Dyspnea Management Strategies Identified by Elders with End-stage Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.”

Assistant Professor Carmen Rodriguez and the University of Florida College of Nursing were selected as the recipient of the 2008 NIOSH National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Partnering Award for participation in the safe patient handling and movement curriculum in schools.

Endowed Professor Beverly Roberts has been selected as an International Career Advisor by Sigma Theta Tau International. Also under Dr. Roberts’ supervision, Ms. Crystal Bennett, a PhD student, was awarded a UWF SCAC Faculty grant.

Clinical Assistant Professor Cindi Figueroa-Hass’s work on “Psychological Issues Associated with Breast Augmentation” was published in the June 2009 edition of Mental Health Nursing.

Clinical Assistant Professor Thomas Bedard, VANA faculty member, is an invited member of the VA Central Office Interdisciplinary Workgroup for the development of simulation learning labs in the VA.

Clinical Assistant Professor Barbara Little, recently appointed as co-chair of American Community Health Nurse Educator’s (ACHNE) Innovative Teaching Task Force and Education Committee, presented the plenary session at ACHNE’s national meeting. Dr. Little also presented four regional workshops on Articulating Public Health Nursing Practice: The Intervention Wheel around the state in partnership with the Florida Public Health Nurses Association.

Department Chair and Professor Jennifer Elder recently had an article published in the Journal of Pediatric Nursing. The article was titled “Introduction to the Special Series on Child and Adolescent Mental Health.” Dr. Elder also collaborated with a former PhD student, Melissa Dodd Inglese, to produce another article, “Caring for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Part I,” for the February 2009 issue of Journal of Pediatric Nursing. In addition, Dr. Elder’s article, “The Gluten-Free, Casein-Free Diet In Autism: An Overview with Clinical Implications,” was published in the December 2008 issue of Nutrition in Clinical Practice.

Clinical Assistant Professor Susan Donaldson and Dr. Elder had their article “The Development of a Web-Based Platform for Fathers of Children with Autism” published online by Learning Technology. Donaldson and Dr. Elder also presented two posters at the International Meeting for Autism Research in Chicago, along with three undergraduate students, Michele Seranno, Christina Palau, and Jeffrey Walker. Dr. Elder and Dr. Donaldson are investigators on a newly funded intramural grant ($78,000) from UF’s Center for Translational Science Institute (CTSI).


Assistant Professor Sandra City, VANA faculty member, presented at the Florida Magnet Nursing Research Conference held in Orlando Florida. The title of the presentation was “Embedded Clinical Nursing Faculty: Process and Outcomes from an Innovative Academic Clinical Practice Partnership.”
For many college students, spring break may be spent lying on the beach, shopping, spending time with friends or getting away to a tropical destination. Although seven students in the College of Nursing did travel to a tropical destination, lying on the beach was not on the itinerary.

These students spent their break at the Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan (UADY) in Merida. Associate Professor Sharleen Simpson, PhD, ARNP accompanied students on the trip to the Yucatan as part of an exchange partnership with the UADY. This is the third year that UF nursing students have traveled to the Mexican state of Yucatan.

Although the students may expect a different way of life than their own, Dr. Simpson noted that students are always startled when they observe first-hand how people of the Yucatan culture live and how resourceful they are.

“I think it’s really important for them to see how people elsewhere are coping,” she said. “One of the things we emphasized is how much they’re able to do with so little.”

So what was a typical day like for these students?

“Our day was always jam-packed,” said Bryce Crouch, now a senior BSN student. “We woke up at 6:30 a.m. and were not in bed until midnight. But it was worth it. We were exhausted, but it didn’t make a difference. We’d start our day off working with the community, doing health assessments. We traveled to Succopco (a neighboring town) with the other students from the area to measure height and weight and to really work with students in the classroom. Then we were able to work hands-on with the families.”

Dr. Simpson was glad the students were able to experience more aspects of the nursing role as Crouch described.

The students recalled a few moments that would leave an everlasting impression.

“The most eye-opening moment for me was when we went to the ER of the local hospital,” said now senior BSN student Courtney Youngs. “We’re so used to the ER in the United States, where there are individual rooms, it’s quiet and air-conditioned, and all of the patients’ charts are confidential. In contrast, their ER was overflowing. People were lined up on stretchers in the hallways. Some of them didn’t even have blankets, and if they did, they were dirty or torn. The patient charts were literally taped to the wall above them. There were no individual rooms or air conditioning. There were needles and syringes on the counter tops, and only the most critical patients had IV’s.”

Crouch couldn’t believe the number of patients the nurses were seeing.

“I thought it was interesting that the nurses there would see literally hundreds of patients a day,” she said. “Patients come in the morning and pick a number, and if you got there at 5:30 a.m. before they opened, and you didn’t get a number, it didn’t matter how sick your child was, you would not see a doctor that day.”

Although the trip is in their past, the knowledge gained will help them as future nurses.

“I think there is a drastically different culture in Mexico, and it was really great to see those differences,” Crouch said. “You gain experience you’re not going to get in the classroom or from a textbook.”
The University of Florida College of Nursing’s Seventh Annual Research Day, held recently in conjunction with its Distinguished Malasanos Lectureship, featured more than 50 faculty, student and clinical practitioner poster presentations in areas such as adult, women’s and children’s health, evidence-based practice and nursing education.

The Malasanos Lectureship featured keynote speaker Dorothy Brooten, a professor of nursing at Florida International University, College of Nursing & Health Sciences. With funding from the NIH for more than 25 years, Dr. Brooten’s research over the past 23 years focuses on developing, testing, refining, and modifying the Quality Cost Model of Advanced Practice Nursing Transitional Care. This research includes examination of patient problems that require more advanced practice nurse time and contacts and documents the effects of advanced practice nursing care on patient outcomes.

Top honors for graduate research went to master’s degree student Toni Glover, MA, RN, for her poster “Gender Differences in Side Effects of Morphine and Butorphanol.”

Top honors for undergraduate research went to graduating senior Jillian Krickovich for her poster “Accounts of the “Disney Effect” in Autistic Children as Described on the Internet and in Other Public Media.” Her faculty mentors were Sharleen Simpson, PhD, ARNP and Jennifer Elder, PhD, RN, FAAN.

Top honors for community/clinical research went to Peggy Guin, PhD, ARNP, for her poster “Goodbye UTI: Nursing Innovations for Reducing Catheter Associated UTIs.” Guin, from Shands at UF, also collaborated on the poster with Kathleen Cocking, MSN, RN; Kathy Gamble, MN, ARNP; Kelly Jacobitz, BSN, RN, and Rose Rivers, PhD, RN.

The Malasanos Distinguished Lectureship brings distinguished speakers to the university every two years to discuss a wide variety of health topics of interest to clinicians, patients and the public. The Malasanos Distinguished Lectureship was endowed in 1992 in honor of John Malasanos, husband of former College of Nursing Dean Lois Malasanos.

Help Us Honor a Legacy of Leadership in Research and Education

Dr. Lois Malasanos, the third dean of the UF College of Nursing, made innumerable contributions to both to our college and the nursing profession in Florida, nationally and internationally. She was a leader in academic nursing with a rich background in nursing science and practice. Dr. Malasanos oversaw the College’s strengthening of its research and graduate programs, and in 1984, she established the state’s first PhD program in nursing. At the time, doctoral programs were still very new, and there were only 24 existing programs in the country. Many of the state’s most significant nursing leaders are graduates of UF’s program.

Help us continue to honor Dr. Malasanos’ legacy by contributing to the Lois Malasanos Fellowship Fund, which supports graduate students pursuing their degrees. For more information, contact Anna Harper at 352-273-6360 or aemiller@ufl.edu

Help Us Honor a Legacy of Leadership in Research and Education

Sydney VandeVeer (R) and ____ , now BSN graduates, are shown next to their honored research poster.

(L-R) Associate Professor Sunny Yoon, Dean Kathleen Long, Keynote speaker Dorothy Brooten and Dr. Toree Malasanos, daughter of the late Dr. Lois Malasanos, third dean of the College.

UF COLLEGE OF NURSING HONORS ITS HERITAGE AT Malasanos Lectureship and Research Day

PHOTOS BY TRACY WRIGHT
College Welcomes Past Faculty Members

In May, the College held its annual Heritage Faculty Luncheon in the Dean’s Conference Room at the College of Nursing in Gainesville. The luncheon welcomes back former faculty members providing a forum for them to catch up with old friends and learn about the College’s latest news. Dean Long was happy to welcome old friends as well as recently retired faculty members who gathered together. Many of those who attended are pictured here: Photos clockwise from top (L-R) Dr. Joanne Richard, Linda Sigsby, Dr. David Williams, and Ann Smith. Right: (L) Dr. Gene Anderson and Dr. Betty Hilliard. Below: (L-R) Virgie Pafford, Development Officer Anna Harper, Dr. Karolyn Godbey, Program Assistant Yancy Jones, former professor Charlotte Spellacy and Dean Kathleen Long.

Gator Nurses Party Like It’s 1984!

The UF Alumni Association’s newest reunion program, Silver Society, celebrates the 25th anniversary of graduation from UF. We were excited to welcome two Gator Nurse alumni back to campus, Sharon Carlisle (Colson), who received her master’s degree in nurse midwifery and now resides in Temple Terrace, FL and Suzanne Farina, who received her BSN and now resides in Gainesville. Shown here are Suzanne and her husband Andrew and Sharon and her husband Jack celebrating at the official Silver Society reception, where they received their commemorative medallion, certificate and pin. For more information on Silver Society and other UF Alumni Association events, visit http://www.ufalumni.ufl.edu/events/.
Orlando Gator Nurses Reconnect with Friends and College

Gator Nurses and friends in Orlando recently gathered for a reception where they were able to meet with Dean Kathleen Long, learn about College news and updates, discuss nursing issues and have fun with old and new friends. Held at the Crowne Plaza Orlando Downtown, the reception was a great way for these Gator Nurses and friends to reconnect and network with each other. If you are interested in hosting a reception in your area, please contact Tracy Wright at tracyb@ufl.edu or call 352-273-6421.


FOREVER YOUNG: Gator Nurses Honored with Young Alumni Awards

Every year the University of Florida Alumni Association recognizes alumni who are 35 years of age or younger and have already distinguished themselves in their profession and community. Distinguished Young Alumni Awards are presented the morning of Spring Weekend, preceding the Orange and Blue Game.

We are happy to recognize this year’s College of Nursing recipients, Amy Barton (BSN 1997) and Beverly Childress Solesky (BSN 1998, MSN 2001, PhD 2004).

Amy Barton, who now resides in San Francisco, has a twelve-year career spanning from practicing as a registered nurse to various leadership roles in hospital administration/management. Currently, she is engaged in consulting where she adjunctively supports various health care organizations and businesses by analyzing and advising on strategic marketing, program and business development initiatives, as well as health care law.

Beverly Childress Solesky was one of the first graduates of the college’s BSN to PhD program. She is currently the evidence-based practice coordinator at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center in Gainesville and is a faculty member with the VA Nursing Academy, a partnership with the College of Nursing. She previously served as a post-doctoral fellow at the VA.

1990’s

Susan Kohler, BSN 1994, recently relocated to Boston, MA with her partner of two years. She is currently working as a VP of Compliance and Regulatory Affairs for CeltiCare. Her company is one of five Health Plans providing health coverage through Massachusetts Commonwealth Care. Although she has been out of clinical practice for 10 years, she continues to hold active RN licenses in FL and MA and keeps up on current political actions impacting nursing and health care.

Connie S. Chapelle, RN, MN (1995), CLNC presented at the 14th annual National Alliance of Certified Legal

Nurse Consultants conference in San Antonio TX March 12–13, 2009. Her presentation was on how to assist attorneys in back and neck injury/pain medical cases.

2000’s

Amanda (Floetke) Elliott, BSN 2001, MSN 2002, PhD 2006, was selected as an ORISE (Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education) Fellow with the Vision Health Initiative, in the Division of Diabetes Translation, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta GA. Amanda and her family, husband Josh and 1-year-old son Luke, are relocating from Birmingham, AL. Josh will be doing a Pediatric Ophthalmology fellowship at the Children’s Hospital (Scottish Rite) in Atlanta.

alumni news

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

It is rare that I am able to present an award to someone who has done so much for so many around the globe. As UF Nursing Alumni Council president, I was given just that honor at this year’s Spring Commencement Ceremony when I presented Ms. Ann Lurie with the Alumna of the Year award for 2009. Much has been said in this issue of Ms. Lurie’s incredible philanthropy and dedication. It was simply overwhelming to hear of all of the good works Ms. Lurie has done (in addition to raising six children)!

I know I wasn’t the only one who was inspired as our audience erupted in applause when Ms. Lurie was presented with the award. I am so happy to count her as a Gator Nurse. But what also struck me was Ms. Lurie’s simple statement when she accepted the award, which you also read in this issue: “Nurses can do anything.” And she is a living example of it. It made me feel very proud to be a nurse, most of all a Gator Nurse.

Of course, the commencement activities are such wonderful events to attend. The UF Nursing Alumni Council has been sponsoring the College of Nursing Pinning Ceremony since 2005, and we are so proud to put on this event for our graduating baccalaureate students. Not only does it signify their entrance as professional nurses, but we also see it our official welcome as Gator Nurse alumni.

That being said, I encourage all current alumni to reach out to new Gator Nurses you may encounter in your practice settings or hometowns. I encourage you to utilize the College of Nursing Alumni Affairs office as a resource if you want to connect to more Gator Nurses, both current and newer alumni. Similarly I encourage all of our newer alumni to get involved with our Alumni Council, stay connected with the Gator (Nurse) Nation and attend our alumni events, like our upcoming Reunion Weekend, on November 6-7, 2009.

To take a line from UF’s famous campaign, “Gator (Nurses) are everywhere!”

Go Gator Nurses!

Bonnie Pepper

**Corinne Larson**

The College of Nursing lost a dear friend in Corinne Larson who passed away this June. A retired nurse, Mrs. Larson and her husband Willard were great friends and supporters of the College. In 1995, the Larsons gave a gift worth $319,000, which invested in education, research and practice programs at the College. The Larsons designated the gift to be used to meet the most emergent needs of the College.

Mrs. Larson was a 1943 graduate of the St. Luke’s Hospital School of Nursing in Marquette, Michigan and had a very rewarding career as a nurse—one of the main reasons the Larsons decided to give back to nursing.

“Because of Corrine’s passion for nursing and she and her husband wanted to help to continue to advance the profession,” said Dean Kathleen Ann Long. “They put trust in our College leaders to strive for the highest levels of nursing education and patient care.”

Mrs. Larson had resided in Sun City Center with her husband. She is survived by her husband, and by beloved children and grandchildren.

“We are proud to call her a friend of the College of Nursing, and know that she will be deeply missed by her family, colleagues and her friends both here at the University of Florida and home in Sun City Center,” Dean Long said. “She was a very special lady.”

**College Says Goodbye to Dear Friend**

Emily Zubiria, BSN 2004, has been working for the past three years at Miami Children’s Hospital in the cardiac ICU. Emily was named 2008 Nurse of the Year at Miami Children’s Hospital.

Meghan Bullard, BSN 2007, is working in the Pediatric ICU at Florida Children’s Hospital in Orlando. She is an active member of the Nurse Practice Council, helping to make positive changes on the unit and throughout the hospital. She is now working part-time since her son, Greyson James, was born November 5, 2008 at Parrish Medical Center in Titusville. He weighed 6lb 9oz. and was 19.25 inches long.

Kristi McWilliams, MSN 2007, is currently working at North Florida Regional Medical Center on the labor and delivery/postpartum unit. She received a gold star within her first six months at NFRMC, one of the higher awards a nurse can receive.

Chris Schreier, BSN 2008, is currently working at Shands as a pediatric nurse. He recently received a promotion to charge nurse. Look for him on TV this fall when the new UF and Shands commercial airs. Chris auditioned and was selected for the part as the nurse. He married his high school sweetheart, Lesley Stevens on November 8, 2008.
Gator Nursing Reunion 2009: November 6-7, 2009

Don't Miss Your Chance to Relive Your Gator Nurse Memories

Come Learn
Come Play
Come Connect!

Watch for Registration Materials Coming at the End of this Summer! Online registration will also be available.

www.nursing.ufl.edu/reunion