I’ve been thinking about it ever since UConn Foundation announced the theme for its new campaign: “Our University. Our Moment.”

Who understands better than nurses about a moment’s power to change everything?

In a moment …
• A professor finds a way to turn tumblers in the locks for a struggling student whom our profession might otherwise lose.
• A clinical nurse recognizes a need that changes a patient’s quality of life for an hour – or forever.
• A nursing scholar sparks an idea that explodes into an investigation whose outcomes improve quality of life for uncounted patients the researcher will never meet.

It’s always been true that passion for patient care fuels everything we nurses do, at whatever level of our profession. In this moment, that passion also must accommodate today’s overruling realities: a rapidly changing healthcare environment, an uncertain economy, and the sweeping sequelae of the nursing shortage itself.

This issue of *Unison* is full of evidence of the moments that respond to those realities. A few examples:
• Research data from Dr. Tom Van Hoof (p. 8) and Dr. Pat Neafsey (p. 12) promise to come to life in dramatically improved quality of primary care for vulnerable patients with chronic diagnoses.
• Blog entries from our undergraduates studying in Cape Town and San Juan (p. 10) capture moments that reflect the kind of universally compelling insights that nourish nurses’ energies.
• A gathering we called “Our Moment for Conversation” (p. 32) saw scores of volunteers meeting to celebrate and synergize their various plans to support and promote our School.
• In “Dean’s To-Do List” (p. 14), you’ll walk with me through every moment of a typical day, and share with me some of the exhilaration of leading this extraordinary School.
• Next spring, we’ll celebrate a long-postponed moment (p. 16): We’ll break ground for the Widmer Wing, a state-of-the-art learning facility, custom designed to accommodate the pedagogical needs of UConn School of Nursing as the 21st century unfolds. It is pure joy to imagine the moments within its walls that will change lives for future generations of nurses … and those moments’ monumental consequences for the patients they will care for.

One by one, Our Moments coalesce into an extraordinary Momentum that makes us feel strong and useful and hungry for more. I hope you’ll visit us to see how Our Momentum infuses the air we breathe now. I think we’ll make you proud of UConn School of Nursing.
Assistant Professor Xiaomei Cong (above left) collects data for her research studying the effect of Kangaroo Care on reducing bio-behavioral pain responses to heel sticks. The mother uses Kangaroo Care with her premature baby. For later analysis, the video camera captures the baby’s facial expressions and a cardio-respiratory monitor and connected laptop system record the baby’s autonomic nervous system responses. (Photographs by Barbara J. Slater)
Xiaomei Cong is blazing a new path in the study of pain management with pre-term neonates, studying the effects of a natural, non-pharmaceutical remedy, Kangaroo Care (KC). KC, also called skin-to-skin contact, is the upright prone positioning of the diaper-clad infant skin-to-skin and chest-to-chest between maternal breasts. It is a promising non-pharmacologic intervention for reducing procedural pain in preterm infants.

"Premature infants... are subjected to an average of 10 – 16 painfully invasive procedures per day during their NICU stay."

Cong hopes to show that preterm infants in KC experience less pain when stressful procedures, like heel stick, are needed. Cong examines infant responses, like crying, facial actions, heart rate variability, and oxygen saturation, to determine the most effective duration of holding in KC for maximum pain reduction in younger preterm infants. If a short duration of KC, like 15 minutes, can significantly reduce infant pain, then neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) may be more likely to use this simple intervention to reduce pain.

The national pre-term birth rate has climbed more than 20% since 1990, to 12.8% of all births. The survival population of “preemies” has likewise risen steadily because of advanced neonatal knowledge and technology. As a result, preterm infants usually have a NICU stay. While in the high-tech NICU, they undergo numerous painfully invasive procedures and live in a developmentally inappropriate environment, often over a prolonged period of many weeks.

Premature infants, Cong explains, are subjected to an average of 10 – 16 painfully invasive procedures per day during their NICU stay, with repeated heel sticks accounting for 55% - 86% of these procedures.

Exposure to these procedures without pain reduction interventions has serious and lasting implications for the infant’s development. Published research documents that unrelieved pain caused by heel sticks is associated with detrimental outcomes in all major organ systems. It can have long-term cumulative effects, such as increased sensitivity to pain and stress, and impaired brain development. It can even be life threatening.

Following a winding path to UConn and KC research, Cong was initially educated in her homeland, China, where between the communist revolution of 1949 and 1985, nursing was relegated to inferior status with preference given to physicians. During this historical period, nurses could only earn diplomas and were taught by physicians.

She graduated from the second class in a Chinese nursing Bachelor of Science program. She immediately entered both clinical and classroom roles as practitioner and as nursing instructor, and began translating English-language nursing textbooks into Chinese. Without a master’s degree program in nursing in China, she pursued this degree in Thailand and came to the US for her doctorate.

During her master’s degree education, she discovered the literature about infant pain, which generally had been ignored with the false assumption that infants’ pain was fleeting and inconsequential.

Cong acknowledges that traditional Chinese medicine (including herbs and acupuncture) with its emphasis on the whole person and the whole system has informed both her clinical practice and research.

In her clinical research, Cong only studies mother-infant pairs, but she notes that fathers, too, can provide KC, whose positive effects may be related to multiple sensory modes, including the caregiver’s rhythmic breathing, heartbeat, voice, and even fragrance.

Some clinicians express concern for the parents’ feelings when holding an infant undergoing the pain of procedural heel sticks, but parents are often grateful for the opportunity to console their infants. In the high-tech neonatal intensive care unit, KC allows parents to contribute to their babies’ care.

“KC,” Cong says, “helps the parents become involved with their NICU babies. Research shows that parents feel detached, but they would like to be involved. If I can show how KC helps with pain management, this gives parents the chance to prevent unnecessary infant pain.”
“I’m delighted our School’s focus is on care for Vulnerable Populations,” said Assistant Professor Sherry Bassi, EdD, APRN. “Serving the underserved in our communities – especially the homeless – is a particular passion for public-health nurses like me. And taking care of homeless individuals is an amazingly valuable experience for our students, as they fulfill their service-learning responsibilities.” In conjunction with the Southeastern Connecticut Visiting Nurse Association, Bassi launched a nurse-managed, cost-free, foot-care clinic at a drop-in facility, New London’s Homeless Hospitality Center.

“Many homeless people have lost access to other transportation, so their feet take a terrible beating – from both overuse and worn-out or ill-fitting, shoes. A homeless young man who visited our clinic recently wore sneakers with huge holes in the soles. Deep blisters covered the soles of both his feet. He was in awful pain. We see individuals whose corns and calluses have become so deep and painful that they dominate the person’s whole outlook on life.”

Volunteers provide foot soaks, reduce corns and calluses, trim nails, and provide clean, white socks, and a pair of flip-flops for use in shelter showers. They offer special foot-care services to diabetic patients, too, including education, neuropathy testing, and support in accessing both professional care and even orthotics.

Since homeless people often use Emergency Rooms as primary-care sources, volunteers seek to identify those clients not yet connected with local community health centers, and make referrals to case managers and social-service agencies.

“The clinic has given our students real insight into the importance of professional case management, too. Our clinic is inexpensive to operate. It’s not high-tech nursing at all. But it’s gratifying to know that 45-or-so minutes of focused nursing attention can make a dramatic difference in quality of life for another human being. That’s made the service especially meaningful to our students,” Bassi observed.

The clinic also shattered some students’ stereotypes about homeless populations. “Most are shocked that our clients’ mean age is 32. Students take care of clients from all walks of life, some their own age, a few pregnant and alone who, for whatever reason, now live on the street.”

“Many students have told me their foot-clinic service-learning experience has opened their minds and hearts, bridged the gap between theory and practice, and made them better nurses. To me, that’s the greatest gift of all,” Dr. Bassi concluded.
“For many years, my research has centered on nursing discoveries surrounding HIV/AIDS,” said Associate Professor Elizabeth Anderson, PhD, APRN. “I think back to the early ‘80s, when the HIV/AIDS epidemic was new, and I’m amazed by how far medical and nursing scholarship has brought us.”

“People were terrorized by this disease. It wasted its victims, more every day, on the way to near-term death. We didn’t understand the virus. HIV patients were stigmatized, marginalized and, perhaps, the most vulnerable population of that day.”

Some 25 years ago, before HIV/AIDS moved from “death sentence” to “chronic disease,” not-for-profit Tabor House opened as a Hartford residence for homeless men with AIDS. Now it has two sites. Elizabeth Anderson volunteers on its Board.

“Our residents remain vulnerable. They’re homeless. They have HIV. Most of them have troubled personal histories — many stories of prison, addiction, deprived childhoods in disordered families. Our goal is to offer our residents the life-skills they’ve never before been afforded, so that when they are ready to leave us, they’ll be equipped to live successfully and independently,” Dr. Anderson observed.

Dr. Anderson, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambrey, is now in her twelfth year on the UConn School of Nursing faculty. “The purpose of our presence at Tabor House (we Josephites call it our charism) is to promote healing and reconciliation, a sense of our oneness with one another, nature, and God. I think many nurses share that purpose. I’m a Sister for the same reason I’m a nurse and teacher. It’s just who I am.”

Houses are small (six residents), comfortable, freshly painted. They feel like home. Some residents cook and dine together, like a family. They have many learning opportunities, including programs to maintain sobriety, earn GEDs, improve language and other skills. The houses have 24-hour staff coverage, and access to case managers.

“Basically, it’s their home, where they’re learning to live successfully,” Dr. Anderson explained. “They’re so proud of how and where they live that they’re eager to share it with guests. I remember a resident who invited me to see his tiny, tidy room. It is wonderful to know they have a future now.”

“When I see happiness and hope like his,” Dr. Anderson said, “I know how Tabor House has changed the quality of life for him and others. And I feel connected and fulfilled … as a Sister and as a nurse.”
As an advanced practice nurse, Holly Bradley witnessed the striking changes in health care that have required the delivery of comprehensive clinical care and increased the demand for nurses in leadership roles.

With an extensive advanced practice background, Bradley said, “I did not want to be defined by research, but by my clinical practice.” This made the UConn Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program the perfect choice. It prepared her for future endeavors in conducting collaborative research, applying new knowledge in practice, and leading health care policy change.

Our DNP program is the first program in the nation to require a clinical practice dissertation. It is designed to serve nurses seeking an alternative to doctoral programs focused on research. It emphasizes the scientific basis of knowledge, evidence-based practice, and development of leadership expertise within advanced practice nursing.

According to Bradley, Melanoma accounts for only 3 to 4% of all skin cancers, but is responsible for the majority of skin cancer deaths. Modifiable risk factors for melanoma include sun exposure, especially to artificial sun sources, such as the tanning bed above.

During her time as a DNP student, Bradley combined her primary and urgent care background with early detection and patient education, specifically in dermatological nursing. She said, “I had seen an increasing number of young adult patients in my college health service practice coming in with changes in skin lesions, excessive tanning, as well as a need for staff education with regards to skin assessment skills.”

Her clinical practice dissertation demonstrated the efficacy of educating nurse practitioners (NPs) in proper documentation/early detection of skin cancer among young adults. Additionally, the use of a standardized screening instrument substantially improved the quality of NP’s documentation (a 200% increase), enhancing patient education.

Bradley was our first DNP student to present her findings at the Eastern Nursing Research Society meeting.

Her translation of evidence into practice through the DNP program has set her on a path to shape the future of human health. “I look forward to the application of this knowledge as I embark on this next phase of my nursing career, as a newly graduated DNP,” Dr. Bradley said.
MEIN

Master’s Entry into Nursing

A
n alumna of the first Master’s Entry into Nursing (MEIN) class, Kelly Poskus, MS, RN, knew that she wanted a career in health care, but it took her a while to get around to nursing.

Although Poskus’s grandmother had been a nurse and Poskus herself had volunteered at St. Mary’s Hospital, Waterbury, she earned her bachelor’s degree in Health Administration from Quinnipiac College and worked in the Women’s Education Life Learning office at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

Then nursing “clicked” for Poskus: “Working in the hospital environment I became more intrigued by the profession and decided it was interesting to me.”

Recognizing that she enjoyed working with people (and not working behind a desk), Poskus saw in nursing, “the whole package; a fast paced environment, interacting with people but with purpose, too. I think that was what was missing from my career.”

Designed for students who already have earned bachelor’s degrees in fields other than nursing, the UConn MEIN program gave Poskus an intensive, one-year, full-time preparation (both didactic and clinical) for nursing licensure. Students who complete the sequence automatically enter the nursing master’s degree program. Poskus completed her Master of Science in nursing administration in 2006.

Poskus now holds two indispensable career roles in nursing. By day, she is stroke coordinator at Waterbury Hospital, which is certified by the Connecticut Department of Public Health as a Primary Stroke Center. In this position, Poskus collaborates with other nurses, physicians and other healthcare team members, and is responsible for procedure development and updating as well as data management, staff and patient education and community outreach.

By night, Poskus is a medical-surgical clinical instructor of nursing students at UConn and Yale. As Poskus observes, “This role keeps me at the bedside, and I have found that I love to teach. It is rewarding to watch students’ faces light up when they are able to connect classroom to clinical. When they get that ‘ah ha’ moment, and it all makes sense.”

Her clinical instruction for UConn is a homecoming of sorts: Kelly teaches our current MEIN students. Poskus observes, “I think my students appreciate this because, not only can I say ‘Yes I actually know what you are going through,’ but it shows them that there is a light at the end of the tunnel — a career in nursing!”

Donna Clemmens, PhD, R.N.

After seven years at New York University College of Nursing, Donna Clemmens will be returning to our School of Nursing faculty. Beginning July 1st she will be the newest addition to the Master’s Entry into Nursing (MEIN), see article above, as a clinical associate professor and senior faculty member at the Stamford campus. After earning her PhD in nursing in 2000 at the University of Connecticut, she went to Yale University School of Nursing where she completed a postdoctoral research fellowship in psychosocial oncology. Clemmens is on the advisory committee for Child and Family Services of the board of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. Her recent research focused on the relationship between Carelink participation and geriatric nursing education in community health.
In research meetings and at Qualidigm, Honors-Program junior Stephen Mahier learns the importance of collecting high-quality data.

Photograph by Barbara J. Slater

“… nurses will continue to expand their roles in primary care and health care leadership … ”
“Often I’m asked why a physician serves on a School of Nursing faculty,” said Associate Professor Thomas Van Hoof, MD, EdD. “As both clinician and educator, my scholarship centers on using educational interventions to change clinician behavior and improve patient outcomes. Nurses provide much of our system’s care, and nurses will continue to expand their roles in primary care and health care leadership, two of my areas of interest. That’s why I came to the School.”

Aligned with the School’s research focus on vulnerable populations, Van Hoof’s current work investigates whether specific technological, educational, and communications support can reduce disparities in the quality of care delivered to racial and ethnic minority groups. Van Hoof is Principal Investigator of a two-year study, The Equity and Quality (EQual) Health Care Project. Because diabetes is especially prevalent among minority groups, his study focuses on diabetes care.

Van Hoof works with Qualidigm, a federally designated organization overseeing the quality of Medicare in Connecticut. The Connecticut Health Foundation, which funds the project, centers on improving equity of care. “Qualidigm and the Foundation deserve credit for this project,” Van Hoof noted. Clinical sites are eight Connecticut primary-care private practices, recruited because their caseloads include significant populations of minority patients diagnosed with diabetes.

“Since effective communication is central to all quality-of-care improvement, participating practices are enhancing their cultural and linguistic competence, too,” Van Hoof observed. “After completing an excellent web-based course from the U.S. Office of Minority Health, practice physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and staff participate in facilitated workshops, where they meet with peers to discuss enhancing culturally and linguistically sensitive care,” Van Hoof said.

Key to the project is creation of a practice-specific electronic Diabetes Patient Registry, which assembles key patient-care data and generates population/exception reports. Performance reports compare progress of the practice’s own diabetes patients with benchmarks, and with progress for similar patients in peer practices.

The project also provides: assistance in implementing clinician/patient reminders to improve care; support in reviewing and acting upon performance feedback of patient data; guidance in improvement-centered team care and office redesign; access to interactive workshops on cultural and linguistic competence; and access to CME credits.

At least monthly, a Qualidigm consultant visits each site to facilitate technology use, to assess quality-improvement progress, and to optimize skills and talents of clinicians and staff.

Research teams are charting data over time, to learn if enhanced technologies and communication-skills actually result in improved diabetes care, meanwhile identifying barriers and facilitators to change. “If findings are positive, we hope to expand to other diagnoses, or to add more primary-care practices,” Van Hoof added.

“It’s essential to approach complex problems from multiple angles, especially in improving care for diverse populations. We hope the quality-improvement opportunities we offer to both clinicians and patients will engage more stakeholders and overcome more barriers. As a physician and an educator, I am always interested in using education and communication to improve quality of care. This project is a perfect example.”
Moments: in Their Words

Through their blogs, students exchanged their 2009 study abroad moments in Cape Town, South Africa, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. To read more postings, please visit our Study Abroad web page under Academics at uconn.nursing.edu.

It was a powerful moment to watch the new family, together for the first time, bond and mesh into one. The nurse enabled this moment to occur and it was evident that the mother was thankful to be able to connect with her child after such a long and trying process. I will never forget the tears streaming down the father’s face and mother’s wide grin and she rocked her baby on her chest. ... Katherine Zilich, Cape Town, South Africa

It’s amazing how many opportunities are available to us in such a large hospital setting. Just last week I was able to observe a partial gastrostomy as a medical student talked me through the entire procedure ... Sophia Sopczneski, San Juan, Puerto Rico

The staff at East Ridge Pediatric Clinic was one unlike any I have seen before. In a situation that I quickly deemed unmanageable, they stepped right up and got the job done. They treated the patients with the utmost respect and dignity, while still providing them proper medical care, health teaching, and medications ... Briana Lebert, Cape Town, South Africa

The cut was made and with a few swift movements, a couple of tugs and pulls the first baby out. Catching was one nurse and one neonatologist, oh yes and only one incubator - for both babies! ... Jessica Crank, Cape Town, South Africa
The School of Nursing Study Abroad program is not only an educational journey, but a personal one too. We ensure students are immersed in quality nursing clinical and didactic education, while still exposing them to another culture's language, values, health care resources, and dramatically different patterns of major disease rates and poverty.

When they first arrive at their destination, it’s an instant culture shock. Every student’s experience is different but one that unifies them. Students create a storehouse of memories, from a moment with the Puerto Rican police salsa bands singing and dancing in the hospital’s main lobby, to a moment in the South African heart transplant museum where the first heart transplant was performed 41 years ago.

Even with striking cultural differences, however, as assistant professor-in-residence Karen Breitkreuz said, “It doesn’t matter much what language you speak, as long as you know the language of a smile.” Students create bonds with their future colleagues during their stay as they observe and work along with them to provide patients with care in situations that many feared would be unmanageable.

Our students return changed, matured with new perspectives on life after being immersed in places where they found themselves reevaluating their own values and beliefs. A few moments studying abroad, and our students are forever changed.

Karen Breitkreuz, EdD, MSN, RN, CNS
Karen Breitkreuz, assistant professor-in-residence, earned her Doctor of Education degree from Columbia University’s Teacher College in May 2009. Last fall she served as the School of Nursing’s Cape Town, South Africa, Study Abroad resident director.

For Karen, it was an opportunity that met two desires: to educate and expand students horizons and to build relationships with colleagues in other nations to better understand common issues in global health care and nursing. Between 1996 and 1998, Karen used her nursing to serve in medical mission trips to four countries with the International Medical Strike Force, Operation Blessing, where she functioned as a pre-op and post-operative recovery room pediatric nurse.

Joan Carpenter, MSN, RN
Clinical faculty member Joan Carpenter took her Fall 2009 experience as a Study Abroad instructor in Cape Town, South Africa, and shared it with others back home. The seven weeks that she lived in this third world country and explored its different cultures changed her perspective on the world.

She found that her sensitivity to patient care grew, and the tendency to apply Western beliefs diminished. Her experience in Cape Town has made her an enthusiastic advocate for the School of Nursing’s Study Abroad, including a presentation about her experiences to the Womens’ Health Department at Hartford Hospital. She will soon speak about it again at the Hospital for Special Care on Nurses Day.
Through years of scholarship, Professor Patricia J. Neafsey, RD, PhD, has explored visually engaging ways of using touchscreen computers to teach older adults about potential adversities with self-medication: “Now that average primary-care clinical visits are down to 14 minutes, we need technology to help patients learn what they need to know about their drugs.”

Her current research seeks to learn whether patients’ interactions with a motivational, educational website can improve self-medication practices and responses to antihypertensive pharmacotherapy. In primary-care settings, patients use touchscreen laptops to input personal/demographic details, and to click their current medications (names/dosages) on a comprehensive list of antihypertensives, other prescriptions, nutritional supplements, and OTC medications, including how and when they take each agent.

Patients receive custom-tailored on-line education as well as printouts of personalized guidance, including drug-management solutions and warnings about potentially adverse reactions/interactions of their medications. Researchers trained APRNs to use the printouts as a resource in their patient-care management.

“Preliminary results are exciting,” Neafsey continued. “Intervention-group members reported substantial ‘intent to change’ their self-medicating behavior, following what they’d learned. Without changes in their prescribed regimens, some patients – who’d failed to reach their blood-pressure targets at the study’s outset – met those goals after the intervention. So the program will be marketed to primary care practices through AdhereTx,” said Neafsey.
All politics may be local, but all health is global.

During the Spring 2010 semester, ten School of Nursing faculty members gathered every other Monday night to discuss health care in countries representing all aspects of the global, both developed and underdeveloped countries, and government-controlled health care and private systems.

Organized by Dr. Carol Polifroni and supported with funds that she secured through Provost Peter Nicholls’s grant competition for faculty development in global education, each faculty member led discussions of basic population demographics, leading causes of morbidity and mortality, culture perspectives and health care systems’ financing.

The grant also permitted the group to invite Dr. Mary Norton, RN, from Felician College, to talk about Pakistan’s health care system. In turn Norton, chairperson of the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations Briefing Committee, invited the faculty and a group of nursing students to attend one of the UN briefings in New York City. On April 1, twenty students and four faculty observed a briefing, side by side with leaders from throughout the world, received a tour of the United Nations, and returned to UConn with a greater global awareness.

On the same day, Connecticut Congressman Joe Courtney visited UConn for a student and faculty town hall forum jointly organized by Dean Anne R. Bavier and School of Pharmacy Dean Robert L. McCarthy. Among his committee appointments, Courtney sits on the Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions Subcommittee, and he was vigorous in working for the recent passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

“This is a historic time for young people going into health care,” Courtney told the audience of nursing and pharmacy students and faculty. “And the need to be politically informed and engaged will determine the quality of your profession.”

Courtney characterized the passage of health reform as establishing a “basic health care right, not a privilege, which has eluded us for 60 years.” He also noted that health reform will make US corporations, like Connecticut’s United Technologies and Pratt & Whitney, more competitive in the global market where most other countries, not the employers, provide national health care.
On Chris Czemske’s first day as my new Assistant to the Dean, we sat down to discuss what lies ahead for us. I asked if she had questions for me. Chris replied, “I don’t really understand everything a dean does. Will you help me learn?”

I knew a good way to start: We went through my To-Do Lists for the following couple of days. I explained what I’d be doing, with whom, and how each appointment would support our profession, UConn, and/or our School of Nursing. As we talked, I realized we were chronicling some of our School’s everyday “Moments,” which contribute to Our Momentum. I hope they’ll interest you, too:

**CCMC: joint appointment.** Teleconference with the Nursing VP at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center in Hartford. We’ll discuss a faculty member’s proposed joint appointment, serving both CCMC and UConn School of Nursing.

**Finance.** Constance Bedan is our newly promoted Fiscal Manager. In our weekly meeting, we’ll cover our progress in allocating expenditures, and review our up-to-the-minute alignment of forecasts and payables.

**Council of Deans.** Each month, all UConn deans meet with the Provost, Chief Librarian, Research VP, and directors of regional UConn campuses to discuss policies affecting UConn’s academic enterprise. Today we’ll discuss compensation policies for graduate students who assist on research grants and ethical guidelines for faculty members who serve as consultants to outside organizations.

**Associate Deans.** Our accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education spans ten years, but detailed updates are due at the five-year point. Associate Deans Regina Cusson and Rhea Sanford have prepared the School’s narrative responses for our final review today.

**Mentoring.** One-on-one meeting with a tenure-track faculty member to review scholarly progress, to find ways I can support even greater productivity, and to develop the individual’s positioning for reappointment committee reviews.

**Lunch.** Meet an emeritus faculty member for lunch at the Student Union. I’m lucky that so many retired faculty members share their perspectives with me about where the School has been and where it’s headed. I relish one-on-one lunches with these generous friends. Their wisdom enriches my decision-making while their confidence bolsters my boldness.

“**They believe in us and what we do. They say Connecticut needs us to be strong.**”

**Grant support.** Our faculty scholars are wonderfully relentless in seeking outside support to fund their research. Among grant-proposal requirements is a dean’s letter of support. I don’t dash these off. I close my office door, to reflect quietly on the scholar’s unique strengths and how the proposed investigation can help shape the future of human health. I reap a personal reward, too: In those moments of quiet pondering, I’m renewed in my deep respect for the outstanding nursing scholars I’m privileged to lead.

**NLN.** National League of Nursing is one of the oldest nursing organizations in the country; its focus is best practices for nursing education. As NLN’s National Secretary, I help plan NLN meeting agendas (among other things). Today’s Executive Committee conference call is to finalize the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the NLN Board of Governors.
Students/DC. Meeting with four students whom the School will send to Washington, DC, for the Inaugural Nursing Student Policy Summit, sponsored by American Association of Colleges of Nursing. These students already have risen to School leadership. At this meeting, they will interact with the very nursing leaders who influence creation of national healthcare policies. It’s not too soon for students to understand nursing’s national context, and to see evidence that nurses exactly like themselves soon will fill national leadership positions. (Update: At the last minute, we were able to schedule a visit to the office of Joe Courtney, Storrs’ Congressional representative. It was an astonishing moment for our students, when Congressman Courtney met with us personally to discuss the ramifications for nurses and nursing leadership of the healthcare reform act!)

“Our Conversations” (Elaine/Kathe): Lately, all sorts of people have been asking if they can help us! Alums, families, retired faculty, others. They say they believe in us and what we do. They say Connecticut needs us to be strong. So they’re rolling up their sleeves. Today, I’m meeting with Alumni Coordinator Kathe Gable and Development Director Elaine Cunningham to plan a brainstorming party – Our Moment for Conversation – where these 70-or-so volunteers can meet with us and each other, and – in breakout groups – together, to hammer out imaginative ways that we can support the future of our School.

WW/Dolan Planning. This meeting is with the Widmer Wing architects and exhibit specialists to review the contents of our irreplaceable Dolan Collection of Nursing Artifacts, especially to decide which artifacts will be on permanent display, which will be rotated. We’re designing shelving and lighting throughout the new wing, measuring antique posters to decide which wall spaces are most appropriate for each, and how to install archival climate-control devices to assure their preservation. It’s hard to express how meaningful it is to me that, at last, Josephine Dolan’s extraordinary collection will have a proper context, out in the light and air, where it can fascinate students about our profession’s astounding history.

Foundation Remarks. Rob and I plan a quiet dinner at home. Then he’ll watch the game while I prepare remarks for a meeting of the UConn Foundation Board of Directors. It’s an important invitation, since deans play a big role in fundraising, and UConn Foundation’s sole purpose is to raise private funding for schools like ours. I’ll have fifteen minutes to distill everything important about our School – past and present – and what we’re doing to anchor nursing’s future in Connecticut and beyond. I’ll share my pride in our successes in serving all our stakeholders. I’ll also be candid about how our lack of endowed chairs/professorships and our tiny endowment handicap our promise to rise to the top tier of U.S. schools of nursing.

As Chris and I went through that exercise, I looked at my days through her fresh eyes. And I was renewed in my conviction that serving as Dean of this extraordinary School of Nursing, at this pivotal moment in its history, is, quite simply, the best job on the planet. Thank you for the astonishing privilege of leading UConn School of Nursing.
Building Futures

“I was overjoyed when I heard plans for the new Widmer Wing and touched by its tribute to my mother. The School would have proper learning facilities, at last!

It felt as if our moment finally had arrived.” - Michael Widmer
Storrs Hall’s Widmer Wing: Heritage and Innovation

Home of UConn’s School of Nursing and the oldest extant brick building on campus, Storrs Hall embodies both the heritage and innovation of the school and university. With preparation for ground breaking on the new Widmer Wing, a history of ingenuity continues.

Only the second brick building at UConn (the first, Agriculture Hall, was erected on Storrs Road in 1899 but razed in 1960), Storrs Hall was named after the benefactor Augustus Storrs who had deeded to Connecticut 155 acres of farmland that included several wood frame buildings, including a former orphanage.

Storrs Hall opened as a dormitory in 1906, featuring 60 dormitory rooms and 30 studies, described by Rufus Whitaker, the third president of what would become UConn, as “a beautiful and enduring embodiment of the hope of the fathers and mothers. We crave no prouder distinction than to be permitted to lend a hand to more and more of their sons and daughters.”

After World War II, new dormitories were built on North Campus, and Storrs Hall was converted into offices in 1952, first for the School of Business Administration, and eventually the School of Nursing, which had been housed in “The Cottage,” later known as the Carolyn Ladd Widmer Building.

Built in 1919 as UConn’s first infirmary, the Widmer Building was named after the School of Nursing’s founding dean. In 1996, because significant structural deterioration prohibited relocation of the Widmer Building, located on the site for the new Chemistry Building, it was razed. Storrs Hall, the next home of the School of Nursing, was renovated in 2002. It includes three media equipped university classrooms used by many different departments, elevator and handicap access, as well as classrooms, conference rooms, clinical simulation labs, and office space for the School of Nursing.

However, the School of Nursing was too large for Storrs Hall alone, requiring the installation of temporary mobile structures for offices, a simulation lab, and a large class and meeting room, the Storrs Hall Annex on the east side of the building.

When Dean Anne R. Bavier came to UConn School of Nursing in 2007, she was presented with this challenge: To bring the physical space of the school into the twenty-first century, preserve the architectural integrity of a historic building, and build a permanent tribute to Dean Widmer. No stranger to the refinements of architecture or to the rigors of capital campaigns, Dean Bavier set to work on the preliminary planning and development stages. The distinguished architectural firm of Tai Soo Kim Partners was selected, whose clients include Colgate University, Connecticut College, Trinity College, and Yale University. Architects met with faculty and staff to discuss needs. The university’s Board of Trustees endorsed these efforts by doubling the budget allocation for the construction, with funds to come from UConn 2000.

Dean Bavier was determined that, with the 15,800 square foot Widmer Wing, the School of Nursing would have two prominent features: a distinctive front entrance to welcome visitors and spaces for students to socialize and study. The design includes clinical simulation rooms, a large classroom, a case-study room with 175 seats, and a large entryway and reception area showcasing the Josephine A. Dolan Collection of Nursing Artifacts. Built into the eastern hillside, the new Widmer Wing will frame, not hide, the classic architecture of Storrs Hall.

In remarks at the 2009 Reflections of Excellence banquet, Dr. Michael Widmer (one of Dean Widmer’s sons) said, “I was overjoyed when I heard plans for the new Widmer Wing. I was touched by its tribute to my mother. The school would have proper learning facilities, at last. It felt as if our moment finally had arrived.”

Shown above and left are renderings of the new Widmer Wing by architectural firm Tai Soo Kim Partners.
UConn School of Nursing alumna Mary Ann Cordeau (PhD, 2004) remembers vividly her trepidation during the admission interview with Eleanor Krohn Herrmann, now professor emerita, trailblazing scholar of nursing history who was the reason Cordeau wished UConn to be where she did doctoral study. “I couldn’t remember the name of Virginia Henderson, but she admitted me into the program anyway!” Cordeau recounts.

What began as an intergenerational mentor-protégé relationship, quickly deepened into a friendship of true minds, and now Mary Ann and her husband Robert Cordeau have ensured a permanent public acknowledgement of Dr. Herrmann’s contributions to UConn and to nursing with their generous donation to the School of Nursing to create the Eleanor Krohn Herrmann Reading Room in the new Widmer Wing addition to Storrs Hall. According to Cordeau, “By accepting me and going beyond mentoring, Eleanor opened doors whenever she could. She made me part of her family.”

Cordeau describes Dr. Herrmann’s modesty and humility, all the more remarkable for a life as filled with personal accomplishments and professional distinction. Dr. Herrmann grew up in Great Barrington, and, although her father was killed in a farming accident when she was 14, her mother greatly influenced her and her siblings to value education.

Dr. Herrmann earned her BS in nursing from Adelphi University in New York, her MS in nursing from the University of Colorado, and both MEd. and EdD degrees from the Teachers College of Columbia University. She taught at Yale University, University of Wyoming, University of Colorado, Syracuse University, and Cornell University, as well as UConn.

A personal commitment to social justice led Dr. Herrmann to Ecuador where she was instrumental in establishing the country’s first university-level school of nursing curriculum under the auspices of Project Hope. She has also frequently served as a consultant for the World Health Organization. Since 1969 she has had an ongoing relationship with the nursing profession in Belize, formerly British Honduras on the Yucatan coast, as well as with several other countries in Central and South America.

(Continued on page 19)
Service also characterized Dr. Herrmann’s professional academic career, during which she was a charter member of the American Association for the History of Nursing and served on its board, and served on editorial boards and review panels of *Nursing Outlook, Journal of History of Medicine and Allied Health, Image: Journal of Nursing Scholarship, Journal of Nursing History, Medical Heritage* and *Public Health Nursing*.

In her commencement address to School of Nursing baccalaureate graduates in May 2009, Dr. Herrmann reminded students and guests: “...In the past, early ambulation, intensive-care centers, electronic monitoring devices, wonder drugs, and modern surgery all dramatically changed nursing and the responsibilities of nurses. Future discoveries and innovations, such as genetic science, will likely bring about changes that will be every bit as radical. In combination with other scientific and biotechnological advances, along with society’s increasing expectations, we can expect new and complex situations, many of which will also be ethical in nature. Assuredly they will all have an impact on the future of nursing practice. They are driving forces that we must address now as we educate nurses for practice in the 21st century.”

By nurturing a friendship with the School of Nursing’s first faculty member and fellow historian, Josephine Dolan, Dr. Herrmann earned Dolan’s trust and enabled the bequest to UConn of the archives and artifacts that constitute today’s Dolan Collection. But she has also, by means of what Cordeau calls “persistent begging,” significantly expanded that collection in succeeding years and personally raised the funds to furnish the Dolan Room. In retirement, Dr. Herrmann remains the collection’s chief curator.

In providing the donation to establish the Eleanor Krohn Herrmann Reading Room, Mary Ann Cordeau says that she wanted it to be “a beautiful and peaceful place for individuals to study and research and be inspired by nursing’s rich history. I want other people to experience the joy of discovery.”

The joy of discovery, making connections across generations of nurses and nurse scholars, is Eleanor Krohn Herrmann’s legacy to all of us.
Aging


Alternative Care and Spirituality


Community Health


Correctional and Forensic


Culture, Language, & History


Long, T. L. (2009, September). *AIDS and the genealogy of dissent*. Society for Medical Anthropology International Conference, Medical Anthropology at the Intersection: Celebrating 50 Years of Interdisciplinarity, Yale University, New Haven, CT.


Telford, J. C. (2009, March). “They had inserted several Dakin’s tubes, which I irrigated every two hours”: The integration of technology into the practice of World War I nurses. *Eastern Nursing Research Society Annual Conference*, Boston, MA.
Disease


Education Innovation


Business Matters

For Constance Bedan, it is all about balance. With a master’s degree from the University of Connecticut in Natural Resources Management and Engineering, Connie knows that the Business Office is far from what she spent years studying. She expected difficulty landing a job in her field, so when offered a full time position as the School of Nursing’s Financial Assistant, she seized the opportunity.

“I like to be busy, and you can’t ask for a busier place than the School of Nursing Business Office,” said Bedan. Recently promoted to fiscal manager, Bedan goes well beyond the general duties of processing payroll, handling reimbursements, paying and billing organizations, vendors, and businesses. “Nothing pleases me more than when something has been finalized, and done correctly,” continues Bedan.

Bedan provides budget data and spending recommendations to the Dean. A balanced budget ensures the school is providing students with an exceptional education and opportunities that serve as catalyst to professional and personal growth. Managing multiple accounts according to state, federal, and foundation policies requires constant attention to detail and strategic thinking to make every expenditure timely, and to ensure the school is a steward to taxpayers resources. As School of Nursing professors continue to strive in providing the nursing field with innovative research, she is behind the scenes providing research faculty with financial management of their grant accounts.

When not balancing financial accounts, Bedan is spending time with her husband and two young daughters building tents and taking weekend walks in the “jungle,” as her two daughters refer to their forested back acre.

Bedan began her UConn career as a student worker in the Family Studies business office and then progressed to her present position as Fiscal Manager. Bedan works efficiently to balance both her family obligation and professional life with great success.

Photograph by Barbara J. Slater

Fiscal Manager, Constance Bedan at her desk with fingerpaint artwork from her two-year old daughter proudly displayed on her wall.

Unison 21
Faculty Scholarship • Our Moment

Education Innovation (continued)

Long, T. L. (2009, April). When the writing student is a professor: Repurposing and adapting writing center practices for faculty writing support. 25th Annual Meeting of the Northeast Writing Centers Association, University of Hartford, Hartford, CT.


Information & Technology


Pain & Symptom Management


Parent Child Health


Faculty Scholarship


Quality and Organizational Improvements


Pharmacology


Professional Issues


Welcome

Judith Chestnut, BA
Secretary, Office of the Dean

Christine Czemske, BS
Assistant to the Dean

Ann M. Salina, BA
Admissions and Recruitment Coordinator
Faculty Scholarship • Our Moment

Quality and Organizational Improvements (continued)


Theory & Methods


Beck, C. T. (2009, May). Merging a research program using qualitative and quantitative methods [keynote address]. University of Texas at Tyler, Tyler, TX.

Beck, C. T. (2009, December). Cultivating a program of research on postpartum moods and anxiety disorders: Merging quantitative and qualitative research methods. Massachusetts General Hospital Institute for Health Professions, Boston MA.


Beck, C. T. (2009, December). Cultivating a program of research on postpartum moods and anxiety disorders: Merging quantitative and qualitative research methods. Massachusetts General Hospital Institute for Health Professions, Boston MA.


NEWS to use

School of Nursing Translates Science into Human Health

Case Mysteries in Pathophysiology (Morton) is Dr. Patricia J. Neafsey’s new textbook for nursing undergraduates. It takes a problem-based approach to learning, with detailed narratives on specific cases, including patient histories, lab values, full-color pathology slides, and diagnostic images. Individuals or groups of students use their knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology to solve “mysteries.” Two versions are available: One includes the answers, while the other makes answers available on a password-protected website. This text is finding a market even among readers, long past their nursing school years, who enjoy solving diagnostic puzzles.

The Hispanic population is the largest and fastest growing minority population in the US, but recruitment of Hispanic people into nursing lags behind. A metasynthesis by doctoral student Jessica Alicea-Planas suggests several obstacles: lack of funding for education, lower educational attainment, cultural conflicts, and lack of education role models. High schools, community colleges, and college or university nursing schools might improve Hispanic recruitment into nursing by partnerships that prepare students, provide nursing role models, and vigorously coach nursing students in seeking financial resources.

Many older adults experience chronic pain from osteoarthritis, with harmful results to their mobility, fitness, and independence. Research by Dr. Deborah Dillon McDonald shows that managing their pain depends on the health care provider’s asking the right questions and the patient’s giving clear responses. McDonald uses a laptop computer “avatar” simulation to coach patients in the waiting room. Healthcare providers’ social desirability questions ("How are you feeling?") or close-ended questions ("On a scale from 1 to 10, describe your pain") are not as effective as asking open-ended questions that use several synonyms for pain (“Tell me about your aches, soreness, pains or discomfort”), which prompts patients to reveal more useful information.

Cardiovascular disease in older adults has profound medical and financial consequences for the patients, the families, and the healthcare system. Research by Dr. Colleen Delaney suggests that nurse-initiated spiritual practices, like Mindfulness Meditation and Loving-Kindness Meditation, may improve the wellbeing of patients with cardiovascular disease.
Students Making Special Moments

Although they already have full plates with their general education courses, nursing didactic classes and clinicals, our students still make time for volunteer outreach.

School of Nursing clubs like MASCC (Moulage/props, Acting, Simulation, and Creativity Club) engage in community service projects. CareLink, a community health project in partnership with the Visiting Nurses Association, involves nursing students in real clinical service like Healthy Kids are Happy Kids and Alcohol Safety Team.

The UConn Student Nurses’ Association (SNA), a pre-professional organization for nursing majors, engages in a variety of community outreach programs throughout the academic year. SNA students assist with the Special Olympics games, visit nursing home residents, support the Hole in the Wall Gang camp for children with disabilities and life-threatening illnesses, and raise funds for health care causes. SNA’s participation in Relay for Life – Breast Cancer Awareness –raised $4,300 this year. On campus each Spring semester, SNA students participate in HuskyTHON for the Children’s Miracle Network, volunteer at local soup kitchens, and conduct a winter holiday food and toiletry drive for the needy. In April, the organization sent 16 students to the National Student Nurse Association convention and presently has three students on the Connecticut Student Nurses Association board.

According to SNA president, senior Holly Mirizio, “My goals as SNA president were to make more students aware of our organization, to increase membership and to offer students more leadership opportunities. I am pleased to say, we have been able to achieve all of these goals. We went from roughly ten members my freshman year, to more than 60 active members and 100 documented members. The more members, the more we can serve our community.”

Upcoming Events Share in Our Moments

- **Graduate Recognition Ceremony**
  - Saturday, May 8, 2010
  - Time: 11 a.m. Reception, 11:30 Program
  - Location: Student Union Ballroom

- **MEIN Information Session**
  - Wednesday, May 19, 2010
  - Time: 6-8 p.m.
  - Location: Bishop Center

- **Alumni Weekend**
  - Friday & Saturday, June 4-5, 2010
  - Luncheon, Husky Nightingale Nurse Ceremony, Pickle Awards

- **Transition To Clinical Practice**
  - Tuesday, August 31, 2010
  - Time: 9 a.m.
  - Location: Student Union Theater

- **Reflections of Excellence 2010**
  - Saturday, October 23, 2010
  - Check our web site for details.

- **MEIN Pinning Ceremony**
  - Sunday, December 12, 2010
  - Time: 12 p.m.
  - Location: Student Union Theater

All events are on Storrs Campus. For additional information on Alumni Weekend or other events please contact Kathe.Gable@uconn.edu or phone 860.486.0613. Pictured above is the UConn Homecoming Parade 2009.
Another School of Nursing 2009 moment was at the Connecticut Nurses’ Association 103rd Annual Convention and Awards Ceremony where four members of the UConn Health Center’s Correctional Managed Health Care Initiative were honored with the Florence S. Wald Award for contributions to nursing practice.

Led by nursing associate professor Dr. Deborah Shelton, the UConn Health Center’s Correctional Managed Health Care Initiative includes nursing assistant professor Dr. Sherry Bassi, Director of Nursing/Patient Care Services at the Connecticut Department of Correction Dr. Constance Spagnola Weiskopf, and assistant clinical professor Denise Panosky.

“The Shelton Team” was recognized for its outstanding contributions in the development of research, education, policy, and clinical practice environments that provide compassionate and competent care to inmates within the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

Although each member brings a different expertise to the group, they all share the desire to set forth one goal: improve the access to care for the underserved inmate population.

University Service Award

UConn’s School of Nursing moment is now, and Elizabeth T. Beaudin ’74, ’80 MSN, ’06 PhD seized the moment in advocating for patient health.

For her efforts in shaping the future of human health, Beaudin received the 2009 University Service Award at the Alumni Association Alumni and Faculty Awards celebration held on Friday, October 16, 2009.

Between 2005 and 2009, Beaudin has increased the support for research and fundraising efforts through her position as Chair of the School of Nursing Advisory Board. She has dedicated her time recruiting alumni and corporate support for the School. Her hard work has helped push forward the school’s goal to become one of the top 20 schools of nursing in the United States. As director of Nursing and Workforce Initiatives at the Connecticut Hospital Association, Beaudin leads the statewide effort to reduce the nursing shortage. She has taught graduate nursing students in the administration track and is on the adjunct faculty for UConn. No matter what role she plays, whether it is teaching, advocating, or serving as school representative to the media, Beaudin has been known to go above and beyond in bringing this school to its moment.
Moments

AWHONN Award

One of UConn’s School of Nursing notable professors has been paving the path towards the improvement of woman and infant health around the world through her renowned research and expertise in perinatal mood and anxiety disorder. For this, Cheryl Tatano Beck was awarded the 2009 Distinguished Professional Service Award for the Association of Women’s Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses.

Her many contributions to the field include the Postpartum Depression Screening Scale (PDSS) that was developed with emeritus professor of UConn’s Neag School of Education, Dr. Robert K. Gable. Currently, Beck is continuing her research with Jenniffer A. Barr from Brisbane, Australia, after working together on a 2008 Canadian Family Physician publication about infanticide. Their current research is now focusing on facilitating adaptations to motherhood for women suffering from postpartum depression. They aim to identify key interventions for recovery that minimize any long-term effects of this mental health problem.

For her eminent work she has been recognized as a UConn Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor in 2008 and was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in 1993. Beck’s dedication to improving care has helped women share special moments with their children.

The Dean’s Award for Caring

“The key to Betty’s caring heart is her ability to live wholly in the ‘precious now.’ It makes every communication worthy of her attention and her wonderful smile. People come away feeling valued. She’s a superb role model for nursing,” said Dean Bavier as she presented the Dean’s Award for Caring to Betty Garrison last May.

Betty Garrison, School of Nursing Admission and Enrollment secretary, was presented with a marvelous, one of a kind blown-glass heart as the second recipient of the “Dean’s Award for Caring” during Commencement 2009.

Garrison said later “When I heard Dean Bavier mention my name I looked around, then it dawned on me that it was me. I walked up still stunned because I felt there were other people that were deserving of the award.”

Garrison has dedicated 12 years to the School of Nursing. She is referred to as the students’ “go to” person, even if it has nothing to do with Admission and Enrollment. The relationships she has built with the students over the years have left an everlasting imprint in both the students’ lives and hers. Many students return to express their gratitude for all she has done.

Garrison says, “It’s a gratifying feeling, personally to see them accomplish what they are looking to do in life.”
A Guide to Our Students

UConnect Nursing alumnus Bereshith Adams attributes his academic success to two women: his mother (the nurse who inspired him to become a nurse) and Lisa Santor, recently retired as academic advisor in the School of Nursing.

During her tenure, Santor brought to her work the “tough love” of a mom and the curricular knowledge of an expert. As Lisa observes, “Sometimes I was the bearer of not the greatest news. In having to do so, I provided them with options and alternatives. After all, the students are why we are all at the university.”

Santor came to UConn after hearing that it was a good place to work, initially working in the Photonics Research Center. Later she was recruited to join Betty Garrison (see story on page 27) in nursing’s former Academic Advising Center. Looking back on her service to nursing students, Lisa remarks, “I enjoyed each and every student that came to me. I so enjoyed the different personalities and backgrounds. I grew from my experiences with them - and I miss them.”

Meet Our New Associate Dean

“I’ve been in love with UConn for more than 40 years, and with nursing almost that long. Since then, I’ve been preparing to be our School’s Associate Dean for Pre-Licensure Programs. But I didn’t even recognize that until Dean Bavier invited me to serve,” said Rhea Sanford, PhD, APRN. “I love nurses, nursing, nursing educators, and nursing students!”

After earning her UConn Bachelor’s in Psychology, Dr. Sanford worked in a psychiatric hospital. “Care was interdisciplinary. Our CNS nurses’ holistic viewpoints on patient care helped me recognize I yearned to be a nurse. So I went to Yale. Like our MEIN program now, Yale let me earn my RN and master’s in nursing relatively quickly. Later came my PhD from UConn School of Nursing.” Throughout Sanford’s career, her passion has been patient education.

“In 2007, I was thrilled by my joint appointment – UConn Health Center and our School--especially teaching ethics to nursing undergraduates. Our School always has done an exemplary job of populating Connecticut (and beyond) with superbly prepared nursing professionals, at every level. Our future looks even more dynamic and productive. It’s an exhilarating time to be part of it all, as an Associate Dean!”
We are now accepting nominations for the following alumni awards to be presented at the 2010 Reflections of Excellence event:

- The Carolyn Ladd Widmer Outstanding Alumni Award for Leadership in Nursing
- The Eleanor K. Gill Outstanding Alumni Award for Clinical Excellence in Nursing
- The Marlene Kramer Outstanding Alumni Award for Research in Nursing
- The Beverly Koerner Outstanding Alumni Award for Education in Nursing

Award criteria and instructions can be found on our web site at: www.nursing.uconn.edu/alumni or by contacting Kathe Gable at: 860.486.0613.
Alumni Weekend, June 5-6, 2009

Pictured above, alumni from numerous classes. Kudos to the classes of ’59, ’62 and ’69 for having a strong attendance.

(Photograph by Barbara J. Slater)

Plan a Reunion!
The UConn Alumni Association and School of Nursing want to support alumni with their reunion planning.

June 4-5, 2010

Campus wide activities
Friday: School of Nursing Luncheon, Pickle Awards & Husky Nightingale Nurse Ceremony.

For additional reunion information please contact Kathe.Gable@uconn.edu or phone 860.486.0613.

Class Notes

Malia Sedgewick Johnson ’56 BS
retired in 2009 after teaching for over 50 years in nursing Education. In her career she has taught at all levels of nursing education at Vanderbilt University, University of Texas, University of Hawaii, and most recently, Maui College.

Elizabeth (Koval) Fumiatti ’59 BS
was the president of VNA of Central Connecticut prior to retiring. Elizabeth presently serves as chairman of the Board of Hospital for Special Care and chair of the Center for Special Care (Parent Corp). She is an active Rotarian in New Britain-Berlin Rotary Club.

Dory P. (Twitchell) Lippert ’59 BS
is employed at Montgomery Hospice, Maryland, as a bereavement counselor where she facilitates a grief workshop and support group for bereaved family members.
Rita (Eurich) Metcalf ‘59 BS  
is currently a substitute nurse in occupational health. A 
year after moving out west, she became president of the 
Sociable Albuquerque Singles group, and wrote Eurich 
family history for the Ellis Island databank.

Marilyn (Alpert) Margolies ’64 BS  
retired from Phelps Memorial Hospital Center in Sleepy 
Hollow, NY, where she worked as Pre-Surgical Assessment 
RN. She would meet with patients before surgery to educate 
them about procedures, troubleshoot problems, coordinate 
activities, and complete the medical data. Although retired, 
she works per diem 4 – 5 days a month while still looking 
after her granddaughter, Ellie, two days a week.

Carol (Milardo) Floriani ’68 BS  
is currently retired in South Carolina, after relocating from 
California where she worked in nursing management. 
Despite her retired status, she has pursued hospice nursing 
in the upstate region of South Carolina. However, her 
retirement has not been consumed with work as she and 
herself husband, Robert, continue to travel and went to Italy 
in March 2009 for their 36th anniversary.

Lynn (Schwartz) Durham ’69 BS  
is self employed as a speaker, writer and well-being coach. 
Lynn is a contributing author to Touched by Angels of Mercy and 
Serving Productive Time. She also has an audio book 
titled Dancing Gracefully With Life.

Edilma Yearwood ’74 BS  
was recently promoted with tenure to the position of 
associate professor of nursing at Georgetown University 
where she has worked since 2002. Her specialties are 
cultural diversity and mental health with a focus on 
children, adolescents and families from Latin America and 
the Caribbean.

Joseph Blansfield ’75 BS  
Colonel, Army Nurse Corps, US Army Reserve, was 
awarded the Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious Service 
in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as Deputy 
Commander (Chief Nurse) of the 399th Combat Support 
Hospital from MA. In his 22 years of service he was 
deployed in 2001 to Kosovo at the time of 9/11, and later 
to Iraq in 2006-07 doing split based operations in Mosul, 
Tikrit and Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

Pictured left to right are award recipients : Pamela A. Thompson, 
Rich DiPentima and Cynthia Chernecky. (Photograph by Thomas Hurlbut)

**UConn School of Nursing Distinguished Alumni honored on October 30th**

Pamela A. Thompson ’71 BS, of American Organization of Nurse Executives – the Carolyn Widmer Outstanding Alumni Award for Leadership in Nursing.

Rich DiPentima ’74 BS, of the New Hampshire State House of Representatives – the Eleanor K. Gill Outstanding Alumni Award for Clinical Excellence in Nursing.

Cynthia Chernecky ’77 BS, of Medical College of Georgia – the Beverly Koerner Outstanding Alumni Award for Education in Nursing.

Barbara Hatcher ’67 BS, of American Public Health Association – the Josephine A. Dolan Distinguished Service Award. (not pictured)

Congressman Joe Courtney ’78 JD, of 2nd District of Connecticut – the Josephine A. Dolan Distinguished Service Award. (not pictured)

For additional award recipient information go to www.nursing.uconn.edu/alumni and click on the link for Reflections of Excellence.
Marylouise Welch ’80 MS, ’90 PhD (CLAS) was awarded the 2009 Reverend John J. Stack Teaching Excellence Award for her magnificent contributions to students’ education. She is the director of the graduate nursing program and a professor of nursing at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford, CT. Marylouise also is involved in a project that provides online education to nurses in Guyana.

Mary Jane Williams ’82 MS, ’95 PhD (NEAG) was the winner in the Teaching category of the 2009 Nursing Spectrum Nursing Excellence Awards of New England. At the University of Hartford in West Hartford, CT, she is the nursing department chair, and president/founder of the Nursing Career Center of Connecticut. Within the Connecticut Nurses Association, she chairs the government relations committee and works on policy issues on the state and national levels.

Diane Longobucco ’88 MS was honored at the third annual Sisters of Saint Joseph Awards ceremony for carrying on the mission set forth in 1987. She is a clinical nurse specialist for maternal-child services at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, CT.

Maggie Leavitt ’94 BS was recognized by Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, FL as the 2009 Nurse of the Year for her exceptional clinical knowledge and patient appreciation.

Juliette Shellman ’98 MS, ’03 PhD recently joined the Yale University faculty as an Assistant Professor in the Graduate Entry Prespecialty in Nursing program. In 2004, she was selected as a John A. Hartford Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity Post Doctoral Fellow at New York University for her research, remarkable commitment to geriatric nursing, and potential for future leadership.

Theresa Quell ’05, PhD (NEAG) is president of the Connecticut Nurses Association, vice president of Connecticut Southwestern Area Health Education Center, and a member of the Norwalk Board of Health. Theresa also is the assistant dean at Fairfield University’s School of Nursing.

Shaping the Future of Human Health: Our Moment for Conversation

The purpose of Our Moment for Conversation on March 5th was to follow-up on the energies ignited at our events and to mobilize our volunteers into action in support of our School. It worked!

The theme of the 2009 publically launched Campaign for UConn - Our Moment, Our University - was our stimulus for gathering alumni and friends to converse and strengthen the lifelong bonds between all members of the UConn family. Leaders of the groups (Alumni & Friends Society, Ambassadors, and Advisory Council, Emeritus/Former Faculty) focused on ways participants can give back to our School. Welcoming involvement from near or far, we underscored that there is a role for everyone on our team.

Our Moment for Conversation demonstrated our enthusiasm and plans for upcoming campaign related events to continually inspire alumni and friends. Please contact us if you are interested in new creative ways to engage our community—it’s Our Moment!

Send Updates!

Share news of your activities and accomplishments by completing our “Alumni Update” form at www.nursing.uconn.edu/alumni
“From small acorns, mighty oaks do grow,” according to a proverb familiar to residents of the Charter Oak state. Recent School of Nursing benefactor Richard Mansfield and his late wife Theresa personified it when they began saving almost thirty years ago to create two scholarships.

Dick Mansfield, a surveyor for the Connecticut Highway Department, and Theresa Mansfield, determined that they would create two scholarships, one in memory of a cousin, Natalie Nagle, the other of their son, John Michael, who died in the Vietnam Conflict. These scholarships would help students from Preston (where Dick grew up and has deep family roots) and its vicinity.

The Mansfield’s daughter, Norma, a 1968 alumna of UConn School of Nursing, became an Army nurse in order to help save the lives of wounded soldiers, and served in military hospitals in Japan during the Vietnam era. The acorn never falls far from the oak: she exemplified her parents’ ethos of service.

UConn Nursing is a family tradition. Mansfield’s niece, alumna Diane LaRochelle (’67 BS, ’73 MS, PhD, RN) served on the School’s faculty and as an associate dean, and was awarded the Beverly Koerner Outstanding Alumni Award for Education in Nursing in 2003.

In order to ensure that the gift makes a substantial contribution, Mansfield has stipulated that the scholarships may not be used before 2014, three decades after he and his wife began to set aside funds for this purpose.

Of the two scholarships, Mansfield said, “I hope that they give considerable help to students and impart in Preston, Connecticut, a memory of our family.”

Leave a legacy ...

take part in a once in a lifetime opportunity!

*Time is limited, so don’t hesitate in making a gift. A ground-breaking ceremony is planned for Spring 2011 and distinctive opportunities for naming spaces are available on a first-come first-served basis.*

If you are interested in naming a space or making a donation contact: Elaine Cunningham, Director of Development at (860) 486-0516 or via email at ecunningham@foundation.uconn.edu.
Join us to
Shape the Future of Human Health

nursing.uconn.edu/giving