Healthcare entrepreneur, angel investor, and adjunct professor for UConn School of Nursing's new Healthcare Innovations program, Christine Meehan (BS ‘74) entered UConn as a theater major. However, by her sophomore year, Meehan made a bold leap from performance art to nursing. Why the switch?

Meehan explains, “I met many wonderful people from the nursing program, and it was through them I learned about the program and became intrigued. With more research, I decided that it was a wonderful career opportunity which I continue to enjoy to this day.”

After earning her bachelor’s degree in 1974, Meehan began working as a charge nurse in Rockville General Hospital’s six bed ICU. Meehan later attended New York University in pursuit of her master’s degree, and then continued a twelve-year career in intensive care, specializing in hematology-oncology. During her clinical practice, she became involved with patients participating in a clinical study investigating a new cancer therapy with an implantable pump by Infusaid. With her experience using the device, Meehan was approached by the company to manage all of their customer clinical training for the new pump, leading to her first role in industry.

“It wasn’t a conscious switch from hospital to industry; however, my family asked me why I was leaving nursing,” Meehan reflects. “I always thought that was such an odd question, because in my mind I wasn’t. Just because I didn’t work in the hospital, didn’t mean I wasn’t a nurse.”

Instead, Meehan emphasizes the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship within nursing, as well as the entire healthcare industry. In addition to hospital based clinical practice, there are great opportunities for nurses in insurance, pharmaceutical, medical device, diagnostic companies, to provide important clinical and business activities that affect patient care.

Within industry, Meehan has always been involved with numerous start-ups developing innovative minimally invasive alternatives to traditional surgery. She has served as product manager and director for marketing for implantable pump therapies and pharmaceuticals. Her career then led her to France, where was appointed vice president of marketing and development and later executive vice president for a French medical device company. While in France, Meehan had the opportunity to acquire patented technology for minimally invasive dental surgery from the University of Grenoble. Returning to the United States, Meehan obtained FDA approval for the product and founded a small company called CADImplant, specializing in reducing the need for open flap surgery prior to a dental implant.

With the success of her company, Meehan began investing in women-owned companies and became an angel investor with Golden Seeds. While remaining active in angel investing in the Boston and New York area, Meehan move to Florida where she became active in the local Florida medical device start-up arena. ... continued
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In Florida, she was visited as an UConn alumna by a UConn Foundation development officer in 2011 for the School of Nursing, who was interested in her entrepreneurial success.

After hearing her story, the officer nominated Meehan for the Carolyn Ladd Widmer Outstanding Alumni Award for Leadership in Nursing. Returning to UConn to receive her award, Meehan met with Dean Regina Cusson, who recognized her experience as an entrepreneur to be a valuable asset to the School of Nursing.

“We both believe that nurses have the best ideas on how to improve our health care system, and, if we give them the tools to know how to make change happen, then we are empowering the next generation of nursing,” Meehan explains. “And that was the start of the Healthcare Innovations program here at the School of Nursing.”

Serving first as a judge in the Healthcare Innovations “Shark-Tank” event, Meehan is now appointed as adjunct professor for the expansion of the program.

From hospital to industry to entrepreneur to investor to academia, Christine Meehan approaches and welcomes each new opportunity with an open mind, eager for a challenge. “I think without recognizing it, I have always been willing to take a risk. Some people are uncomfortable in that environment, but as a nurse you learn to handle unexpected situations,” Meehan reflects. “I think nurses are more comfortable with risk than we realize and see the opportunities for innovative change.”

This is the third year for the SON’s Healthcare Innovation program and for more information please visit the SON website: www.nursing.uconn.edu and click on Healthcare Innovations program.