

2023

# UConn

SCHOOL OF NURSING

COMMENCEMENT,  
GRADUATE RECOGNITION  
AND AWARDS CEREMONY



# Order of Exercises

Bagpipe Introduction

Tabitha Heavner

Prelude and Processional

Grand Marshall Valorie MacKenna, Ph.D., RN, CNE, CHSE

*Director of Simulation-Based Education*

National Anthem

Welcoming Remarks

Deborah Chyun, PhD, RN, FAHA, FAAN

*Dean, School of Nursing*

Presentation of Citation to Honorary Degree Recipient

Deborah Chyun, PhD, RN, FAHA, FAAN

*Dean, School of Nursing*

Presentation of Alumni Awards

Deborah Chyun, *Dean, School of Nursing*

Commencement Address

Presentation of the Candidates

Conferral of Degrees

Kent Holsigner, *Vice Provost for Graduate Education,*

*Dean of The Graduate School*

Presentation of Awards

Deborah Chyun, *Dean, School of Nursing*

Alumni Greetings

Ryan Massicotte, *Vice President, Alumni Board*

Closing Remarks

Deborah Chyun, *Dean, School of Nursing*

Recessional

## Administration

Deborah A. Chyun, PhD, RN, FAHA, FAAN

*Dean and Professor*

Nancy Schmieder Redeker, Ph.D., RN, FAHA, FAAN

*Interim Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship*

Annette Jakubisin Konicki, Ph.D., APRN, ANP-BC, FNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

*Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs and Clinical Professor*

Annette Maruca, Ph.D., RN-BC, CNE, CCHP

*Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Clinical Professor*

## Full-Time Faculty

Ivy Alexander, PhD, APRN, ANP-BC,  
FAANP, FAAN

Valarie Artigas, DNP, APRN, NNP-BC

Michele Beaulieu, DNP, APRN, NNP-BC

Cheryl Beck, DNSc, CNM, FAAN

Sandra Bellini, DNP, APRN, NNP-BC, CNE

Katherine Bernier Carney, PhD, RN

Kristin Bott, DNP, APRN, ACNP-BC

Denise Bourassa, DNP, RNC, CNL, CNE

Anna Bourgault, DNP, RN, MSN, CCRC

Judy Brown, PhD, CG, MB (ASCP)

Angela Carrano, DNP, MSN, RN

Eileen Carter, PhD, RN

Sharon Casavant, PhD, RN

Michelle Cole, DNP, MSN, RN, CPN

Eileen Condon, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC

Dolores Coyle-Feliciano, MSN, RN

Christine DiLeone, PhD, RN

Carrie Eaton, PhD, RNC-OB, C-EFM, CHSE

Laura Eiss, MSN, RN, ACNS-BC, NPD-BC

Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN,  
FAANP

Jamie Gooch, DNP, APRN, ACNP-BC

Maurade Gormley, PhD, C-PNP

Tiffany Gwartney, DNP, APRN, NNP-BC

Wendy Henderson, PhD, MSN, CRNP,  
FAAN

Annette Jakubisin-Konicki, PhD, APRN,  
ANP-BC, FNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

Michelle Judge, PhD, RN, CD-N

Tiffany Kelley, PhD, MBA, RN-BC

Steven Kinsey, PhD

Kimberly Kobelski, MSN, RN

Leslie Lapointe, MSN, APRN, CPNP, CHSE

Cathi Lippman, MSN, RN

Maria Lisboa, EdS, MSN, RN

Ruth Lucas, PhD, RNC, CLS

Valorie MacKenna, PhD, RN, CNE, CHSE

Millicent Malcolm, DNP, GNP-BC,

AGPCNP-BC, APRN, FAANP

Annette Maruca, PhD, RN-BC, CNE,  
CCHP

Elizabeth Mayerson, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE

Christina McElroy, MSN, RN, CHPN

Brenda McNeil, DNP, FNP-BC, APRN

Amanda Moreau, MSN, RN

Denise Morris, MSN, CMSRN

Kelley Newlin Lew, DNSc, RN, CDE,  
FAAN

Barbara O'Neill, PhD, RN

Jessica Palozie, DNP, APRN, ACNP-BC

Amisha Parekh de Campos, PhD, MPH,  
RN, CHPN

MaryAnn Perez-Brescia, PhD, RN

Mallory Perry-Eeaddy, PhD, RN, CCRN

Louise Reagan, PhD, APRN, ANP-BC,  
FAANP

Nancy Redeker, PhD, RN, FAHA, FAAN

Melissa Rembish, MSN, RN-BC

Christina Ross, PhD, RN

Dawn Sarage, MSN, RN, CNL, CMSRN,  
CHSE

Shirley Sargent, PhD, RN, NEA-BC

Jean Sheerin Coffey, PhD, APRN, CPNP,  
FAAN

Juliette Shellman, PhD, RN

Natalie Shook, PhD

Marianne Snyder, Ph.D., RN

## Full-Time Faculty, cont.

Christine Tocchi, *PhD, APRN, BC-GNP*  
Hsinfen Tu, *MSN, RN*  
Thomas Van Hoof, *MD, EdD, FACMQ*  
Susan Virkler, *MSN, RN*  
Stephen Walsh, *ScD, MTS, SCM*

Beth Weldon, *MSN, RN*  
Carol Ann Wetmore, *MSN, RN*  
Mary Whalen, *DNP, NNP-BC, APRN*  
Wanli Xu, *PhD, RN*  
Gee Su Yang, *PhD, RN*

## Full-Time Staff

Constance Bedan, *MS*  
Serina Bowman, *BS*  
Shea Bridenbeck, *BS*  
Pamela Cartledge, *MA*  
Jaime Chase, *AS*  
Lindsay Darcy, *MA*  
Catherine Grosso, *MA, BA*  
Kim Hearn, *BS*  
Kathryn Huntington, *BA*  
Christopher Kilburn, *BS*  
Roston Kirk, *BA*  
Meredith Kuzel, *M.Sc.*

Aime Liggett, *MA, BS*  
Megan McNerney, *MFA, BA*  
Kaylea Medina, *MPH*  
David Neill, *BA*  
Ashley O'Connell, *MS*  
Meghan O'Connell, *MPH*  
Jill Reinhard, *MBA*  
Daniel Roggi, *M. Photog. Cr. Photog.*  
Catherine Salai, *BA*  
Heather Spottiswoode, *BA*  
Karen Stevens, *BS*  
Sarah Virkler, *BS*



# Commencement Speakers



**Cesarina Thompson, PhD, RN, ANEF, FASAHP**  
**2023 Recipient, The Beverly Koerner Outstanding Alumni**  
**Award for Education in Nursing**  
**Dean, College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions**  
**University of Hartford**



**Jessica Alicea-Planas, PhD, MS/MPH, RN, CHES**  
**2023 Recipient, The Marlene Kramer Outstanding Alumni**  
**Award for Research in Nursing**

# Doctor of Philosophy

## **Tumilara Aderibigbe\***

Psychosocial and Biological Determinants of Exclusive Breastfeeding in African American Women

Major Advisor: Ruth Lucas, Ph.D., RNC, CLS

## **Batool Almasri**

Development of Barriers and Facilitators of Chronic Cancer Pain Self-Management Instrument: A Mixed Method Study

Major Advisor: Deborah McDonald, RN, Ph.D

## **Tracey Arnold**

A Mixed Methods Exploration of Compassion Satisfaction, Compassion Fatigue, and Emergency Nurses' Caring Ability

Major Advisor: E. Carol Polifroni, EdD, CNE, RN, NEA-BC, ANEF

## **Megan McMahon Coco**

Sensory, inflammatory and psychosocial characteristics of chronic pain in adolescents and young adults with sickle cell disease

Major Advisor: Angela Starkweather, Ph.D., RN, ACNP-BC, CHRN, FAAN

## **Bright Eze**

Identifying Differential Psychosocial and Neurobiological Risk Factors of the Transition from Acute to Chronic Pain in Black and Non-Hispanic White Adults

Major Advisor: Angela Starkweather, Ph.D., RN, ACNP-BC, CHRN, FAAN

## **Timothea Vo\***

Experience of Postpartum Intergenerational Conflict between Vietnamese American Mothers and Their Vietnamese Immigrant Parents

Major Advisor: Cheryl Beck, DNSc, CNM, FAAN

## **Zequan Wang\***

Symptom cluster profiles and functional status among people with heart failure

Major Advisor: Deborah Chyun, Ph.D., RN, FAHA, FAAN

## **TingTing Zhao\***

The Exploration of the Impact of Early Life Pain/Stress on Mitochondrial Function and Neurobehavioral Outcomes in Preterm Infants

Major Advisor: Xiaomei Cong, PhD, RN, FAAN

## **Amy Lynn Zipf\***

Newly Graduated Registered Nurse Transition to Practice: A Mixed-Methods Study

Major Advisor: E. Carol Polifroni, EdD, CNE, RN, NEA-BC, ANEF

# Doctor of Philosophy Student Awards

Carolyn Ladd Widmer Award for Outstanding Research, PhD  
**Zequan Wang\***

Sigma Theta Tau PhD  
**Thea Vo**

# Doctor of Nursing Practice

## **Jeannette Ashley Adorno-Pacheco\***

Implementation of a Lateral Violence Educational Program for Nurses in an Acute Care Setting

Major Advisor: Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN, FAANP

## **Laura Betz McEwan\***

Program Evaluation of Depression Screening in Pregnancy

Major Advisor: Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN, FAANP

## **Emilee Christina Binette\***

Show and Tell: Photography and storytelling to better understand the family experience of end-of-life in the Intensive Care Unit

Major Advisor: Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN, FAANP

## **D'Ana Brooks\***

Evaluating Recommended Screening Practices for Long-Term Adult Allogeneic Transplant Patients by Advanced Practice Providers

Major Advisor: Denise Bourassa, DNP, RNC, CNL, CNE

## **Bliss Dasilva\***

Implementing Music therapy for Anxiety Reduction in Patients with Acute Coronary Syndrome

Major Advisor: Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN, FAANP

## **Salvatore Diaz\***

Barriers and Motivating Factors for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNS) to Continue Their Nursing Education Major Advisor: Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN, FAANP

## **Christina Garcia**

Utilization of Advanced Practice Providers for Acute Stroke Response: A Program Evaluation

Major Advisor: Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN, FAANP

## **Abiola J. Grant\***

"Yes I Can" An Educational Pilot Program: Improving Self-Efficacy in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Management

Major Advisor: Annette Jakubisin-Konicki, Ph.D., APRN, ANP-BC, FNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

## **Lisa Knoll**

The Standardization of Home Blood Pressure Monitoring in Primary Care: A Quality Improvement Project

Major Advisor: Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN, FAANP



# Doctor of Nursing Practice, cont.

**Katherine M. Leary**

Effect of a Competency Bootcamp on New Graduate Nurse's Transition to Practice and Work Readiness

Major Advisor: Jessica Palozie, DNP, APRN, ACNP-BC

**Carolyn Levy**

Breastfeeding Friendly Pediatric Primary Care

Major Advisor: Annette Jakubisin-Konicki, Ph.D., APRN, ANP-BC, FNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

**Benjamin Mahoney\***

Utilization of an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Clinical Champion to Enhance Hepatitis C Screening, Testing and Treatment Initiation within an Open Access Opioid Treatment Program

Major Advisor: Ivy Alexander, Ph.D., APRN, ANP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

**Heather Myrick\***

A Quality Improvement Project to increase Continuous Glucose Monitor use in Primary care practices

Major Advisor: Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN, FAANP

**Antoinette T. Padula**

Implementation of a Spaced Learning Program for Educating CRNAs on a Scalpel Bougie Cricothyrotomy Procedure for Emergency Front of Neck Access.

Major Advisor: Joy Elwell, DNP, FNP-BC, CNE, FAAN, FAANP

**Allison Underwood**

Improving Quality Measurement in Behavioral Health with a Performance Dashboard

Major Advisor: Annette Maruca, Ph.D., RN-BC, CNE, CCHP

## Doctor of Nursing Practice Student Awards

Josephine Dolan Award for the Scholarship of Application

**D'Ana Brooks\***

Sigma Theta Tau

**Bliss DaSilva\***

Eleanor K. Gill Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice

**Heather Myrick\***

# Master of Science

## Adult/Gerontology Acute Care

Nurse Practitioner

Kristen Bergman-Flores

Jennifer Blum

Diana J. Elwell

Ian Gregory Forbes

Kelly Kouzelis

Veronica Luster

Gregory MacKay

Celina Martinez

Ryan Jay Teopengco\*

Joanna Wyszomirski\*

Claudine Hight\*

Brittani Mannix

Jessica Marchetti

Kristina Merced

Zachary Miers

Faizun Nahar

Kelsey Newcomer

Samantha Nunez\*

Mary Richardson

Kristin Schrengost

Michelle Egoavil Solomos\*

Lijo Thomas

## Adult/Gerontology Primary Care

Nurse Practitioner

Rita Jeanne Blanko

Heather Mudano

## Post-Graduate Certificate NNP

Jill Beck

Serra Zadoorian

## Family Nurse Practitioner

Anna-Maria Alvares

Gabriella Beaulieu

Elise Bird

Kristen B. Delaney

Nathan Dorian\*

Gray Pendergast

Dana Tomford

SherryAnn Williams

Pei Zheng

## Nurse Leader

Carissa Contillo

Kelly Greene

Alyssa Grumoli

Patrick Krecidlo

Nicholas Sabolseky

Susan Elizabeth Wilson\*

## Nurse Educator

Nicole DiLoreto\*

Denica Gagnon

Katie Stevens

## Neonatal Nurse Practitioner

Mary Elizabeth Armstrong

Kristene L. Ballard

Ashley Bush

Savannah Byrd

Dia Chakravarty

Kristin M. Chatelain

Kristen Culmo

Erin Detorie

Gina M. Evans

Jessica Fatale

Megan Gilmore

# Master's Student Awards

Eleanor K. Gill Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice

**Rita Blanko**

**Ryan Teopengco**

**Jessica Marchetti**

**Gabriella Beaulieu**

**Alyssa Grumoli**

**Katie Stevens**

Sigma Theta Tau Master's

**Rita Blanko**

# Bachelor of Science

Katherine Aceves  
Erica Alworth  
Sarah Anderson\*  
Cara Andrews  
Natasha Angel  
Kara Beloin  
Alison Bennett  
Meredith Riley Brown\*  
Margaret Burke\*  
Leah Burstein  
Ryan Cabiati  
Megan Cabral\*  
Catherine Cantelmo\*  
Lharissa Charles  
Maxine Collins\*  
Ellie Michon  
Lydia D'Amato  
Fizza Dar  
Olivia De Paola  
Joshua DeVera  
Pagie DeGoursey  
Sara DePietri  
Jonathan Diaz  
Olivia DiBella\*  
Joseph DiBenedetto  
Zakary Disbrow  
Hannah Donne  
Stephanie Downes  
Ava Emmerich  
Hailey Falcone\*  
Kevin Fasulo\*  
Emily Findlan  
Amy Finneran  
Tarrese Folk  
Taryn Formanek  
Britney Fortune  
Irene Frempong  
Kelly Fresher  
Megan Gaboury  
Allison Georgetti  
Leah Graf\*  
Alexander Grandolfi  
Johanna Gutierrez  
Alexandra Gwara\*  
Rachel Colette Hage\*  
Bella Hamilton  
Charlotte Hamilton\*

Juliana Harakaly  
Jillian Healy  
Cole Hermsen  
Odalys Hernandez  
Erin Hickman  
Caitlyn Hochron  
Erin Hopkins  
Samantha Hosking  
Hailey Jimenez-Billings  
Jenna Joshi\*  
Aliza Kennelly  
Jenna La Selva  
Makena Lawrence  
Quyen Le  
Sanaa Leach  
Kathryn Loehle  
Ivette Lopez\*  
Alison Lopez-Valdivia  
Sydney Loverich\*  
Hannah Mallon  
Daniel Martone  
Zara Mason  
Sydney Melanson  
Megan Mendoza  
Kayla Mock\*  
Adam Mohsin\*  
Alexandra Montanaro  
Keyna Morales  
Huma Muzhar  
Trevor Nguyen  
Fallon O'Brien  
Jonathan Opramolla\*  
Mia Ortiz  
Ana Ortiz  
Sandra Osei-Boasiako  
Somachukwu Ozuzu  
Karla Palma  
Tulsi Patel  
Sydney Pearson  
Anna Pesola  
Alessandra Pinedo  
Heidi Placella  
Nick Portal  
Caroline Raffin  
Isabelle Ranaudo\*  
Skylar Rascati  
Shika Reji

Jennifer Rivard  
Destin Rivera  
Jose Luis Rodriguez-Sanchez  
Nicole Carolynn Rogers  
Jillian Rogers  
Tiana Rojas  
Holly Rosa  
Chloe Ruehl  
Alyzah Rumbaoa  
Megan Russell  
Alexandra Russell  
Lillian Satlof\*  
Julia Semmel  
Stephanie Joan Siracuse\*  
Natalie Lynn Katsetos  
Smerling  
Alexis Smith  
Emily Splain  
Gabrielle Thayer  
Merhunisa Uvalic\*  
Gabriela Valdiglesias De La Cruz  
Julia Vampatella  
Alyssa Viegas\*  
Erica Walsh  
Layla Wazorko  
Mackenzie Weng  
Enji Zhou\*

# Undergraduate Recognition and Awards

## Valedictorians



Jenna Joshi



Isabelle  
Ranaudo

### Senior Class Officers

Jillian Rogers – President

Megan Mendoza - Vice President

Lillian Satlof- Secretary

Tiana Rojas - Treasurer

Catherine Cantelmo - Community Service

Jose Rodriguez - Fundraising

### University Honors Laureate

Catherine Cantelmo

Rachel Hage

Karla Palma

Megan Russell

### Honors Students

Katherine Aceves

Leah Burstein

Emily Findlan

Leah Graf

Megan Mendoza

Sandra Osei-Boasiako

Julia Vampatella

Mackenzie Weng

Carolyn Ladd Widmer Undergraduate Leadership Award

**Rachel Hage**

Clara Williams Holistic Nurse Award

**Jillian Rogers**

Sigma Theta Tau Undergraduate

**Jenna Joshi**

# Sigma Theta Tau Members

Sigma Theta Tau is the International Honor Society of Nursing. On the basis of their academic achievements and their potential for nursing leadership, Sigma Theta Tau has inducted these students into its Mu Chapter, the 11th of more than 400 chapters of this honor society. They join many of our faculty who are Mu members as well.

## **PhD**

Tumilara Aderibigbe  
Timothea Vo  
Zequan Wang  
TingTing Zhao  
Amy Lynn Zipf

## **DNP**

Jeannette Ashley Adorno-Pacheco  
Laura Betz McEwan  
Emilee Christina Binette  
D'Ana Brooks  
Bliss DaSilva  
Salvatore Diaz  
Abiola J. Grant  
Benjamin Mahoney  
Heather Myrick

## **Master's**

Nicole DiLoreto  
Nathan Dorian  
Claudine Hight  
Samantha Nunez  
Michelle Egoavil Solomos  
Ryan Jay Teopengco  
Susan Elizabeth Wilson

## **Bachelor's**

Sarah Anderson  
Meredith Riley Brown  
Margaret Burke  
Megan Cabral  
Catherine Cantelmo  
Maxine Collins  
Olivia DiBella  
Hailey Falcone  
Kevin Fasulo  
Leah Graf  
Alexandra Gwara  
Rachel Colette Hage  
Charlotte Hamilton  
Jenna Joshi  
Ivette Lopez  
Sydney Loverich  
Kayla Mock  
Adam Mohsin  
Jonathan Opramolla  
Isabelle Ranaudo  
Lillian Satlof  
Stephanie Joan Siracuse  
Merhunisa Uvalic  
Alyssa Viegas  
Enji Zhou



# Student Award

## **Regina M. Cusson Healthcare Innovations Award**



**Sandra Osei-Boasiako**

BS  
Class of 2023

The Regina M. Cusson Healthcare Innovations Award is awarded annually at graduation to a University of Connecticut student and faculty member who have shown demonstrable commitment and interest in being an example for leading health care innovation through the School of Nursing.



# Alumni Award

## **The Beverly Koerner Outstanding Alumni Award for Education in Nursing**



**Cesarina Thompson, PhD, RN, ANEF, FSAHP  
Dean, College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions  
University of Hartford**

Dr. Cesarina Thompson is Dean of the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions (ENHP) at the University of Hartford, a position she has held since 2018. She was previously Dean for six years of the School of Health Sciences at American International College (AIC) in Springfield, MA. Dr. Thompson began her professional career as a registered nurse and practiced in acute care settings prior to pursuing a career in higher education. Dr. Thompson has over three decades of experience serving in faculty and leadership roles in institutions of higher education. Prior to assuming her first Deanship, she served as faculty and chair of the nursing department at Southern Connecticut State University and was interim associate dean of two schools at SCSU. Her teaching experience includes teaching in undergraduate and graduate nursing programs as well as doctoral programs in nursing education. She has led the development and implementation of new programs, increased the number and diversity of full-time faculty and students, oversaw successful professional program accreditation reviews, and secured funding to expand programs and construct new facilities.

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# Alumni Award

## **The Beverly Koerner Outstanding Alumni Award for Education in Nursing**

**Cesarina Thompson, PhD, RN, ANEF, FASAHP  
Dean, College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions  
University of Hartford**

Dr. Thompson's scholarship has focused primarily on nursing education. She has conducted research and published articles on effective teaching strategies, program outcomes assessment, critical thinking, as well as articles on academic leadership. Based on her scholarship in nursing education, Dr. Thompson was inducted as a Fellow in the Academy of Nursing Education in 2010. Dr. Thompson has been involved in several state and national organizations and task forces focused on advancing nursing and other health professions. She serves as a site visitor/team leader for the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), served on the Board of Directors of the Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions and was inducted as a fellow in the organization in 2021, and is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International. Dr. Thompson holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Bridgeport and earned a Master of Science in Nursing and PhD in Adult Learning from the University of Connecticut.





# Alumni Award

## **The Josephine A. Dolan School of Nursing Distinguished Service Award**



**Angela Martinelli, PhD, RN, CNOR  
Captain (Ret), US Public Health Service 2023**

Dr. Angela Martinelli is currently on staff at the Yale-New Haven Hospital in New Haven, Connecticut. Prior to moving to Connecticut, she was a Science Officer in the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, United States Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, U.S. Department of Defense. At CDMRP she managed a mixture of Psychological Health/Traumatic Brain Injury, Lung Cancer, and Defense Medical Research and Development research grants and contracts. Before joining CDMRP she was a Health Science Administrator at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the NIH, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Office of Science Policy (DHHS). She has also served as the Emergency Response Coordinator for the U.S. Public Health Service in the Office of the Secretary, Office of Public Health and Science, Office of Emergency Preparedness of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD), DHHS. Other duty assessments include Nurse Consultant at the Division of Nursing, Health Resources and Services Administration DHHS.

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# Alumni Award

## **The Josephine A. Dolan School of Nursing Distinguished Service Award**

### **Angela Martinelli, PhD, RN, CNOR Captain (Ret), US Public Health Service 2023**

Dr. Martinelli was on Active Duty in the U.S. Public Health Service (1998-2015) and has also served in the U.S. Army (1988-1992), U.S Army Reserves (1992-1998), and U.S. Air Force (1985-1988). She received her BS at Western Connecticut State University and her master's at the University of Connecticut, and her Doctorate in Philosophy (Nursing) from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Dr. Martinelli did her Post Doctoral Studies at the University of Michigan, School of Nursing in Health Promotion and Risk Reduction with a focus on smoking and nicotine. After post-doctorate training, she taught at Boston College and then in 1998 began her career in the USPHS at the Division of Nursing in the Health Resources and Services Administration.

As a Certified Operating Room Nurse, Dr. Martinelli has worked in this clinical arena since 1975. Since 1993, she has been a nurse with Operating Smile International serving in a variety of countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, South and Central America, and the Caribbean. In addition, Dr. Martinelli she is a nurse with Project Hope and was deployed to Puerto Rico in 2017 in response to Hurricane Maria.

Dr. Martinelli is the author of several papers, textbook chapters, and is a reviewer of professional manuscripts. She is a member of the Connecticut Medical Reserve Corps, Region 5 and represents USPHS nurses on the Military Officers of America Association Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter (MUSNAVC).



# Alumni Award

## **The Marlene Kramer Outstanding Alumni Award for Research in Nursing**



**Jessica Alicea-Planas**  
**PhD, MS/MPH, RN, CHES**

Dr. Jessica Alicea-Planas is Associate Professor at the Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies at Fairfield University, where she served previously as Director of the Undergraduate Public Health program. Other professional experiences include being a Training and Technical Assistant/Consultant for the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health and Safety where she provided health and safety trainings to all 12 regions served by the Office of Head Start, as well as a Family Childcare Health consultant for the Connecticut Nurses Association, and as a Quality Improvement Clinical Co-ordinator at Optimus Healthcare. Her nursing background is community and public health-focused and she is a certified health education specialist. She has worked for the last 25 years in low-resourced areas, locally and abroad with a focus on chronic disease management and health promotion for vulnerable populations through a health literacy and health equity lens.

Dr. Alicea-Planas received her BSN from the University of Connecticut, a Master's in Public Health from Southern Connecticut State University and completed her PhD at the University of Connecticut School of Nursing. She has conducted research and collaborated with various community agencies on multiple health promotion initiatives in the Bridgeport, CT region and has also been a team-member on community-based participatory research projects in Managua, Nicaragua and worked with migrant families in the coffee farming regions as well. Additional projects have included a public health nursing immersion experience in Puerto Rico, faculty collaboration in Cuba, and the conduct of field studies in Guatemala, as well as an international health practicum in the Dominican Republic.

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# Alumni Award

## **The Marlene Kramer Outstanding Alumni Award for Research in Nursing**

### **Jessica Alicea-Planas PhD, MS/MPH, RN, CHES**

Dr. Alicea-Planas has an impressive record of dissemination of her scholarly work with 22 professional journal publications, two book chapters, two opinion editorials, 16 refereed presentations, 14 invited presentations, and seven media, interviews and social media citations. Funding of her scholarly work has included the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Henry Schein Cares Foundation.

Dr. Alicea-Planas has a distinguished record of service including being the current President of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses- CT chapter. She has also served as a board member for the Hispanic Health Council and as Communications and Networking Committee Chair for the Latina Researchers Network. She has served on AACN's Essentials Work Group and their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work Group. Dr. Alicea-Planas was a past recipient of Fairfield University's Faculty Award for Excellence in Community Engagement.



# Faculty Award

## **E. Carol Polifroni Scholarship of Praxis Award**



**Denise Bourassa**

DNP, RNC, CNL, CNE

Assistant Clinical Professor

Director, Nursing Leader and Nursing Educator tracks

The E. Carol Polifroni Scholarship of Praxis Award is given annually at graduation to a School of Nursing faculty member who has shown exemplary integration of theory, philosophy, research, and practice. UConn School of Nursing would not be the renowned institution it is today without the efforts and influence of E. Carol Polifroni. Over 47 years at UConn, Dr. Polifroni made a lasting impact on the School, the University, the state, and the international arena of nursing with her work on the philosophy of science and leadership. She served the School as interim dean three times and was its dean from 2016 to 2018. Most notably, she served in the School's first faculty practice plan, helped establish the Ph.D. program in 1994, created the accelerated, second-degree program in 2003, and served the University in a variety of roles. Dr. Polifroni served as major advisor to 17 Ph.D. graduates and associate advisor to more than 30 Ph.D. and DNP graduates. She received more than \$7.5 million in external grants in support of diversifying the nursing workforce and developing the next generation of nurse educators, but her most valuable contributions to the School were her enduring leadership and dedicated mentorship of future nurses.



# Faculty Award

## **Pellegrina (Peggy) Lacovella Stolfi Clinical Teaching Award**



**Karen Barrett**

MSN, RN  
Adjunct Clinical Faculty



**Kendra Chmura**

MSN, RN, EMT-B, CPEN  
Adjunct Clinical Faculty



**Caitlyn Clyburn**

MSN, RN  
Adjunct Clinical Faculty

Peggy Stolfi has embodied clinical teaching excellence in both our traditional and accelerated CEIN/BS nursing programs for the last 21 years. Not only did she love what she was doing every day, but she built strong relationships with clinical partners, most significantly the Hartford Public School System and Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Throughout her time at UConn, Peggy went above and beyond to create meaningful, memorable, and quality clinical learning experiences for our students.



# Faculty Award

## **John McNulty Excellence in the Scholarship of Clinical Education Award**



**Laura Eiss**

MSN, RN, ACNS-BC, NPD-BC  
Clinical Instructor

### **John McNulty ... a teacher extraordinaire**

John was a nurse's nurse and a teacher's teacher. When he cared for patients, they were his whole focus. When he was teaching, the student was at the center of all his activities. As undergraduate program director for several years, he taught medical surgical nursing as he administered the program with more than 400 students. Proud to be Professor McNulty, John believed he needed to engage the students in order for them to learn; he could not just teach. He entertained them through his skits, drew them in through his stories from his work experience as a weekend supervisor, and always made them think through creating alliterations, plays, and sonnets. His NCLEX bootcamp and march toward passing on the first try is a UConn legend. John knew when to challenge the status quo and used student learning as his compass for decisions. Students were his life's work and yet he knew work-life balance. He assured the parents of our students that safety was the most important thing on a college campus, because his own daughters were the fulcrum of his world. Safety, study, and fun, in that order, was his mantra.

# P RAXIS

Professionalism in behavior, presentation,  
and conduct

Respectful of the richness and diversity of  
others and of self

Accountability for my actions

excellence in scholarship, practice, teaching,  
and service

Integrity, inquisitiveness, and innovation

Service to the profession and the community