

Impacting NEXT GENERATION Nurses

Enthusiastic Support for UConn's Nursing Tradition

"Sooner or later, everyone needs a nurse," says Patricia Werner Bender '69, and if she had her way, all nurses would receive the compassionate and science-based training she received from UConn.

"They take the holistic view," says Bender, "They consider not only the physical aspects of illness, but also the side effects, including the psychological impact and the effect on the family."

Bender believes the School of Nursing does a particularly good job of preparing nurses for their role at the center of health care. "Health care has changed significantly since I was at UConn, and the School of Nursing has kept up with the needs of nurses, thoroughly preparing them for their careers. The students are ready when they graduate, and they transition smoothly into the real world of nursing work."

"The School of Nursing gave us skills, values, and leadership abilities that were transferable to many areas of our lives," adds Bender, whose long career as a nurse includes practice in settings from hospital-based bedside to community outreach, to staff development and private practice. "My UConn education was invaluable in providing me with the framework to provide quality care wherever I went."

Bender's support for the School of Nursing has been long and varied. She has established two scholarship



Patricia Werner Bender '69

funds, one in honor of her father, Robert A. Matheson, a 1941 UConn grad, and one to honor Harold and Lillian Lester, the aunt and uncle who encouraged her interest in nursing as a profession. She also has established an endowed fund to provide program support for the School, and she is an active volunteer; advocating for the School whenever possible.

"Patricia Bender exemplifies not only the technical and scientific abilities of today's nurses but also the empathy that makes a great nurse," says School of Nursing Dean Regina Cusson, who recently recognized Bender with the Josephine A. Dolan Award for Distinguished Service. The award is named after the first faculty member hired by Dean Widmer. "Jo was the glue that held the school together, just as Pat believes that nurses are the glue that holds together the health care system," says Cusson.

"The School of Nursing makes it easy for me and so many others to give back," says Bender. "We are so proud of the accomplishments of our School's faculty, staff and students. I feel enriched and blessed by my UConn education and I think it's important to support the School and its tradition of providing an exceptional education and graduating great nurses."