

Pitt | nurse

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF NURSING MAGAZINE
Fall 2019

**INNOVATION
IN NURSING**

**Bringing Care
to the Community**

In this magazine, we often focus on what our alumni do as the figures we admire and show as the tangible evidence of success.

And indeed, the success of our alumni is important to us. Our alumni are more than 13,000 strong and are changing the face of nursing.

But they aren't necessarily unusual. Nurses everywhere are doing just that. They are changing care delivery and nursing research

nursing for research funding from the National Institutes of Health and nearly a dozen patents held by Pitt Nursing faculty. Nurse researchers are drivers of new nationally established evidence-based guidelines for patient care, for nursing workforce development, and for holistic approaches to what nursing truly means. Their contributions are felt around the world every day from their hands-on participation in curriculum development and teaching and from the concepts that faculty have worked to distribute to audiences beyond the walls of the University.



“Nurse researchers are drivers of new nationally established evidence-based guidelines for patient care, for nursing workforce development, and for holistic approaches to what nursing truly means.”

In this edition of *Pitt Nurse*, we look at the little (and not so little) ways that nursing faculty and nurse researchers at the school are changing how the world thinks about innovation. You'll see how care is being changed to serve the community in more culturally sensitive ways and how faculty teach students to do the same. You'll also

and science. They are leading hospital systems, military commands, health departments, and nonprofit organizations. And they are continuing to provide the same bedside care that many people envision at the mention of nursing as a profession.

By their very nature, nurses are thinkers. Every day of their careers—and starting even before they earn their first degree—nurses are always thinking of what comes next and how to plan for that scenario. In particular, nurse researchers and nurse leaders are innovative and inquisitive—driving the excellence behind everything that goes on both behind the scenes and in the classroom. And as they do this, they find new ways to define what innovation is, what it looks like, and who it benefits.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing has reinforced this behavior since its founding in 1939—a fact supported by its ranking as fourth in the country among schools of

explore more technology-based hands-on projects that give new mothers support and that give clinicians the tools they need to better do their jobs. And you'll get a glimpse of the ways that our faculty, students, and alumni are continuing to redefine innovation in their day-to-day lives.

As we get deeper into cooler weather and the great adventures that this time of year brings, I invite you to read this issue and reflect on innovation as it applies to your life. How does this often-tossed-about buzzword take on new meaning given your lived experiences? What are you doing that creates new ways of solving old problems?

Thank you for your support of the School of Nursing, and enjoy a pleasant fall with your favorite people and things.

Jacqueline Dunbar-Jacob, PhD, FAAN
Dean and Distinguished Service Professor of Nursing
University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing

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INNOVATION BEYOND THE BEDSIDE:

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When *Good Morning America* broadcast live from Pittsburgh this summer, BSN senior Kathleen Weiser (sixth from the left) was there to greet it! Weiser, in addition to managing her busy nursing class load and clinical schedule, is a Pitt cheerleader and was there with her teammates to welcome *Good Morning America* to our city.

Faculty Recognized for Excellence in Teaching

The 2019 recipients of the School of Nursing Dean’s Distinguished Teaching Awards are Salah Al-Zaiti, PhD, associate professor (tenure track), and Betty Braxter, PhD, assistant professor and associate dean for undergraduate education (nontenure track). Al-Zaiti and Braxter were recognized this summer at a school event.



Students and peers noted that Al-Zaiti has a special talent for explaining complex concepts and getting important messages across to students. He is an innovative and creative instructor who has developed materials and individual tutoring techniques that allow students to thrive. Al-Zaiti’s nomination noted that he is such an influence on his students that they used a picture of him as the cover picture for their group chat home page.



Braxter has dedicated herself to the School of Nursing and the greater Pittsburgh community. As the primary teacher for Nursing Care of Mothers, Newborns, and Families, she is able to provide students with experiences that better connect the sequences between didactic and clinical experiences and doing.

Braxter’s peers noted that she never says no and strives to make the undergraduate maternal-infant health experience one of the top programs in the country.

Midwifery Program Celebrates Milestone

The University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing is proud to celebrate the first graduate of its nurse-midwife DNP program, which launched in September 2016. Jessie Holmquist (BSN ’14) received her degree at the Summer Graduation and Pinning Ceremony, held August 9.

Holmquist will now sit for her certification exam before moving into patient care. Holmquist was a 2017 recipient of the March of Dimes Dr. Margaret C. Freda Graduate Nursing Scholarship Award.

The new midwife was welcomed into the profession with a hand blessing ceremony held the evening of summer graduation. This ceremony marks the transition from student to graduate professional and gives a demonstrative sign of the graduate’s acceptance into a new community of providers.

Faculty and Staff Retirements

The University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing bid farewell and fond wishes to several members of its faculty and staff at the close of the 2018–19 academic year.

Susan Albrecht, PhD, RN, FAAN
Associate professor emeritus,
Department of Health Promotion
and Development

Albrecht was with the school and the University for 40 years, most recently serving as associate professor in the Department of Health Promotion and Development. She led and taught in a variety of areas during her time at Pitt, including graduate and undergraduate studies, and served as an honors BPhil advisor, a doctoral student advisor, and a dissertation committee chairperson. A fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, she mentored faculty and hospital clinical administrators as they completed their applications for fellowship.

Jan Dorman, PhD
Professor emeritus, Department of
Health Promotion and Development

Dorman served at the University for more than 40 years, holding secondary appointments in the Departments of Epidemiology and Human Genetics at the Pitt Graduate School of Public Health. Her previous duties included serving as associate dean for research at Pitt Public Health and the School of Nursing and working on Pitt's University Research Council, the Provost's Advisory Committee on Women's Concerns, and many public health and epidemiological committees.

Carol Hodgkiss
Department coordinator, Educational
Technology and Innovation

Hodgkiss was with the School of Nursing for more than 45 years. She was a tireless member of the Staff Council and worked on obtaining many benefits that staff across the University have today, including paid parental leave.

Rachel Libman, DNP, RN
Assistant professor, Department of
Health Promotion and Development

Libman served at the School of Nursing for nearly 30 years. She was the primary teacher and clinical instructor for juniors taking Nursing Care of Children and Families as well as a clinical faculty member for the seniors' Transitions into Nursing course. Additionally, Libman worked with simulation programs and technology.

Donna Nativio, PhD, FAAN, FAANP
Associate professor emeritus,
Department of Health Promotion
and Development

Nativio was a member of the school and University communities for almost 50 years. She was director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program, associate professor, and coordinator of the family and neonatal nurse practitioner DNP areas of concentration. Nativio is a past officer of the American Nurses Association, National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, and Pennsylvania State Nurses Association. She was elected to fellowship in the American Academy of Nursing in 1989 and was elected a federal Primary Care Health Policy fellow in 1997.

Kathryn Puskar, DrPH, RN, FAAN
Professor emeritus and former
associate dean for undergraduate
education

Puskar was with the school for 40 years. She was director of the honors program at the School of Nursing and previously served as director of the master's clinical nurse specialist program in psychiatric nursing and interim chair of the Department of Health and Community Systems. Puskar taught, supervised, and mentored many undergraduate, master's, and doctoral nursing students. Her work has been recognized with a Pennsylvania Nightingale Award for Nursing Research, the American Psychiatric

Nurses Association Award for Excellence in Research, and induction into the Sigma Theta Tau International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame. Puskar was granted emeritus status.

Valerie Swigart, PhD, RN
Professor emeritus, Department of
Health Promotion and Development

Swigart was with the University for more than 30 years. Her research focused on the interface of technology, health care, ethics, and human behavior. She served as the principal investigator or coinvestigator for numerous National Institutes of Health-sponsored and smaller studies. Publications evolving from these studies have supported better understanding of the processes of surrogate decision making regarding life-sustaining technology, the impact of long-term mechanical ventilation, homeless persons' health care-seeking behaviors, Middle Eastern women's experiences of sexual harassment and domestic abuse, and the use of online education to support clinical language learning. The generosity of Swigart and her husband, Michael Gold, led to the creation of the Swigart/Gold Doctoral Award for Scholarship in Nursing Ethics, which benefits a selected PhD candidate each year.

Barbara Usher, PhD, RN
Associate professor, Department of
Health and Community Systems

Usher was active in improving palliative care and was dedicated to geriatric care throughout her career. She received numerous grants to support her work and in 2015 was a recipient of an honorable mention from the Aging Institute of UPMC Senior Services and the University of Pittsburgh Research Day, for work she did on pain reporting and management for residents of long-term care centers who are nonverbal.



Vital Signs:

Keeping Fingers on the Pulse of the Profession and Moving It Forward

In 1954, the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing became a pioneer in nurse education by launching a PhD program—one of the first in the country. Since its founding, the PhD program has been a leader in moving nursing science forward by advancing nursing practice, research, apprenticeships, and continuing education. One might even say that nursing science is intricately woven into the school's DNA.

How are nurse PhDs different from the nurses in the clinic and the hospital? Marilyn Hravnak (MSN '83, PhD '00), director of the PhD program, says research is key. "Instead of creating a path to clinical practice as a staff nurse or nurse practitioner, the nurse PhD program puts students on the path to become nurse-scientists."

A nurse-scientist assesses disease pathology, wellness best practices, and gaps in patient care that can be analyzed in a study and eventually applied to clinical care. "In nursing research, you aren't focused on just one practice or one

“In nursing research, you aren’t focused on just one practice or one unit or one system. You’re trying to innovate; to change practice around the globe.”

Marilyn Hravnak



unit or one system,” Hravnak explains. “You’re trying to innovate; to change practice around the globe; to create changes that will work in Texas, California, or even Saudi Arabia.”

Though the demands of nursing and nurse education have multiplied in intensity and pace since its first PhD class graduated in 1957, Pitt Nursing remains committed to advancing nursing science.

The doctoral program’s most recent innovation includes a nurse apprenticeship program—a new requirement for every PhD candidate. “The apprenticeship model involves pairing the student with a research mentor. Students might work on a project with a technological focus, like big data, or cancer research. The goal is that the student is embedded in a research team,” explains Hravnak. “They attend team meetings, learn about grantsmanship and budgeting, and learn about the project management aspect of running a funded grant.”

In addition, the apprenticeship program affords students the opportunity to develop scholarly output. Candidates must write an abstract and a paper on their research findings separate from their PhD dissertation. “It gives candidates opportunities they otherwise wouldn’t have until after graduation,” Hravnak says.

As the fourth-largest recipient of National Institutes of Health funding among schools of nursing, Pitt Nursing offers PhD candidates a wealth of opportunities to dig deep into some of the most relevant clinical topics of today.

Specific areas of inquiry are contained within the school’s four research hubs:

- Excellence in eHealth Research, which focuses on emerging information and communication technologies that are revolutionizing wellness;
- Genomics of Patient Outcomes, which focuses on investigating genetic susceptibility to disease;
- Behavioral Mechanism of Symptoms and Cancer Treatment Adherence, which examines associations between disease-related symptoms and treatment-related side effects that influence patient adherence to prescribed cancer therapy; and
- Sleep and Circadian Rhythms, which looks at sleep and circadian rhythms and how they affect functional outcomes over the life span.

The studies conducted within each of these four hubs are designed to deliver high-impact results that drive everyday policy and practice decisions.

Part of striving for excellence is evaluation, and Pitt Nursing has a unique position held by Amy Bowser, PhD, that addresses just that. “There aren’t many nursing schools that have a director of evaluation, someone who is overseeing outcomes of the school—measuring how we’re doing and ensuring that we’re doing well to meet our own high standards.”

“Where do we want our students to be? Are they getting there? If not, what are we going to do to be able to get them there?”

Amy Bowser

communicate effectively in writing and orally will be able to use technology in their field, will be able to critically think about and synthesize information and apply it.”

She adds, “And we do that not just for students but also for the curriculum.” Pitt constantly performs quality control to evolve programs to meet the needs of the profession. Bowser says administrators pose questions like, “Where do we want our students to be? Are they getting there? If not, what are we going to do to be able to get them there?” She adds, “It’s exciting to be able to measure how students are doing and see how well they are actually performing—that they’re meeting and exceeding the school’s set benchmarks.”

Outcomes are products of inputs, and student outcomes, such as employment and professional publications, depend on quality input in the form of quality instruction. The School of Nursing pays a great deal of attention to the quality of its faculty performance. For instance, for the past year, Carol Washburn, EdD, director of the Center for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Pitt Nursing, has been evaluating large lecture classes and collecting data on the approaches instructors take and the way students learn to ensure that the school is nimble and can adapt to the needs of today’s students. “We’re looking into the evidence-based teaching strategies to improve student learning outcomes,” says Washburn.

One faculty development goal is to make classes more interactive. Faculty know that the students are bringing devices into the classroom. “It’s difficult to engage them when they’re distracted by their laptops or phones,” says Washburn. So, the faculty are using the presence of these

Bowser’s role is to ensure that student learning outcomes are consistent with the school’s goals. She explains, “Pitt says every graduate will be able to

devices for good. “We’re using a software called Top Hat to ask questions and get instant polling results to see how students are tracking with lecture material,” says Washburn.

Even after they receive their diplomas, nursing grads must dedicate a tremendous amount of time and effort toward staying abreast of developments in the field and keeping their nursing licensure active through continuing education. Pitt makes a career-long commitment to its nursing alumni, explains Mary Rodgers Schubert (DNP ’14), director of continuing education. “In the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, you need 30 hours of continuing education every two years to renew your nurse’s license. We deliver continuing nursing education contact hours so that nurses can renew their licenses and stay abreast of the current findings in the field.”

Accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, Pitt Nursing creates continuing education programs by identifying a learning need—whether for knowledge, skills, professional development, or practice—and delivering contact hours to address that need, says Schubert. Much of the focus is placed on educating advanced practice nurses—nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse executives. And quite often, PhD graduates who have had a grant and developed their own research will create continuing education programs that help them to disseminate their findings.

Schubert says one of the biggest areas for professional development in nursing is keeping pace with technological innovation and communication skills. “Making sure that nurses are aware of how to have open, clear, and concise communication with people has never been more important,” she adds. “Listening skills are equally important, and we have focused a lot of continuing education around these topics.” She explains that, with Pitt’s strong research agenda, “graduates of our PhD program are the ones who are going to help create the new knowledge that will continue to help the profession to grow.”



Innovation Beyond the Bedside:

Pitt Nursing in the Community

When she was completing her first undergraduate degree in the mid-1960s, Claudia Kregg-Byers (BSN '04, PhD '14), RN, MPH, promised herself three things: She would never be a secretary, she would never be a teacher, and she would never be a nurse.

So far, she has succeeded in only one of those goals.

Kregg-Byers teaches senior nursing students in the Department of Health and Community Systems. She says the mission of her teaching is to get her students to recognize that nursing doesn't begin and end at the bedside; rather, nursing extends far beyond the boundaries of the clinic, and even transcends time by reaching into a patient's history and taking their future into consideration.

“Patients come from somewhere, and they go somewhere.” This, she says, is her guiding philosophy.

It's a philosophy that is striking in its radical simplicity. Of course, patients don't just appear at a hospital. Some drive, some arrive by ambulance, some take the bus. Some come from two minutes away and some from hours away. But how often do providers consider where that patient came from or where they'll return to once treatment is complete? And, more importantly, how do those factors affect that patient's ability to remain healthy?

Where someone comes from and returns to, Kregg-Byers explains, is a whole confluence of communal and individual factors: environment, county, neighborhood, home, culture, standard of living, education, socioeconomic status, friendships, family, support systems. There are differences between the patient who came on the bus and the patient who drove—differences that merit providers' attention.

“Everything we do at the bedside is not going to be sustainable if we don’t consider where they come from and where they’re going after we’ve done the best that we can do.”

Claudia Kregg-Byers

She gives the example of an opioid user who could show up at a hospital and receive the highest quality care and nursing, preventative techniques, and medicine.

“But,” she says, “they’re going to return to an atmosphere that is inundated with the kind of lifestyle (that may negatively impact substance use). It is really hard for health care providers to keep them functioning at the highest level.

“Everything we do at the bedside is not going to be sustainable if we don’t consider where they come from and where they’re going after we’ve done the best that we can do.”

To get her students to think about where patients come from and return to, Kregg-Byers sends them into communities to observe factors that might affect those residents. Are there political signs in yards? How close is public transportation? Is there a local economy? How many churches, community centers, and businesses are there? Her goal is to stretch her students’ comfort levels and have them take stock of the outside influences that affect patients and their health decisions, both before they become sick and after they’ve received a diagnosis.

She also invites experts from different nursing fields into her classroom, from school nurses to those working with immigrant populations, to talk about the ways they adjust their nursing to meet the needs of their patients.

“You have a gift as a nurse, but sometimes you have to modify that gift,” Kregg-Byers says. “I want to let them think about the diversities that they’re going to confront and learn how to respect and treat these folks with dignity.” The most important thing, she says, is that students learn not to judge their patients and how to deliver the same care to all patients across the broad spectrum of their life experiences.

Each patient is a person, and each person’s life extends beyond the boundaries of bedside care. The extra effort of considering what lies beyond those boundaries is what Kregg-Byers hopes her students will continue to put forth. It’s also what Margaret Rosenzweig (MSN ’86, PhD ’01), FAAN, is trying to help cancer researchers consider when they conduct clinical trials.

Rosenzweig was recently named associate director for catchment area research at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center and is co-chair of the center’s Committee for Health Equity and Community Outreach & Engagement. The members of this interdisciplinary group work together to make sure that patients’ environments and realities are considered when it comes to basic cancer research. A combined team of physicians, nurses, and researchers, the group is responsible for assessing the 29-county catchment area of UPMC Hillman Cancer Center to identify specific cancer-related risk factors. The catchment area covers about half the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, so while some of the factors are more general, other cancer burdens are specific to western Pennsylvania, like high smoking rates, obesity, and racial disparities in lung cancer treatment.

“Those are unique to our area, so we want to say that we’re addressing that not just through community outreach but also that the research agenda of the cancer center takes into consideration the specific cancer burdens in this catchment area.”

This kind of thinking isn’t new to Rosenzweig, who has spent much of her career researching and addressing racial and socioeconomic gaps in health care. Her interest in community engagement began with one of her first clinical assignments as a young nurse, working with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps to staff a clinic in southern Louisiana. The clinic was going to be closed because there was no money to staff it. Rosenzweig and a few other nurses and social workers stepped in to keep the clinic open for the rural farm workers who relied on it. This experience ignited a lifelong passion to study and work to ameliorate health care disparities.

In 2018, Rosenzweig won one of the first Pitt Seed Grants to continue her work with the Allegheny County Breast Consortium.

“We are trying to build this even further through an initiative of wellness—to say that breast health is part of overall health, really focused on being female and all the things females in lower income communities face.”

Margaret Rosenzweig



The consortium aims to help women think seriously about their breast health, especially in communities where women are not as likely to seek or receive adequate treatment. Rosenzweig is focused specifically on the context of that message. She wants to frame the discussion in terms of a healthy woman and empowering women from low-income communities and communities of color.

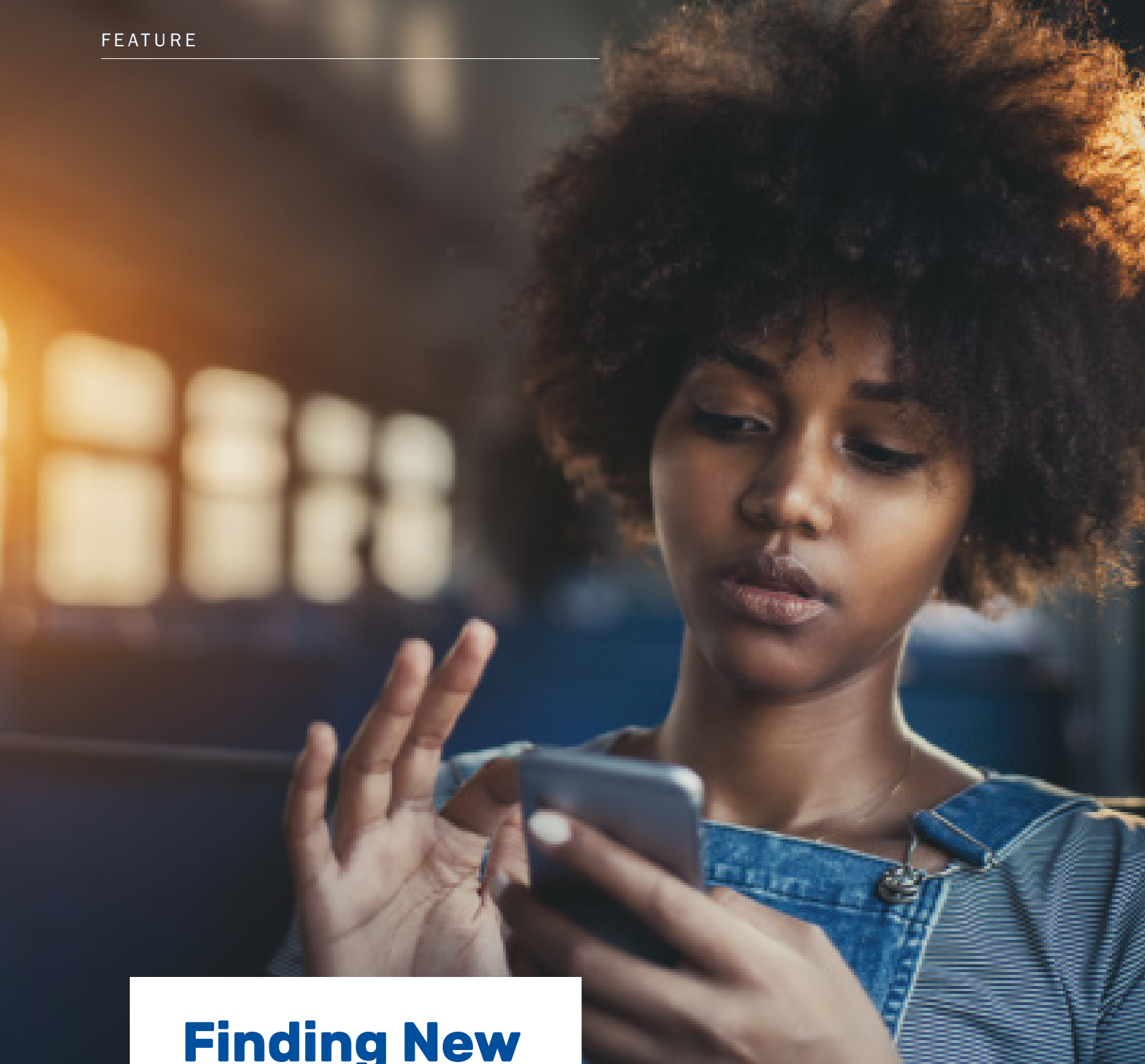
“We are trying to build this even further through an initiative of wellness—to say that breast health is part of overall health, really focused on being female and all the things females in lower income communities face.”

Rosenzweig knows she can't march into a community and say, “We're here to help.” This was a mistake made by researchers in the past, who invited themselves into minority neighborhoods to lecture rather than listen and to recruit rather than invest. The key difference in her approach is making sure the issue at hand is one the community wants to work on. She approaches community leaders and attends meetings to present data about health disparities in hopes that she can persuade the community that the issue of breast health deserves attention. Part of gaining its attention and trust is by sharing relevant data—for example, that African American women have lower mammography rates. Once she has presented the evidence, she poses the question to the leaders.

“Is this compelling enough for people to want to work on this? Because there are lots of compelling problems in poor neighborhoods, so you are sort of competing for the community leaders' attention.”

McKeesport and Braddock were two neighborhoods in the Pittsburgh area where the community leaders agreed that breast cancer was a pressing issue, and the consortium began establishing a presence in the communities as a resource for women's health. With one year of grant funding left, Rosenzweig hopes that by the end of the grant cycle, the consortium will have a permanent presence in Braddock and McKeesport in the form of holistic wellness and resource centers for women. Though Rosenzweig says her goal is not to reinvent the wheel, the program already has in some ways, by favoring sustained community engagement over specific clinical outcomes and putting the communities' needs first.

The practices and philosophies of Kregg-Byers and Rosenzweig go hand in hand. Both are encouraging students and researchers to consider the places patients come from and return to, places that are disproportionately burdened, lacking in health resources, and far beyond the clinic. And both are doing their part to make sure those needs, and those neighborhoods, are not overlooked.



Finding New Solutions to Timeless Concerns:

Using the Power of Nursing to Address Care Needs

Nursing is a field of constant innovation. While researchers explore novel ways of delivering care, on the job, nurses create new techniques to address emerging challenges.

From reframing substance use to delivering words of advice and encouragement just when new mothers need them, faculty members at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing are driving critical innovations in caregiving.

“Patients may present as one thing that’s not obviously related to substance use, but when you dig down, that could be the driver.”

Brayden Kameg



Ann Mitchell and Brayden Kameg

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

Across the United States, some 80 million people are at risk for a drug or alcohol problem. Of that number, only about 10 percent are typically identified as needing an intervention.

That gap informed the creation of Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT), a program aimed at helping nurses to provide effective risk reduction and intervention prior to a patient’s needing more extensive help.

“When people talk about substances, often they jump to the old stigma of the alcoholic or drug addict,” says Ann Mitchell, PhD, RN, FIAAN, FAAN, professor, Health and Community Systems, who spearheaded SBIRT’s development along with Assistant Professor Brayden Kameg (BSN ’16, DNP ’19). “The work we’ve been doing is to educate our students to be able to screen and intervene with people along the continuum before they reach that top percentage.”

SBIRT includes curricula for undergraduate nursing and graduate nurse practitioner students along with tools such as pocket cards a student nurse might carry for reference and role-playing scenarios to simulate different patient interactions.

Kameg cites a World Health Organization finding that drug and alcohol use is associated with more than 200 physical and mental health problems.

“Patients may present as one thing that’s not obviously related to substance use, but when you dig down, that could be the driver,” she says.

That insight exemplifies why Kameg and Mitchell advocate for universal screening: to catch lower-level substance use and also to eliminate the bias and stigma often associated with asking patients about their substance use. SBIRT emphasizes tools such as motivational interviewing, which helps nurses and patients to develop shared goals around substance use, as alternatives to the emotionally loaded encounters that many people associate with a term like intervention.

“It’s not an authoritarian lecture,” says Kameg. “It’s about collaborating with a patient on what goals are realistic and how they can meet them.”

The nation’s ongoing opioid epidemic has dramatically underscored the need for this kind of training. Pitt Nursing recently added to its curriculum the 24 hours of training nurses are required to complete to use buprenorphine in treating opioid use disorders, allowing students to graduate ready to handle the drug.

All SBIRT materials are available for free download on the School of Nursing’s Web site, and Mitchell and Kameg have worked tirelessly to disseminate the curriculum by speaking at conferences and forging partnerships across the University. Nurses are the most trusted health care professionals, Mitchell notes, making them ideal advocates for SBIRT and for the more broad-minded view of substance use it represents.

“We really are doing patients a disservice if we are not screening for all substance use,” Mitchell says. “We just want to encourage people to move this work forward.”

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

For Jill Demirci (BSN ’05, MSN ’10, PhD ’12), the desire for innovation began when she was on duty as a staff nurse in UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital’s mother-baby unit. Many new mothers struggled to breast-feed their infants, and while lactation consultants were on hand to help, new moms often were discharged with remaining questions and concerns.

That impression stuck with Demirci, now an assistant professor in the School of Nursing’s Department of Health Promotion and Development, as she earned her PhD with a focus on breastfeeding support and later served as a lactation consultant herself.

“Their questions were basic things, like what a growth spurt is and what that’s going to look like or how much milk the child is going to take in,” Demirci says.

Brief but frequent contact, she realized, could provide information new moms needed as well as alleviate the isolation and anxiety they often felt once they were on their own with their newborns.

So began the MILK texting program, which sends women supportive text messages during pregnancy and over the first eight weeks of their newborns’ lives.

“For the first 2–4 days after birth, you’ll have small amounts of milk called colostrum (kuh-los-truhm),” reads a message in week 30 of pregnancy. “Colostrum is your baby’s first medicine.”

MILK is semiautomated, allowing participants to text keywords for guidance: “Worried about your latch?” reads a text sent out on day three of the newborn’s life. “Text LATCH to see photos of good latches and positions at the breast.”

Moms also can reply “help” to connect with a lactation consultant standing by.

Supported by a grant from the National Institutes of Health, Demirci spent three years developing the MILK program, followed by two years of testing and a randomized controlled trial. She consulted frequently with colleagues in lactation research, health communications, and marketing.

A pilot program recruited 60 mothers to track their breastfeeding and record questions on a smartphone app. Reviewing these data, researchers looked for critical points when mothers might stop breastfeeding or supplement with formula. What challenges and frustrations did new moms face? What did they need to hear at those moments?

Demirci and her colleagues drafted a bank of text messages, striving to cater to new moms’ needs.





“Their questions were basic things, like what a growth spurt is and what that’s going to look like or how much milk the child is going to take in.”

Jill Demerci

“It was important to use language that moms could relate to and understand,” she says. She wanted to avoid information overload and prevent women from feeling that someone was talking at them rather than to them.

Demerci is currently analyzing trial results and considering the program’s next steps. Allowing new moms’ partners to receive texts and tailoring support to mothers of preterm babies, who face very different challenges, are among the changes Demerci is considering.

At Pitt Nursing, Demerci, Mitchell, and Kameg have found a tremendously supportive environment for their innovations in caregiving. From the technological expertise that has allowed their contributions to flourish to a spirit of collaboration among their colleagues, the school has provided a fertile ground as they’ve steadily expanded the boundaries of caregiving beyond what was previously imagined.

HONORING AND CELEBRATING A LEGACY

Members of the University of Pittsburgh and School of Nursing communities gathered this summer at a luncheon to celebrate the creation of the Caesar O. Aldisert, MD, and Helen M. Aldisert, BSN, Nursing Scholarship.

Caesar Aldisert graduated from the Pitt School of Medicine in 1943, and Helen Aldisert, who attended the luncheon, earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at St. John's College in Cleveland, Ohio. Helen and her daughter, Regina Aldisert, visited the school in 2018 to meet faculty and students and to learn more about the programs available at Pitt Nursing.

Regina Aldisert's husband, Terry Laughlin, vice chair of Bank of America Corporation; Pitt graduate and former Board of Trustees member, died unexpectedly just months after his term as a trustee ended in 2018.

"As Terry's tenure as a Pitt trustee was coming to an end, he wanted to create one more scholarship, this time honoring my parents," Regina Aldisert says. "As a trustee, Terry had learned of the strength of the School of Nursing and its students, and when he suggested that we create a scholarship there, rather than the medical school, it just felt right."

Creating this scholarship, as well as previous scholarships in education and in law and public service, let the family impart a lasting legacy by supporting students who are pursuing careers that, as Regina Aldisert says, "enhance all of our lives." Nursing in particular runs deep for the couple, as their daughter, Rena Kane, and Laughlin's sister, Kate, are both nurse practitioners.



"My father would have been 100 in 2018 when this scholarship was created. He was ahead of his time in his respect for nurses as partners in patient care. My mother trained as a nurse, and she often says, 'once a nurse, always a nurse,' and caring for others infuses her spirit."

Regina Aldisert



From left to right: Chancellor Patrick Gallagher, student Ashley Bleiler, Regina Aldisert, Helen Aldisert, student Zach Skinner, Patricia Laughlin, and Dean Jacqueline Dunbar-Jacob

CLASS NOTES

1990s

Lynn Kosar (BSN '94) has been named chief nursing officer at Forbes Hospital in Monroeville, Pa. She currently serves on the board of directors for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Organization of Nurse Leaders and is a member of the American Organization for Nursing Leadership and Pennsylvania Organization of Nurse Leaders.

Darcy Waechter (MSN '94, DNP '18) is the new coordinator of the RN Options program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. She joined the school as a full-time faculty member in 2019.

2010s

Alyssa Veech (DNP '16) has published a new children's book, *Small but Mighty*, for parents to read to their premature infants. Veech is a nurse practitioner in the neonatal intensive care unit at Sisters of Charity Hospital in Buffalo, N.Y., and also is an assistant professor at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York.



Karin Wickwire (DNP '16) received a 2018 Cameos of Caring Advanced Practice award.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING US

The University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing's friends, alumni, faculty, staff, and students are amazing. Over the course of two months, you not only helped the school to meet one EngagePitt goal, you helped it to beat them both!

Shortly after the Spring Graduation and Pinning Ceremony, Pitt Nursing launched its second EngagePitt campaign to support the Nursing Uniform Fund. This project strives to provide one uniform for each student as they enter their sophomore year. Together, more than 40 donors raised \$9,000, far exceeding the original goal of \$5,000.

Supporters of the school's Nurse Anesthesia program also stepped up this summer. Each year, the program pays to sponsor and support students who wish to attend the American Academy of Nurse Anesthetists annual conference. When alumni and friends were asked to help cover the \$15,000 in registration fees, there was an unbelievable response: 90 donors raised \$21,880.

In Memoriam

1940s

Alice Ramming Lewis (BSN '46)

1950s

Virginia Cynkar (BSNEd '51)

Rita Doll (BSNEd '56, MA '59)

Betty Jean Greene (BSNEd '59)

1960s

A. Alice Kindling (BSN '63, MNEd '66)

1970s

Elizabeth Hartz (BAS '79)

Gwendolyn Reese (BAS '70)

Nancy Sullivan (BAS '70)

1990s

John Grabowski (BSN '92)



Celebrating 58 Years

Six members of the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing Class of 1961 met earlier this year in Charleston, W.Va., to celebrate the 58th anniversary of their graduation. Pictured from left to right are Ellen Urie McGrew (BSN '61), Joyce Urda Pareigis (BSN '61, MNEd '63), Sandra Sulsberger Bowles (BSN '61, MNEd '64), Judy Cyphert Montgomery (BSN '61), Ruthann Fleming McChesney (BSN '61), and Paula Berkey (BSN '61).

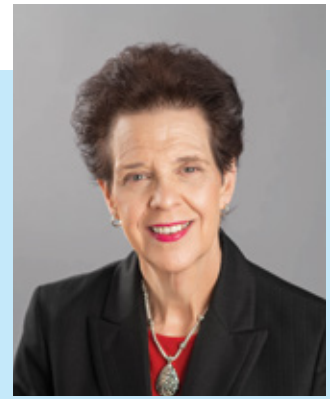
The weekend was full of reminiscing and laughter as well as visits to the Vandalia Gathering and the J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works. These alumni are looking forward to their 60th reunion at Pitt in October 2021.

SOMETHING IN COMMON

You'll find the more than 13,000 University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing alumni around the world and in countless organizations. It's common for one or more alumni to work for the same hospital system—especially in larger systems—but slightly less common for two alumni to hold succeeding leadership positions.



Robin Lane



Susan Miller

Robin Lane (BSN '05), director of value management and analysis at UPMC, and Susan Gerhart Miller (BSNEd '74, MN '77), senior director of enterprise value analysis at Jefferson Health in Philadelphia, Pa., have accomplished just that. Lane recently completed her term as president of the Association of Healthcare Value Analysis Professionals (AHVAP) and was succeeded by Miller. AHVAP is an organization that provides education, resources, and networking to its membership of health care professionals and promotes value analysis in the health care community. Both Lane and Miller brought significant expertise to this leadership role.

Pitt Nurse interviewed them to learn their perspectives on what it means to share this bond as colleagues, friends, and Pitt Nursing alumni.

How did you find this role and each other?

Miller: I began working in value analysis jobs and knew from some other colleagues about AHVAP, and I really looked forward to joining and taking advantage of the education and networking opportunities that this national organization had to offer. During the first or second year of my membership, Robin and I met at the annual conference, and we discovered we were both Pitt grads. It took off from there.

Lane: When I moved into a value analysis position at UPMC, my first task was to go out and find everything I could about health care value analysis. That's how I learned about AHVAP. And we were a very small group. Susan and I were on the ground floor, and we felt this really great connection. We were friends, and we helped each other professionally. Susan succeeding me as president is like the cherry on top of the sundae. It's been a wonderful and interesting journey.

What's it like to have this relationship and to have it with a fellow Pitt nurse?

Miller: We're often the only person, or one of a small number of individuals in our health care organizations with the title and job responsibilities we have. It's been really critical to develop a network of peers and friends who are in similar situations and who are doing the same kind of work, facing the same challenges. Robin and I have cochaired committees together and have done a lot of work together, and it has been really fun to think that a national professional organization has the opportunity to have two graduates of the same school succeed one another.

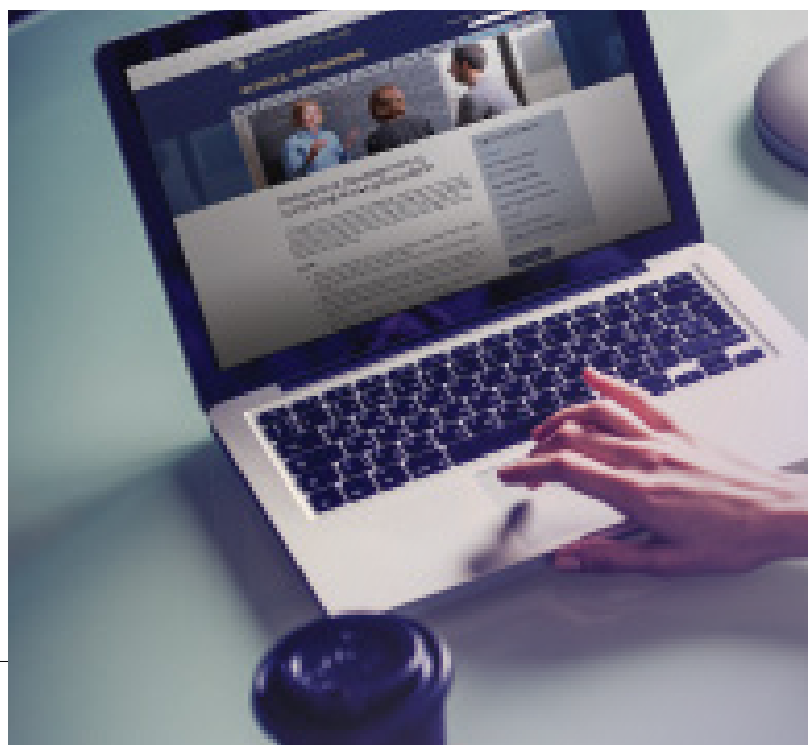
Lane: We've built a beautiful relationship. When I started, I was the only value analysis professional for all of UPMC and one of a small number of people on the AHVAP e-mail distribution list, so it was a lonely job. You got into the professional organization, and you found peers you could reach out to.

What does it mean to have Pitt play such an influential part in your careers?

Lane: We've been in the right place, at the right time, with the right skill set. One of the factors for me obtaining my role was that I was a Pitt grad. Pitt has always been at the forefront. Most people don't get the opportunity to build something like this. Susan and I have been very fortunate.

Miller: Coming back to Jefferson to initiate the director of value analysis position was the opportunity of a lifetime. I needed to call on my entire skill set to be successful. The most important things that the Pitt School of Nursing taught me were critical thinking skills and collaboration. Pitt taught me how to do it. That ability to think critically just makes the role possible.

Lane: We can evaluate and criticize evidence. It's what we were taught, and it has really enabled us to move these initiatives with value analysis at UPMC and AHVAP forward and be successful.



Robin, how did you become president of AHVAP?

Lane: In AHVAP, there is a fairly clear pathway to leadership. First, I was involved in committee work, then I was elected to be a director for the northeast region, and then I was nominated for president. My role as president involved moving the organization to a new management firm and expanding membership. We made some big changes. My goal was getting us synced up as an organization, moving the strategic plan forward, and expanding our membership opportunities outside clinical health care roles and adding an affiliate role.

Susan, what are your primary objectives as president?

Miller: My goals are really built around AHVAP's mission and strategic plan: executing the organizational goals of building and shoring up AHVAP's infrastructure, and focusing real and targeted energy on meeting the needs of our members. It's taking that work and translating it into how we can continue to grow the organization so it can sustain itself in the years to come. We need to be at the cutting edge of all of the changes health care has to offer.

What should younger alumni and current students take away from your experiences?

Miller: Once you find that role that you're truly passionate about, think about how you learn from somebody else. Who are others out there who are truly leaders? How do you network with them? Cast a wide net and be open to exploring a host of roles within the nursing profession.

Lane: When you're starting your nursing career, there's so much out there. I had an idea of what I felt passionately about, what I didn't feel passionately about, and where my strengths were. When that idea comes to you, take it and run with it, and be the best you can be. Find a mentor. Go to seminars. Go to conferences. Take classes. Don't shy away from things that are new. Seek out what you really want. It's out there—but you have to look for it.

NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

Between keeping up with busy clinical or job shifts, teaching, putting out the fires at home, and finding time for yourself, it can be hard to find the time and space to complete your license's required continuing education contact hours. Pitt Nursing can help!

The Professional Development and Continuing Education Web site has enduring/online activities that you can complete on your schedule as well as options if you want to spend time in a classroom again.

Visit nursing.pitt.edu/professional-development-continuing-nursing-education to learn more.

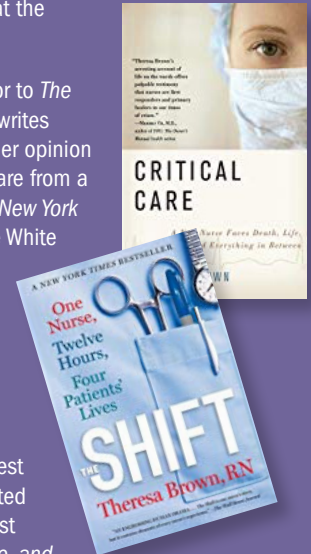
Two Alumni Elected the American Academy of Nursing

Two University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing alumni were among those inducted as fellows of the American Academy of Nursing this fall. Theresa Brown (BSN '07) and Debra Thompson (BSN '77, MSN '81, PhD '10) were inducted at the academy's 2019 conference.



Brown is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times*, for which she writes about nursing and health care. Her opinion series, "Bedside," examined health care from a nurse's point of view. One of her columns for *The New York Times* Well blog earned Brown an invitation to the White House, where President Barack Obama quoted her in defense of the Affordable Care Act.

She has written for CNN.com, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, Slate, and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and she has a quarterly column in the *American Journal of Nursing* called "What I'm Reading" that discusses books of interest to nurses. Brown speaks nationally on topics related to nursing, health care, and the end of life. Her first book, *Critical Care: A New Nurse Faces Death, Life, and Everything in Between*, is used as a textbook at schools of nursing across the country.



Thompson is vice president of the Pitt Alumni Association. She is chief executive officer of a consulting business, Debra N. Thompson, LLC, and holds an adjunct faculty appointment at the School of Nursing. In 2013, Thompson founded the Newmeyer-Thompson Doctoral Student Award at Pitt Nursing.



She has expertise in leadership development, patient safety, and quality improvement and has extensive experience in using the Toyota Production System within health care to improve safety, quality, and care outcomes. She works with a variety of health care organizations nationally and internationally to apply these principles. Thompson is a member of the American Organization for Nursing Leadership and served as a member of the Foundation Education Committee and the Patient Safety and Quality Committee. Thompson has been involved with the Center for Evidence-Based Management since its inception. She is a past president of the Eta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing and is the current vice president.

Induction into the academy is a selective and prestigious honor for nurse leaders. Only 231 individuals were selected in 2019, representing 38 states, the District of Columbia, and 17 countries.

ALUMNI AWARDEES HONORED

Each year, the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing presents awards to alumni and honorary alumni who embody the spirit of a Pitt nurse and who have made impactful contributions in their respective fields. The 2019 recipients were honored as part of the Spring Graduation and Pinning Ceremony in April.

This year's recipients were Theresa Brown (BSN '07), Deborah Gillotti, Sandra McAnallen, and Jing Wang (PhD '10).

Distinguished Alumni Award:

Theresa Brown, PhD, RN, *New York Times* best-selling author



Theresa Brown, a clinical nurse, is the author of the *New York Times* best seller *The Shift: One Nurse, Twelve Hours, Four Patients' Lives*, which portrays one real shift worked by a hospital nurse. It shows a day in the life of an RN but also all the life in one day in a hospital.

Brown is a frequent contributor to the *The New York Times*, for which she writes about nursing and health care. Her opinion series, "Bedside," examined health care from a nurse's point of view. One of her columns for *The New York Times* Well blog earned Brown an invitation to the White House, where President Barack Obama quoted her in defense of the Affordable Care Act. Brown has written for CNN.com, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, Slate, and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and she has a quarterly column in the *American Journal of Nursing* called "What I'm Reading" that discusses books of interest to nurses. She has been interviewed on the NPR program *Fresh Air* and has appeared on *Hardball*, *20/20*, and NPR's *Talk of the Nation*. She speaks nationally on topics related to nursing, health care, and the end of life. Her first book, *Critical Care: A New Nurse Faces Death, Life, and Everything in Between*, is used as a textbook at schools of nursing across the country.

A native of Missouri, Brown has a PhD in English from the University of Chicago and taught English for three years at Tufts University. She stayed home with her three children after working at Tufts and was inspired by them to return to school and become a nurse, leaving academia behind.

Honorary Alumni Award:

Deborah Gillotti, chief operating officer, nVoq Inc.



Deborah Gillotti is responsible for the sales, marketing, product management, and customer experience functions at nVoq Inc. She has held senior global leadership positions in sales and marketing at companies such as Microsoft; Quest Diagnostics' MedPlus, Inc.; and Healthphone Solutions.

She has focused on strategic business development through channel partnerships in the public sector and health care verticals. Previously, Gillotti served as chief information officer for Starbucks Coffee Company and Duracell Inc. and as a senior consulting manager with KPMG. She has received national recognition for her leadership in the technology field, including being listed as one of "America's Best Technology Users" by *Forbes* magazine and among *CIO* and *Computerworld's* top 100 information technology executives, and

she has contributed to *Harvard Business Review* and other publications.

Gillotti received a BA in economics and history from the University of Pittsburgh and an MS in accounting from Georgetown University. She also completed the Women Directors Development Program at Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management. She's a member of the University of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees, for which she chairs the Institutional Advancement Committee. She also chairs the Board of Visitors for the University's School of Nursing and is a member of the Board of Visitors for the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. For 20 years, Gillotti has served as a mentor for the University of Washington Michael G. Foster School of Business MBA program and as board president for a local nonprofit.

Honorary Alumni Award:

Sandra McAnallen, senior vice president, clinical affairs and quality performance, UPMC Insurance Services Division



Sandra McAnallen is responsible for strategic plan development and implementation of network management and provider relations for all UPMC Insurance Services Division lines of business. She has led the ongoing value-based reimbursement strategy, which has resulted in both a primary care and a specialty approach to alternative payment mechanisms.

McAnallen has more than 40 years of experience in the health care industry. She joined UPMC Health Plan in 1996 and was part of the start-up team that established it as a major health insurer in Western Pennsylvania. In 2005, she joined Heritage Health Systems Inc. of Houston, Texas, where she served as senior vice president for national HMO operations. She returned to UPMC in 2008.

McAnallen serves on numerous boards, including those of UPMC St. Margaret, UPMC Susquehanna, the Epilepsy Foundation, and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, as well as on the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing Board of Visitors. McAnallen holds a master's degree in leadership and liberal studies from Duquesne University, a bachelor's degree in nursing from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, and a registered nursing degree from St. Francis Hospital.

Young Alumni Award:

Jing Wang, professor and vice dean for research, School of Nursing, UT Health San Antonio



Jing Wang is a 2010 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, with master's and doctoral degrees in nursing. She is the founding director of the interprofessional Center on Smart and Connected Health Technologies. Her research uses mobile and connected technologies to optimize behavioral lifestyle interventions and improve patient-centered outcomes in those with type 2 diabetes and obesity, especially in underserved communities.

Wang was a 2013 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Faculty scholar and a 2016 Macy Faculty scholar. She is an editorial board member for *The Diabetes Educator* and editor in chief of *JMIR Aging*. She also reviews grant proposals for the National Institutes of Health, American Nurses Foundation, and National Science Foundation. Wang is a member of the working group that updated the 2017 National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support and is a member of the steering committee of the new American Nurses Association Connected Health/Telehealth Professional Issues Panel that will update the nursing standards related to telehealth.



Grace Campbell



Young Ji Lee



Faith S. Luyster



John O'Donnell



Sheila Alexander



Julius Kitutu

FACULTY GRANTS

April–July 2019

Judy Callan, PhD, RN

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Rehabilitation Research & Development
Service**

Does Adding a Tailored Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Mobile Skills App Mediate Higher Rates of Depression Recovery, Adjustment, and Quality of Life in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans Compared to Standard Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?

Grace Campbell, PhD, MSW, RN, CNL, CRRN
**University of Pittsburgh Innovation Institute,
National Science Foundation I-Corps**
Here4You Virtual Cancer Support Coach

Hayley Germack, PhD, MHS, RN
**University of Pittsburgh Central Research
Development Fund (CRDF)**

Factors Associated with Medical-Surgical Revisits in Patients with Serious Mental Illness: An Exploratory Multistate Analysis

Young Ji Lee, PhD, RN
CRDF

Modeling Race, Age, Income, and Neighborhood Deprivation into Risk Scores for Poor Quality of Death in Metastatic Breast Cancer

**University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing
Center for research and Evaluation Pilot/
Feasibility Study Program**

Development of a Computational Model to Predict Patients at Risk for Poor Quality of Death in Metastatic Breast Cancer

Faith S. Luyster, PhD

Inspire Medical Systems, Inc.

Upper Airway Stimulation Therapy for Sleep Apnea: The Patient's Experience

John O'Donnell, MSN, DrPH, RN, CRNA
**Health Resources and Services
Administration**

Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships

Margaret Rosenzweig, PhD, FAAN

NRG Oncology

Symptom Experience, Management, and Outcomes According to Race and Social Determinants of Health (SEMOARS) during Breast Cancer Treatment: The Influence of Taxane Metabolism (SEMOARS+M)

Karin Warner, DNP, RN

**University Center for International Studies,
African Studies Program**

Security Implications on Population Health in the Niger Delta (Africa)

FACULTY DISTINCTIONS

April–July 2019

Sheila Alexander, PhD, RN, FCCM, was accepted into the 2019 Women in Academic Leadership program, sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh Office of the Provost. Alexander will be in the inaugural cohort of 20 women faculty members from across the University.

Marilyn Hravnak, PhD, RN, FCCM, FAAN, was appointed to serve on the editorial board of *Heart & Lung: The Journal of Cardiopulmonary and Acute Care*.

Julius Kitutu, PhD, was selected to participate in the 2019–20 Atlantic Coast Conference Academic Leaders Network. This new collaborative leadership program is designed to support development and hone managerial skills in faculty with some leadership experience.

Karin Warner, DNP, was appointed by Women in International Security to be on the 2019 Gender, Peace and Security Next Generation Symposium Review Committee. Warner and Sandra Prigg-Monteverde, assistant director of the Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security Studies within the Pitt Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, are starting a chapter of Women in International Security on the University of Pittsburgh campus.

STUDENT GRANTS

April–July 2019

Hiba Abujaradeh, PhD student

**Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society
of Nursing, Eta Chapter**

The Association of Trait Mindfulness with Psychosocial and Biobehavioral Variables among Adolescents with Type 1 Diabetes

Stephanie Frisch, PhD student

Sigma Theta Tau International, Eta Chapter

Improving Emergency Department Nurse Triage via Big Data Analytics

Maura McCall, PhD student

Oncology Nursing Foundation

ONF Research Doctoral Scholarship

STUDENT DISTINCTIONS

April–July 2019

Dawn Eldred, a DNP student in the adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner program, was selected for the Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center Scholars Program. Eldred is the director of health services and a nursing instructor at the University of Pittsburgh at Titusville. The scholars program prepares health professionals and allied health students interested in rural and underserved care to provide continuously improving care in a transforming health care system.

Leah Johnson, a senior BSN student, was awarded the Evelyn Paige Parker Scholarship and the UPMC Scholarship by Pittsburgh Black Nurses in Action.

NEW FACULTY

April to October 2019

Jenna Bench, assistant professor, Department of Acute/Tertiary Care

Cynthia Chew (BSN '10, DNP '16), assistant professor, Department of Health Promotion and Development

Brayden Kameg (BSN '16, DNP '19), assistant professor, Department of Health and Community Systems

Carolyn King, instructor, Department of Health Promotion and Development

Jonna Morris (PhD '18), assistant professor, Department of Health and Community Systems

Barbara Rauscher, assistant professor, Department of Acute/Tertiary Care

Fei Zhang, assistant professor, Nurse Anesthesia program

PITT GIVING: THE MORE YOU KNOW

Do you have questions about words that you might hear that relate to making a financial gift to Pitt Nursing? You're not alone. Learn more in this and future issues of *Pitt Nurse* about terms you might hear and will want to consider if you choose to give to Pitt Nursing.

Unrestricted Support: Making an unrestricted gift to the School of Nursing means that you are trusting the school to make decisions about how your gift will be spent. This means that your money will be used where it is most needed and can make the biggest impact. This could include financial aid and scholarship support for students, travel funding for students to attend conferences, or needed supplies and equipment in the school.



UPCOMING EVENT

Winter Graduation and Pinning Ceremony

December 13
6 p.m.

Twentieth Century Club
4201 Bigelow Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15213



Students from the school's Doctor of Nursing Practice Nurse Anesthesia program attended the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists annual conference in Chicago, Ill., in August.

PITT NURSE MAGAZINE CREATIVE TEAM

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A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a newborn baby's hands. The baby's hands are in the foreground, and the person's hands are in the background, both holding the baby's hands. The background is blurred, showing a person's face and a white surface, likely a hospital bed.

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Become a Nurse-Midwife.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing offers a BSN to DNP Nurse-Midwife major. Be part of centuries-long traditions of midwifery, providing care to women before, during, and after pregnancy.

To find out more, **visit nursing.pitt.edu.**