

Spring 2019

Nursing

Hartford Hospital 
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For Hartford Hospital nurses and alumnae of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing



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Hartford Hospital's Nursing Professional Practice Model



The Nursing Professional Practice Model was developed by nurses from across Hartford Hospital. It is a visual representation of the scope of nursing practice and nursing's role in enhancing the human health experience.

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Nursing

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Messages From Executive Leadership



Exceptional Nurses Aren't The Exception Here, They're The Rule

All hospitals want to offer a great patient experience, and many struggle to do this consistently. In fact, many hospitals employ great people, and yet, not every hospital excels at serving all people every time. In health care today, often the greatest patient experience happens not so much by design, but simply because they were

lucky enough to encounter one of those great people.

It is one thing to have exceptional nurses inside the organization, and quite another to empower exceptional nurses to define the organization. At Hartford Hospital, we make it a priority to support nurses on their journeys of continuous learning and growth.

For us, career advancement is about more than prestige and job titles. We encourage nurses to take on new challenges, and accept new opportunities, because empowered nurses lift up all the people they influence.

Nurses committed to their own growth are committed to their team's growth. Those who recognize their role as lifelong learners have a habit of constantly teaching, coaching and mentoring the people around them. When nurses pursue more education, achieve a new certification or take on a new role, their colleagues benefit and experiences skyrocket.

One role we must play is to recognize the people who volunteer discretionary effort constantly and model high performance. Nurses who display these behaviors are the true leaders of our organization, helping make exceptional care the rule rather than the exception.

Our ambition, to become number one in the Northeast for patient experience by 2023 (#123), will be successful as we embed these habits deep in our culture. We will accomplish this by supporting our employees and continuing to provide opportunities for our nurses to shine.

Here at Hartford Hospital, we elevate remarkable people. Our nurses feel they belong and help ensure remarkable experiences are not accidents, but intentional and part of our operating model. This is how Hartford HealthCare and Hartford Hospital work (H3W)!

Bimal Patel

President, Hartford Region
Senior Vice President, Hartford HealthCare



For Nurses, No Two Paths Alike

Nurses have a crucial role in health and healing; bringing cutting-edge clinical practice together with compassion. Their work requires constant balance of the personal and the clinical, preserving the human touch while delivering safe, evidence-based care.

Within the demands of our work, it is important to focus on personal growth and development. Nursing leaders are

teaching, coaching and mentoring to help our future leaders shape a rewarding path through the profession of nursing.

At Hartford Hospital, we foster lifelong learning to cultivate the passion in each of us. Our nurses illustrate our motto that every moment matters. We commit much of ourselves to our patients and our profession, because nursing is more than a career; it is our life's work. The internal rewards and personal fulfillment are immeasurable. Through personal and professional development, we advance the care that we deliver, and the health and well-being of our community.

I started my career as a bedside nurse, and I had opportunities to explore many facets of nursing and to grow in ways I never imagined. What I love most about what I do today is helping people forge their own paths.

Every day at Hartford Hospital, experienced nurses demonstrate guidance and support of students and colleagues who are new to the profession. On all units and shifts, there are preceptors who guide new HH nurses to acclimate to the organization, and to the responsibilities of the professional nursing role. Also visible are the formal and informal mentors who are generous with their time and support of colleagues.

The most important thing we can do is invest in our nurses and their successes. We try to learn what each person wants professionally, and to help them to achieve it. From experts in numerous clinical specialty areas, nurses find career advancement in leadership, education, advanced practice, informatics, quality, case management, research, and risk management.

We offer many opportunities for development because it both nurtures the individual and cultivates the future of the organization. From hiring new graduates to building a nurse residency program and more, we are helping our nurses get stronger while strengthening our resources of clinical talent. Hartford Hospital only grows when our people grow.

This edition celebrates those who have forged their own unique path here. Each story highlights exemplars of continuous learning and growth, people who raised the bar and accepted new challenges.

I hope you will see this as an invitation to begin a conversation about what's next. The next opportunity is yours for the taking.

Cheryl Ficara, MS, RN, NEA-BC

Vice President, Patient Care Services
Hartford Region, Hartford HealthCare



New Program Expands Opportunities For Bedside Nurses

Developed by the Professional Practice Council (PPC) with input from staff nurses throughout the hospital, the new Professional Nurse Advancement Program will allow nurses who want to remain at the bedside to have greater opportunities to grow professionally and help advance nursing overall.

Significantly, the program bases promotion to the Expert Level on not just clinical ability, but on contributions and commitment to the field of nursing. Applicants will illustrate their expertise and leadership through the creation of a portfolio that, among other elements, shows how their careers reflect each aspect of our nursing model: science, art, ethics and advocacy.

Greater opportunities for career growth, improved professional satisfaction and retention, and the ability to provide even better patient outcomes are among the program's goals. It will be launched during Nurses Week.

"One of the things important to us was that the program be applicable to all nurses, in all clinical areas and departments, which meant making sure that advancement was focused on behaviors, rather than competencies," said PPC co-chair Marlene Harris, MS, RN, who led efforts to create the new program with PPC co-chair Katie Veas, MSN, RN. Susanne Yeakel, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, CNML, and Amy Schroder, MSN, RN, CNML, collaborated as mentors.

"We also wanted to make sure that the Expert Level criteria was transferrable," Harris continued. "This is why the process for advancement now focuses on overall professional expertise, rather than unit-based expertise. We want all nurses to stay motivated to learn new skills, as well as be able to take advantage of opportunities in different clinical areas."

Any nurse hired for 24 hours or more in a non-exempt position is



It took members of the Professional Practice Council more than a year to develop the new Professional Nurse Advancement Program. "It was time consuming, but worth it," said PPC co-chair Katie Veas, MSN, RN. "The diversity of PPC members led to great discussions, especially about how to make sure the criteria for advancement was applicable across all clinical areas. An added benefit was that during the process, Council nurses got the opportunity to better understand what colleagues do in other departments."

eligible to apply to be considered for advancement, with applications accepted biannually by August 1 and February 1.

A PPC subgroup will review each application and invite those who meet criteria to be interviewed.

The Professional Nurse Advancement Program consists of three levels: Novice, Competent, and Expert. Novice nurses advance to the Competent Level after they complete one year of experience, the hospital's Nurse Residency Program, and all competency requirements. Advancement to the Expert Level requires a letter of intent, resume, application form, manager endorsement, two peer letters of support, an exemplar incorporating the professional practice model and a formal Nursing portfolio.

Most new nurses today create a portfolio as part of nursing school graduation requirements. This means that when they're ready to pursue Expert designation, they can build on the portfolio they already have. For more experienced nurses who did not create a portfolio in school, beginning one provides a meaningful opportunity to examine, and reflect on, their careers.

The list of items required to be in an advancement portfolio will be

distributed to units during upcoming information sessions and is available on the hospital intranet.

"An Expert Level nurse is a leader and mentor," Yeakel said. "An Expert nurse is a professional who is invested in not just their own career, but the careers of others. It's someone willing to have courageous conversations; someone who goes above and beyond, with a broader view of what it means to be part of a team, a unit, or even at the hospital. It's a leader committed to advancing the field of nursing."

To Schroder, one of the best aspects of the program is that nurses can choose to make the jump from Competent to Expert at any point in their careers. There is no time restriction.

"When I started my family and my kids were small, something like pursuing an Expert designation wouldn't have been possible," said Schroder. "Life outside of work was just too busy for me to be in the right place mentally, or to put in the time needed to create a portfolio. We all go through these kinds of phases. This program allows bedside nurses to pursue advancement when it's right for them, whether they are in their third year or their thirtieth." •

Wound Care: Providing Opportunities For Nurses And The Best Patient Care

‘I like to think of our nurses’ strengths as the mosaic exemplifying our nursing model: science, art, ethics and advocacy.’

Talk to almost any wound or ostomy nurse about why they joined the Wound Team, and there’s one word that is repeated over and over: **opportunity**.

*“After spending six years on Hartford Hospital’s transplant floor, I finally got the **opportunity** to work in the area that brought me into nursing—wound care.”*

– Suzanne Miller, BSN, RN, CWON

*“I’m the newest nurse in the department, though I’m also the oldest—66 in June! I became COCN certificated in March. Friends joke that I’m like a bud flowering in the spring, and it’s true! I hope young nurses see me as a role model, because becoming a wound care nurse is something I’ve always wanted to accomplish. And now, after 34 years, I’ve done it! It’s never too late to take advantage of the **opportunities** provided here.”*

– Carol Lightbody, BSN, RN, COCN

*“I say good luck played a role in me becoming part of this team. I was a bedside nurse, skin champion and, at the time, contemplating going back to school to get my master’s degree. But then someone suggested I learn more about wound and ostomy, so I shadowed for a few days and decided to skip the master’s for now and become certified in wound and ostomy instead. It helped me realize that here at Hartford Hospital, **opportunities** are everywhere.”*

– Kim Cheney, BSN, RN, CWON

*“As a new RN, I thought I would go to work and then do whatever I was assigned. But then I discovered I could specialize, and wound care turned out to be a great choice. Not only do I love it, but there are so many **opportunities** for growth from here. Who knows where I will go in the future.”*

– Jennifer Daviau, BSN, RN, CHRN, CWON



Wound and Ostomy Team members Lisa Smith, BSN, RN, CWON; Suzanne Miller, BSN, RN, CWON; Barbara Falkowski, BSN, RN, CWON; Carol Lightbody, BSN, RN, COCN; and Jennifer Daviau, BSN, RN, CHRN, CWON.

As Clinical Leader Barbara Falkowski, BSN, RN, CWON, puts it, most Wound Team members are “home grown.” They also illustrate Hartford Hospital’s desire to advance and provide career opportunities for its nurses.

Such is the case with Lisa Smith, BSN, RN, CWON. She started her second career as an RN in the Home Care Immersion Program for new RNs. Then, realizing she wanted to specialize in wound care, she transferred to Hartford Hospital for acute care experience and, later, became certified in wound and ostomy nursing.

Part of the Wound Team since starting here 30+ years ago, Falkowski echoes team leader Lisa Corbett, DNP, APRN, CWOCN, about the hospital-wide opportunities for collaboration that working in wound care provides.

This has led the Wound Team to

become a springboard to other opportunities within Hartford HealthCare, Corbett said, citing longtime team member Becky Morton, BSN, RN, CWON, as an example. Morton used her wound team-acquired knowledge about nursing workflow, implementing change and organizational systems to successfully transfer into Nursing Informatics.

“Also, the fact that our nurses come to us with so many different strengths and experiences make us a really strong and stable team,” Corbett said. “I like to think of our nurses’ strengths as the mosaic exemplifying our nursing model: science, art, ethics and advocacy. It gives us the opportunity to select the best skill set from within our team to match the individualized needs of the complex patients we serve.” •

Roxana Murillo: At The Bedside Is Where This Nurse Wants To Be



It's at patients' bedsides where Roxana Murillo feels most fulfilled: "I want to be close to my patients, provide direct care, help develop staff, and be seen as a leader on my unit, working side by side with other nurses and experiencing everything they are." Shown here at right, she's pictured in the Surgical Trauma ICU with co-workers Judi Tartaglia, MSN, RN, CCRN, CMC, TNCC, and Kevin Oulundsen, MSNc, RN.

A voice inside the head of Clinical Nurse Leader Roxana "Roxy" Murillo, MSN, RN, CCRN, TNCC, told her to leave her job as a nurse educator to follow her heart and return to the bedside of ICU patients. There, she could provide direct patient care and continue to expand on the critical care skills she was starting to develop when she became a nurse educator.

In response, however, the voices of several co-workers said, *Huh?*

"People asked if I realized that I'd be leaving eight-hour days to go back to working stressful 12-hour shifts. Some said I was nuts to give up having weekends and holidays off. But as much as I enjoyed being a nurse educator, my heart was with my patients," Murillo said. "My passion as a nurse is to make a difference at the bedside. So I made what some people saw as taking a step backward. But honestly, I have never looked back. I feel so fortunate

to work for a hospital that wants me to be happy and follow my heart."

Where her heart has led her is, in some ways, back to the start.

After spending her first 18 months as a nurse at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Mass., Murillo came to Hartford Hospital in 2013 to become a bedside nurse in the Surgical Trauma Stepdown Unit.

Leaving home in West Hartford to attend the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Murillo said she always knew she would come back.

She spent almost two years working with Surgical Trauma Stepdown patients before transferring to the Surgical Trauma ICU. Supervisors encouraged her to attend the University of Hartford to earn her master's degree, and there she developed an interest in nursing education.

Said Murillo: "At the same time, at the hospital, I was precepting and

mentoring new nurses, and I realized that I was really enjoying sharing my knowledge and watching them grow."

When a position as a Cardiology Nurse Educator opened up, Murillo decided to apply. She hadn't yet completed her master's in Nursing Education. But fellow Surgical Trauma nurse Judith Tartaglia, MSN, RN, CCRN, CMC, TNCC, one of Murillo's mentors, suggested she get the experience of going through the interview process.

"I gave it a whirl and was so surprised and thrilled when they hired me," Murillo remembered. "It was an honor to be a part of an incredible team of nurses. The Cardiology Leadership team was so supportive of my new career path. Their dedication to the development of all staff taught me so much. But I missed being at the frontline of care."

Though the move back to patients' bedsides has returned her to where she started, it's anything but a step

Roxana Murillo: At The Bedside Is Where This Nurse Wants To Be

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back, asserted Tartaglia: “Roxy is following the path that works for her, and we will always support that. She’s a self-reflective nurse who identified what she wanted, what she loved, and she chose to work in an area where she can elaborate on her skill set. She is an outstanding resource nurse, a validated interpreter, a strong preceptor and an exceptional bedside clinician.”

As a clinical leader, she also

continues to educate nurses who are less experienced in surgical trauma and cardiology. In the community, she teaches future nurses as a part-time professor at Quinnipiac University.

As committed to advancing nursing as she is to caring for her patients, Murillo serves on the hospital’s Clinical Practice Council and Alarm Management Group, as well as is a member of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses.

“Roxy is the nurse that makes you instantly feel better when you find out that she is working your shift,” said Surgical Trauma ICU Manager Wioletta Chrostowski. “Her presence enhances teamwork. She is a true star.”

Perhaps most importantly, Murillo is where she wants to be: “I know Hartford Hospital will help me take my career wherever my heart wants it to go.” •

Nurturing Happier, Better Skilled, And More Confident Nurses

Lisa Enslow, MSN, RN-BC, CLC, doesn’t need to read national research studies on the effectiveness of first-year residency programs to know that nurses who complete them experience greater job satisfaction.

She sees it every day.

“It’s so gratifying to go to Nursing Council and see how many nurses who went through our Graduate Nurse Residency Program are now engaged, forward-thinking leaders, who know that they have the ability to advance patient care,” said Enslow, who has served as residency coordinator since 2016. “They know the hospital values their passion, expertise and voices, and so they use them.”

An average of 175 new nurses annually participate in Hartford Hospital’s Graduate Nurse Residency Program. Most begin within 10 weeks of their start date, with Enslow overseeing up to eight cohorts a year.

It’s a mandatory, 12-month program for any nurse who comes to Hartford Hospital with less than one year of acute-care experience. But as much as the program is an opportunity to ensure that new nurses are best-prepared to care for acutely sick patients, in a fast-paced environment, it is also an investment in the success of their careers.

“That first year can be a period of extreme stress, which can lead novice nurses to doubt their abilities, or even decide to leave the field. I think back to my first year of nursing, when suddenly I went from the classroom to being 100% responsible for real patients. It was daunting! I wish I had a program like this,” Enslow said.

Our Graduate Nurse Residency Program helps new nurses evolve into competent professionals by:

- Growing their decision-making skills
- Providing clinical nursing leadership at point of care
- Putting research-based evidence into practice
- Strengthening professional commitment to nursing
- Formulating individual development plans



Graduate Nurse Residency Coordinator Lisa Enslow, MSN, RN-BC, CLC, doing one of the things she enjoys most: distributing graduation certificates.

Residency nurses are partnered with a RN facilitator, as well as attend monthly presentations and peer support groups. Participant also complete an evidence-based practice initiative. This experience allows the new nurse to work with a mentor RN to execute an evidence-based practice initiative.

The quality and potential impact of these projects is illustrated by the fact that two recent initiatives were chosen for the national nurse residency conference. Nurses from CB2 and the IOL worked on initiatives for addressing goals of care conversations with oncology patients and transgender room assignments.

“Programs like this show just how much Hartford Hospital values our nurses, the difference nurses can make, and how nurses’ satisfaction is such an essential part of patient satisfaction,” Enslow added. “We want our nurses to be happy, self-assured and to see, from their first day here, that we will provide tools they can use to empower themselves and advance their careers.” •

Melissa Hernandez-Smythe: An Empowered Nurse Who's Now Empowering Others

It takes some nudging to get Melissa Hernandez-Smythe MSN, RN, to talk about herself.

Ask her about the new nurses she works with as nurse educator for CB4 and CB5, however, and there's no hesitation. Her words come out quickly, enthusiastically. She also tends to repeat the word "empower."

"Empowering new nurses, especially, to speak up, to be courageous, to be an advocate for patients, and to speak for those patients who can't: This is such an important part of being a nurse educator," explained Hernandez-Smythe, who with Hartford Hospital's support earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Ohio University and a master's degree in nursing education from Western Governors University. "It's also what I work so hard to do."

Confidence was exactly what Amber Sabatucci, BSN, RN, needed.

Although Sabatucci wasn't a new nurse when she came to Hartford Hospital this past October, she was new to the hospital environment.

Graduating nursing school in 2013, Sabatucci had spent the previous six years working in a Montana long-term

care facility. But the pace on CB4 was much faster, and the patients much sicker. She had also never administered IV medications or faced the potential of a life-saving rapid response call.

"There's a big difference between working at a long-term care facility in Montana and an acute-care hospital in Hartford," Sabatucci said. "But Melissa was there with me throughout my orientation, telling me that she believed in me, that she knew I could do this. She stressed that if I needed help, she would be there, and that I was part of a great team where everyone would be there for me, too. She made all the difference, and now I feel great. She empowered me to know that I was capable."

Entering the field of nursing 10 years before Sabatucci in 2003, Hernandez-Smythe's first job was as a bedside nurse at Saint Francis Hospital in Poughkeepsie, NY. A graduate of Dutchess Community College, she worked at Saint Francis Hospital before relocating to Connecticut to accept a position on Hartford Hospital's Medical Intensive Care Unit and live closer to her family.

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Sierra Laferriere, BSN, RN, from CB5 with Melissa Hernandez-Smythe, MSN, RN.

Melissa Hernandez-Smythe: An Empowered Nurse Who's Now Empowering Others

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Almost immediately, Hernandez-Smythe said, she found great satisfaction in providing care for such acutely sick patients and their families. She also enjoyed precepting and mentoring new nurses, but sometimes worried that their voices weren't always as strong as their clinical abilities.

"Part of being a nurse is being able to advocate for the patient," said Hernandez-Smythe, who also worked on

'I want our nurses to feel empowered enough to speak up in any situation; for each nurse to know how important their role is as a collaborator and member of the healthcare team.'

the STAR team as an ICU float nurse and as a clinical leader. "We have to speak with them, to make sure they understand everything they've been told by the provider, and to speak for them when we see that they can't speak for themselves."

"Patients are scared. They're often confused," Hernandez-Smythe continued. "As nurses, we need to place ourselves in their shoes and advocate for them. That isn't always easy. I want our nurses to feel empowered enough to speak up in any situation; for each nurse to know how important their role is as a collaborator and member of the healthcare team."

Hernandez-Smythe has also used available opportunities at Hartford Hospital to empower herself. Interested in technology and wanting to be part of the hospital team working to find new ways to use it, she joined Clinical Informatics in 2015 to help implement the EPIC electronic health record system. She also contributed to the development of an electronic tool designed to help manage both the interdisciplinary care, and length of stay, of critical care patients.

"It was really interesting to see the importance of nursing's involvement in these projects," Hernandez-Smythe said. "Nursing informaticists can be extremely useful in assisting the clinical analysis of workflow, as they truly understand how any new software will impact the process of patient care throughout the system."

She has also served as a Healthcare Information Management clinical documentation specialist and OSHA coordinator for occupational health. Last year, she assumed her current role as nurse educator.

"Truly, I've been on a journey here, with Hartford Hospital helping me grow professionally and try so many different things over the course of my career," Hernandez-Smythe said. "Working as a staff nurse, it's important to know that nurses can branch into many other specialties within health care, and they can do it right here at the hospital. There are so many other avenues that a nurse can take beyond the bedside."

The degree of caring and commitment Hernandez-Smythe has shown for fellow nurses, the profession of nursing, and the hospital overall has not gone unnoticed. In fact, for CB4 nurse Ashley Gopal, BSN, RN, it's been inspiring.

"The idea that we at Hartford Hospital are a team, and that we will all do our best together to care for our patients, is something Melissa stressed during my orientation and means so much to me," Gopal added. "None of us are in this alone, and Melissa is an amazing role model and mentor."

Hernandez-Smythe, however, doesn't want praise for her part.

"Doing this work is what I love. What a privilege it is for me to know that I am helping train our nurses to be their best, to best care for our patients, and for all of us together to help advance nursing care," Hernandez-Smythe said. "I feel so very fortunate to work here at Hartford Hospital. There's nowhere else I'd want to be." •

Michaela Lis: Advancing Trauma Care As She Advances Her Career

Even though Michaela Lis, MSN, APRN, AGACNP-BC, learns something new every day in her work as a nurse practitioner in trauma, she can't wait to go back to school.

In June, and supported by Hartford Hospital, Lis will begin a week-long program at the University of Rochester and 200 hours of OR experience to become certified as registered nurse first assist (RNFA) in the operating room.

"I'm so excited!" said Lis as she described how being an RNFA will allow her to be even more hands on during surgeries. "Controlling bleeding, suturing incisions and wounds, intervening in life-threatening situations, managing perioperative complications—already, as a trauma APRN, I think sometimes about the impact of my work, and how the interdisciplinary team I'm a part of truly saves lives. That's an amazing thing to be able to say. It's a privilege. But this new role will allow me to be an even greater benefit to my patients and my team."

As an RNFA—which will make her the surgeon's extra hands—Lis will likely find herself responsible in situations even more high-stress than those she faces now. Yet she has proven her ability to quickly think and stay calm under pressure.

"She seems to naturally handle the most stressful situations with ease, and she carries herself with the utmost respect," said Trauma Surgery Clinical Leader Nicholas Haskell, PA-C, MSPAS, MPH. "She excels in her role as a new nurse practitioner on a busy trauma surgical service and has emerged as a natural leader."

'Working as part of the trauma team is constantly exciting, but also constantly challenging. I know I have so much more that I can achieve, and that I can do it at Hartford Hospital.'

Perhaps one of the reasons Lis seems so comfortable is because in many ways, she grew up at Hartford Hospital.

After graduating high school in 2009, and wanting to gain some clinical experience before entering UConn to study nursing, she spent the summer before college as a Hartford Hospital student intern, working as part of the Nursing Informatics team.

The position gave her the opportunity to work alongside staff nurses, which only confirmed that a career in health

care—as a nurse, specifically—was where she wanted to be.

"I was drawn to nursing because I loved interacting with patients. Nurses are able to make a huge impact on a patient's care in their most intimate moments," Lis said.

During the four years Lis attended UConn, she became a PCA and continued working at Hartford Hospital on weekends and during school breaks.

Fascinated with neurology and drawn to the urgent need and acuity of trauma patients, Lis applied to become a neurotrauma nurse on North 9 after graduating with her bachelor's degree in 2014. She stayed in the position for four years.

During this time, she earned her master's degree and APRN certification, as well as made the decision to specialize in trauma surgery. According to Associate Trauma Medical Director Joseph Portereiko, DO, FACS, she was also busy going above and beyond to help advance patient care.

Lis was a driving force in an initiative on North9/ North9SD to promote staff and patient awareness about venous thromboembolism and the importance of prophylaxis, Portereiko said. It earned her a Professional Practice Nursing Award in Science and the Full Circle Award.

"Michaela is a nurse who is always on top off all aspects of the care of her patients," added Portereiko, also an attending trauma surgeon and the hospital's associate chief and surgical quality officer. "As a high-functioning member of the trauma AP team, she engages her past as an RN to be an advocate for her patients and rapidly learn all of the graduated responsibilities needed at a busy Level 1 Trauma Center."

One of the things that makes her current role so meaningful, Lis said, is the results she sees at the end: "Seeing the transformation that patients can make to recover from extremely serious injuries and illnesses is something that I cherish in my everyday work within the trauma team."

"Sometimes I miss being a bedside nurse and being the person who is constantly there with a patient," Lis continued. "But I really enjoy that as an APRN, I can make decisions about treatment. Having the autonomy to see a patient, and be able to order medication or prescribe a treatment, without having to page another prescriber, is pretty amazing. As a trauma APRN, I am also rarely in the same place each day. Depending on what patients need, I could be in the ED, or the OR, or on a floor. That's exciting."

Trauma and Neuro/Surgical Critical Care APRN Manager

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Michaela Lis: Advancing Trauma Care As She Advances Her Career

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Michaela Lis, MSN, APRN, AGACNP-BC, with fellow trauma team member Jackie Gladstein, PA-C.

Jennifer Freund, MSN, APRN, ACNP-BC, CCRN, said the passion Lis shows for the field is often contagious: “She’s eager to learn and thrives in supporting the growth of others, herself, the trauma service, and the hospital overall. She brings a real ‘nursing sense’ to the bedside, able to recognize emergent situations or a patient or family in need. It’s hard not to be affected by her desire for self-improvement.”

Earning an RNFA will require Lis to spend four days on campus in Rochester, N.Y., with the rest of her coursework completed online. She will conduct her required 200 hours

of clinical work at Hartford Hospital, where already she’s had career and learning opportunities that sometimes feel surreal.

Now, she has more to come.

“I can remember how it felt the first time I put in a chest tube; the first time my hands were next to the surgeon’s inside a patient’s belly. Working as part of the trauma team is constantly exciting, but also constantly challenging work. I know I have so much more that I can achieve, and that I can do it at Hartford Hospital.” •

Mike Gilgenbach & Jamie Houle: From Entry-Level Staff To Leaders In Nursing

When Mike Gilgenbach and Jamie Houle joined Hartford Hospital at ages 20 and 25 respectively, it was as entry-level care providers: Gilgenbach as a surgical technician and Houle as a PCA.

Both hoped their positions would serve as stepping stones, but steps to what neither was exactly sure at the time. Today, with the help of Hartford Hospital's tuition reimbursement program and supervisors who encouraged and challenged them, Gilgenbach is a nursing director and Houle a nurse manager. And, in many ways, they're both living their dreams.

They also both know that whatever career goal they dream up next, Hartford Hospital will help them achieve it.

Mike Gilgenbach: 'If you seize the opportunities given to you, there are no limits'

In 1994, at 20 years old and fresh out of a two-year associate's degree program at Manchester Community College, one of the first realizations Gilgenbach, MS, RN, CNOR, had was that if he stayed a surgical technician, he would only work in the OR. If he became a nurse, he could work anywhere in the hospital.

"I guess it's ironic that I never really left the operating room area," said Gilgenbach, nurse director of Perioperative Services since April 2018.

Making sure that health care was where he wanted to be, Gilgenbach spent a year as a surgical tech before entering the UConn School of Nursing to earn his bachelor's degree. After graduating, he considered offers to work at two other hospitals. But the opportunity to stay at Hartford Hospital, in a new position as an OR nurse, appealed to him on several levels.

"When a patient is in surgery, you are 100 percent their voice and advocate, plus you are working with the surgeon, anesthesiologist, maintaining patient safety, and keeping yourself ready for any interventions that might be necessary. It's such an important job, and what I knew I wanted to do. Plus, I already knew and loved the people I worked with, so why would I want to leave?"

After four years as an OR nurse he was named a clinical leader and then, in 2007, asked by Hartford HealthCare Regional Vice President Patient Care Services Cheryl Ficara, MS, RN, NEA-BC, to consider the role of nurse manager.

"Actually, it was more like Cheryl challenged me," Gilgenbach said. "She saw things in me that I didn't see in myself. And she made me believe I could do anything I wanted to. So, I took the job because I wanted to take advantage of this new opportunity.

I don't want there to be limits on where I can go with my career."

Opportunity struck again last year, when the director of Perioperative Services position became available.

"Early on, when meeting Mike, it was apparent that he held a unique set of qualities that made him stand out as a person, staff member and leader, regardless of title," said Ficara.

"His energy and positive demeanor were palpable, and many people gravitated to him, even early on. He had the ability to connect with a wide variety of people, establish trust, and build bridges and consensus. He also has a tremendous skill set in the realm of perioperative services, which gave him tremendous credibility. He is can-do and solution oriented. He truly cares about his work, his team and the patients and families we serve."

Despite this belief in his abilities, Gilgenbach considers himself a novice with a lot left to learn about both the job and his abilities.

However, this is far from the end of road: "I've got a lot of years left in this position. But if the right opportunity came along for me to move within the Hartford HealthCare system, I would definitely consider it. The potential for growth here is tremendous."



Mike Gilgenbach, MS, RN, CNOR

continued on page 11

Mike Gilgenbach & Jamie Houle: From Entry-Level Staff To Leaders In Nursing

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Jamie Houle: 'I see my possibilities here as endless'

It took a while for Jamie Houle, BSN, RN, to figure out what kind of career he wanted to pursue.

After high school, his desire to help and work with others led him to customer service jobs as a food server and with an oil company. But it was only after enrolling in Capital Community College's CNA course, and being pulled aside by a teacher, that he considered nursing.

"That teacher said she saw how well I connected with people and really put a fire under me to give nursing a try. I've never looked back," said Houle, who at the same time 15 years ago began working on Hartford Hospital's Bliss 9 East as a Patient Care Associate (PCA).

At that time, Houle said, there were few differences between going to work and going to school. Knowing he was studying to be a nurse, co-workers would urge him to shadow them or try new things. Quickly, he discovered he was most intrigued with the heart.

"I was particularly fascinated with telemetry and how the heart automatically does what it does, and how wrong things go when it doesn't do what it is supposed to. Even more fascinating was how we were able to fix all the things that could go wrong with the heart."

While still in school, he left being a PCA to become a Patient Administrative Associate (PAA) on B9I and, after graduating, joined B9E as a bedside nurse, again being mentored and encouraged by co-workers. What followed were several years moving between caring for patients in Cardiac Surgical Step-Down and the Medical ICU—



Jamie Houle, BSN, RN

including a 14-month stint when he lived and worked in North Carolina—along with three years in Hartford Hospital's Cardiac Surgical ICU. He also earned his bachelor's degree.

"When I came back to Hartford from North Carolina, I was able to pick up right where I left off, going back to working with cardiac surgery patients and former colleagues. In many ways, it was like coming home," Houle said. "It's incredible to work for a place where everyone helps each other be their best."

In 2016 a retirement led to Houle being named nurse manager of Bliss 9 East and Bliss 9 Stepdown — the same unit where he started as an entry-level PCA.

"Jamie is an exceptional nursing leader and a key resource to others," said Cardiovascular Services Nurse Director Karen Habig, MS, RN. "He is a well-respected nursing leader who takes the time to 'seek to understand separate realities' and challenge the status quo. His passion for patient safety and quality are evident in his everyday practice. He is quick to investigate thoroughly any concerning situations and follows up with the necessary courageous conversations."

Just three years at his current position, Houle said there's much he wants to do to help grow his staff, the department, and himself. Down the road, however, he can see himself in a job more focused on quality indicators or one of his other areas of passion: "I see my possibilities here as endless and believe it's the same for any Hartford Hospital nurse." •

Ann Russell: From Giving The Best Care To Now Helping Develop It

Ann Russell, MSN, RN, CCRN-K, doesn't just love being a nurse. She loves nursing. Ask her almost any question about the 33 years she's spent in the field, and even if you can't see her face, you can hear her smile.

"You meet a patient at what often is the most vulnerable moment of his or her life, and it's the nurse who is there to experience it, and to help that patient through," said Russell, who started at Hartford Hospital in 1989 as a bedside nurse in the Trauma unit. "The patient and the nurse are in that moment together, which I find extremely powerful. When I was getting my master's, I learned about nursing theorist Margaret Newman, who said the nurse-patient relationship could do more than transform the patient. It could transform the nurse. Since then, I've used the questions 'What lessons can I learn from this patient?' and 'How can I transform from this experience?' to help guide my day-to-day practice and career overall."

In her current role as Hartford HealthCare Transformational Lead, Russell also considers these questions as she works to identify and develop new and better ways to use technology to improve patient safety, regulatory compliance, and overall patient care. Her experience as both an acute-care nurse and nurse educator make her an invaluable part of the clinical informatics team.

Earning her bachelor's in Nursing from the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) in West Hartford, Russell spent her first three years as a nurse working with vascular patients at Massachusetts General Hospital. But she missed Connecticut. Despite growing up in Boston, she established roots here in college, and the clinical training she had done at Hartford Hospital as a USJ student had left an impression.

'Every day I continue to learn and grow, and it's amazing to realize that my work contributes to making sure our nurses have right at their fingertips all the tools they need to be their best.'

Then in her 20s, Russell wasn't yet sure where she wanted go in Nursing. But she felt strongly that Hartford Hospital would take her there.

"Nursing consists of four domains: science, ethics, art, and advocacy. And even as a young nursing student, I could see that at Hartford Hospital, nurses were being encouraged to embrace this framework, as well as given opportunities to engage in the domains that they felt most drawn to, and that could help advance their careers," Russell said. "I wanted to be part of that. Right from the beginning I learned so much, and really, it's never stopped."



Ann Russell, MSN, RN, CCRN-K

Always thinking that one day she might like to teach, Russell made what she felt was a "natural progression" from Trauma to the Surgical ICU and, in 1997, became Surgical ICU and vascular nurse educator. Although her primary focus would be to support preceptors, teach new procedures, and orient new staff, she would still spend time at patients' bedsides, when needed, and provide direct medical care.

"The bedside work is so meaningful. The influence a nurse can have there is so great. Part of me will always miss not being a part of patients' daily lives," said Russell, who with Hartford Hospital's support earned her master's in Nursing Education from the University of Hartford in 1999. "But to take on new roles to help other nurses advance in their processes, or move them toward their goals? That is extremely meaningful work, too."

After five years as a unit-based nurse educator, Russell became Hartford Hospital's first-ever ICU Core Coordinator, responsible for training all of the nurses in Hartford Hospital's five ICUs and five Step-Down units. As such, she spent 15 years developing curriculum, conducting classroom training, and helping launch and grow Hartford's very first simulation-based nursing training program.

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Ann Russell: From Giving The Best Care To Now Helping Develop It

continued from page 12

And the job was always new. Each new evidence-based best-practice or technology meant the need for new curriculums, new training methods. However, when the job for her current position in the Clinical Informatics Department was posted, she realized it would give her the opportunity to not just teach new evidence-based best practices, but to help develop them.

Already a credentialed Epic trainer, she also was well-aware of the many challenges caregivers can face when trying to use available technology to provide best-practice bedside care.

“So my role on the Clinical Informatics team is that I am Hartford HealthCare system’s Transformation Lead,” Russell explained. “Very briefly, this means I’m the

ambassador between the Hospital and other system entities, and my job is to integrate clinical need with available technology—technology that is always changing, which means that new possibilities and opportunities to transform the way HHC provides care emerge every day. Working as part of a team to advance practice through education and adoption of evidence-based practice, as well as to identify gaps, develop clinical tools that aren’t currently available—it’s exciting work, and it has me collaborating with professionals across the system. Every day I continue to learn and grow, and it’s amazing to realize that my work contributes to making sure our nurses have right at their fingertips all the tools they need to be their best.” •

Nursing News & Notes

Hospital Hosts Nurse From Singapore, Fosters Global Relationships

The Department of Nursing and Division of Geriatric Medicine were proud to host Janet Toh, a nurse from Singapore who works at the Singapore public healthcare organization’s Changi General Hospital (CHG).

Toh had been recognized by her colleagues with the Health & Manpower Development Program Award, which allows the recipient to choose a program to observe to gain knowledge and then transfer what has been learned into clinical practice.

At a recent Nurses Improving Care for Health-systems Elders (NICHE) national conference, Toh heard about the work Hartford Hospital has achieved as a NICHE Exemplar designate hospital. This led to her three-week educational observational experience.

Here from the end of February to early March, Toh was able to learn about, and take part in, Hartford Hospital’s GRN/GPCA training programs; GRN Champion Group; volunteer geriatric programs such as Keeping in Touch and Activity Cart;



Among those at Hartford Hospital’s GRN training program with Singapore nurse Janet Toh, BSN, RN-BC, in center, were: instructor Christine Waszynski, DNP, RN, GNP-BC; Susanne Carrier, MSN, RN, ONC; Sharon Nelson, MSN, RN, ONC; Sue Ribeiro, BSN, RN; Kelly Rutkowski, BSN, RN; Sabrina Pereira, BSN, RN; and Fawn Pluff, AD, RN.

and Bed Safety. Spending time with several GRNs and GPCAs on medical units and in the ICU, Toh also had the opportunity to interact with patients in the Therapeutic HUB. She also spent time with the Palliative Care team and attended ELNEC training.

Focused on learning about our geriatric education programs, GRN/GPCA training, geriatric volunteer programs, and our journey to NICHE Exemplar designation, her vision was to take what she learned to achieve NICHE Exemplar designation for her hospital. Hartford

Hospital has been a NICHE Exemplar hospital since 2015, and it was very exciting to share the great strides we have achieved.

Toh expressed her thanks for everyone’s kindness and said she was very impressed with our programs.

“It’s a true testament to our teamwork and dedication that we have been chosen by colleagues on the other side of the globe,” said NICHE program coordinator Michelle Nai, MSN, RN-C. “Hartford Hospital was given an opportunity to coach, teach and mentor on a global scale.”

Nursing News & Notes

We congratulate these Hartford Hospital nurses on their recent achievements.

Nursing Administration

- Maria Gray, MSN, FNP, obtained her master's degree from Purdue University Global.
- Tina Loarte-Rodriguez, MSQAc, BSN, RN, CIC, CPPS, was re-certified in Infection Control and Patient Safety.

Nursing Education

Lisa Enslow, MSN, RN-BC, CLC, presented a poster called "Increasing Confidence of the New Nurse in Patient Emergency Situations Using a Multi-Method Approach" at the Nurse Residency Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla.

Critical Care



These nurses completed the Critical Care Department's rigorous 20-week orientation for new graduates interested in starting their careers in the Intensive Care Unit. The program focuses on critical care core competencies needed to enhance the knowledge and

expertise of each nurse. Pictured are Erica Leonard, BSN, RN; Gina Vagnini, BSN, RN; Elizabeth Ezirike, BSN, RN; Jennifer Elsaesser, BSN, RN; and Cody Brissette, BSN, RN.

Emergency Services

The following nurses completed the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) course for the State of Connecticut:

- Samantha Rush, BSN, RN
- Sarah Lerch, BSN, RN
- Erika Paggioli, BSN, RN

The following nurses received certification in Emergency Nursing:

- Andrew Geller, BSN, RN, CEN
- Audrey Scott, BSN, RN, CEN
- Sterling Yanke, BSN, RN, CEN

Institute of Living

At the Nurse Residency Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla., a poster called "Psychiatric Hospital Staff's Perspective of the Effects of Transgender Patients Placed in Rooms of the Gender they Identify As" was presented by:

- Nicole Lefurge, BSN, RN
- Priscilla Franco, BSN, RN
- Amanda Terranova, BSN, RN
- Nathan Tyson, ADN, RN

Medicine/IV Therapy, Case Coordination

Two nurses received their Medical-Surgical Registered Nurse Certifications from the Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board:

- Ashley Barnard, RN, CMSRN (Case Coordination)
- Mallory Akin, RN, CMSRN (High 12)

Perioperative Services



Janice Hahn, MSN, RN, CST, was recently honored as the first recipient of Goodwin College's new *The Alumni Professional Achievement Award*. The award is designed to recognize alumni who use their expertise to differentiate themselves in the community; excel above and beyond with a record of notable career accomplishments; and demonstrate a history of outstanding contributions within their profession.

Speciality Services

"Initiating Goals of Care Conversations in Inpatient Oncology Care" was a poster presented at the Nurse Residency Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla., by CB2 RNs:

- Luke Lamarre, BSN, RN
- Maura Kenny, BSN, RN
- Blaire Herter, BSN, RN
- Emily Boucher, BSN, RN

Two CB2 nurses earned oncology nursing certification after passing a rigorous exam administered by the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation:

- Luke Lemarre, BSN, RN, OCN
- Kelly Monaghan, BSN, RN, OCN

Nightingale Awards

Please join us in congratulating Hartford Hospital's 2019 Nightingale Award recipients!

These Hartford Hospital nurses will be among those honored at the 17th Annual Hartford Regional Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing Gala held on Thursday, May 9, 2019, at the Connecticut Convention Center. The Nightingale Gala is an event honoring nurses who embody nursing excellence and go above and beyond the call of duty in an array of clinical and educational environments.



David Chicoine, RN
Perioperative Services



Beth Ann Collins, MSN, RN, ACNS-BS
Cardiology



Chao Huang, MSN, BSN, RN
Case Coordination



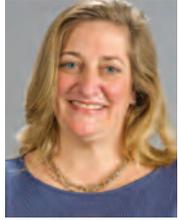
Sean Kelleher, BSN, RN
Neurology



Karen Livingston, APRN, ONC
Bone & Joint Institute



Dawn Lutecki, BS, RN
Emergency Department



Amy Majewski, BSN, RN
Heart Failure Navigation



Kari Rancourt, BSN, RN, CTCC
Transplant Center



Gwen Redler, MS, RN-BC, RRT
Medicine



Chris Reinert, RN
Surgical Trauma ICU



Mandi Riley, BSN, RN
Women's Health



Melissa Scavetta, MSN, APRN
Institute of Living



Kathleen Sheeran, RN
Medical ICU



Catherine Thresher, MSN, RN-BC,
PCCN
Inpatient Rehabilitation



From The Alumnae Association President



As I peer from my window, I see buds on the trees and pale green bulbs peaking from the ground. I realize that spring is right around the corner and so is the 50th anniversary of my Hartford Hospital nursing class graduation. I think back to when I was a new graduate and how similar I was to a budding flower just beginning to sprout. My 25-year journey at Hartford Hospital began as a staff nurse,

then assistant head nurse, then nurse manager, and finally instructor and nurse supervisor, pursuing and obtaining both my undergraduate and graduate degree while working full time. My journey was no different than hundreds of other young grads' who followed a similar path. How and why did so many of us take this course?

I believe the answer is this: Like the attentive gardener, the Hartford Hospital philosophy was to nurture, guide, prompt, and encourage young fledglings to grow, and become stronger, as we began our exciting new path. As newly sprouted flowers are watered, fertilized and carefully tended to, we were taught, encouraged and supported by our nursing administration, our physician staff, and all of the hospital management team. We were given every opportunity to learn through on-site education and training, in-house seminars and grand rounds, and financial support for ongoing education.

This Alumnae Association is filled with nurses who were given a solid educational foundation at Hartford Hospital, and who continued on to stand out among others—be it as directors of Nursing, APRNs, VPs, CEOs of large medical centers, published authors, or in numerous other leadership roles. The scholarship committee of this association can attest that many nurses who are currently working at Hartford Hospital are following the same course. We have given numerous scholarships over the past few years to provide additional financial assistance to those nurses going beyond their undergraduate degree, working towards master's and advanced practice.

Hartford Hospital, a leader in its field, shaped and molded us into mature and competent nurses. This allowed the hospital to deliver and maintain the highest standards of care to all of its patients, and for us to become leaders in our field.

It is with affection, respect, and deep gratitude that we think of you, Hartford Hospital. We are grateful that you made us, and continue to make us, the strongest and best nurses that we can be.

Mary Jane Densmore, MS, BA, RN (HHSN '69)
President, Alumnae Association
of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing

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Join Your Alumnae Association



Become one of the more than 600 HHSN graduates who belong to the Alumnae Association of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing. Membership dues are only \$10 per year and include membership in the Alumnae Medical Fund. Members are allowed to apply for scholarships.

To join, simply mail your \$10 non-tax deductible check (payable to the Alumnae Association of HHSN Inc.) to the address below. Include your full name, class year, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address.

For more information, please contact Pat Ciarcia, executive director for alumnae affairs, at: patciarcia@snet.net or visit: www.hhsnalumnae.org. You may also write to the Alumnae Association of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, 560 Hudson St., Hartford, CT 06106.

STAY CONNECTED! If your email address changes, please notify Pat Ciarcia.

Alumnae Spotlight

Every Day, She Uses The Love Of Learning That HHSN Instilled



From the HHSN Class of 1967 yearbook.

When Sheila Rowell was growing up, women who wanted a career had two choices: be a teacher or a nurse.

Some felt limited by this lack of opportunities. But not Rowell.

“Being a nurse was what I always wanted to do,” said Rowell, a member of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing Class of 1967. “One of the things I’ve loved about nursing is that there was never a time when there wasn’t something to learn; when there wasn’t something new.”

“And of course, I loved the patient care, especially when I got into home care. One of the things I quickly discovered as a home care nurse is that patients who might be extremely compliant in the hospital are often not so agreeable at home, which can sometimes put them at risk,” she continued. “Being in the homes and making a difference in the lives of patients who might live alone, or be scared, or just don’t understand the seriousness of their condition, can be extremely rewarding.”

Entering HHSN in 1964, Rowell said she began her career at a time when “health care was changing quickly” and Hartford Hospital right along with it.

“Terms like ‘patient management,’ and ‘disease management’ were new,” Rowell

said. “Hartford Hospital was building its first cardiac care unit. And it seemed like every day, there was a new and better way to treat patients, and something new for us to learn. There were constant changes. It was exciting to be a part of it and to know that as the field of nursing was growing, I was growing, too. I think that being a student at this period of time had a lot to do with me wanting to be a life-long learner.”

After graduating from HHSN, Rowell spent three years working as a staff nurse on Hartford’s “old C9W” before moving to Boston and taking a job at what is today the Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Then known as the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, she worked in the ICU and burn unit: “The patients were very sick, and the work was very hard. But it was also very satisfying.”

While working there as a night supervisor, Rowell began taking classes at Northeastern University towards her bachelor’s degree. She left work for a year to complete it, graduating in 1978, and then moved to Boston’s North shore area, where she decided to give home care a try.

“People were being sent home from hospitals so quickly,” said Rowell, who in 1988 also earned a master’s degree in healthcare management from Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute/ Hartford Graduate Center. “It was clear how much home care could make a difference. Most patients at the time of discharge don’t hear anything but, ‘You can go home now.’ Especially among geriatric patients, a home care nurse could make a huge impact.”

She spent seven years working as a staff nurse and clinical supervisor at the VNA of Greater Lynn in Massachusetts. Moving back to Connecticut in 1985, she continued in home care, working for companies like St. Francis

Hospital and Medical Center Home Health Agency, Care-at-Home, and Omni Home Health Services, where she served as vice president of clinical services.

After a year of service at two other Connecticut home care agencies, she became director of quality improvement and education at New England Home Care, where she remained for 21 years. She retired in March 2018.

Highlights of her career include successfully achieving Joint Commission accreditation in four different home care agencies; facilitating major facets of the acquisition of five home care organizations; being integrally involved in staff education at all levels; and receiving a Nightingale Excellence in Nursing Award in 2008.

“Really, every day in my career was a learning experience,” said Rowell, who credited HHSN with instilling the love of learning that she still holds on to today. “As a Hartford Hospital Nursing student, I received a wonderful, hands-on education that, among so many other things, showed me that opportunities to learn are everywhere. Even as a retiree, I use that lesson every day.”



Sheila Rowell today.

She Was Part Of ‘The Greatest Generation’



From the HHSN Class of 1939 yearbook.

Hartford Hospital School of Nursing Class of 1939 Alumnae Ruth Banfield Lowderback may have died in 1995, but her words are still very much alive.

More than 200 of the letters Lowderback wrote to her husband Charlie when the two were separated during and after World War II are featured as part of an exhibit currently on display at the University of New England in Maine.

Included in the collection, titled "No One Fights Alone: WWII in the Pacific," are letters Lowderback wrote when she served as a U.S. Army Air Evacuation Nurse stationed in Hawaii and other locations. She rose to the rank of first lieutenant, while her husband served as a first lieutenant in the Signal Corps. The two married immediately before they went off to war.

Lowderback wrote to her husband almost every day, describing everything from carrying wounded men, to learning to cook, to her sadness when President Franklin D. Roosevelt died. Very much in love, she also wrote how she barely spoke to the men she met, because none were as interesting as Charlie.

Her family also donated her nurse's cloak, nursing uniform, WWII uniform, and dog tags to the exhibit.

"One of the stories Mom loved to tell was how when she announced she was going to enlist in the Army, her supervisor at Hartford Hospital called the local recruitment station to tell them not to accept her application. The hospital didn't want to lose her," remembered her son, Gary Lowderback, with a chuckle. "We never knew whether that story was 100% true. But whatever the case, Mom was so determined to serve that she drove to the Army's Boston office and enlisted there. Like so many of her generation, she felt it was her obligation to be part of the war effort."

In addition to writing letters, Lowderback also kept diaries, some of which detail her experiences as a HHSN student:

The school was run by a Miss McConnell, an old Canadian Army nurse. ... Was she strict! Every morning we lined up for inspection and got demerits if we weren't all spit and polished.

Written in small, careful script, her notes also explain how her career included serving a year as a private-duty nurse, attending Simmons College (now Simmons University) in Boston to study Public Health, and working for two years for the Visiting Nurses Association. She also reminisces about being a Girl Scout and attending high school dances. She writes:

We had an old Victrola. Mr. B.J. Lee, the principal, let us use it on our lunch break. What fun we had in the old auditorium!

After the end of WWII, she left nursing to become a homemaker and raise three sons: Gary, Glen and James. According to Gary Lowderback, the family lived in a house built on the 25-acre farm in Bloomfield, Connecticut, that his mother grew up on. This meant that in addition to caring for her children, Lowderback also cared for horses, cows and chickens.

"She was an outdoor girl, and she loved her horses," Gary Lowderback said.

When her youngest son entered high school in the late 1960s, Lowderback resumed her career, going back to Hartford Hospital where, among other duties, she ran the blood bank.

"My grandmother called my mother 'the bright side,' because she was so light and cheery all the time," Gary Lowderback said. "She was so giving and

friendly. She taught us to be honest and giving too, and to accept responsibility for what we did. I think that's one of the things she would want to be remembered for."



During WWII.



Ruth in 1992.



Meet Your 2019 Hartford Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Association Board

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HHSN Alumnae Scholarships

The HHSN Alumnae Association awards scholarships at our annual banquet to eligible individuals who are pursuing a degree in nursing. Please check our website, hhsنالumnae.org, for eligibility requirements and contact information. We ask that all applications and necessary documentation be submitted no later than April 1, 2020.

CLASS OF 1951

Carolyn “Cal” Brunning Clarke is 88 years old and enjoying life in a nice retirement home in Brampton, Ontario, Canada—just on the west side of Toronto. She has three grandchildren ranging in age from 14 to 25. They keep her young!

CLASS OF 1955

Carmela DiPasquale Kenney is busy with her family and church groups. Her four children are doing well, and she has a new grandchild who is 18 months old. Although Carmela lives in another state, she is able to visit with her children every few months.

CLASS OF 1957

Cynthia Johnson Pavano is unable to attend the banquet this year because her grandson is graduating from Fairfield University on the same day. She has another granddaughter who attends Bentley and is in Italy for the semester. She will graduate next year.

CLASS OF 1959

Ardell Schmidt Patterson and **Barbara Bedlow Matthews** would like to alert classmates about their 60th nursing anniversary this year. Hopefully, there will be good representation from their class at the alumnae banquet. They say that longtime friendships are very special, and it's important to keep connections strong.

Alumnae **The Pillbox**

CLASS OF 1960

Mary Clementino Moreau will be acting in a “senior” play. She is memorizing all the lines and says that after this production, she will retire from acting!

Joan Aggard Newth is busy in her community. She has always been an organizer and now has formed a group of nurses to socialize with.

Margie Ashman Page is planning her annual trip to the UK to visit her daughter and family.

CLASS OF 1961

Kathleen Smith continues to teach full time in Rhode Island College’s Nursing program.

Anita Resnick Gold is retired from nursing but keeps very busy. She exercises regularly and volunteers at the Senior Center, taking blood pressures. She is a member of a book club and also is taking Hebrew classes.

CLASS OF 1962

Irene Hallgren Anderson is enjoying her twin granddaughters, who attend college in Boston.

CLASS OF 1963



Regina Gudelski Gosselin holds a black belt in judo and has been a volunteer assistant instructor for the Florida School of Judo for a number of years. She also teaches judo lessons to YMCA members of all ages.

CLASS OF 1965

Jean Williams Hurst and her husband, Dr. Victor Hurst, have relocated to Rockport Mass., after many years of working and living in Florida.

Gail Firth Chambers would like to remind her class that next year they will be celebrating their 55-year nursing anniversary. Not many classmates have previously participated in the banquet, but she would love to see some of her old classmates for the reunion.

Barbara MacPhail Haupt’s daughter, Maria, and her family visited the United States last summer from Turkey. Barbara had her daughter while a student at HHSN.

CLASS OF 1966

Lynn Buckley Barrett enjoys retirement and lives in Venice, Fla., with her husband. She enjoys gardening, quilting and traveling, returning recently from a trip to Dubai, Bhutan, and India. Her greatest joy is visiting with her family.

CLASS OF 1967

Phyllis Desaulniers Cummings is retired but continues to substitute as a school nurse for the Norwich Public Schools.

CLASS OF 1969

Jean Bajek has a new baby granddaughter born in March. Now she has five grandchildren. She appreciates good health and the freedom of retirement to travel and visit them. She also enjoys their visits to her home in Panama City Beach, Fla. In October, she evacuated from the hurricane that devastated areas close to her. She was blessed to return to an intact home and a beach that escaped erosion.

CLASS OF 1970

Joan Carpenter was employed by Hartford Hospital from 1970 to 1991, working in the NICU and PACU. Then she was a professor at the University of Hawaii on Kauai. While on Kauai, she interviewed for an adjunct professor position in pediatrics. In 2003, she moved back to Connecticut and taught at UConn until 2016 as a part-time faculty member. She also started working again at Hartford Hospital on the postpartum unit, staying there until her retirement in 2014. Next year, her class will celebrate 50 years since graduating from HHSN and hopes to generate interest for classmates to attend the alumnae banquet.

CLASS OF 1972

Patricia Maloney Stumbo is a proud 1972 graduate of HHSN. After graduation, she worked for seven years at Hartford Hospital. She then moved to Tucson, Az., where she has been working at the University of Arizona Hospital, now a Banner Health facility. She is hoping to connect with her classmates to plan their 50th nursing anniversary in 2022.

CLASS OF 1974

Patricia Veronneau, director of Acute Patient and Family Transitions at Hartford Hospital, was named a recipient of Hartford Business Journal's 2018 Health Care Heroes Awards. In her role at the hospital, she is an advocate who supports patients and families as they move through the complex hospital system.

CLASS OF 1975

Gail Bonney Castonguay has retired from Androscoggin Home Healthcare and Hospice. She worked there for 35 years, the last 31 as clinical supervisor. Her nursing career has been a wonderful part of her life, and she especially enjoyed home health care. It is now time for her to play with her grandchildren and work on her mini-farm and greenhouse.

CLASS OF 1976

Elizabeth Lattarulo Horan has recently moved to California and is still working in the nursing profession.



IN MEMORIAM

Mary Marianella Ambrose '44
Josephine Rice Raymond '49
Marjorie Beers Whiting '49
Gwen Morrison Hughes '50
Janet Evelyn Rowley '52
Audrey Bowe Clegg '53
Faye Scott Dawes '55
Margaret McDonald Scattoloni '56
Dorothy Jaschinsky Whitehead '56
Linda McGee Wohlgenuth '56
Gail Scribner Cassello '58
Geraldine Zelinsky Fowler '59
Mary Logan Tustin '61
Diane Miano Tomczak '68
Kathleen Driscoll Sidabras '74

PHYSICIAN

R. Kent Sargent, MD –
Director of Emergency Services HH

Alumnae Comments



Thank you for your help in locating a Hartford Hospital School of Nursing pin for me. I am so happy to have it! Even though my nursing career is winding down, it is still important to me to have this HHSN pin!

–**Mary Ann Stabler Newton '74**



Let Us Hear From You!

We would love to receive photos and news from HHSN alumnae. Please mail information to the Alumnae Association of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, 560 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106 or e-mail patciarcia@snet.net.

Give A Lasting Gift

Your contribution today will make a difference to our nursing education program. Mail your gift to Hartford Hospital, Fund Development, 80 Seymour Street, Hartford, CT 06102. You can act now and show your commitment to nursing education forever by including Hartford Hospital and/or the Alumnae Association of HHSN Inc. in your estate plans. For more information, please contact Carol S. Garlick, vice president, philanthropy, at 860.545.2162 or at Carol.Garlick@hhchealth.org.



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Address Service Requested



Freshmen students from the Class of 1957 learn angensteen (ureteral) suction skills from their clinical leader.

Photo courtesy of The Hamilton Archives at Hartford Hospital