

# THE FLAME

2020-2021

Mennonite College of Nursing at Illinois State University



## Compassionate Care

Alumna Shannon Laesch opens community clinic



# CONTENTS

## THE FLAME

The magazine of Mennonite  
College of Nursing

2020-2021 Issue • published annually

Dean • Judy Neubrandner  
Newsletter coordinators • Ashley Bollhorst  
and Nora Dukowitz  
Copy editor • John Twork  
Photographers • Michelle Hassel,  
Lyndsie Schlink, and Bryanna Tidmarsh  
Designer • Jeff Higgerson

Illinois State University  
Mennonite College of Nursing  
Campus Box 5810  
Normal, IL 61790-5810

[Nursing.IllinoisState.edu](http://Nursing.IllinoisState.edu)

- 3 DEAN'S MESSAGE
- 4 CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY
- 7 MCN LAUNCHES FOUR NEW PROGRAMS
- 8 A FINGER ON THE PULSE
- 12 SEVEN FRIENDS FROM THE CLASS OF 1983
- 15 BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE,  
ONE NURSE AT A TIME
- 16 A CALL FOR CELEBRATION

CREATE  
YOUR  
LEGACY

# Dean's message



**EACH YEAR, I WRITE THESE WORDS TO YOU IN THE SPIRIT OF REFLECTION AND WITH AN EYE FOCUSED SQUARELY ON THE FUTURE.** The global pandemic we continue to navigate has clearly come with challenges, many of which were unimaginable before now. These struggles have tested us all, personally and professionally, but they have also inspired something else in each of us: growth.

As you know, Mennonite College of Nursing has over 100 years of rich history. Those decades of learning, teaching, helping, and healing have resulted in deep, strong roots. Now, as we emerge from the pandemic and continue to branch out, we can look forward to several exciting things coming soon. After all, from every challenge, great opportunity can flourish, and we must nurture it.

Last year, the Illinois State University Board of Trustees approved the construction of a 20,000-square-foot, two-story Nursing Simulation Lab building to be placed directly west of the existing Lab. This new space is anticipated to be completed for fall 2024. It will feature additional nursing simulation, skills lab, and health assessment areas, providing MCN students with enhanced experiences to prepare for a dynamic career in health care. This will be a fantastic addition to our current facility. We will share more information with you in the future about this exciting endeavor.

On one hand, it is hard to believe how much MCN has grown over the years. On the other, when I think about the hard work and dedication of our students, graduates, faculty, staff, and community, it is no wonder what we've accomplished and how well-positioned we are for the future. MCN is the leader of nursing education in Illinois because of people like you that care and commit. I invite you to continue to grow and build along with MCN.

Sincerely,

Judy Neubrandner, Ed.D., FNP-BC  
Dean, Mennonite College of Nursing

# Caring for the Community

MCN alumna opens clinic

By Bryanna Tidmarsh



Outside the doors of her new clinic, Select Care, Shannon Laesch '99 greets a crowd of community members who have gathered to celebrate her grand opening in Bloomington. Her family members have just arrived from Arkansas, her young niece and nephews smiling big as they hold the ribbon up. Laesch's daughter, who works at the clinic with her, hands her the large blue scissors.

**The crowd counts down—3, 2, 1—then cheers as she cuts the ribbon.**

Inside the clinic, Laesch gives us the grand tour. The rooms are warm and welcoming, with earth tones and pops of blue. "I named the clinic Select Care because of the services we offer for wellness, sexual assault, forensic nursing, bone health, and osteoporosis," says Laesch. "These are areas I'm passionate about."

Laesch's dedication to bone health began in fall 2013. When she interviewed for a position as an advanced practice nurse, the doctor said, "We want to start a bone clinic."

"People kept coming in with fractures," recalls Laesch. "No one treated their osteoporosis. So then, they would fracture again. These patients needed help addressing their underlying health problems." She emphasizes how knowing your bone health can help predict falls and prevent serious injury, whether you're 35 or 85.

This wasn't the first time Laesch ran a business to serve a need she saw in the community. In 2003, she opened a home care agency, bringing care to seniors in need.

Laesch went on to lead the initiative for bone clinics in multiple health care facilities. At one point, she had 300 patients.

Having received her BSN from MCN in 1999, Laesch returned to teach clinicals for MCN nursing students from 2006-2019, then again in fall 2021. In 2019, she applied for and obtained her Full Practice Authority (FPA) Advanced Practice Registered Nurse license. An experienced business owner, Laesch was ready to open her own clinic.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses with FPA are authorized to practice independently from a physician, treating patients and prescribing medicine. Laesch was on the executive board for



Select Care is located at 2103 E. Washington St., Suite 2C, Bloomington.



the Illinois Society for Advanced Practice Nursing, which helped push for Full Practice Authority to be passed in 2018.

“It’s a ton of work,” says Laesch. “But it’s worth it because of the patients.”

Some of these patients are survivors of sexual assault, who trust Laesch with their follow-up care. Before the clinic opened, hospitals would refer these patients from the Bloomington-Normal area to Pekin or Peoria. Laesch’s clinic offers follow-up support for sexual assault survivors.

“Our office feels homey, not sterile, and we follow the patient’s lead,” she says. “Even if they don’t go to the ER and get a kit collected, they can still come

to me for follow-up care, regardless of whether anything legal is involved.”

The clinic provides local injury care, pregnancy testing, and STD testing, and they can refer patients for counseling services.

With her education, business experience, and expertise in bone health, Laesch brings much-needed care in sexual assault, wellness, and bone health to the Bloomington-Normal community. 

---

**The Ko Family Scholarship** supports students who exemplify innovation and seek to improve medicine. For more information on how to set up a nursing scholarship, contact Jennifer Sedbrook, (309) 438-7178 or [jsedbro@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:jsedbro@IllinoisState.edu).

*“People kept coming in with fractures,” recalls Laesch. “No one treated their osteoporosis. So then, they would fracture again. These patients needed help addressing their underlying health problems.”*

# MCN LAUNCHES FOUR NEW PROGRAMS

By Bryanna Tidmarsh

Mennonite College of Nursing's mission is to promote excellence and innovation in education while striving to improve health locally and globally through exceptionally well-prepared nurses. In pursuit of this mission, MCN is building upon its continuing education offerings to empower nurses to expand the scope of their care:

- The **BSN to Ph.D. program** provides an efficient pathway for nurses interested in research to obtain their Ph.D. Students work alongside faculty and receive mentorship in their area of interest.
- The **BSN to DNP program** equips nurses with the tools needed for achieving the highest practice level in the field. The DNP-prepared nurse applies nursing research toward improving patient outcomes. Nurses choose between a Family Nurse Practitioner sequence and a Nursing Leadership & Management sequence.
- The **Psychiatric Mental Health post-master's certificate** curriculum focuses on population health and treatment of common psychiatric disorders across the lifespan. Mental health is foundational for overall health. Students gain the knowledge and training to meet patients' mental health care needs.
- The **School Nurse certificate program** prepares nurses for care, leadership, and advocacy within the school system.

All these programs contribute to the solid array of offerings at MCN and embrace the rich traditions and quality nursing education for which the College is known. ✦



MCN is building upon its continuing education offerings to empower nurses to expand the scope of their care.

**The Mark Pelletier Fund for Faculty Development** provides professional development opportunities and support for the faculty in the Mennonite College of Nursing. For more information on how to set up a fund in nursing, contact Jennifer Sedbrook, (309) 438-7178 or [jsedbro@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:jsedbro@IllinoisState.edu).



# A FINGER on the PULSE

MCN faculty build awareness of heart attack symptoms in the Latinx community

By Bryanna Tidmarsh

For many people, it can be difficult to recognize the signs of acute coronary syndrome, commonly known as a heart attack. Few studies have focused on how people understand heart attack symptoms, and even fewer focus specifically on Spanish-speaking communities in the U.S. This is where nurse researchers come in: they gather data to better understand the needs of communities, then create recommendations for improving nursing practice and patient outcomes.



Dr. John Blakeman and Dr. Susana Calderon discuss their research in the Nursing Simulation Lab.

*“Looking at the data, we will be able to focus on areas in which we can improve in terms of education, messaging, programming, and ways we can connect with this population.”*

Dr. John Blakeman

MCN faculty members Dr. John Blakeman and Dr. Susana Calderon are doing just that. The two first met at Millikin University, where Blakeman was a student in Calderon’s health assessment lab. Blakeman’s research focuses on cardiovascular disease and symptom science, while Calderon’s work focuses on oral health in underserved populations. By chance, they both landed as faculty at MCN. “Now, we have a strong cardiac research team,” says Calderon. They wondered: “Do Spanish-speaking individuals in Bloomington-Normal know the signs of a heart attack? And do they know what to do if they experience symptoms?”

“Within Hispanic and/or Latinx communities, there isn’t a lot of information about heart attack symptoms,” said Calderon. One 2006 paper found that there’s even less information in communities of people who speak solely Spanish. Though there are public health campaigns to spread awareness, they aren’t always accessible to everyone. Calderon insists, “We can’t ignore this segment of the population.”

To address this disparity, Blakeman and Calderon are working with the Community Health Care Clinic (CHCC) in Normal, which serves a primarily Spanish-speaking population, with most patients identifying as Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx. They are measuring the extent to which CHCC patients recognize the signs of a heart attack, as well as whether they know what to do if they experience symptoms.

From statistics to translation, this research requires a diverse set of skills. Because of this, the project has been a team-effort in collaboration with MCN, the CHCC, and others on campus including MCN faculty Dr. Marilyn Prasun, Dr. Myoung Jin Kim, Dr. Susie Watkins, and Ph.D. student Kate Peterson; nursing students (including, as of the writing of this article, Ashley Belsan and Mary Horcher, both of whom are part of the CAUSE program and are fluent in Spanish); and Dr. Montserrat Mir from the Department of Languages, Literatures, and

Cultures, who collaborated with nursing faculty on this project.

MCN has an existing partnership with CHCC through the CAUSE program, which is directed by Watkins. “We are continuing to build that partnership by being intentional about our research methods,” says Blakeman. One component that was important to the team was making sure that all materials were available in both English and Spanish.

There were other barriers to consider beyond translation, too. “When you do research with Spanish-speaking folks, first-generation folks, or new immigrants, a major barrier can be complex issues of immigration, relocation, and education level,” says Calderon. It was important to protect the safety of participants and to also let them self-identify. For example: “Some participants



use the term Latinx, but some don't. They can choose Latina, Latino, Latinx, or Hispanic."

The path to a good partnership is paved by ethical research. "We have to think about how our research can benefit them," says Calderon. "Research is not always done ethically. When people hear 'research,' they walk away. Because I am from this population, I know that this especially happens for minorities due to the history of being harmed by research. That's why, as researchers, we always want to make sure we are giving back to these communities."

"This is new ground," says Blakeman. It's a small study, so nurses can't generalize it for all populations. But for Bloomington-Normal and communities like it across the country, the information is valuable. "Looking at the data, we will be able to focus on areas in which we can improve in terms of education, messaging, programming, and ways we can connect with this population. It's not just an educational intervention; it's a multilayered, intentional process to help people change behavior." Ultimately, it will help places such as the CHCC improve their patient care and best strategize

how to address health disparities within the populations they serve.

The study helps build relationships between MCN and the patient population, too. Calderon hopes that patients who shared their contact information might be willing to participate in future studies, such as those related to her work on improving oral health.

Finally, the study sets the groundwork for future research in acute coronary syndrome. With more funding, it could serve as a rationale for future research in the field and be replicated on a larger scale.

"The future is there. The need is there. The interest is there," says Calderon. "What it needs is funding."

Blakeman and Calderon would like to thank their collaborators and funding agencies for their support during this research initiative. They would also like to thank the College, Dean Judy Neubrander, Dr. Mary Dyck, Dr. Montserrat Mir, and the Department of Language, Literatures, and Cultures. This research was made possible thanks to an Illinois State University research grant. ❖

*If you are interested in supporting MCN's Office of Research contact Jennifer Sedbrook, (309) 438-7178 or [jsedbro@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:jsedbro@IllinoisState.edu).*

## SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

### Want to hear more?

Scan the QR code below with your smartphone's camera to listen to Episode 3 of MCN's new podcast, MCN On Air, to hear more about research from Dr. John Blakeman. You can find the podcast on major streaming services.



*"As researchers, we always want to make sure we are giving back to these communities."*

Dr. Susana Calderon

## A CELEBRATION OF **SEVEN LIFELONG FRIENDS** FROM THE CLASS OF

# 1983

By Ashley Bollhorst



*From left, Linda (Bork) Ziemer, Patty (Franey) Haberkorn, Jayme (Hasbargen) Lottinville, Cindy (Koch) Malinowski, Ellen (Rayburn) Wylie, Velma (Myers) Shetler, and Lori (Loewen) Troyer*

**I**t started with a voicemail. Lori Troyer, an MCN graduate from the class of 1983—“You know, the Dark Ages,” Lori joked in her message—had some exciting news. “There’s a group of seven of us,” she told me, “All MCN grads from the class of 1983. We all still work in the nursing profession, and we’ve stayed friends all these years. We’re getting together in town next week.” Would I like to attend their gathering and hear their story? Heck yeah, I would.

I called Lori back and said “yes,” setting a meeting time for 6:30 p.m. on the coming Thursday. She tells me that, after we hang up, she will call Patty, one of the seven, to tell her, “Patty, it’s happening!”

### **ARRIVAL**

When I arrive, Lori is waiting for me outside. After an exchange of greetings, I’m welcomed into her friend Ellen’s home, a charming

historic house tucked on a quiet street. Stepping inside, I’m led toward the sitting room where the friends have arranged themselves on couches and chairs to form a circle. A chair has been thoughtfully set out for me, and I take my spot.

“So, which one is Patty?” I say with a grin.

All eyes look in one direction, and Patty exclaims, “This wasn’t my idea!” Laughter and teasing follow, and I’m met with the realization of just how long they’ve been friends, how close they still are, how special that is.

After some gleeful exchanges, it’s revealed that it was really more Lori’s idea, but all are excited for today. Formal introductions follow, and I meet: Patty Haberkorn, Lori Troyer, Ellen Wylie, Velma Shetler, Jayme Lottinville, Linda Ziemer, and Cindy Malinowski.

### **MCN IN THE 1980s**

The seven met at Mennonite College of Nursing and remember much from those days.

A favorite MCN instructor was Lynn Kennell. “She just made you love OB,” said Ellen, whose career and life have focused on caring for mothers and children.

Other favorites were Dr. Denise Wilson, who had a knack for making content relatable and engaging, and Gay Chelsey, remembered for her sense of humor and how she made learning fun.

Back then, the school was one building, with dormitory housing and classrooms. Classes met in the basement, sometimes attended in sweatpants and slippers. If a man was present in the dorms, students would signal to the other girls by setting out a waste basket and yelling, “Man on the floor!”

A tunnel connected the school to the hospital, too, which meant MCN students could be on-call in times of need, such as during snowstorms, Velma recalled.

## CHANGES IN NURSING

The group has seen health care advance dramatically in 38 years. The pace of things is what they notice most. Patients spend less time in the hospital; things happen more quickly.

People used to come in a week in advance to have tests done for a surgery. Now tests can be performed same-day. Heart attack patients used to be at the hospital for 10 days minimum. Now, they can be discharged in as little as 24 hours.

## DISCOVERING THE SPARK

Why did they become nurses? For Patty and Jayme, the reason was family.

Patty answered, “My mom was a nurse, and Dad always said I should become a nurse like her. At first, I didn’t want to be, but my opinion

on it flipped one day. I’ve never regretted it.”

Jayme said, “My grandmother wanted me to become a nurse, so I did. I ended up taking care of her at the end of her life, and it felt like everything came full circle then. I just kept thinking, I’m supposed to be here. If I wasn’t a nurse, I wouldn’t know how to do this.”

Linda was guided by purpose. “I thought nursing would be a great way to take care of others and make a difference in their lives,” she said.

For Velma, it was by accident. “I was going to school for social work. I disliked all my sociology classes, so I took a year off and worked in a nursing home. I never left nursing after that.”

## GATHERING AND FELLOWSHIP

The friends have gathered to celebrate many times over the years, including each of their seven weddings.

They vacation together, too. Since 2012, they’ve taken a trip every year, traveling to seven cities in four states. Tonight’s gathering adds to that list; the group is staying tonight at Ellen’s, but tomorrow they’ll be off to the Ozarks in Missouri for a weekend getaway. Their ultimate destination? For this group, it’s not the place but the company that matters. “We just want to continue our get-togethers for many more years,” said Lori.

## LIVES OF IMPACT

For the seven, careers in nursing and their connection as friends, have created unexpected impacts in each other’s lives and in their communities.

When Linda and Cindy were at the hospital giving birth to their second-born children, Lori was one of their nurses.

Cindy and Linda became faculty members at MCN, teaching the next generation of nurses. Among Cindy’s students was Patty’s nephew. He graduated with his BSN in 2020.

Ellen’s passion for motherhood and childcare would guide her to start a grief support group for infant loss. The group helps families cope after having a miscarriage, a still birth, or a premature baby who wasn’t able to come home. (For those who would like to attend, it runs through Carle BroMenn Medical Center and meets the first Thursday evening of every month on Zoom.)

Jayme’s career has focused on end-of-life care. She served as Clinical Coordinator at Iroquois Memorial Hospice for many years before working as an ER nurse at Iroquois Memorial Hospital.

Patty has dedicated her career to meeting the health needs of people with disabilities. She is the Executive Director at Futures Unlimited, an organization specializing in providing services for adults with disabilities in Livingston County.

Together, the friends have 266 years of nursing practice,



Group photo taken on their 1983 graduation day, from left, Ellen, Velma, Linda, Cindy, Lori, Jayme, and Patty



From left, Ellen, Velma, Linda, Cindy, Lori, Jayme, and Patty, taken at their latest get-together



Back row, from left, Velma, Ellen, Patty, and Linda  
Front row, from left, Lori, Cindy, and classmates Jenny (Peasley) Messier and Kim (Peters) Alberts

service, and leadership in 11 areas of expertise, making impacts in countless lives.

### INSIDER KNOWLEDGE

As the evening ended, I asked, “If you ever needed to prove your identity to one another, what is a code that only this group would know? Answers flew out instantly. “Sylvia!” said one. “The Yellow Brick Road from The Wizard of Oz!” said Lori.

“What’s the story for the Wizard of Oz?” I asked. They found me a picture to explain. They collaborated on a group Halloween costume one year, including Dorothy, Scarecrow, and even the Yellow Brick Road. Observing the smiling faces in

the image, I agreed it was the perfect passcode.

### EVENING’S END

Afterward, as I left the circle of friends, interview over, I knew that faithfully representing the collective warmth, humor, and wisdom I felt in that room would be impossible. Like the memories they’d shared with me that night, some things can only be experienced and felt rather than described. But I also knew, as Lori walked me out and said goodbye, told me to be careful going down the front steps, that these are the things that make MCN great—evenings full of storytelling, unexpected laughs,

old pictures, and finished sentences; friendships that transcend time; and lives spent making a difference. ✨

A leadership gift from Ellen Wylie '83 and Mark Wylie has created an endowed scholarship to honor former MCN instructor Lynn Kennell.

For more information on how you can support this scholarship, contact Jennifer Sedbrook, (309) 438-7178 or [jsedbro@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:jsedbro@IllinoisState.edu).

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 7 weddings
- 23 children
- 11 grandchildren
- 11 gatherings in 5 states

### WHERE THEY MADE A DIFFERENCE

- Cardiac ICU
- Developmental Disability
- Education
- Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)
- Hospice
- Leadership
- Medical-Surgical
- Obstetrics
- Urology

# Building a brighter future, ONE NURSE AT A TIME

By Bryanna Tidmarsh



In the 2019 *Flame* magazine, we shared how nurses are like silent watchmen, the unsung heroes who are there for our best and worst moments, but who seldom stand in the spotlight. The COVID-19 pandemic changed this. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared 2020 the Year of the Nurse, and the media rushed to profile the nurses standing on the frontlines of the pandemic. Suddenly, the world knew what we knew: nurses are the foundation of our health care system.

And each of us adds to that foundation:

- The accountant who changed career paths, inspired to become a nurse due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The nurse educator who supports and empowers nurses on their floor.
- The school nurse who tracks student symptoms to keep our children safe.
- The nurse who holds up an iPad so a patient can connect with their loved ones.
- The donor who contributes to scholarship funds, helping to support the next generation of nurses.
- The nurse who goes back for a DNP to improve nursing practice.
- The nurse researcher who works closely with marginalized populations to combat health care disparities.
- The readers who pick up this magazine and listen to the voices of nurses in our community.

**Because of you, MCN stands strong.** Now, as the need for nurses grows in the face of an unprecedented nursing shortage, we rise to meet this need by continuing to build toward a brighter future in health care.

We do this by bolstering our research base, collecting and analyzing data in order to improve patient outcomes.

We do this by creating innovative solutions for clinical space via simulation, which allows us to accept more nursing students and further combat the nursing shortage.

And, we do this by building a new, state-of-the-art Nursing Simulation Lab, which will offer an innovative space for our students and faculty to collaborate.

Readers, we want to know: How have you helped build up the field of nursing or been impacted by a nurse? We hope you will step into the spotlight and share your story with us. 📌

*As the need for nurses grows in the face of an unprecedented nursing shortage, we rise to meet this need by continuing to build towards a brighter future in health care.*

# A call for celebration

## MCN alumni gather virtually to commemorate milestone reunions and award winners

By Amy Irving

Each spring, Mennonite College of Nursing alumni travel from all over the country to Illinois State University to honor milestone reunions and recognize award winners. While we couldn't gather in person in 2021 for the Mennonite Nurses Alumni Organization (MNAO) Awards and Reunion Banquet, Dr. Judy Neubrandner, dean of the Mennonite College of Nursing, and MNAO President Sarah Lindsey wanted to make sure we had a chance to celebrate our alumni.

Over 50 members of the community joined us for a Zoom gathering on April 24 to recognize reunions and award winners for 2020 and 2021. The virtual event also celebrated the Golden Jubilee, an annual MCN event which honors the class celebrating its 50th reunion. We welcomed alumni from the class of 1951 all the way up to the class of 2019.

Neubrandner greeted the group and shared some college updates. Dr. Aondover Tarhule, vice president for Academic Affairs and provost, also attended and gave some remarks. During the Golden Jubilee presentation, we strolled down memory lane with the classes of 1970 and 1971.

During the award ceremony, hosted by MNAO President Sarah Lindsey, award winners from 2020 and 2021 shared their remarks. Classes with milestone reunions were then recognized, as well as alumni from all the classes. Once the event ended, alumni were able to join a breakout room with others from their class to chat. Even though this was not an in-person event, alumni enjoyed being able to see their classmates and catch up.

Plans are well underway for the 2022 MNAO Awards and Reunion Banquet. We hope to once again gather on campus to celebrate. If you are in the Class of 1972, save the date for the Golden Jubilee Celebration for Friday, April 22 at the Alumni Center. The MNAO Awards and Reunion Banquet will be Saturday, April 23 at the Alumni Center.

Visit [Nursing.IllinoisState.edu/Alumni](https://Nursing.IllinoisState.edu/Alumni) to nominate someone for an award. Click on the MNAO Awards tab to fill out the online form, or call (309) 438-2174 to submit a nomination over the phone. ✨





Daniel Barbee



Dr. Cody Yochum



Dr. Carol Farran



Ruth Baughman Oesch

## **THE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD**

### **DANIEL BARBEE**

The 2021 recipient of the Mennonite Nurses Alumni Organization’s Distinguished Alumni Award is Daniel Barbee. This is the highest award the Mennonite College of Nursing bestows upon its graduates.

After earning a BSN in 1988, Barbee went on to receive an MBA from the University of Phoenix in 1992. He is currently the President for Rural Division at Bon Secours Mercy Health, where he oversees three hospitals, a cancer center, two occupational health centers, a freestanding therapy center, and multiple physician practices. Prior to this position, he was the CEO for the University of Toledo Medical Center.

Barbee holds several professional and civic organization memberships. He is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, a chair at the Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio, the medical lead for four Honor Flights, and a board member for Willard Area Economic Development as well as

Tiffin Seneca County Economic Development. Barbee has also been a guest lecturer at the University of Toledo’s health care administration program, and he served two terms as the president of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

One of the achievements that matters most to him is raising his three children with his wife, Kathy. The Barbees have an annual scholarship for nursing students, helping to invest in preparing the next generation of nurses. “Mennonite College of Nursing truly changed the trajectory of my life,” says Barbee. “I am forever grateful.”

## **THE EARLY CAREER ACHIEVEMENT ALUMNI AWARD**

### **DR. CODY YOCHUM**

The 2021 recipient of the Mennonite Nurses Alumni Organization’s Early Career Achievement Award is Dr. Cody Yochum.

In 2008, Dr. Cody Yochum graduated from Lakeview College of Nursing with a BSN, then earned a FNP degree from Mennonite College of Nursing in 2012. In 2016, he received a DNP

in critical care/post-resuscitation from Missouri State University, and in 2020, he completed an Acute Care Nurse Practitioner post-master’s certificate from the University of Pennsylvania.

Yochum currently works at St. John Medical Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma in the ICU as a critical care hospitalist. His responsibilities include evaluation, treatment, and management of critically ill and complex patients in the medical, neurological, surgical, and cardiovascular ICUs. He also works for the Jackson & Coker Locum Tenens as a critical care nurse practitioner. His responsibilities include night coverage of the pulmonary and critical care services as a Locums provider at OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria.

Yochum is a member of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses. He is an ongoing preceptor for NP students as well as medical residents. Outside of work, he is a church musician and he mentors young musicians.

When asked about what his most important achievements are, Yochum responded, “Continuing my education to make myself the

best at what I do. Also, being a godfather to three amazing kids, and mentoring church youth to help shape a positive and powerful tomorrow.”

## **THE SERVICE AWARD**

### **DR. CAROL FARRAN**

The 2021 recipient of the Mennonite Nurses Alumni Organization’s Service Award is Dr. Carol Farran.

Having over 30 years of experience in health care, Dr. Carol Farran is a nationally recognized nurse with particular interest in family caregivers of persons with Alzheimer’s disease.

In 2017, she retired as professor emeritus in health and aging at Rush University College of Nursing. During her tenure at Rush, she served as Ph.D. student advisor/co-advisor, provided oversight for transitioning from a DNSc to Ph.D. nursing program, and acted as the College of Nursing representative on the Graduate College and Medical Center Internal Review committees.

Farran also collaborated with Rush Institute for Healthy Aging to implement an interdisciplinary intervention for older adults and family caregivers who need in-home assistance. As director of the interdisciplinary groups within the education core at the Alzheimer’s Disease Center, she led interdisciplinary faith sharing groups in multicultural churches in Chicago. Additionally, Farran provided informational presentations on Alzheimer’s Disease and

Caregiving in different settings in northern Illinois.

Farran received numerous awards and honors for her research, scholarship, and service throughout her career, including the Rosalyn Carter Leadership in Caregiving award, the Midwest Nursing Research Society’s Distinguished Contribution to Research Award, and the Illinois Nurses Association Distinguished Researcher Award.

Farran was the Director of the Mennonite Hospital School of Nursing in the 1970s, where she headed the development of a modular curriculum that allowed for more individual learning. Under her leadership, the school received continuing accreditation from NLN in 1980. Farran continues her relationship with MCN by providing additional ideas for faculty research projects.

“It is indeed an honor to be recognized for these achievements in research by nursing colleagues and to see continued student development in these areas of study,” said Farran.

## **SPIRIT OF NURSING AWARD**

### **RUTH BAUGHMAN OESCH**

The 2021 recipient of the Mennonite Nurses Alumni Organization’s Spirit of Nursing Award is Ruth Baughman Oesch.

Oesch received a nursing diploma from Mennonite Hospital School of Nursing in 1961 and a BSN from Northern Illinois University in 1968. Oesch had a long career

as a nurse before retiring in 2003 as an occupational health nurse for the City of Bloomington. She previously served as a staff nurse at St. James Hospital in Pontiac and Mennonite Hospital in Bloomington, as a clinical instructor for Mennonite Hospital School of Nursing, and as the director of nursing service at Mennonite Hospital from 1968-1972.

Oesch received the District Six, INA Nurse of the Year in 1984, as well as the MNAO Distinguished Alumni Award in 1986. She has served as a Red Cross nurse and was a volunteer nurse at the Community Health Care Clinic. Oesch is an active member of Second Presbyterian Church, where she held the roles of Sunday school teacher, deacon, and parish nurse. She is presently the chairperson for the JOY (Just Older Youth) Group at her church.

Oesch served on the Board of Mennonite Hospital School of Nursing and has been a member of the Mennonite Alumni Association since she graduated in 1961, holding several board positions, including president. In 2018, she established an endowed scholarship at Illinois State University Mennonite College of Nursing.

Oesch stated, “It’s always especially gratifying to be honored by one’s peers. This Spirit of Nursing Award is a very special culmination of my nursing career. I accept this award with great gratitude and humility.” 



## In Memory

Our sympathies go to the family and friends of the following:

**Quanstrom**, Wilhelmine (Keim) '44,  
April 25, 2020

**Sutter**, Lela '44,  
June 11, 2019

**Holcomb**, June (Cralley) '46,  
March 16, 2020

**Henderson**, D. Jean (Brandt) '48,  
June 30, 2021

**Rieger**, Jane (Davis) '48,  
February 27, 2020

**Keasling**, Marjorie (Lawrence) '49,  
December 14, 2020

**Sanders**, Marjorie (Davis) '51,  
November 21, 2019

**Deavers**, Alice (Kumler) '52,  
October 7, 2020

**Hofer**, Joyce (Eigsti) '52,  
January 1, 2021

**Wallace**, Shirley (Danforth) '52,  
August 11, 2019

**Cole**, Juanita (Wells) '53,  
September 9, 2020

**Landstrom**, Ruth (Gregory) '53,  
August 14, 2021

**Dohleman**, Helen (Wuebbens) '55,  
August 13, 2019

**Linder**, Jane (Cline) '56,  
November 11, 2020

**Moser**, Rachel (Punke) '56,  
October 11, 2021

**Blair**, Rebecca (Witham) '59,  
July 13, 2020

**Hulvey**, Juanita (Wilson) '60,  
March 5, 2021

**Michalovic**, Stephen '64,  
December 23, 2020

**Leonard**, Donna (Baughman) '65,  
December 7, 2020

**Middleton**, Kathryn (Clausen) '75,  
September 21, 2019

**Koch**, Linda '78,  
February 26, 2019

**Cuttill**, Melinda (Gibson Conrad) '89,  
September 10, 2021

**McGee**, Donna '91,  
July 8, 2020

**Ransdell**, Kimberlee (Greer) '92,  
December 2, 2020

**Ohler**, Allen '98,  
August 13, 2021

**Zimmerman-Scott**, Lori  
(Zimmerman) '98,  
September 28, 2020

**Santiago**, Peggy '02,  
December 7, 2019

**Heffren**, Holly '03,  
January 5, 2021

**Mengarelli**, Lisa (Clark) '03,  
August 26, 2021

**Lauritson**, Julie '05,  
October 12, 2021

**Melody**, Karen '09,  
February 23, 2021

**Evans**, Daniel '10,  
May 2, 2020

**Tessier-Quint**, Patricia '11,  
May 26, 2020



## Save the date!

The following events have been scheduled for **2022**:

### Thursday, March 24

MCN Research Symposium

### Friday, April 22

Golden Jubilee Celebration

### Saturday, April 23

MNAO Awards & Reunion Banquet

### Friday, May 6

Spring Commencement

### Saturday, October 15

MCN Homecoming Tailgate

### Saturday, December 17

Winter Commencement

More events are in the process of being planned, and we encourage you to visit [Nursing.IllinoisState.edu](https://Nursing.IllinoisState.edu) for updates and additional details.



## Retirements

This year marks the retirement of three faculty who have meant so much to us: **Dr. Brenda Johnson**, **Dr. Cindy Kerber**, and **Cindy Malinowski**. Our flame burns brighter because they were with us, and they will always be part of the MCN family.



## Connect with us!

Join our **MCN Alumni group**.



Visit [Nursing.IllinoisState.edu](https://Nursing.IllinoisState.edu) for more information about these events, registration links, photo galleries, online stores, and more.

Illinois State University, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding affirmative action, nondiscrimination, and anti-harassment. Illinois State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, order of protection, gender identity and expression, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, unfavorable military discharge, or status as a veteran in employment, educational programs and activities, or admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed by contacting the director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access by email at [EqualOpportunity@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:EqualOpportunity@IllinoisState.edu), by calling (309) 438-3383, or by mailing to the office at Illinois State University, Campus Box 1280, Normal, IL 61790.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting Mennonite College of Nursing at (309) 438-7418.



**Mennonite College of Nursing**  
 Campus Box 5810  
 Normal, IL 61790-5810

-  [NursingISU](#)
-  [@NursingISU](#)
-  [@isu\\_nursing](#)

## HELP A FUTURE NURSE!

**Make a gift to support a MCN nursing student and our future nurses.**

### GIFT DESIGNATION

- Mennonite Nurses Alumni Organization Endowed Student Scholarship (5816633)
- Centennial Fund to support nursing students (5815100)
- Strategic Initiative Fund (general gift to the college 5815631)

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

\_\_\_ **OPTION 1:** Check. A check for my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to Illinois State University Foundation is enclosed.

\_\_\_ **OPTION 2:** Credit Card:

- VISA  MASTERCARD  DISCOVER  AMERICAN EXPRESS
- A single gift in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- A recurring gift in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, ending on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (month/day/year), to be paid:  monthly  quarterly  semiannually  annually

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name on card

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Account number      CVV      Expiration date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email

\_\_\_ **OPTION 3:** Make a gift online at [Giving.IllinoisState.edu](http://Giving.IllinoisState.edu).

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
 City      State      ZIP

(      )       mobile  home

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Preferred phone number

### OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT ISU

- I (and/or my spouse/partner) work for a matching gift company: \_\_\_\_\_
- Please send me information about ways to support ISU through a provision in my will, trust, retirement plan, or other deferred gift arrangement.
- I have already included ISU in my will, trust, retirement plan, or other deferred gift arrangement.

*Please mail this form to:*  
**Illinois State University Foundation**  
**Campus Box 8000**  
**Normal, IL 61790-8000**