Mary Punke ’54 and June Forbes ’54

Mary Punke and June Forbes are receiving the Spirit of Nursing Award for their dedication to the profession of nursing, their college, and classmates. They are a living testimony to the values of Mennonite College of Nursing, and concern themselves with the physical, emotional, and spiritual care of others, whether or not they are donning a nursing uniform. Initially nominated for the Distinguished Alumni Award, the MNAO Awards Committee thought it would be more appropriate to create a one-time award for this special situation and these exceptional individuals.

Last year they came to the aid of former Alumni Director of many years and classmate, Dorothy DeVore ‘54. Dorothy suffered a horrible accident while accompanying her husband to a Chicago Hospital via an ambulance in April of 2009. After the accident, Dorothy faced many obstacles. For more than a year, her friends/colleagues/alum, Mary and June, were there constantly to help her heal and manage the challenges an accident will bring. They made this terrible time in her life more bearable by helping on a daily basis, whether it was running an errand, helping her physically, taking her to appointments so a recovery could be assured.

June Forbes spent much of her career as a long term care nurse in Colfax. Mary Punke was a surgical nurse in Colorado and Hawaii, and then came back to Illinois and worked in long term care at Mennonite Hospital. Mary has been the “glue” of her class and would continue to inspire them to attend various MCN events. They both have supported future students of the college.