Erma Mae Liddle Borchers Endowed Scholarship

Erma Mae Liddle Borchers was born in rural Cropsy/Sibley, Illinois where her family had a long history of military service to this country. She was a Daughter of the American Revolution (DAR) Governor Thomas Ford Chapter in Ford County and a member of numerous genealogical societies. Her father served in World War I, her brothers Lyle and Glen served during the Korean War, her future husband, Warren would be in the Army Air Force and their future son, Steve would serve in the US Public Health Service/Indian Health Service (IHA). Prior to entering nursing school, Erma worked in an essential WWII industry for nearly 9 months, known as that "great arsenal of democracy." Erma attended and graduated from Mennonite School of Nursing in 1945-1948, as a U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps member. All US Cadet Nurse Corps members made a pledge to serve in essential nursing for the duration of the war.

Erma’s 44 year nursing career was diverse. At the beginning of her career she served three different Peoria Hospitals, and was the Director of Nursing for five years at the Washington Nursing Center. This organization was very progressive at the time in the area of rehabilitation. When Warren’s career took them to the California, Erma brought her new passion for rehabilitation nursing and helped introduce it to the Bay Area as the Director of Rehabilitation Nursing/Acute Rehab Center at Mills-Peninsula Hospital in San Mateo, California, to promote acute rehabilitation and CRRN Certification. This 28 bed unit that had a client base of stroke and accident victims. There Erma created a Stroke Club, which was a support group for stroke victims.

Erma was a life-long learner who continued her education by receiving her bachelor’s degree in Health Services Administration in 1982 and her Certificate in Rehab Nursing (CRRN) in 1984. She was a charter member of the Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN) which was formed in 1974. It was the ARN that sponsored the CRRN Certification as a nursing specialty. The first exam was in 1984. Erma encouraged all of her colleagues to pursue this advanced certification.

Erma’s influence and encouragement was also felt at home. Her son, Steve, followed her into the medical profession as a dermatologist, and her daughter Lori once worked in a hospital setting, and transitioned to the care of animals as a Registered Veterinarian Technician. Their vocations were no doubt influenced by their mother, not by demand, but simply by observing her life.

Throughout her career, Erma was known as an innovator, encourager, mentor and teacher. When talking to her husband about what Erma valued most about nursing, Erma never forgot the foundations taught to her at MCN, he feels that above all, Erma cared about taking care of the patient at the bedside.