

# University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

## Nursing

### Alumni Newsletter

October 2004

#### Greetings from the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Hello Nursing Alumni and Friends,



This has been a busy and exciting start of the academic year at UW-Eau Claire. For those of you who may not be in the immediate Eau Claire area, I am thrilled to share the news of the changed status of the School of Nursing. This fall, University faculty unanimously approved the renaming of the School of Nursing to the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences houses the departments of Adult Health Nursing, Family Health Nursing, Nursing Systems, and the Department of Public Health Professions (formerly the Allied Health Department). This change became effective with the action of the Board of Regents at their September meeting.

I believe these changes will increase the visibility of the nursing programs and position us to expand the leadership we provide in nursing and health care education. In addition there will be further opportunities to build connections with the programs in Health Care Administration, Environmental Public Health and Music Therapy.

A transition team of college faculty and administrators is working to develop the college mission and governance structure of the new college. We will keep you posted as we move forward in establishing the new college.

I am also pleased to announce that Dr. Mary Zwygart-Stauffacher has agreed to take on the role of Interim Associate Dean for the new college. Dr. Zwygart-Stauffacher will provide leadership for all of the college graduate programs, the post-baccalaureate and post-master's programs and the Collaborative Nursing Programs. Dr. Zwygart-Stauffacher has extensive experience in directing graduate programs in other nursing programs. We look forward to the guidance she will provide for our programs.

By the time you receive this, Homecoming will have come and gone and we will begin planning for the Nurses Walk for next year. We hope you will continue to attend and we hope that this event will become an occasion for many classes to meet for reunions. For those of you who were unable to attend, I hope you will take the opportunity to let us know where you are and what you are doing.

I know many of you have participated in the *Fulfilling the Promise of Excellence* Campaign and I am grateful for the support you provide our nursing programs. One way we have received support through the campaign is in the area of investing in student success. Last academic year we were able to celebrate the activities of the Nursing Honor's program through the generous support of Guy and Lauren Brubaker. It is awe-inspiring to listen to our students present their works of scholarship and creativity. The future of the nursing profession looks good, indeed. This year we received needed support from Mary Bliss to help sustain the work of our Student Success Center, a faculty directed, peer tutoring program. We have many other projects for which your support would be valued.

Thank you for your continued interest and support.

Dean, College of Nursing and Health Sciences

### **We're A College!!**

This August, UW-Eau Claire faculty unanimously voted to rename the School of Nursing the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. In addition to the three nursing departments, the College includes the Department of Public Health Professions which encompasses environmental public health, health care administration, and music therapy. In concert with these changes, Dr. Elaine Wendt, our former Associate Dean and Educational Administrator, was named Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Dr. Mary Zwygart-Stauffacher was named the Interim Associate Dean. In honor of the restructuring, a get-together was held on the "East Lawn" of the Nursing Building. Pictured below, left to right, are Andrew Phillips, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Robert Bolles, Academic Affairs Budget Officer; Steven Tallant, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor; Elaine Wendt, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences; and Donald Mash, Chancellor.



Dr. Mary Zwygart-Stauffacher with the flowers she received in honor of her appointment as the Interim Associate Dean of the College of Nursing & Health Sciences.

### **2004 Nursing Alumni Homecoming Walk a "Brisk" Success**

Once again, we faced a frosty morning for the 2004 Walk, which was held on Saturday October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Well over 50 people joined in the breakfast and walk across campus. Attendees with significant graduation anniversaries were honored, including Patricia Garber (Class of 1969, 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary), Jan Black (Class of 1974, 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary), and Kathy Dahl (Class of 1979, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary). Dr. Nancy Fugate Woods, our self-described "oldest" alumna, having graduated in 1968, was inducted into the UW-Eau Claire Alumni Hall of Honor. Dr. Rita Kisting Sparks was our newest alumna, having been named an Honorary Alumnus by the University in August.





Thanks and appreciation are extended to the many agencies and individuals who donated door prizes, including Luther Hospital, Sacred Heart Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls, St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, Lee's Uniform Center, Dean Elaine Wendt, Interim Provost Steven Tallant, the Continuing Education Office, Barnes & Noble Bookstore, University Dining Services, and the Alumni Association Office. The assistance of the many individuals and students who helped with organizing and setting up the walk was once again greatly appreciated.



### High-lights from the 2003 Nursing Alumni Homecoming Walk



The weather may have been a little chilly last October (note the mittens and hands in pockets in the photos), but that didn't quell the enthusiasm of the many alumni, family members, emeriti and current faculty members, and students who came for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Nursing Alumni Homecoming Walk. More than 75 people participated in the 2003 walk and another 53 alumni were unable to attend but ordered T-shirts. Faye Deich (class of 1979), the assistant administrator and chief nursing officer at Sacred Heart Hospital, was the 2003 UW-Eau Claire Nursing Alumni Hall of Honor Inductee. As the 2003 inductee, she was asked to lead the walk. We also were honored by the presence of Jane and James Moore and Guy and Lauren Brubaker. Jane (Webert) Moore, a 1973 School of Nursing graduate, and her husband, James, made a \$40,000 gift to support the renovation and technological update of the Nursing simulation laboratory. The Brubakers created the Guy and Lauren Brubaker Scholarship for students in Nursing in financial need and also sponsored a luncheon for undergraduate nursing students in the

Nursing Honors Program.

Special thanks go to the many agencies and individuals who donated door prizes, including Luther Hospital, Sacred Heart Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls, Lee's Uniform Center, Brenda McClellan-Tilson, Dr. Elaine Wendt and the School of Nursing, Dean Mark Clark from the College of Professional Studies, Chancellor Donald Mash, Provost Dean Satz, the Continuing Education Office, and the Alumni Association Office. The assistance of the many individuals and students who helped with organizing and setting up the walk was also greatly appreciated.

You may remember that in preparation for the 2003 walk, Sister Joel Jacobi was given the special assignment of praying for better weather (because it rained during the 2002 walk). Sister Joel's prayers worked and we did not have rain; however, she was asked to pray for no rain and a temperature of 65 degrees for the 2004 walk.



### **Honorary Alumnus Dr. Rita Kisting Sparks**



We extend our congratulations to Dr. Rita Kisting Sparks, PhD, RN, who received the Honorary Alumnus Award on August 7, 2004. This award is presented to a non-alumnus who has demonstrated great love of and service to UW-Eau Claire. Those of us who have had the privilege of working with Dr. Sparks would certainly agree that she is more than deserving of being an Honorary Alumnus.

Dr. Sparks, Professor Emerita of Nursing Systems, formally "retired" in 2002 after 35 years of service to the School of Nursing and University. She has been quite busy in her so-called retirement as she continues to help with many professional nursing activities, including work with the Wisconsin Nurses Association and the local chapter of Sigma Theta Tau.

During her nursing career, Dr. Sparks served in a variety of professional roles. In addition to teaching classes in medical surgical nursing, nursing research, and transitions to advanced practice nursing, she served as department chair, coordinator and assistant dean for nursing outreach, and interim associate dean and educational administrator of the School of Nursing. Her research areas included problem solving, coping, chronic illness, and mentoring/preceptoring. While at UW-Eau Claire, she wrote and received well over \$200,000 in funding for various nursing research projects and programs.

Dr. Sparks earned her bachelor's degree from UW-Madison, her master's degree from the University of Colorado, and her doctorate from the University of Minnesota. Prior to her teaching career she was



a staff nurse at hospitals in Madison and California and a head nurse at a Madison hospital. She also worked as a temporary staff nurse in Minneapolis, Madison, and Eau Claire hospitals during her teaching career to maintain her clinical expertise. She has held numerous offices and served on committees in professional nursing organizations at the local, state, and national level and has been involved as a volunteer for projects throughout the Chippewa Valley.

Dr. Sparks received the 2002 Wisconsin Nurses Association Nursing Education Award and the 1997 Award for Outstanding Service to the Wisconsin Nurses Association. At the time of her retirement, she established the Rita Kisting Sparks Service Award for nursing faculty through the UW-Eau Claire Foundation.

### **Alumni Hall of Honor Recipient Dr. Nancy Fugate Woods**



Congratulations are in order for Dr. Nancy Fugate Woods, PhD, RN, FAAN, a 2004 inductee into the Alumni Hall of Honor. The UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association and UW-Eau Claire Foundation induct outstanding alumni from each of the University's colleges into the Alumni Hall of Honor during each Homecoming. Dr. Fugate Woods is Dean of the School of Nursing and Professor of Family and Child Nursing at the University of Washington in Seattle. Many alumni and faculty particularly remember Dr. Fugate Woods as a member of the first graduating class in 1968 and the designer of the UW-Eau Claire School of Nursing cap. She also was a 1981 recipient of the Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award.

For more than twenty years, Dr. Fugate Woods has focused her teaching efforts and research on women's health. Recent research projects have involved studying the transition to menopause and associated symptoms as well as a web-based decision aid for those considering hormone replacement therapy. Dr. Fugate Woods has served as president of the American Academy of Nursing and of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research. She was elected to the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences and is a member of the National Advisory Council on Nursing Research for the National Institute of Nursing Research.

### **Wisconsin Idea Fellow Ms. Karen Maddox**



Congratulations also are due to Karen Maddox, RN, MSN, MPH, PNP, Interim Chair and Associate Professor of the Family Health Nursing Department. Ms. Maddox was named a Wisconsin Idea Fellow for 2004-2005. This award recognizes UW-System faculty for their extraordinary public service contributions in the state, region, and community. The services for which these persons are recognized support the health, education, and economic development of Wisconsin. This is a wonderful recognition of Ms. Maddox and her many activities in the Chippewa Valley, region, and state. A mere sampling of these activities includes having served on the Healthy

Communities 2000 Committee in Eau Claire County, her involvement with Chippewa County Healthy People 2010 and District 10 of the Wisconsin Nurses Association, and her integral role in the National Youth Sports Program, held at UW-Eau Claire each year.

## Double the Excellence



We are quite privileged in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences to have two members recognized with 2004 University Excellence awards for their outstanding work. Ms. Patricia Burbach (far left), a program assistant who has worked diligently at the Marshfield Site for 14 years, received the Classified Staff Excellence in Performance Award. Dr. Susan Moch, Professor in the Family Health Nursing Department, received

the Excellence in Service Award. Dr. Moch joined the faculty at UW-Eau Claire in 1988 and has done extensive work with the Hmong population in the community. We extend our congratulations to both Ms. Burbach and Dr. Moch.

## Student and Faculty Scholarships and Awards

The Nursing Awards Banquet is held each Spring to award scholarships and honor student and faculty achievements. These scholarships and awards are made possible through the generosity of many donors. New student scholarships for 2004 included the Marguerite Coffman Memorial, which was established in memory of Dr. Coffman, the first Dean of the School of Nursing; the Marjorie S. Bottoms Nursing Scholarship, which was established in honor of Dr. Bottoms, former Associate Dean and Educational Administrator of the School of Nursing; and the John Thurston Nursing Scholarship, which was established in honor of Dr. John Thurston, an emeritus psychology professor, who taught many of our nursing students. At the May 6, 2004 awards banquet, scholarships were awarded to 31 undergraduate, 2 Collaborative Nursing Program, and 6 graduate nursing students. Faculty recognized were Dr. Michaelene Mirr Jansen with the Rita Kisting Sparks Service Award; Dr. Joan Stehle Werner with the Patricia M. Ostome Award for Excellence in Clinical Instruction; Dr. Mary Zwygart-Stauffacher with the Suzanne Van Ort Award for Faculty Creativity and Scholarliness; and Cathy Cooper with the Ihle Family Award for Caring. Jeanne Weggel, an alumna, also received the Ihle Family Award for Caring.

The UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association also gives outstanding student awards to undergraduate and graduate students from each of the colleges. Melissa Irwin, a December 2003 graduate, was awarded the undergraduate Outstanding Student Award and DeAnn Thomas-Kvidera, a May 2004 graduate, was presented with the graduate Outstanding Student Award.

## Incorporating Technology into Our Teaching through Donations

Numerous requests have come your way for donations to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Foundation's "Fulfilling the Promise of Excellence" capital campaign. We are quite appreciative of your generosity, as the donations help us to move forward. For instance, past monies were used to purchase a Laerdal SimMan Universal Patient Simulator (for the Eau Claire site) that is being used



more and more each semester as we've integrated him into our Sophomore and Junior classes, with plans to use him in acute care case study scenarios in the Senior classes. Saint Joseph's Hospital Foundation purchased a SimMan for use by the students at our Marshfield Site.

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences is making great strides in this area of patient simulation. We were quite proud to have Nita Johnson, our skills laboratory coordinator, and Gunnar Larson, a graduate student and "voice of our SimMan", give a presentation entitled, "If We Buy It, Will They Use It?—One School's Development of SimMan Clinical Simulation", at an educator's conference pertaining to the use of technology in nursing curricula. We also are planning to host a simulation user's group meeting in January 2005 with the Laerdal company.

Through University lab modification grants, we were able to install two group workstations in Rm 246 in Eau Claire and one group workstation at our Marshfield Site. Each workstation has a 50 inch plasma screen that makes it possible for students to work together on assigned projects, particularly those involving interactive media case studies. Donations help to support the purchase of up-to-date clinical and course related DVDs and CD-ROMs.



When contributing to the UW-Eau Claire Foundation, you may designate specific departments and programs on campus. Indicating the "Nursing Advancement Fund" in the memo lines of your checks ensures that the monies will be reserved for Nursing program initiatives and students.

### Room 119 Before and After

For those of you who have ever had a class in Room 119 (the room with the infamous less than soundproof dividing wall) at the Nursing building in Eau Claire, you may have found the experience to be less than ideal. At last, after many years of seeking funding, the room has been remodeled. Major changes include the installation of an improved soundproofing divider, repositioned and updated teaching stations, carpeting, and new furniture.



**Before****After**

### Local Support of Nursing Students Greatly Appreciated

Besides offering opportunities for our students to develop and practice their growing repertoire of skills, many of the local agencies provide other greatly appreciated niceties for the students. For instance, both Luther Hospital and Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire provide pizza or submarine sandwich parties around final exam time. They also have gifted the students with care packages, T-shirts, and other supportive items to help get them through those stressful days. Saint Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield sponsors the Christmas party for students and staff at our Marshfield Site and each spring takes the seniors to lunch at a local restaurant; additionally, junior nursing students are treated to a luncheon each fall.



Senior nursing students (now graduates) taking a break during final exams with a little December holiday spirit, including food and T-shirts from Sacred Heart Hospital.



Kayla Sabelko, a junior, displaying one of the care packages received from Luther Hospital last December. The boxes are stuffed with items to help students make it through final exams, including popcorn & stress reduction toys (yoyos, kazoos), as well as pens and bandages.





Students (many are now alumni) relaxing and enjoying food at the Marshfield Site.

### Notable Book Donations

Cynthia Halfen, a Nursing alumna, donated the following book to the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. She was a contributor to Chapter 11: “Operation issues: Practical considerations for a successful program.”

Armstrong, M. L., & Freuh, S. (Eds.). (2002). *Telecommunications for nursing: Providing successful distance education and telehealth* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Springer Publishing Co.

Dr. Ralph Hudson donated his book, *The other side of the doctor-patient relationship* (2004), to the students and faculty in Nursing. Dr. Hudson had an active surgical practice in Eau Claire from 1958-1990 and taught classes at the School of Nursing. Dr. Hudson’s book is available from Monarch Tree Publishing, P.O. Box 387, Eau Claire, WI 54702 ([www.monarchtreepublishing.com](http://www.monarchtreepublishing.com); 1-888-895-7166).

### Planting Community Connections



Students and faculty member Brenda McClellan-Tilson at our Marshfield Site planted a garden this Spring outside the dayroom window at the Marshfield Nursing Center, an extended care facility where students have clinical experiences. The project was done as an extension of the sophomore nursing class, FMHN 235 Nursing: Professional Caring. Pictured in the photo are Brenda McClellan-Tilson (with shovel) and sophomore student, Jamie Bredemann.

## International and Transcultural Connections

Students and faculty have really been going places lately! For the past several years, many of our nursing students have taken advantage of the study abroad opportunities offered by the University's Center for International Education. In fact, a small group of undergraduate nursing students recently returned from studying in Scotland over the summer. Nursing, however, has been working to increase its international and national/cross cultural connections even further in order to learn more about nursing in other countries and cultures. A sampling of these activities is listed below:

- Dr. CeCelia Zorn and Dr. Susan Peck helped establish exchanges with Sweden. Last November and December, three undergraduate nursing students from the College of Borås Borås, Sweden visited Nursing. The students participated in classes and observed various clinical experiences at Sacred Heart Hospital, Community Health Partnership, Eau Claire City-County Health Department, and with individual nurses in St. Paul, Marshfield, and Ho Chunk Nation. Two of our students took a graduate directed study, "Dignity and Nursing from a Global Perspective", in Sweden this past May. We will be welcoming three more undergraduate students from Sweden this Fall.
- Ms. Rita Sperstad teaches a cultural care independent study course during winter breaks. She and the students participate in a free standing birthing center at Holy Family Service in Weslaco, Texas (near the Texas/Mexico border).
- Ms. Jayne Bielecki is working with the Center for International Education to have one of our nursing courses (NSYS 377: International Dimensions of Health Care Systems) available to our students to take in Costa Rica in the Summer of 2005.
- Dr. Susan Peck has visited and worked with Southern Cross University (SCU) faculty in Lismore, New South Wales, Australia. Through her efforts, an undergraduate nursing student is taking a sophomore nursing course at SCU.
- Ms. Bonnie Solem recently supervised a clinical group of nursing students at Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. Ms. Solem and the students worked with Lakota Sioux patients and families in hospital and community settings.
- Dr. Susan Moch and seven students traveled to Anchorage Alaska to learn about children and families as part of a nursing clinical course. The students worked with the Alaska Native population, including "sour dough", Eskimo, Athubecan, and Aleut Alaskans. They also met many adventurous Alaskan nurses in independent practice.
- Faculty are in the preliminary stages of establishing connections with Jinan University in China.

## Passings and Memorials

Athene D. Dale, 78, of Eau Claire died January 15, 2004 at Augusta Nursing home in Augusta. Mrs. Dale was one of the original faculty when the School of Nursing was founded. She taught at the School of Nursing for more than 20 years after joining the faculty in 1966. She retired with Emeritus status in 1988. Her areas of teaching included medical-surgical nursing, research, and management and leadership. Mrs. Dale also was a charter member of the local chapter of Sigma Theta Tau. She graduated from St. Luke's Nursing School in Kansas City, Missouri and furthered her nursing studies at Kansas University and the University of Washington in Seattle. Memorial services were held January 19, 2004 at Grace Lutheran Church in Eau Claire.

Jason Hoogland, 23, a sophomore nursing student from Merrill, died on November 13, 2003. Jason was killed in an auto accident shortly after learning that he had been admitted to our undergraduate nursing program at the Marshfield Site.

Diana Mueller, 21, a senior nursing student from Sun Prairie, died July 2, 2003. A memorial and group discussion were held by student peers and faculty on September 16, 2003. Diana also was remembered by her classmates in the student speeches at the May 2004 Nursing Convocation Ceremony.

### **Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, International Honor Society of Nursing**

The 2004-2005 Delta Phi Chapter Board has planned a number of events for this academic year. Board membership includes, President: Jodi Arriola; President-Elect: Sheri Hydo; Secretary: Barb Davis; Treasurer: Linda Duffy; Directors: Gunnar Larson and Amy Fish; Leadership Interns: Brandi Luther-Sparks and Susan Bonis; Publicity: Melyssa Heintz; and Research Chair: Lois Taft. They are excited to have a diverse membership on the Board from both the Eau Claire and Marshfield sites. Board members also represent many varied areas of nursing practice.

If you have any ideas for programming or would like to share your research interests with the membership, contact one of the above Board members. Please also consider submitting an abstract for consideration and dissemination at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Kaleidoscope of Nursing Research: Research into Practice Conference, planned for April 22, 2005.

The chapter recently participated in its Annual Service Project: The Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk, which was held on September 18<sup>th</sup> in Carson Park in Eau Claire, and on October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Marshfield.

### **Eau Claire Student Nurses' Association (ECSNA) Activities**

The Eau Claire Student Nurses' Association (ECSNA) is an organization designed to provide new opportunities and support for nursing students at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. The ECSNA has approximately 40 active members from both the Eau Claire and Marshfield nursing sites. Members participate in many service and fundraising projects, nursing conventions, and other College of Nursing and Health Sciences activities.

The Eau Claire site is actively involved in preparing and serving meals at the Beacon House in downtown Eau Claire, sorting toys and food for the Salvation Army, donating money to the Interfaith Hospitality Network and other charities, and performing many other service activities within the community. The Marshfield site participates in numerous fundraisers such as bake/brat sales as well as Younkers Specials ticket sales. The Marshfield site also organizes fieldtrips to local health care facilities to expose students to new experiences. Both sites are working together to create a newsletter to keep students up-to-date on events in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences as well as health care related activities in the community.

The ECSNA has also been fundraising for the past several years to raise money to replace the existing furniture and redecorate the student lounge located in the Nursing building. Fundraising for the project has been completed, and the ECSNA is in the process of purchasing new items for the lounge, which should be completed by midsemester.



## Spotlight on Emeriti Faculty: Ms. Berniece Wagner

By Signe Cooper, RN, MEd, FAAN (Reprinted with permission from *Nursingmatters*, August 2002).



Ms. Wagner presenting the Berniece Wagner Scholarship to junior nursing student Sara Gerondale at the May 2004 School of Nursing Awards Banquet.

Berniece Wagner was appointed to the UW-Eau Claire School of Nursing shortly after it was established. Most of her nursing career was in the area of medical-surgical nursing, and she was an early advocate of the use of written nursing care plans.

Wagner was born May 18, 1924 in northeast Nebraska. Her parents were Max and Martha (Zutz) Wagner. She had two older sisters and a younger brother. Her paternal grandparents had homesteaded in Nebraska.

As a child she lived on a farm near Oakdale. Her father died in 1927 of diabetes and complications following major surgery. Her brave and resourceful mother kept the family on the farm, but lost it in 1933 during the Depression. The family then moved to Norfolk, Nebraska, a larger town which offered more

employment opportunities.

Wagner graduated from high school in 1941. She had taken the commercial courses in high school that included typing, shorthand and other office skills, for her mother believed it was essential for every young woman to be able to seek employment with specific skills that would enable her to “stand on her own two feet” if necessary.

Upon her graduation, one of Wagner’s high school teachers, who had established the Norfolk College of Business, hired her as a secretary/receptionist, recruiter of students and publisher of the college newsletter. After Pearl Harbor in 1941, there was an acute shortage of teachers, so she taught typing, shorthand, business machines, etc.

With the U.S. involved in World War II, many opportunities became available for women. Wagner learned about the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, established to meet nurse personnel needs for civilian and military hospitals. Wagner entered St. Mary’s School of Nursing in Rochester, Minn. in 1944. Because many nurses had entered the military, students essentially staffed the civilian hospitals throughout their entire program.

The work was arduous and students carried heavy responsibilities. But she also noted that it was an interesting environment, since patients came from all over the world.

After receiving her diploma in 1947, she was appointed head nurse on a neurology unit at St. Mary’s Hospital. She then returned to the University of Nebraska in Omaha, where she worked in the newly opened psychiatric unit. Having worked only in large hospitals with specialized units, she then took on the challenge of working as director of nursing in several small hospitals in Nebraska, including the 60-bed hospital in her home town of Norfolk, where she lived at home for two years.

In January, 1952, Wagner enrolled in the University of Minnesota where she earned a bachelor’s of Nursing Education two years later.

Immediately after graduation, she joined the faculty of the University of Iowa College of Nursing. At

that time there were so few nurses with college degrees that she was hired without being interviewed, nor told of her salary. A phone call from the Iowa dean informed her that she was to arrive on a specific date and where to report. She taught medical-surgical nursing, and in the fall of 1957, she re-entered the University of Minnesota and received her master's degree in Nursing Education the following June.

She then went to the University of Kansas as coordinator of medical-surgical nursing and assisted in the transition from the three-year diploma program to the four-year baccalaureate program. It was here that she met Marguerite Coffman.

Six years later Wagner attended the University of Washington in Seattle for post-master's study. She then joined Coffman in Wisconsin where she had been laying the groundwork for a new school of nursing that was to be established at the UW-Eau Claire.

Seventeen sophomore level students were admitted to the first class in the fall of 1965. For the first year, Dean Coffman and Wagner constituted the full-time faculty. Cooperating health agencies, nursing personnel, students and RNs in the area were oriented to the characteristics of degree programs. Recruitment of qualified faculty was intense. Wagner coordinated medical-surgical nursing and was later named department chairperson in 1970.

In 1979 she became assistant dean, since renamed Associate Dean.

Wagner had been a strong advocate for written nursing-care plans, and in 1965 she wrote a definitive article on nursing-care plans widely used in schools of nursing and by staff nurses.

When asked about her most important contribution to her profession, she said, "I think I made a difference. My greatest satisfaction turns around the fact that I was part of that sizable group of nurse educators, administrators and clinicians who knew what was needed to upgrade nursing education and practice.

"It was a stimulating and optimistic era for the nursing profession, and we worked hard to give reality to our vision. While we struggled, we sensed that we had opposition, as one of my friends put it: 'we were "the stepchild" in the world of higher education.' But we reveled in a feeling of being pioneers and kept at it."

"But something of great significance seems to have gotten lost during the last few decades," said Wagner, "not only for the nursing profession but for the society at large that needed the knowledge and skills of well-educated nurses. In a world so focused on high technology and affected by such rapid social changes, no one might have guessed the numbers of nurses needed. Were those perhaps 'the best of times' for the nursing profession? I hope not."

Upon her retirement in 1988, Wagner was named professor emeritus. The next year she worked part time writing references for former students, holding seminars for alumni, publishing the Alumni Newsletter, facilitating the publication of a personal history of an aged nurse-friend in Colorado, writing family memoirs and involving herself in issues related to care of the elderly. She remained in Eau Claire where she still lives.

Wagner has had a lifelong interest in the arts and recently made a substantial contribution to establish the Berniece Wagner Arts Endowment. It is designed to fund the arts for enrichment of the elderly and for youth after-school programming. Her special gift to the community was recognized on March 14

with an evening event in her honor that featured a variety of performing artists from the Chippewa Valley area.

*(Ms. Cooper thanks Berniece Wagner for assistance with this article.)*

### **Alumni Office: Willing and Able**

Thinking about organizing a class reunion? Let the Alumni Office be of help. They assist in planning alumni activities of all kinds—residence hall gatherings, class reunions, and even receptions in cities, towns, and places of business where alumni live and work. The staff at the UW-Eau Claire Alumni Office can help with mailings, scheduling events, and processing reservations. For assistance, please contact John Bachmeier, Director of Alumni Relations, at UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association, 216 Schofield Hall, 105 Garfield Avenue, P.O. Box 4004, Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004; phone: 715-836-3266; fax: 715-836-4375; e-mail: [alumni@uwec.edu](mailto:alumni@uwec.edu). More information about the Alumni Association can be found at the following web address: <http://www.uwec.edu/Alumni>.

Also let the College of Nursing and Health Sciences know if we can be of any assistance in your class reunion activities. We can provide Nursing representatives and tours of the building. We are interested in hearing about any plans you may have. Information can be directed to Dr. Elaine Wendt, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 105 Garfield Avenue, P.O. Box 4004, Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004; Phone: 715-836-5287; e-mail: [wenttle@uwec.edu](mailto:wenttle@uwec.edu). More information about Nursing is available at the following web address: <http://www.uwec.edu/nurs>.

### **Stay Involved in Nursing Activities**

In the future, we would like to bring alumni and friends together again for other events. We also hope to continue a Nursing alumni newsletter. If you are interested in becoming involved with various Nursing alumni planning/work committees, or if you have questions or stories to share, please contact Dr. Debra Jansen in Adult Health Nursing at 715-836-5183 or [Jansenda@uwec.edu](mailto:Jansenda@uwec.edu).

### **Let us Hear From You**

We like to hear about Nursing alumni. Be sure to keep Nursing and the University updated with your current contact information and any news you would like to share (awards, recognitions, etc.). News can be posted on the Alumni Association web site <http://www.uwec.edu/Alumni>. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences, however, would like to hear from you directly also (715-836-5287; <http://www.uwec.edu/nurs>).

### **Nominate Nursing Alumni**

Showcase the great achievements of your fellow nursing alumni and even non-alumni by nominating them for an award. With each Homecoming, the UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association and UW-Eau Claire Foundation induct outstanding alumni from each of the University's colleges into the Alumni Hall of Honor. Past inductees from Nursing have included Dr. Michaelene Mirr Jansen in 2002 and Ms. Faye Deich in 2003. Other awards to consider include the Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award, the Honorary Alumnus Award (for non-alumni), the Lifetime Excellence Award, the Outstanding Recent Alumnus Award, and the President's Award. More information about these awards can be found at <http://www.uwec.edu/alumni/awards.htm>, or by contacting the Alumni Office. Please consider nominating a deserving nurse (see the Alumni Award Nominating Form below). An online nominating form can also be found at <http://www.uwec.edu/alumni/awardform.htm>.



# Alumni Award Nomination Form

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*I wish to nominate:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Major field of study at UW-Eau Claire: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Award for which you are nominating this individual:**

- Alumni Hall of Honor
- Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award
- Honorary Alumnus Award (for non-alumni)
- Lifetime Excellence Award
- Outstanding Recent Alumnus Award
- President's Award

*Please explain why you feel this nominee should receive an award.*

*What is your nominee's life-guiding philosophy and/or greatest strengths?*

**Submitted by:****Name:** \_\_\_\_\_**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_**Daytime phone:** \_\_\_\_\_**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail the completed form to the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 105 Garfield Avenue, Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004 and we will forward it to the UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association Office. Alternatively, this form may be completed online at <http://www.uwec.edu/alumni/awardform.htm>. However, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences would appreciate hearing about the nominations.