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Local Nursing Legends

Carol H. Robinson, RN, MS

The nursing history committee of the Medical Heritage Center is proud to announce the recognition of ten outstanding Central Ohio nurses. These nurses, deemed “Local Nursing Legends,” were nominated by their peers for their long lasting and significant contribution to nursing and the health of central Ohio citizens. They have influenced the care of hospital patients, the health of school children, the education of nursing students, the quality of public health services, and the broader health care policies and decisions affecting us all. The ten nurses recognized as “Local Nursing Legends” are described below.

Lillian Flickinger Bernhagen, a registered nurse and fully certified teacher in the Worthington (Ohio) City school system was a pioneer in human sexuality and health education curriculum development for elementary and high school children. The author of nationally distributed health education materials, Bernhagen spoke and consulted widely. She also chaired the American Medical Association Medicine/Education Committee on School and College Health.

Jeanne Clement, a psychiatric nurse and educator, counsels patients, teaches students and leads community initiatives to improve the lives of those dealing with mental health problems. As Associate Professor of Nursing and Psychiatry at the OSU College of Nursing, Clement teaches conflict and dispute resolution at the Capital School of Law and mediation skills at the OSU College of Law. She also is president of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association.

Dorothy A. Cornelius (1921-1992) was Executive Director of the Ohio Nurses Association for 26 years and led Ohio nurses in gaining mandatory licensure in Ohio. She established the Economic General Welfare program and developed a strong practice program. President of the American Nurses Association, the International Council of Nurses, and the American Journal of Nursing Company, Cornelius was a mentor to many nurses and a supporter of all.

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The Ohio Nurses Foundation (OBN-001-91) is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.
Naomi James Evans (1899-2001) was a pioneering African-American nurse and inductee in the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame as well as the Ohio Women’s Hall of Fame. Evans was the first African-American registered nurse to be employed at the Benjamin Franklin Tuberculosis Hospital. As the African-American nurse in the Columbus City school system (1942-1968), she was a role model and mentor for future nurses of color, and a kind and compassionate professional for thousands of school children.

Anne Maddox (1939-2005) was a diabetes educator for over 30 years at Riverside Methodist Hospital in Columbus. She developed a model diabetes teaching program which included essential teaching components and extensive patient and family participation. Started in 1973, the program was recognized by the Ohio Department of Health for its positive impact on the lives of diabetic patients. Maddox taught thousands of professionals, patients, and families about diabetes management and self-care.

Mildred E. Newton (1901-1972) was Director of The Ohio State University School of Nursing from 1952-1968 and obtained accreditation for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. She also established a Master of Science degree and served on national committees. She consulted and spoke widely and contributed to textbooks and journals, as well as encouraging faculty and students to strive for higher levels of achievement.

Geraldine Price was a member of The Ohio State University School of Nursing faculty from 1952-1971. She pioneered television teaching, wrote a widely used medication administration textbook, and participated in the construction of Newton Hall, the OSU nursing building. Joining the Ohio Department of Health in 1971, she became Chief, Division of Nursing, and led major initiatives including formalized training of nursing home personnel and a state-wide study of the nursing shortage.

Gracey Sills, Professor Emeritus in The Ohio State College of Nursing, led initiatives in psychiatric nursing at the local, state, and national levels for over thirty years. A Director of Graduate Studies and Acting Dean, she worked to help The OSU School of Nursing achieve college status within the University. She has received numerous awards including Distinguished Teaching Award, Distinguished Service Award, and three honorary doctorates.

Rosa Lee Weinert, Executing Director of the Ohio Board of Nursing 1981-1996, led the revision of the Nurse Practice Act, as well as the transition of the State Board Examination to a Computerized Adaptive Test. She also oversaw the development of computerized testing for the NCLEX, taken today for state licensure. She was instrumental in founding the National Council of State Boards of Nursing and served as President of the Board of Directors.

Elsie Williams-Wilson, was the first African-American nurse to receive a graduate nursing degree from OSU and is now an Emeritus Associate Professor of Nursing. She developed innovative curriculum in the care of elderly patients and emphasized the need for cultural and racial diversity through recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty. Williams-Wilson received the University Distinguished Affirmative Action Award and the Center of Teaching Excellence Award for Teaching for Minority Student Retention in recognition of her work. The honorees will be recognized at the annual Friends of Nursing History program held on May 8, 2008, with a reception at 4pm and a lecture from 4:30-5:30pm. During her presentation, Debbie Freece, MS, CNS, RN, Mid-Ohio District Nurses Association Executive Director, will speak on the rich heritage of nursing in Central Ohio. An exhibit about the honorees will be on display at the Medical Heritage Center in May and will tour central Ohio schools and institutions following the program.

Note: In 2000, Dr. Charles Wooley suggested that a nursing history project (now in its eighth year) would be a most welcomed addition to the medical history program at the Medical Heritage Center. We are indebted to his foresight and regret his passing.

In Memory: Charles F. Wooley, MD, FACC

By: Richard P. Lewis, MD

The OSU Division of Cardiology lost a stalwart of 45 years on February 15, 2008. Charles F. Wooley, MD, FACC, Professor Emeritus, OSU Internal Medicine and Medical Heritage Center Scholar-in-Residence died unexpectedly, a shock to his colleagues, family, and friends.

Dr. Wooley was one of the earliest full-time academicians in the Division. Dr. Joseph Ryan appointed him Assistant Professor in 1963, and he became our first Cardiac Cath Lab Director. An early innovation was his special graphics laboratory in which patients underwent an evaluation by fellows prior to catheterization. This teaching laboratory was the precursor of the Overstreet Teaching Laboratory.

Dr. Wooley won more teaching awards than any faculty member at The Ohio State University College of Medicine from 1966-1981. These awards were largely given for his teaching on the inpatient service where he was legendary. He mastered the Socratic method of teaching, which was still possible in the less hurried days of the past.

Dr. Wooley established the Overstreet Teaching and Research Laboratory in 1982 which continued until 2000. This was a remarkable and unique experience for the lucky students who participated. The purpose of the Overstreet Laboratory was to enable intensive learning about clinical exam, clinical reasoning and use of the laboratory in evaluating patients with heart disease. It also was used to stimulate research. Notable contributions from this lab were the studies of left bundle branch block which became the basis for biventricular pacing, aortic physiology and pathology, connective tissue disorders, and his “family” study. Ironically, the paper describing this experience was published the week of his death in the Hellenic Journal of Cardiology.

Dr. Wooley was a lifelong scholar and had several active clinical research and historical projects in the works at the time of his death. His major areas of interest were mitral and tricuspid disease, mitral valve prolapse and the MVP syndrome (for which he developed the definitive classification and disease mechanisms), function and disorders of the aorta, cardiovascular manifestations of connective tissue disorders, and the study of a family with familial cardiomyopathy—the studies of which evolved over 35 years (1st publication in 1972) and eventually defined the natural history, genetic basis, pathology, and therapy. Because of his reputation as a teacher and clinical investigator, Dr. Wooley was awarded the Alumni Medal of Honor from New York Medical College in 2004. His entire family was with him to accept this prestigious award, a wonderful experience for them all.

In the last half of his academic career, Dr. Wooley became a world renowned historian. As his interest in medical history grew in the 1990’s, he was instrumental in developing the Medical Heritage Center. This Center may not have happened without his leadership and commitment. He assumed the role of historian for the Department of Internal Medicine and affiliated at our annual Metz Faculty Award for an outstanding senior faculty member.

Dr. Wooley’s interest in the historical aspects of mitral valve prolapse began with the realization that MVP was not a new disease. DaCosta’s original work during the Civil War in which he described middysystolic clicks in “disabled” soldiers led Dr. Wooley to uncover the MVP story. Dr. Wooley wrote nearly twenty papers on this story and compiled them in his book, The Irritable Heart of Soldiers and the Origins of Anglo-American Cardiology. It was interesting to discover how MVP patients (who became symptomatic when drafted for military duty) played a major role in the development of British and American cardiology and the first Heart Hospitals.

As an historian, the Osler Society (an international medical history association) was a natural for Dr.Wooley who participated actively and became the society’s President.

His final book, The Second Blessing: Columbus Medicine and Health The Early Years, was Dr. Wooley’s magnum opus. As with his book on Irritable Heart, he traveled widely to obtain source material. This book will be the reference work on the development of medicine in 19th century Ohio.

Dr. Wooley was an exceptionally honorable person, who was also very much his own man. He truly “thought outside the box” and often just the opposite from the conventional view. This was one of the reasons many sought his advice. He was a man who cared deeply about people, whether they be patients, students, colleagues or friends. He was a devoted family man and devout Catholic. He and his wife, Lucia, reared a wonderful and successful family—one daughter and four sons, and have ten grandchildren, for whom he set the same high standards. Along with his many accomplishments this remarkable family constitutes his lasting legacy.