

UAB NURSING

THE UAB SCHOOL OF NURSING

Fall 2006



Good Neighbors

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FROM THE DEAN

Welcome to the fall 2006 issue of *UAB Nursing*. This issue will give you a close-up look at what makes the UAB School of Nursing such an exciting place to be! Our faculty, students, and alumni continue to provide leadership to improve health care and nursing workforce development from our inner-city and rural communities to regions worldwide.

In this issue, you will read that the UAB School of Nursing remains committed to serving our community as well as advancing our clinical, research, technology, and educational partnerships. These partnerships have directly impacted the nursing resources in Alabama and worldwide and will continue to do so. They illustrate the positive energy and productivity from members of the UAB nursing community aimed at improving nursing and health care. Let me share just a few of the selected accomplishments that are making great news in our school:

- The undergraduate program grew by 8 percent and the graduate program by 38 percent;
- Our students and alumni are winning national awards;
- The SON will become one of only 33 programs nationwide (and the only school of nursing in Alabama) to have a nurse residency program through a partnership with UAB Hospital;
- Our faculty are being recognized as leaders in nursing science, with Joe Burrage, Ph.D., and Jacqueline Moss,

Ph.D., having received NIH grants—Burrage for his work in salivary rapid HIV testing and Moss for her study in clinical decision support simulations for reducing medication error;

- Susan Lacey, Ph.D., has been selected as a nurse fellow in the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellows Program for 2006;

- The Ph.D. in Nursing Program increased its funding for eight full fellowships through federal funding and received additional support through the Nurse Faculty Loan Program; and

- The Good Health Program, our faculty practice for Birmingham's municipal employees, is the recipient of the Wellness Council of America's Gold Award for Working Well.

You can see that the UAB School of Nursing is reaching out to our clinical, research, and community partners.

We enter the 2006-2007 academic year with a new organizational structure for academic leadership that will fortify the school's mission for the future. Faculty have begun to develop a strategic agenda that refocuses the school's vision, an agenda that strengthens the education, research, and service missions within the context of UAB's Academic Health Center and the World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Nursing and Midwifery Education.



Doreen Harper, Ph.D.

I want to applaud our outstanding faculty, staff, students, and alumni for their leadership and support at this time of strategic change. Leadership requires openness to learning and adaptation with an eye to the future for the discovery and application of knowledge that improves practice. The UAB School of Nursing is working together with our health-professions colleagues and our communities to be part of the solution to impact and improve the quality of care. The UAB School of Nursing has a tradition of creating innovative education, science, and evidence-based practice responding to real-world challenges. I look forward to a promising future as we educate tomorrow's nurses to provide compassionate care and improve the quality of care and health outcomes for those we serve.

*Doreen Harper, Ph.D.
Dean, UAB School of Nursing*



Good Neighbors

Giving Back to the City of Birmingham



Kathleen Brown (left) and Michael Weaver head the School of Nursing's unique partnership with the city.

Birmingham firefighter Joel Self was battling a blaze at an abandoned furniture store in West End in 1999 when he walked into a thick cloud of smoke—and off the roof.

After falling almost 20 feet, Self suffered multiple serious injuries. “I had more than a dozen fractures, having straddled a steel door on the way down,” he recalls. After five weeks in the hospital, he turned to the City of Birmingham Occupational Health Clinic.

“They went out of their way to help me get back to work,” says Self, now retired. “Their assistance with physical therapy, coordination of services, pain management, and physical therapy meant the world to me, improving my overall health and functional status today.”

KEEPING A CITY HEALTHY

Located at the UAB Highlands hospital building, the Occupational Health Clinic is a unique partnership between the UAB School of Nursing and the city of Birmingham, designed specifically to serve the city’s municipal workforce. That’s no small task, given that the city employs more than 4,000 workers in 24 departments at 161 worksites—but the nurses still manage to provide specialized treatment for all of them. In addition, they serve as educators, giving city employees guidance on how to head off future health problems, both work-related problems and those that have more to do with their overall lifestyles. In the process, UAB’s nursing students get real-world experience in numerous capacities that

will serve them well in almost any future nursing career, whether they become ER nurses, advanced-practice nurses, or even researchers or educators.

This 20-year partnership between a school of nursing and an entire city is unlike any other program in the country, says Doreen Harper, Ph.D., dean of the School of Nursing. “The range of preventive and clinical services offered through this School of Nursing faculty practice is vital to keeping Birmingham healthy.”

SAFE WORK PRACTICES AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Funded by the city, the Occupational Health Clinic employs two full-time nurse practitioners, one full-time RN, three clerical staff members, a full-time

strength and conditioning specialist, a program manager, and a financial manager. “The clinic is important to the city because it serves only one employer,” says Kathleen Brown, Ph.D., director of the clinic and a professor of graduate studies at the School of Nursing. “The goal of the program is to provide quality occupational-health services for City of Birmingham employees and to provide a nurse-managed, clinical occupational-health setting with specialized opportunities for student learning. An additional goal is to teach employees the importance of safe work practices and healthy lifestyles.”

The clinic’s personnel are all knowledgeable about health and safety issues related to the jobs of city employees, and they are experts in case management. And while they work on behalf of the city, they maintain an equal-partnership role with the city’s Occupational Health and Safety Department, maintaining constant lines of communication with the department to protect workers’ health and facilitate a safe, speedy return to work after an injury. Brown says the clinic’s services include nurse-practitioner care for employees with on-the-job injuries, case management to facilitate return to work, preplacement evaluations, and post-injury monitoring.

“The most rewarding thing for me is seeing how our nurse practitioners work with the Occupational Health and Safety Department and the Personnel Department to achieve the goals of health and safety for city employees,” Brown says. “The NPs provide quality care and have an excellent rapport with the employees as well as the city department heads. Our staff’s extraordinary capabilities are reflected in the positive comments we consistently receive from those civic leaders.”

BOOSTING QUALITY OF LIFE

The partnership between the School of Nursing and the city extends beyond

the school’s care for individual patients, however. UABSON nurses have become a go-to source for the city’s entire workforce for education about how they can stay healthier and reduce risks to their well-being—and improve their overall quality of life as a result.

The Good Health Program, which began in 1985 as a pilot project, was created in response to rapidly escalating health-insurance costs. Two years later the occupational-health nursing faculty began collaborating with the city of Birmingham on a “Back School” for employees with back injuries; that partnership was such a

success that in 1991 the city approached the SON about taking over the Good Health Program. Michael Weaver, RN, Ph.D., serves as principal investigator, and Brown serves as assistant project investigator. “Reducing costs and increasing productivity in city employees benefits the city and its taxpayers because it maximizes services and minimizes the need for tax increases,” says Weaver, a professor of graduate studies at the School of Nursing.

“As a microcosm of the community, the biggest problems we see in city employees are health effects stemming from

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An interdisciplinary, well-trained nursing and health professions staff at the Occupational Health Clinic treats a Birmingham municipal workforce of more than 4,000 workers at 161 worksites around the city.



Taking the Lead in Partnerships

As far back as the 1980s, the value of building professional partnerships began making a far-reaching impression on nurse educator Doreen C. Harper, Ph.D.

Harper made it a point to become involved in partnership initiatives in her work as a faculty member at the University of Maryland School of Nursing and the George Mason University College of Nursing, and in recent years as dean of the Graduate School of Nursing at the University of Massachusetts Worcester.

In 2005, when Dr. Harper was asked by a search committee to become a candidate for the deanship of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's School of Nursing (UABSON), the positive collaborative atmosphere on the UAB campus was a real drawing card for her.

She was impressed with the success that UAB's School of Nursing already had enjoyed in the partnership arena; among the partnerships Harper admired was the Good Health Program, a long-running collaboration between the UABSON and the City of Birmingham to promote health and safety among city employees. (The Good Health Program is spotlighted in the cover story of this issue of *UAB Nursing*.)

"I believe there is tremendous opportunity for UAB's School of Nursing to continue to escalate its leadership role in partnership-linked initiatives," says Harper, who became the UABSON's new dean on November 1, 2005.

"Because of the School of Nursing's track record in partnerships, and because of the positive collaborative climate at UAB and within our community and state,



"Partnership models will become centerpieces of operations, initiatives, and contributions at UAB's School of Nursing."

Doreen C. Harper, Ph.D.

our faculty and staff are in an ideal position to participate in additional partnerships. In fact, we already are doing this.

“I envision that partnership models increasingly will become centerpieces of operations, initiatives, and contributions at UAB’s School of Nursing. In fact, the school has been restructured to include a new position for an associate dean for clinical affairs and partnerships to expand this component of our mission. Dr. Alberta McCaleb, recently appointed to this position, will lead the school’s efforts in building new partnerships and clinical service contracts.”

CASTING A WIDE NET

■ Diversity of Partnerships

When Harper speaks of UABSON partnerships, she speaks of a wide array.

Some partnerships, like the Good Health Program, are structures through which the UABSON partners with the community. In addition to partnering with a governmental entity such as the city of Birmingham, Harper points to extensive community-partnership opportunities with corporations, community agencies, and civic groups.

Other partnerships involve the UABSON working toward common goals with other schools of nursing and/or other health-related entities around the state, the nation, and the world.

Then there are the many opportunities for partnering with various entities within UAB’s sprawling health-sciences-center complex—opportunities that match the university’s threefold missions of education, research, and service, says Harper. In education, there are partnerships to educate nurses and other health professionals. On the research front, there are partnerships to expand specific areas of

knowledge. In service, there are partnerships in areas such as patient care. And, Harper notes, some partnering endeavors have diverse tentacles that address all three missions.

Why does Harper believe so strongly in the values of a nursing school partnering with others? “Health care is so complex today that no one person, no one discipline, can do it alone,” she says. “You must have interdisciplinary teams engaged with communities to understand problems and to engage in solutions.

“You come up with better ‘real world’ solutions when you get more minds approaching issues from the perspectives of various disciplines and settings.”

■ Reaching Out to Other Nursing Schools

All across the nation, schools of nursing today face major challenges in recruiting and retaining faculty, Harper says. “We are facing the most dire shortage of nursing faculty that we have ever known. One way to address that shortage is to find more efficient, educational ways for nursing-school faculty to earn higher degrees, including doctorates.”

The UABSON is embarking on a faculty-mentoring partnership that Harper says is aimed at that challenge. At the heart of this partnership is the UABSON’s Ph.D.-in-Nursing Program—the only such program in Alabama.

This partnership mission is fueled by the school’s offering an accessible Ph.D. course of study to accommodate needs of nursing-school faculty members around Alabama and the Southeast. The goal is to enable a master’s-level nursing-school faculty member to function as a Ph.D. student enrolled at the UABSON, while at the same time continuing to function as

a faculty member in a nursing school that might be located a considerable distance from the UABSON.

“Here the UABSON will utilize our expertise in distance learning, mentoring, and advising to assist these faculty to acquire the research and scholarly competencies that prepare them for careers as university faculty,” says Harper.

She explains that this will entail considerable partnering between the UABSON and schools of nursing around Alabama and other parts of the region—schools that employ master’s-level faculty members who can become Ph.D. students at the UABSON.

This program can serve as a prototype not only at a state and regional level, but also nationally, says the dean. “There are many nursing-school faculty members who want to earn advanced degrees. Nursing schools that employ them want them to earn those degrees. But with the shortage of nursing faculty, it poses a problem when faculty are forced to interrupt their teaching jobs for long periods and move away to enroll in nursing schools that offer the advanced degrees they seek. Through this partnership, I believe we can offer both schools of nursing and master’s-level faculty the opportunity to continue to prepare new nurses while at the same time developing the future faculty to prepare nurses at the baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral level. There is a real opportunity here.”

■ Within the UAB Family

Dean Harper says she is gratified to see the UABSON enter into one partnership agreement after another with its various UAB neighbors. She says she has seen firsthand that other entities within UAB share the School of Nursing’s enthusiasm

for partnerships. Too, she says other UAB entities have extensive partnership-related knowledge, experience, and success.

Dean Harper notes that the UABSON has collaborations under way with UAB partners that include the School of Engineering, School of Medicine, School of Health Professions, Center for Aging, and UAB Hospital, to name a few. In addition, there are emerging UABSON partnerships with Children's Hospital and with the Birmingham VA (Veterans Affairs) Medical Center.

NURSING AND THE UAB NETWORK

■ The "Virtual Patient" Project

UAB's School of Engineering has teamed with the School of Nursing in a newly patented project to produce and use a computer-simulated "virtual patient" to teach health-professions students of all types, including nursing students.

With the click of a computer mouse, a nursing instructor can teach students about the human body through a computerized screen that shows the body's internal organs in three-dimensional form.

This is a project that resulted from partnering efforts of UABSON's instructional design manager, Danny Murphy, with those of School of Engineering computer programmer Corey Shum and mechanical-engineering faculty member Alan Shih, Ph.D.

■ Cooperating to Support Teaching

UAB's School of Medicine has teamed with the School of Nursing in a project to introduce "make-believe patients" to the education of nurses enrolled in an advanced-practice curriculum.

These nurses, studying to become nurse practitioners, are exposed to actors posing

as patients. The actors test the knowledge of nurse-practitioner students by mimicking symptoms that nurse practitioners likely will encounter in real patients. This approach is called the "standardized patient."

Dean Harper notes that medical schools such as the UAB School of Medicine already have been using this approach in training medical students and thus can serve as good guides. It's fitting, she adds, that advanced-practice nurses also be trained with this approach.

"The standardized patient has become a proven model for testing clinical competencies—for testing knowledge in patient assessment, diagnosis, and clinical management," she says. "Our school is the first nursing school in Alabama to make use of the standardized-patient model, and in so doing we are delighted to be working with the UAB School of Medicine."

■ Combining Resources with SHP

In an era when development of resources in becoming more and more expensive, Harper says partnerships often are a cost-effective approach.

"Very often, if you combine your efforts with a good partner, together you can develop a state-of-the-art resource that is much better than a resource you could develop alone."

Along that line, she says that the School of Nursing needs a clinical-simulation laboratory to use in teaching, and that the School of Health Professions (SHP) has the same need. "So the two schools are going forward to develop one lab that we both can use."

■ UAB Hospital's Innovative Residency

UAB Hospital recently was approved as a site to conduct a residency program for

nursing-school graduates, and the hospital is partnering with the UABSON to implement this residency.

The residency is aimed at graduates of nursing-education programs at the baccalaureate level or above—nurses who are entering their first experience in university-hospital nursing. During the one-year residency program, a nurse works as a staff nurse in the participating hospital while at the same time going through an extensive educational program.

This residency is being conducted in selected hospitals around the United States approved by the residency's sponsor, the University Health System (UHS) Consortium. As of this writing, UAB Hospital was one of only 33 sites in 23 states to be approved since the national residency's launch in 2002.

Dean Harper says this program exposes nursing residents to clinical expertise of nurses at UAB Hospital and to educational mentoring of faculty at the School of Nursing. "For these nurse-residents, this brings together the best of both worlds."

Representing nursing service and nursing education as co-coordinators of this UAB nurse residency are Pam Patterson, M.S.N., from the UAB Hospital nursing service, and Alberta McCaleb, D.S.N., the School of Nursing's associate dean for clinical affairs and partnerships and a member of the faculty.

"A goal of this residency is to expose new nurses to knowledge and experiences that will make them feel more at ease and more proficient in their jobs," says McCaleb. "The sponsoring UHS Consortium hopes that one result will be a lower employment-turnover rate among newly employed nurses. Data already indicate that this residency is accomplishing that. Prior experience has told us that we usually can expect a turnover rate of 50



The revolutionary “Virtual Patient” project is the result of collaborative work by Danny Murphy (left), the SON’s instructional-design manager, School of Engineering computer programmer Corey Shum, and other UAB visionaries.

to 60 percent during the first year when nurses are employed in clinical positions, mostly in hospital settings. In contrast, nurses who have completed this residency have experienced a job turnover rate of only 11 to 13 percent. We are proud that UAB Hospital was approved to participate in this residency and that we at the School of Nursing are working with the hospital in implementing this innovative program.”

■ Promoting Better Care for Children

In a partnership between the UABSON and Children’s Hospital, the UABSON will invest faculty time to assist Children’s Hospital nurses in developing their evidence-based practices. Representing the UABSON in this partnership is faculty member Susan R. Lacey, Ph.D.

“This partnership will take a look at how the very best care can be rendered to children by a health-care system,” says Harper.

■ Joining Forces with the VA

The UABSON also has launched cooperative programs with the Birmingham VA Medical Center to involve the VA’s Palliative Care Center and Geriatric Center. Taking the lead on behalf of the UABSON are faculty members Pam Fordham, D.S.N., and Norman L. Keltner, Ed.D.

Dean Harper says this partnering shows great promise in producing a real “win-win” for both the VA and for the School of Nursing.

“The VA and our School of Nursing together have opportunities to develop

training models to contribute to the knowledge of advanced-practice nurses and B.S.N.-prepared nurses. We also have an opportunity for postdoctoral fellows to interact with gerontological researchers at the VA. This partnering can move forward our school’s educational goals, it can move forward research goals, and it can aid the VA in its goal to increase the number of nurses in its system prepared at the B.S.N. level or higher.”

Harper says the VA-UABSON collaboration demonstrates how partnerships in a leading health-sciences center can focus on multiple goals. “This is an example of how partnerships can match the missions of various organizations for mutual gain—in research, education, and clinical practice.”

Flu with Wings

No one can say yet if the H5N1 virus will mutate and begin to spread easily from human to human, but UAB's Pandemic Influenza Task Force—in which the School of Nursing plays an integral role—is at work making contingency plans for UAB in case a pandemic does occur.

Erica Pryor, Ph.D., assistant professor, represents the School of Nursing on the task force. She has had extensive experience working with a variety of disaster-preparedness groups at UAB—from West Nile to SARS—and is a member of the International Nursing Coalition for Mass Casualty Education, headquartered at the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.

The group had a preliminary plan in place in September and is now fine-tun-



ing the information to disseminate it to the UAB community. One example: At orientation, undergraduate students will receive two-page brochures from the task force explaining the preparations for pandemic flu and where the students can find further information.

Vaccines are being developed, none of which are known to be efficacious at this point, but members of the task

force say that the best way to counter the spread of avian flu is practicing good hygiene—cover your coughs, wash your hands frequently, and isolate yourself from others if you're sick—and nurses may be among the best-equipped to disseminate this message.

Says task force member Dr. Thomas Terndrup, M.D., "Those are probably the best mechanisms to reduce the likelihood of having a very serious pandemic. I would say that the other things—the antiviral medications, the vaccines—are supplements to good public-health behavior. That's not very sexy, and it doesn't sell news, but it's more effective than treating someone with Tamiflu. If you don't acquire the disease, you're a whole lot better off than trying to undergo treatment."



A "Perfect Storm" of Symptoms

Beware of the "hazardous waist"—that's one of the messages of Susan Appel, Ph.D.'s research on metabolic syndrome. Her work, focusing on African-American women, identifies patients who are in danger of developing such cardiovascular risk factors as type-2 diabetes long before it becomes a full-blown syndrome. One warning sign: central obesity. "Waist circumference is more predictive than just a body-mass index measurement. In some ways, the

tape measure is almost like a vital sign," she says.

Other signs Appel has identified as early markers: acanthosis (a darkening of the skin at the back of the neck, particularly on dark-skinned people), skin tags under the arms, and insulin resistance (normal glucose levels but abnormal insulin levels); a patient could be in this stage for 10 to 20 years before developing diabetes, but during that time the patient would be slowly developing cardiovascular injury.

Fighting the Toughest Battle



SON researchers are teaching nurses in Uganda to be more effective collectors of data on the AIDS crisis that has ravaged Africa for more than two decades.

Millions of dollars are invested by the United States government and drug companies worldwide in research projects in countries where disease is widespread. The problem: The projects are being run and the data is being collected by nurses who have no background in research. The nursing educational programs in these countries simply do not teach research protocols.

Researchers working under the auspices of the School of Nursing's World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center for Nursing and Midwifery Education are part of a collaborative team funded in part by an NIH grant awarded to Eric Chamot, M.D., M.S., Ph.D., in the School of Public Health that works on building research capacities internationally. They have been able to take the School of Nursing's wealth of research expertise and use it to aid public-health efforts in one of the few African nations that has achieved success in combating the AIDS epidemic.

The data-collecting nurses in Uganda, where this work is centered, are paid according to the number of people they see and the information they bring back. Often, if a nurse goes to a village and doesn't find the person she's looking for, she will interview a neighbor so that she can come back with information and receive payment. That information is then recorded into a database, which is used as the basis for many important health-care distribution and information decisions. The process has helped to bridge cultural gaps and teach Uganda's nurses why integrity is so critical—and why just making up an answer and filling in a blank doesn't work.

Associate professor Joe Burrage, Ph.D., and Barbara Woodring, Ph.D., former associate dean for undergraduate studies, helped establish Uganda's only baccalaureate program in nursing. The goal of the project was to build research into the program so that nurses graduating from the program will, for really the first time in the country's history, have a solid understanding of the concept of research and how it impacts people's lives.

Progress is necessarily incremental, but the SON's researchers have noted many important advances in the three years of the program. "The UAB School of Nursing helped connect Uganda's baccalaureate nursing school to the Internet for the first time," says Dean Doreen Harper, Ph.D. "The next steps will include building a 10-computer lab, creating a window on the world and building capacity for Uganda's nursing workforce."

"The idea is to identify patients before they need to be treated with medicine," Appel says. "One of the primary treatments in the early stages is lifestyle changes—diet and exercise. . . . If I tell you today that you're at risk instead of telling you five years from now, as was the case in the past, you're still going to be better off, even if you only do half of what you're told."

Appel's research has focused particularly on African-American women because

they have a higher incidence of diabetes. In most states people with type-2 diabetes make up 7 to 8 percent of the population. Among African-American women in Alabama, the rate is 17 percent. "That's unacceptable," Appel says.

In February, her contributions to the field were recognized when she won the Research in Minority Health Award from the Southern Nursing Research Society.



AMY BROOKS

Amy Brooks says she always had her sights set on a career in nursing. After getting her associate degree from Jefferson State Community College in 1990, she spent 14 years as a registered nurse. But when she saw fliers posted at the HealthSouth Medical Center advertising a new RN-to-B.S.N. program at the UAB School of Nursing, the chance to take that career even further seemed too good to pass up.

"I always went with the intention of furthering my education," says Brooks, who lives in Pinson, Alabama, with her husband and two children. "So I went on the Internet, saw that the classroom portion

of the program was completely online—and that was a big advantage, to be able to complete a four-year degree without having to go to campus except once a week."

The innovative RN-to-B.S.N. option, offered as part of the School of Nursing's Mobility Plan, is opening up new doors for nurses who are working full-time, trying to raise families, or both, and who can't just drop everything to sit in a classroom. Through an online curriculum RNs can complete coursework as their schedules permit. The program enables working nurses to start on the road to advanced-practice degrees, positioning them to fill nursing roles that are growing more complex and involving greater and greater responsibilities with each passing year.

"Given that this program allows them to take classes without having to come to campus—which many of them can't do because they have jobs and families to worry about—and even allows them to take classes at 2 a.m. if that's what's convenient for them, we found a program like this very desirable to have at the School of Nursing," says Elizabeth Stullenbarger, Ph.D., associate dean for academic affairs.

"Many nurses desire to go into advanced practice, or they want to be nurse practitioners or nurse specialists; they also might want to go into some of the quality-assurance kinds of fields," Stullenbarger explains. "All of those fields require graduate degrees, and they have to have the bachelor's degree to start on the road to those."

With a full-time job and two children aged 9 and 12, Brooks says her decision to go back to school took "a lot of soul searching," but the UABSON faculty helped her every step of the way. "Having the online program really made it easy to be able to work and raise a family," she

says. "And I haven't met anybody at UAB who's not been dedicated and encouraging. They treat you as a mature adult."

Brooks says the prerequisites for the program took about three semesters to complete as a part-time student taking one or two classes at a time. She completed the program itself in four semesters as an extended program, but adds that students can complete the course in two semesters as full-time students.

Brooks says the School of Nursing also works with any prospective student to determine the course schedule that is best suited for that student's specific lifestyle. "They look at how many hours you work a week and whether it's going to work," she says. "They want you to graduate with good grades and be able to move on."

Her ultimate goal? "I want to teach. I want to be a part of the faculty at UAB, and for that you really need a doctoral degree. I felt like I needed to pursue my master's degree and an advanced-practice nursing role, and when I complete that, I'm going to go for either my Ph.D. or my D.S.N."

That's music to Stullenbarger's ears. "One of the greatest needs we have in the nursing profession right now is preparing faculty," she says. "We have a severe nursing shortage in this nation, and one of the things that's hindering more people getting into this field is a shortage of nurse educators."

But even those graduates who elect to stay in practice rather than taking on management or academic roles can benefit from the mobility program, Stullenbarger says. "There is sound research data to show that the more education a nurse has, the better patient outcomes are, and that's another motivating factor for a nurse to go back to school," she says. "Better education equates to better patient outcomes."

ALICE BRISTOW

Attached to Alice Bristow's refrigerator is a newspaper clipping that reads "Follow the Scariest Path." She cut out the headline just before deciding to enroll in the UAB School of Nursing.

"I don't know if it was the influence of friends or media, the heroic efforts of nurses during the Oklahoma City bombing and 9/11, or simply the reflections of an aging housewife, but something happened to bring a long-forgotten dream to the surface," confesses Bristow, 50. "I began to think a lot about nursing, though it seemed ludicrous that I could become a nurse at my age."

The daughter of a medical doctor and a radiologic technician, Bristow originally planned on becoming a teacher. She earned a degree in education in 1977 but was sidetracked by motherhood and a decision to help out in the family's small retail business. The years went by, but Bristow's desire to help others remained constant. "I love working with people," she says. "To positively affect the life of a patient and family is a great honor and an awesome responsibility."

It was a responsibility Bristow had to deal with even as she endured a series of personal and family hardships that would've been enough to discour-

age many people from pursuing their dreams. "The hardest part of nursing school," she explains, "was knowing loved ones were hurting and not being there for them. When I started in the fall of 2004, my father had a radiation treatment. Then in October my first cousin was killed in a freak automobile accident."

Bristow continues, "In May 2005 my mom had a health crisis and was rushed to the hospital. On the day we brought her home, my 18-year-old nephew was critically injured in an auto accident. In July my aunt passed away. The following December I watched a dear friend begin a sharp decline after battling breast cancer for several years."

Despite this string of tragedies, Bristow found the strength to carry on. Receiving the Delia and John Robert Endowed Nursing Scholarship, she says, was a major turning point.

"I had decided to drop at least one course after my mom's illness but was advised that I might not get back in. I was exhausted and discouraged because the work was incredibly difficult. My prayer to God was to give me a definite sign that nursing was where I was supposed to be, or give me courage to walk away. Within a couple of days, I pulled a letter out of



Alice Bristow

my mailbox informing me of the scholarship, and the tears began to flow. I'll never forget that day."

Earning her nursing diploma is something else Bristow will always remember. "It was a thrill to walk into Bartow Arena on May 6, 2006, to celebrate graduating with my B.S.N.," she says. "It was one of the visions that kept me going through the past five semesters."

"I love working with people. To positively affect the life of a patient and family is a great honor and an awesome responsibility." — ALICE BRISTOW

The UAB School of Nursing has experienced many changes in the past year, a list that includes new faces in a variety of positions. Along with a new dean, Doreen Harper, Ph.D., the school added a new development director and scholarship/alumni-relations director (pages 18-19) and a number of new faculty members, six of whom are profiled below. These qualified and motivated faculty will help to further bolster the school's reputation for excellence both in teaching and in valuable research with promising applications for real-world nursing.



Yvonne Eaves, Ph.D.

Education:

Ph.D., Michigan
M.S., Northern Illinois
B.S., St. Xavier College

Eaves comes to UAB from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing, where she worked for 11 years in various capacities culminating in research assistant professor. Before that, she was a graduate assistant at the University of Michigan, where she earned her doctoral degree, and at Northern Illinois University, where she received her master's. Prior to her graduate education, Eaves was a six-year nursing veteran of hospitals across Illinois. Her professional activities and service include numerous projects and committees focusing on gerontology, the elderly, and end-of-life care; she has also won prestigious honors including recognition as a Geriatric Nursing Research Scholar at New York University's John A. Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing and the Ella E. McNeil

Memorial Award at the University of Michigan School of Nursing. Eaves also has been funded by the National Institute of Aging for her research on "A Caregiving Intervention for Rural African Americans." Eaves has 11 journal articles to her credit and has participated in more than 30 presentations.



Lygia Holcomb, D.S.N., CRNP

Education:

D.S.N., UAB
M.S.N., Missouri

Holcomb returns to UAB after earning her D.S.N. here and serving as a UAB nurse practitioner from 1993 to 1996. Providing care and sharing her knowledge with aspiring practitioners has been the focus of her life for the past 20 years. Before returning to Birmingham, she served as director of the Nurse Practitioner Program at the University of Central Florida, but she

has also worked with young students in school-based clinics as well as practicing in assisted-living facilities, indigent-patient clinics, public-health departments, and even correctional facilities. She also maintains a research focus in school-based health care in developing countries, having served as the director of the World Health Organization (WHO) affiliate at UCF; she continues to organize and participate in mission trips to Honduras and Haiti. Holcomb also served as the first vice president of the board of the Florida Nurses Association.



Arlene Johnson, Ph.D.

Education:

Ph.D., UAB
M.S.N., UCLA

A former faculty member at both Oakwood College and Vanderbilt University, Johnson received her Ph.D. from UAB earlier this year and joined

the faculty as an assistant professor. She previously taught both undergraduate and graduate nursing programs at the University of California-Los Angeles, where she also served as an adult nurse practitioner. At UAB she plans to continue the program of research she began in her dissertation, which focuses on the effect of sleep deprivation on performance and error in nurses who work night shifts; she is also a recipient of the Minority Faculty Fellowship.

Angela Jukkala, Ph.D.

Education:

Ph.D., Minnesota
M.S., Minnesota
B.S.N., Bemidji State

Jukkala returns to her home state of Alabama after 10 years in Minnesota, where she earned her advanced degrees in addition to serving as the director of professional services at Falls Memorial Hospital in International Falls. Her current research program studies the barriers to practice for advanced nurse practitioners in rural areas as well as access to care, with particular emphasis on neonatal resuscitation in rural hospitals; she is a member of the Rural Nurses Organization, the National Rural Health Organization, and the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses. Jukkala is a certified specialist in women's health care and has received predoctoral grant awards from the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research and the American Academy of Pediatrics.



Na-Jin Park, Ph.D.

Education:

Ph.D., UAB
M.S.N., Pusan National University,
South Korea

Park completed her Ph.D. this past August, having studied breast-cancer risk, psychological distress, and dispositional optimism on immune responses in healthy women; her dissertation research was funded by a Tri-Service Nursing Research Grant from the United States Department of Defense. She joins the UAB faculty with a lengthy and varied list of experiences, including serving as a research assistant for Duck-Hee Kang, Ph.D., in UAB's Center for Nursing Research, teaching undergraduate nursing in her native South Korea, and even serving as an occupational-health nurse for Korean Air. Her research at UAB will focus on the areas of psychoneuroimmunology and occupational health.



Glenda Smith, D.S.N.

Education:

D.S.N., University of Texas-Houston
Health Science Center
M.S.N., Vanderbilt
B.S.N., North Carolina Central

Previously Smith served as a faculty member at Tuskegee University and the University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center, but she has nursing experience going back more than 25 years and is dually certified as a pediatric and neonatal nurse practitioner. Smith was also a research training scholar in the Alabama Collaboration for Cardiovascular Equality Research Training, where she studied the effects of sexual maturation on blood pressure in teens and preteens. She is a member of numerous professional organizations including the National Association of Neonatal Nurses, American Nurses Association, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, and Southern Nurses Research Society; she is also a recipient of UAB's Minority Faculty Fellowship.



ALUMNI PROFILE: *Valorie Tucker, M.S.N.*

It's an experience Valorie Tucker will never forget.

Just one day after Hurricane Katrina pounded New Orleans, Tucker and other members of UAB's Critical Care Transport team arrived by helicopter as part of a dramatic rescue effort.

"It looked like a war zone. All the streets were flooded," says Tucker. "We had to have LifeSaver helicopter fly to New Orleans ahead of us so that the team could be flown over to the hospital. UAB doesn't use the helicopter, but Children's Hospital does. We came together and formed one unique team—myself, two other nurses, and two respiratory therapists. We arranged our equipment so we could transport about three to six infants.

"When we landed, there were military helicopters everywhere. There was no electricity, so there were no lights at the airport. We were racing against time because the sun was going down. When the team returned from the hospital, we loaded the babies into the jet from the helicopter."

And their emergency mission didn't end with the transports. "The staff there was so emotional—they didn't have any air conditioning, and they wore cutoff scrubs and flip-flops. When we went back

the next day, we took T-shirts, water, candy bars, toiletries, and other useful items. They were so thankful."

Tucker would later win the Alabama Hospital Association's HERO Award for helping relocate newborns during the crisis. Being recognized for her efforts was something she never expected. "I was very surprised," she says. "I really don't consider myself a hero—I just take care of every individual baby as if it were mine."

Tucker, who earned a B.S.N. and M.S.N. from the UAB School of Nursing, admits that working in critical care is demanding. "It's hard to paint a good picture of what we do unless you are able to see for yourself," she says. "We are all really close and work well together; we know what each other's jobs are and what we are responsible for. As a neonatal nurse practitioner, I work collaboratively with neonatologists to provide care for high-risk infants, improving access to care for one of our most vulnerable populations."

The hours, too, can take their toll. "Whenever a transport call comes in, the coordinator sends out the page to the team members. We have 15 minutes to get started

and 15 minutes to get loaded and out the door. If I'm at home at night, I have 30 minutes to get into the office. And we have to make sure our packs are checked and we have the supplies needed, because at any minute the pager could sound. We also have to know when we're too tired so that we can call ourselves off-duty for safety purposes."

While some might find Tucker's position overwhelming, she sees it as the realization of a lifelong dream. "I've always wanted to be a nurse," she says. "Even when I was a little girl, I wanted to take care of babies. I did my preceptorship in the Regional Newborn Intensive Care Unit at UAB and fell in love with it. I knew then that I wanted to work in RNICU.

"I always try to have a positive attitude. It's hard when the family is upset and we have to leave, but we always reassure them. I have five children of my own, and I know how I would feel if someone was taking my sick baby away. I try to feel their pain and comfort them.

"The most rewarding part of my job," says Tucker, "is knowing that our team is making a difference in the lives of our littlest patients and their families."

BOARD OF VISITORS PROFILE: **ROBERT LUCKIE JR.**

As the founder of the state's largest advertising agency, Robert Luckie Jr. recognizes talent when he sees it. And that isn't limited to the boardroom.

“In 1987 my wife was in the hospital undergoing treatment for breast cancer. The nurses who took care of her up until the time she died were totally dedicated, professional, and thoughtful,” Luckie says. “I’ll never forget what they did for her. I felt like they were the unsung heroes, and I wanted to do something to show my support.”

Although reluctant to take credit, Luckie played a pivotal role in establishing the UAB School of Nursing’s Board of Visitors. The board, comprising various community leaders, was created to assist the School of Nursing in any way possible. Fund raising was at the top of that list.

“I couldn’t begin to tell you how many scholarships we’ve generated over the years, but it’s an impressive number. A lot of people worked very hard to raise the money that’s awarded to some well-deserving individuals,” Luckie says.

Luckie has personally endowed scholarships, including the Lois Drolet Luckie Scholarship in Oncology Nursing (which honors his late wife) and the Robert Luckie Family Endowed Nursing Scholarship. He sees both as a way of giving back.

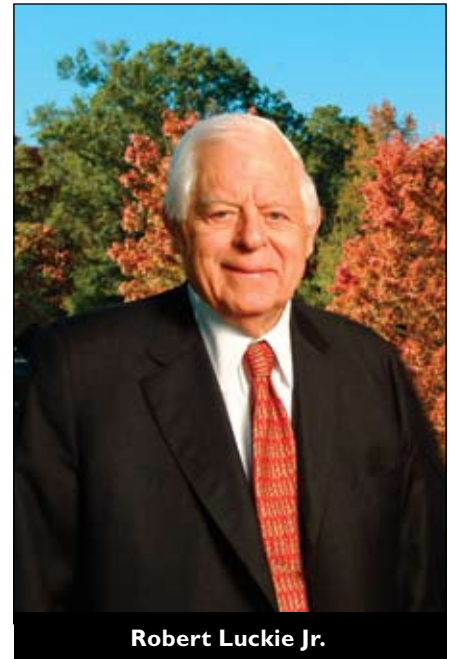
“There are those who struggle financially. In many cases, someone from a small town who’s wanted to be a nurse their entire life graduates high school and is shocked at the costs they’re going to face. These scholarships are designed to help young people with natural ability find places at the UAB School of Nursing

and serve future generations. Being a nurse requires real determination—you either have the desire or you don’t.”

Luckie realized his calling while working in the editorial and advertising departments of *The Birmingham News*. In 1953 he took a leap of faith, forming the public relations/advertising firm Robert Luckie & Co. “I started out with nothing more than ambition and a typewriter,” laughs Luckie, who grew up in Montgomery and later graduated from Birmingham–Southern College. “I’m very proud of what we’ve accomplished throughout the years.”

The firm, which became Luckie & Forney Inc. in 1964, has received numerous honors and awards, including the prestigious Clio. Known today as Luckie & Company, it is one of the largest full-service communications agencies in the South, representing both regional and national clients. His sons currently oversee day-to-day operations: Robert Luckie III serves as chairman and CEO, while Tom Luckie serves as president.

Bob Luckie, a former Birmingham Advertising Man of the Year, has also been recognized by the university. He was selected as a member of the UAB President’s Council and serves on its Honorary Campaign Board. He also helped raise money to erect a statue of the school’s second president, S. Richardson Hill. For his devotion to UAB, Luckie was honored with an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree in 1997. “I was very



Robert Luckie Jr.

surprised. It was a real honor, but I felt like there were others who were more deserving. I’m very pleased about my association with the university. A lot of us wouldn’t be here today if not for the care and expertise of the medical staff of this world-class facility.”

It is UAB’s committed team of nurses, however, that holds special meaning for Luckie. “I can’t say enough about these talented young men and women who make a difference in people’s lives every day,” he says. “They have worked extremely hard to complete very sophisticated training. They spend time with the patients and know how to comfort them. They go the extra five miles, in my opinion, and I want everyone to know it.”

M*A*S*H

goes to Australia



Barrett Brock MacKay, husband Rick, and Skip and Brenda Brock

Mother Nature did her best to drench the festivities with a steady downpour, but even she couldn't spoil the good mood of the hundreds of SON alumni, faculty, and friends who attended "M*A*S*H 2006: Bivouac in the Outback," the school's annual "Make Another Scholarship Happen" fundraiser. Held at Patchwork Farms, owned by Pat and George Blinn in Birmingham, the event was chaired by Joie Jones, Donna Reddinger, and Jean Tomlinson. Wearing bush hats and other outback gear, guests enjoyed "pint and tucker" (otherwise known as cocktails and dinner) catered by Outback Steakhouse and heard the moving story of featured speaker Alice Bristow, who is featured on page 11 of this issue; they also got to hear from the school's new dean, Doreen Harper, Ph.D., about her plans for the school and its future. With more than \$58,000 raised for scholarships, the event was a rousing success, and set the stage for even bigger things to come at the School of Nursing.



Caroline Ireland enjoys the evening



Philippa and Frank Bainbridge



Joie Jones and Karle Falkenburg and unidentified "friend"



Former SON Dean Rachel Booth with Dean Harper and Barbara O'Neal



Fay and Bill Ireland in their Australian "duds"



Elizabeth Wallace, George Wallace Jr., and Juanzetta Flowers



Bill Harbert, Dean Harper, Anne Michaels, Bob Jones, Billy Harper, and Nancy Jones



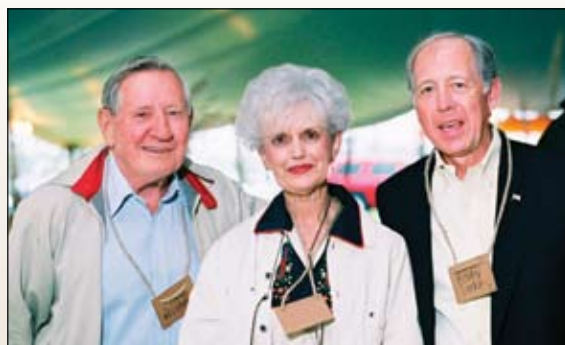
Dr. Griff and Craig Harsh with Jack and Jean Tomlinson



Bobbie Parsons autographs copies of her books, which benefit the SON



Pat Blinn, Lella Bromberg, Frank Bromberg, and George Blinn



Dr. "Scotty" McCallum, Anita Smith Lunsford, and Bobby Luckie

Ann Robinson

Ann Robinson's frequent visits to Birmingham to visit family gave her a firsthand look at the growth and energy at UAB and throughout the city. Now, as the School of Nursing's new development director, she says she's thrilled at the opportunity to be directly involved in that progress.



Ann Robinson

"It is terrific—the incredible economic growth, the growth of the university, and how it has become such a prime mover," she says. "That kind of vitality really makes you want to participate."

Robinson comes to the School of Nursing from the MedicAlert Foundation; before that, she was the senior development director at California State University-Stanislaus. She says she's looking forward to focusing on a specific school, particularly one that's a part of an environment as active as UAB. "I am deeply committed to higher education,

and I missed the challenge and vibrancy of both a research institution and an urban institution," she says. "UAB is truly the engine of the health-care industry not just for Birmingham, not just for Alabama, but for the entire Southeast. That is incredible, and it is very attractive.

"The founders of these visions should really be applauded, not only for their service to the economy but also for their service to the people of the area. The economy should not be separate from whom you serve . . . that kind of service to people is what creates the responsibility for that vision. Though health care is an industry, it's an industry that serves people."

Robinson adds that she's excited about coming to the School of Nursing at a time when important new projects are in their infancy. Robinson will work with scholarship and alumni-relations director Andy Wallace to match those initiatives with new fund-raising programs designed to reach out to alumni and the rest of the university. "We have to create and maintain programs that keep alumni engaged—that start a new relationship with them," she explains, "and with Andy I'm not worried about that at all."

Fortunately, she says, she'll also have the added benefit of working with a faculty committed to keeping alumni involved. "When we were in our strategic planning, it was wonderful to hear how they wanted

to engage them," she says. "Where else do you hear faculty asking to bring alumni back to work on particular projects? They see the value of the alumni, and I'm really impressed with how they want to continue that relationship."

Robinson also counts the school's Board of Visitors as an important ally not only in helping to raise funds but also in raising its public profile. "Look at the caliber of the individuals who are part of that board. These are just incredible women and men who are dedicated to advancing the School of Nursing," she says, "and they do that through their philanthropic efforts, but also through advocacy."

Though she moved more than 2,200 miles to get here, Robinson says the transition to Birmingham has been an easy one. She looks forward to resuming her gardening and landscaping hobbies in a climate more like California than where she grew up in Indiana. "In the Midwest you have two and a half months when you can grow anything, so I was lucky I kept a flowerbed," she laughs.

And in spite of the distance, she's confident that her three daughters, all of whom live in the Los Angeles area, will visit frequently. "They encouraged me to go southeast," she says. "We have been coming to Birmingham for more than 18 years, and they love it here . . . so I'm not too worried about getting to see them."



Andy Wallace

What inspires students, faculty members, and supporters to get involved with nursing—and help fuel the School of Nursing’s success? For many like Andy Wallace, the school’s scholarship and alumni–relations administrator, it was a powerful personal experience.

Three years ago, Wallace’s father was hospitalized with inoperable cancer. “He came to UAB Hospital, and he experienced incredible nursing care,” Wallace remembers. “He only lived ten weeks from his initial cancer diagnosis. He was in and out of the hospital the last couple of weeks, and received amazing nursing care throughout the experience. So nurses will always top my list of favorite people, because of the care they showed him.”

Wallace had plenty of prior experience working with nurses—from 1981 to 1994, he was a media specialist in UAB Hospital’s department of hospital communications, and he returned in 2000 as the hospital’s coordinator for communica-

tions, community relations, and special events. When his current position at the School of Nursing opened up earlier this year, offering an opportunity to work even more closely with nursing, “it was just too awesome to turn down,” he says.

Wallace now oversees an alumni community more than 10,000 strong, from the School of Nursing on the Birmingham campus to the original school in Tuscaloosa and Hillman and Jefferson hospitals. Fortunately, he can rely on a dedicated archivist, Pat Cleveland, to help manage the rich history of the school and its programs, as well as devoted alumni who work hard to stay in touch with each other and plan events.

“Our alumni group does all kinds of things—they help with the Lamp of Learning ceremony, our scholarship program, and our Homecoming activities. They want to support the students and the faculty any way they can,” Wallace says. He adds that he’d like to organize more class reunions at the school, and he and Dean Doreen Harper, Ph.D, have even talked about expanding alumni’s role to raise the school’s visibility and serve as a sounding board for ideas.

Wallace also oversees more than 50 endowed scholarship funds currently endowed at a total of \$4.5 million. “This past fall we awarded more than 70 scholarships to students who were coming in for the first time or who were already enrolled in the School of Nursing,” he says. “It’s a great program, so we’ll continually work to increase the amounts we award.”

It’s a lot of responsibility, but Wallace says he’s proud to serve a profession that does so much for people at such critical and emotional times in their lives.

“Our dean likes to say that you go to a hospital because you need nursing care—you really only see your doctor for a short time during your hospital stay, but you’re taken care of 24 hours a day by nurses. I’d never thought about it that way, but it’s true.

“I have many friends who are nurses, and I was on many committees with nurses at the hospital, but I didn’t get to experience nursing care until my own father required it. I think the nursing care my dad received while in the hospital made the experience less stressful on both of my parents. And I want to be part of a team that cultivates and supports nursing from academia to service.”

continued from page 3

obesity and sedentary lifestyles,” he says. “Reducing morbidity and mortality related to obesity requires significant long-term changes in lifestyle, which are difficult to achieve. Another challenge is finding ways to involve employees who are at high risk and help them to incorporate healthier behaviors into their lifestyles. Using data from the health screens, we are able to identify those highest-risk individuals, and we have found that personal contact is the most effective way to encourage participation in risk-reduction interventions.”

Leaders of the program have also been successful in coming up with highly creative projects that invite widespread participation. For example, in 2002 the Good Health Program commissioned the *Hearty Fire Station Cuisine* cookbook; Birmingham-area firefighters submitted their favorite recipes, which were then analyzed by a UAB nutritionist, who made slight modifications to reduce fat and make them healthier. The cookbooks were distributed to all city fire stations, and some of the best-liked recipes were posted on the Web.

A future project involves providing an accessible fitness center for city employees that will offer everything from the usual exercise equipment to individual training, group exercise, and even yoga classes.

REAL-WORLD CAREER TRAINING—NO MATTER THE CAREER

While city employees benefit greatly from these programs, they aren't the only ones. UAB's nursing students get valuable real-world experience, not only in patient care, but also in the kinds of research and public-health awareness that will prepare them for roles as future health-care leaders.

Brown says the Occupational Health Clinic is an “outstanding teaching setting” for graduate as well as undergraduate nursing students. “Undergraduate students



“The greatest reward is making a difference in individual employees’ health and quality of life.”

Michael Weaver, R.N., Ph.D.

have the opportunity to observe the nurse practitioners and a B.S.N.-prepared registered nurse and be supervised in their clinical experiences. Nurse-practitioner students have access to practitioner faculty and staff, who are excellent role models and instructors.”

Through the Good Health Program's screenings, both graduate and undergraduate students gain experience in gathering important health data and interacting with other health-care fields, says Thomas Kekes-Szabo, the program manager. “Undergraduate students collect data at

the health screenings, counsel people to reduce health risks, and gain experience in interdisciplinary teams by interacting with the program's nutritionist at the screenings,” he says. “Master's students also have opportunities to participate in research and learn about aspects of data collection, clinical decision-making, program evaluation, interdisciplinary interventions, and case management. The program has provided access to a study population for doctoral-student dissertations, and occupational-health nurse practitioner students have the opportunity to work in an occupational health clinic with both physicians and nurse practitioners.”

It all adds up to a unique opportunity for UAB nursing students across undergraduate and graduate programs. “More than 120 undergraduate and graduate nursing students participate in these clinical programs with strong emphasis on improving health outcomes through interdisciplinary teams, nurse practitioners, physicians, physical therapists, and others,” Harper says.

WORKING WONDERS IN THE MAGIC CITY

The partnership between the UAB School of Nursing and the city of Birmingham is a unique opportunity for nursing students, but it's a unique opportunity for the city's workers, too. Through the partnership's top-notch treatment and health education, Birmingham workers rank among the nation's healthiest, best-cared-for municipal employees. And they're grateful for the help.

“We have received thank-you for everything from supporting smoking cessation to a referral for high blood pressure, which led to treatment of a serious, previously undiagnosed cardiovascular problem,” Weaver says. “The greatest reward is making a difference in individual employees' health and quality of life.”



A gift that lasts beyond a lifetime...

Planning for the future is your gift to your family and to the UAB School of Nursing. Just as time spent with grandchildren is a joy for you and for them, supporting the UAB School of Nursing brings satisfaction now and ensures future support for nursing education, research, and patient care. Made through your will, retirement fund designation or trust, your estate gift will demonstrate your commitment to UAB's School of Nursing—during your lifetime...and beyond.

For more bequest information, please contact
Elaine Eberhart, Director of Planned Giving,
AB 1270, 1530 3rd Ave. S, Birmingham, AL 35294-0112
(205) 934-0759 / eberhart@uab.edu.

For information about the School of Nursing, please contact
Ann Robinson, Director of Development,
School of Nursing, NB 119A, 1701 University Boulevard, Birmingham AL 35294-1210
(205) 975-2443 / arobins@uab.edu.

Always consult your tax or legal advisor when considering a planned gift.



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