

Winter  
2018 Issue

# Alumni Times

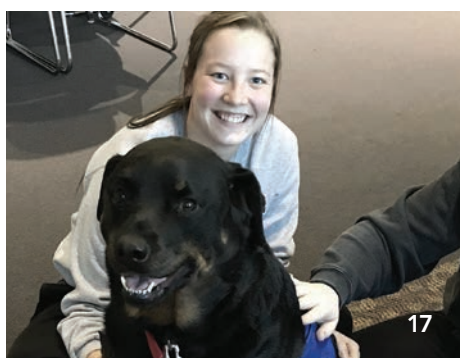
Clarkson College Alumni Magazine

Upholding our values  
in a changing world





Learning, Integrity, Caring, Excellence, Commitment. More than just five words, these Values define who we are as Clarkson College community members. Remaining steadfast in our principles becomes more important than ever as we navigate the constantly shifting health care field. Instill these Values in everything that you do, and stand back to watch it positively influence you, your community and the world.



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**EXECUTIVE EDITOR** Rita VanFleet    **CONTRIBUTORS** Jen  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR** Ann Hagenau    Anderson  
**DESIGNER** Nicole Bonk  
**SENIOR WRITER** Marie Dahlberg

The Alumni Times is a quarterly publication distributed by the Alumni Association of Clarkson College, 101 South 42nd Street, Omaha, Neb. 68131. Direct all story and photo submissions, changes of address or publication inquiries to Rita VanFleet, at 402.552.3516 or [vanfleetrta@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrta@clarksoncollege.edu).



## On the Cover

How the past helps us commit to provide compassionate care. 18

**PHOTOGRAPH BY** Chris VanKat

## From the Alumni President

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### **We all want to do the right thing and make ethical decisions in our professional and personal lives.**

Strong values allow us to be impactful leaders, and pledging to uphold our morals gives us purpose. When leaders pass their values onto others, it helps to guide organizations and companies.

What values are identified and encouraged by Clarkson College? Learning, Integrity, Excellence, Caring and Commitment; each one is especially significant for health care providers.

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Our values define who we are, and they drive us to become leaders in our personal lives and careers.

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#### **Learning**

Clarkson College challenges us to learn new things while developing behaviors and skills through experience, education and sharing.

#### **Integrity**

Honesty and truth are important. Integrity helps us develop a strong moral compass to make ethical decisions.

#### **Excellence**

Whether we are trying to achieve success as an individual or as a team, we strive for distinction among our peers.

#### **Caring**

Caring is vital in many careers, but even more so in health care. This Value stems from a deep concern for others and a desire to make a difference in their lives.

#### **Commitment**

Loyalty drives our dedication to customers, family, friends and patients. Commitment builds character and inspires those around us.

Our values define who we are, and they drive us to become leaders in our personal lives and careers. Think about them beyond what you learned while attending Clarkson College or Clarkson School of Nursing and ask yourself how these five Values drive you professionally and personally. In this constantly changing world, I challenge you to take a moment to review your personal values and determine your true north.



Jen Anderson, M.H.A., RHIA ('10),  
Alumni Association President



1 / A candle lighting ceremony held at the Cathedral. 2 / Dean Loya leads a tour during Alumni Weekend. 3 / The interior of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.

## Alumni Association Makes Donation to Trinity Episcopal Cathedral

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral plays a significant role in Clarkson College history. Each year during Alumni Weekend, former Clarkson College and Clarkson School of Nursing students tour the historic building and learn about its vast history from Dean Craig Loya. This year, in appreciation of Dean Loya's dedication and service, the Alumni Association is making a monetary donation that will help with their New Beginnings Project, a program that works with sexual assault and domestic violence survivors.

The Cathedral and its history are deeply connected to Bishop Robert Harper Clarkson who served there in the late 1800s. It was his dream of establishing a nurses' training program that led to

the establishment of Bishop Clarkson Memorial School of Nursing, founded in 1888 by the church deaconesses and his wife Meliora after his death. Over the years, thousands of Clarkson College students gathered at the Cathedral for cappings, convocations and graduation ceremonies.

While the school has changed names and locations several times over the years, the Clarkson College community has never forgotten its roots at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. The building is one of the few original Omaha landmarks still in use today, and each time alumni visit the Cathedral, they remember their time at the College and gain insight into its rich history.



## Clarkson College Reaches Middle School Students in Tennessee

As the College continues to grow and expand, more people are learning about the institution's dedication to educating compassionate health care providers. Now, the message is reaching middle school students in Tennessee thanks to Clarkson College alumna Joyce Crites. She is a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) graduate and a school nurse who is spreading the College Values to the next generation of students.

Prior to attending Clarkson College, Crites earned a Bachelor's degree in Communications from Bellevue University. Soon after, she decided that nursing was her true calling and began researching schools in Omaha with BSN programs. She knew she wanted a smaller, personalized campus environment, which made Clarkson College the perfect fit. Less than two years after she enrolled, Crites earned her degree.

"I chose nursing because I have always loved medicine and helping people," she said. "In school, I excelled in science-based classes, and I knew from a very young age that health care was the direction I wanted to take."

The versatility of the nursing profession enables Crites to work in many different fields. She has worked in critical care, emergency rooms, home health, administration and additional specialties throughout her 20-year career. Currently, she is a full-time nurse at Westwood Middle School in Manchester, Tenn. "Of all the jobs I have had, this is the most rewarding," she said. "I serve a student population of more than 400, and I absolutely love coming to work."

To help students learn about educational opportunities, Westwood Middle School faculty members display banners from their alma maters in the hallways. Alongside her colleagues, Crites exhibited a Clarkson College pennant to honor the institution. "Displaying the banners highlights the many different places we've earned our degrees and shows students that our educations are widespread," she said. "It demonstrates the vast opportunities and resources that are available to students when pursuing their education."

Crites hopes that displaying the pennants will encourage students to explore the many options they have in pursuing a collegiate education. She understands that the right school can help students find their passion and make lifelong connections—just like the ones she made at Clarkson College.

"I have so many fond memories of my time at Clarkson College, and most of them involve the students I met in my classes and clinical settings," she said. "We developed a strong bond during the time we spent together, and we relied on each other for support and motivation. My time at the College was incredibly rewarding, and I am glad that I chose to attend and further my education."



## Celebrate with Your Alma Mater

Reconnect with your classmates during Alumni Weekend

The Alumni Association of Clarkson College is beginning the new year by preparing for the annual Alumni Weekend events slated for Sept. 27–28. Each year, the College honors the 50, 40, 25 and five-year anniversary classes, and the classes of 1968, 1978, 1993 and 2013 will be honored during this year's September festivities. All alumni are invited to attend the events and celebrate with their peers and alma mater. In addition to Alumni Weekend, the Radiologic Technology program is celebrating their 25th graduating class with activities scheduled throughout 2018.

Alumni Weekend will kick off on Thursday, Sept. 27 with a brunch followed by a tour of the Clarkson College campus. The afternoon will feature a Heritage Garden Walk and dedication as well as a historic tour on Ollie the Trolley through downtown Omaha. On Friday, Sept. 28, an educational event will take place in the morning. That evening, alumni will gather for dinner and a night of entertainment.

Reserve Sept. 27–28 and come back to celebrate with friends, College faculty and staff. Thursday's events are a gift to you from Clarkson College, and there is no charge to attend them. The educational event and dinner scheduled Friday each have an associated fee.

The Alumni Association hopes you and your fellow classmates will join us on campus in September. Look for additional information about Alumni Weekend in the mail, on the Clarkson College website and in the spring edition of the Alumni Times. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the possibility of honoring your graduating class, contact Alumni Coordinator Rita VanFleet at 402.552.3516 or [vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu).

## Lights, Laughter & Trivia During the Annual Holiday Lights Tour

The third annual Alumni Association-sponsored Holiday Lights Tour on Dec. 7 offered an evening of merriment and fun for alumni and guests. The seasonal event was a great opportunity to relax, don festive attire and celebrate the holiday season.

As the bus wove its way through Omaha neighborhoods, attendees enjoyed traditional and creative light displays. Light snacks were provided by the Alumni Association Board, and the group played Christmas Trivia to test their holiday knowledge.

### Assess your holiday expertise


Quiz yourself on a few of the trivia questions shared during the Holiday Lights tour.

- › What is the only Christmas greenery not allowed inside a Christian church?
- › When Suzy Snowflake comes, what color is her dress?
- › Where was I when I saw mommy kissing Santa Claus?
- › What country started the tradition of exchanging gifts?
- › What Christmas tree is considered the least desirable Christmas tree?
- › What star did the Littlest Angel's box of treasures turn into?

Trivia / Mistletoe. White. Stairs. Italy. Spruce.  
The Star of Bethlehem.

Keeping  
Our Values —





The Maltese Cross has been an honored symbol within the Clarkson College community for decades. The icon forms a cross with eight distinct points, and tradition says these points represent the Beatitudes delivered during the Sermon on the Mount. The virtues laid out in the Beatitudes closely relate to the Clarkson College culture and support the Values established by the institution.

The connection to the past is clear, but have you ever wondered why the Maltese Cross symbol was chosen many years ago to represent the College? The possible answers may come as a surprise.



1 / The Maltese Cross shown on the left arm of Clarkson School of Nursing student uniforms. 2 / The Knights of Malta in battle. 3 / The Knights preparing a funeral ceremony within the Knights of St. John hospital around 1650 A.D.

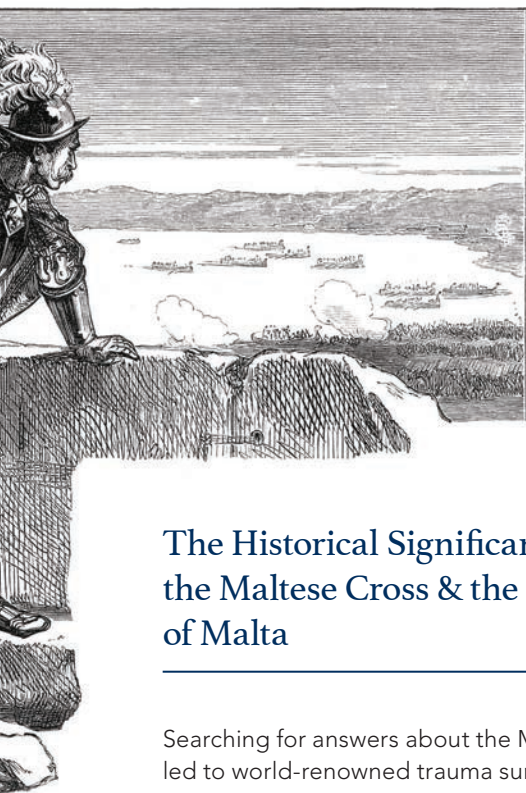
## The Maltese Cross and its history

are tremendously fitting to Clarkson College and its community members. The Beatitudes state blessings to the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful and the peacemakers. Together, the blessings offer guidance about what it means to lead the compassionate, purpose-driven (or called) life of health care professionals.

Since its earliest days, the Bishop Clarkson Memorial School of Nursing assisted and instructed caring health care providers. Bishop Robert Harper Clarkson and his wife Meliora wanted to support the Omaha community by caring for its children and providing a much-needed hospital in the area. Bishop Clarkson died from pneumonia on March 10, 1884, and Meliora—in conjunction with the church deaconesses—completed his vision

of establishing a nurses' training program at the Bishop Clarkson Memorial Hospital for Children in 1888. As the training institution progressed and grew, it expanded its services to provide medical assistance for those in need throughout the growing city. Meliora's actions marked the beginning of a long relationship between the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska and what is now known as Clarkson College.

Although early pictures of Bishop Clarkson and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral do not display the Maltese Cross, the symbol's meaning and significance have played an integral part since the organization's earliest history. Clarkson School of Nursing and Clarkson Hospital began using the Maltese Cross in the early 1930s when nurses wore the symbol on their uniforms as they cared for patients.



## The Historical Significance of the Maltese Cross & the Knights of Malta

Searching for answers about the Maltese Cross led to world-renowned trauma surgeon Dr. Juan A. Asensio, FACS, FCCM, FRCS, (England) KM. Dr. Asensio is Professor and Vice-Chairman of Surgery for Creighton University College of Medicine, as well as Chief, Division of Trauma Surgery and Surgical Critical Care and the Director of the Trauma Center and Trauma Program at CHI Creighton University Hospital-Bergan Mercy in Omaha, Neb. In addition, he is a Professor of Surgery at the Uniform Services University of the Health Sciences Walter Reed/Bethesda Medical Center, known as "America's Military Medical School." He is also a modern-day Knight of Magistral Grace and soon-to-be Knight of Obedience of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta—as in the famous Knights of Malta. These warriors were monks, healers and protectors who adopted the Maltese Cross as their symbol.

An interview with Dr. Asensio revealed many historical facts about the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, which has a long history dating back to the first and all subsequent Crusades since the 11th century. "With 700 strong and 1,200 Spanish soldiers, the Knights defeated the Ottoman Empire, conquering their land, naval force and more than 50,000 elite soldiers," said Dr. Asensio. "It was the greatest siege of all military history."

Dr. Asensio explained that the triumphant outcome established the Knights to be known as the "Knights of Malta." "Subsequently, the Knights destroyed the Ottoman empire in the Battle of Lepanto, one of the greatest sea battles of all time. Spain's greatest writer, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, also fought in this conflict," said Dr. Asensio. "These battles preserved the sovereignty, culture and Christian religion in many European countries."

Originally, members of the Order were tasked with protecting the Christian faith and caring for pilgrims as they traveled to the Holy Land. Brothers from France, Auvergne, Provence, Castille, Aragon (Spain), Italy and England (Scotland and Ireland) joined other Knights from around the world. They dedicated themselves to healing the sick and wounded, regardless of race, religion or nationality. Drawing on inspiration from other healers of the time, the Knights performed their works while displaying the Maltese Cross, which became a symbol of hope and honor. Thus, the Order adopted the motto "Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum," which means "Protection of the faith and service to the poor."

"Our mandate was to defend the homeless, protect the weak and the poor, defend the Christian faith and be healers," Dr. Asensio



Renowned trauma surgeon and Knight of Magistral Grace  
Dr. Juan A. Asensio, FACS, FCCM, FRCS, (England) KM

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**“Our mandate was to  
defend the homeless,  
protect the weak and the  
poor, defend the Christian  
faith and be healers.”**

DR. JUAN ASENSIO

said. “Not all of the knights were physicians, but there were many. The Order had close partnerships with both Jewish and Arab doctors. As a matter of fact, the Order learned a lot from the doctors, many of whom were based in Syria.”

The Order’s works and mission are very much alive today and remain a constant presence in the world and its members’ lives thanks to representatives like Dr. Asensio. While its inner-workings are often shrouded in mystery, the Order currently has diplomatic relations and embassies in 107 countries. It has an enclave that is considered its own country and is located within their palace on the Aventine Hill in Rome and their offices in Via Condotti. The Order even issues their own passports, which are recognized by the vast majority of countries. They are still considered the Army of the Pope and are only subject to his Eminence.

Just like the Knights of old, Dr. Asensio devotes his life as a professor and trauma surgeon to bettering humankind and the never-ending search for peace. As a reminder of his calling and involvement in the Order, Dr. Asensio prominently displays Order of Malta flags in his office at Creighton University. The first flag is the Order’s symbol, a white Maltese Cross on a black background. Another is the U.S. Calvary flag, marking his service operating on the wounded during multiple conflicts. The final flag features a red background separated into four sections by a large white cross. This is the Order of Malta battle flag and can only be displayed after a member sees combat.

According to Dr. Asensio, there are less than 7,500 Knights of Malta in the world today. Receiving Knighthood is a tremendous honor that is offered by invitation only. Inductees

must demonstrate their integrity and willingness to go above and beyond their duty by performing works that greatly benefit society and complete the rigorous training required to receive Knighthood. Dr. Asensio and his fellow Knights, along with 80,000 volunteers and 25,000 Order of Malta employees, are active in 120 countries caring for people in need through medical, social and humanitarian works.

Dr. Asensio states that the Order conducts numerous projects, including clean water initiatives in underdeveloped countries, assistance in the aftermath of the Mexico earthquakes and support for Puerto Rico residents after Hurricane Maria. The only hospital operating in Syria's war zone is a Knight of Malta hospital. Their yearly pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France is a worldwide event to heal the sick.

Members of the Order display the Maltese Cross everywhere they go, and it remains a symbol of protection and a badge of honor. Their work builds upon the promises the Knights made centuries ago to provide service and care to anyone in need. The pledge remains alive today, and Dr. Asensio and his fellow Order members personify what it means to be compassionate health care providers.

"We're not here to judge," he said. "We cannot and will not discriminate, and we don't interfere with other country's politics. We are there to help, heal and protect people."

## Exploring the Past to Make Way for the Future

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While members of Clarkson College are still on a quest to determine when and why the institution adopted the Maltese Cross, meeting with Dr. Asensio offered insight into the symbol's rich historical significance. Just as the Knights of centuries past were united by a pledge of mercy and courage, Clarkson College students and alumni dedicate themselves to helping others and living out the College Values. The Maltese Cross serves as a continual reminder to draw inspiration from other healers, both past and present, as we commit to a lifetime of providing compassionate care.

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek for they shall possess the land.

Blessed are they who mourn for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice for they shall have their fill.

Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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The Beatitudes, Matthew 5:3-10

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*Each piece of information gathered about the past leads to a greater understanding of our role in today's world. If you have insight into the Maltese Cross and its history at Clarkson College, email Rita VanFleet at [vanfleetrta@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrta@clarksoncollege.edu).*

## College Welcomes New Directors to Service Departments

New leadership aims to continue the institution's successes by building upon the College Values

Every day, Clarkson College employees commit themselves to the Values of Learning, Integrity, Caring, Commitment and Excellence. It is this dedication that guides the community and draws new, inspiring leaders to the institution. In recent months, Clarkson College welcomed two new directors devoted to upholding the College Mission and preparing students to be the best.

### **DIRECTOR, ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

#### **Dr. Julie Taylor-Costello**

In August, Julie Taylor-Costello, Ph.D., joined Clarkson College as the Academic Success Director. Dr. Taylor-Costello has worked in higher education for 25 years in areas such as student services, academic affairs and service learning. Her diverse professional background prepared her for the position's various challenges.

"This position is a great fit for me because I like to be busy and work on many different projects," she said. "I love the challenge of bringing myself up to speed and learning new things."

As an undergraduate, Dr. Taylor-Costello attended Nebraska Wesleyan University and went on to earn her Master's degree at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. She jumped right into her higher education career upon graduation and realized several years later that she missed being a student. She enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where she earned her Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Higher Education, and she is currently working on a Master's degree in Counseling.

While the reputation for educating the best health care professionals drew her in, Dr. Taylor-Costello says the Clarkson College Values and Mission are what

really caught her attention. "The Clarkson College Mission and Values are very important to me because they align with my own," she said. "Not all colleges practice what they preach, but it is clear that here, the Clarkson College Values drive the Mission."

In her role as Academic Success Director, Dr. Taylor-Costello helps manage the Success Center on campus. She and her team provide Clarkson College students with resources such as counseling, tutoring, writing assistance and testing support. They also coordinate student retention, registration and orientation efforts as well as any other projects that come their way.

"As a team, our goal is to ensure that we always find new ways to offer students the best possible services," she said. "We want to help them succeed and stand out as students and health care professionals."

### **DIRECTOR, STUDENT FINANCIAL AID**

#### **Laura Thayer-Mencke**

Laura Thayer-Mencke was appointed Student Financial Aid Director in September, and she brings more than 17 years of experience to the position. Her knowledge prepared her for the role, and her dedication to helping motivated students makes her a perfect fit for Clarkson College.

After attending Wayne State College as an undergraduate and earning a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Thayer-Mencke joined the institution as a recruiter. She spent three years traveling the Nebraska countryside for the Admissions office. During her travels, she met Financial Aid officers from other institutions, and the



1 / Dr. Julie Taylor-Costello.

2 / Laura Thayer-Mencke.

encounters inspired her to explore the field. Eventually, she made the switch to Financial Aid and hasn't looked back.

"My entire career has been in higher education," she said. "When I first started, I didn't know much about Financial Aid, but it seemed like an interesting area that I wanted to explore further."

Clarkson College and its health care focus interested Thayer-Mencke right from the start. "I was intrigued by Clarkson College because I know that health care students are highly motivated and focused."

At the College, Thayer-Mencke and her team maintain compliance with federal and state financial aid regulations. They aim to provide efficient services while upholding a high level of excellence and integrity in all interactions. The team works every day to streamline processes while improving external and internal communications.

One of Thayer-Mencke's goals is to utilize the most up-to-date software in the Financial Aid office. "I want to make sure that we are using our software to its fullest extent," she said. "We need to take advantage of formal training opportunities and network with colleagues at other schools who are using the software."

According to Thayer-Mencke, achieving her goals comes down to providing excellent customer service to students and families. "Our goal in the Financial Aid office is to improve our processes so we are more efficient and effective," she said. "In turn, this will improve student experience and satisfaction."



## Connect at the Career Fair for Health Professions

Event aims to increase attendance while offering students and alumni more opportunities

The seventh annual Career Fair for Health Professions is Thursday, April 5 from 12:30–3 p.m. in Howard Hall on the Clarkson College campus. During the event, current students, recent graduates and alumni will connect with organizational representatives to learn about the different career opportunities health care has to offer.

Event organizer and Academic Outreach Liaison Jon Clay intends to offer something for everyone—from upcoming graduates searching for their first job to experienced professionals interested in a career change. Attendees will gain information about both entry-level and advanced positions and have the opportunity to network with other professionals.

"The Career Fair is one of the best opportunities for students and employers to connect with health care providers," Clay said. "We want to continue the event's success and maximize participation by attracting employers that our students want to meet."

Last year, more than 215 attendees networked with 50 organizations from the Omaha area and across the Midwest. Thanks to increased employer opportunities, organizers expect up to 60 businesses to attend this year. Clay is improving employers' experience by providing more premium booths that offer organizations a prime spot to maximize their exposure.

"I always want to leave employers with a great impression of Clarkson College," he said. "The improvements we've made in the Career Fair give us the opportunity to maximize employers' time while they are on campus."

Alumni are invited to attend the Career Fair for Health Professions as a participant or an exhibitor. If you would like more information or have questions regarding the Career Fair, contact Jon Clay at 402.552.2944 or [clayjon@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:clayjon@clarksoncollege.edu).



# Library Updates Improve Information Accessibility

Virtual resources and informative sessions assist students on and off campus

Accessing information in today's world is vastly different than it was in the past. Browsing the library card catalogue and checking out books is no longer a feasible option for many students. The Clarkson Service League Library team, led by Library Services Director Anne Heimann, M.S., AHIP, is keeping up with students' changing needs by leading the way to more accessible information.

Until recently, many Library resources at the College were only available in print and were difficult for part-time or distance students to access.

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"Rather than being completely separate, the Library should support what's happening in the classroom."

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To assist the College and its large distance population, the staff began looking for ways to make information easily accessible to people on and off campus. Their solution was to create a new website and virtual library. Journals, e-books, articles and approved databases are all available in one place on the new site. Users may also reserve study rooms, submit article or book requests and browse frequently asked questions about the Library.

Updating the site to meet students' needs is an on-going process. "It's very much a live site," Heimann said. "People access and use it every single day, so we're constantly making changes. As resources and technology advance, we'll continue to update and improve the site."

The Library staff also introduced Research Assistant Program (RAP) sessions in fall 2017. During these consultations, staff members walk students through the process of accessing information on the Library site. Participants develop skills to efficiently search databases, utilize proper search terms, refine database results and evaluate article sources.

The team has led more than 100 RAP sessions since the program's launch. According to Heimann, Clarkson College faculty ensured the program's success by including RAP sessions in their curriculum. Attending a RAP session is a course requirement in many classes, and Heimann hopes this will lead the way to more Library integration in the classroom. "We've had a great response to the RAP sessions," she said. "I think the program will continue to grow as more faculty begin to incorporate it into their courses."

Heimann's goal moving forward is to align the Library and its services with what faculty are teaching. "Rather than being completely separate, the Library should support what's happening in the classroom," she said. "Moving forward, we want to look at assessing our programs and finding out what impact we're having on students and their education."

# Caring Spirit Spreads Across Campus During Choose to Give

College employees give back to students through scholarship donations

Clarkson College employees have a daily opportunity to live out the Value of Caring as they interact with students and one another. Their compassion is even more apparent during the annual Choose to Give campaign held every fall. The fundraising effort invites employees to donate to the Alumni Association Endowed Scholarship Fund, and it demonstrates a commitment to supporting students as they pursue a health care education.

Employees went above and beyond this year by raising \$9,873 during the Choose to Give campaign in early November. These donations are combined with alumni contributions to fund scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students with strong academic abilities who demonstrate a financial need. Employees can make a tax-deductible donation in any amount, and the College applies 100 percent of the gift to the Scholarship Fund.

The Choose to Give campaign has raised more than \$68,000 since its creation in 2011. In appreciation of donations this year, all employees who contributed during the campaign received an additional casual dress day. Participants were also eligible to win one of four gift certificates valued from \$50 to \$200.

Employee participation in Choose to Give demonstrates a community-wide pledge to the Clarkson College Values. In every instance, staff and faculty strive to maintain an empathetic, compassionate and respectful attitude toward those they interact with, serve and lead. The Scholarship fundraiser allows employees to positively impact students as they focus on their academic efforts.

## Contribute to future scholarships

Donations to the Alumni Scholarship Fund are welcomed at any time throughout the year. It is an excellent way to recognize or memorialize someone while helping students meet the financial challenges of their college education. Donations may be sent to: Alumni Coordinator, Rita VanFleet, Clarkson College, 101 South 42nd Street, Omaha, Neb. 68131. Checks should be made payable to "Alumni Association Scholarship Fund."



## Providing Support & Sharing Seasonal Cheer

A recap of fall events throughout campus

### Study Hall Activities Help Ease Students' Stress

Finals week can be mentally draining and physically exhausting for many students. To offer support during this busy time, the Alumni Association sponsored study halls on Dec. 4–5 in Howard Hall. Approximately 105 students stopped in during the two-day period to complete homework, enjoy snacks and take a break from their long study sessions.

The highlight for most students was spending time with the therapy dogs from Love on a Leash. Canine visitors were there for one hour each day, and students had the opportunity to interact with them. A wide variety of dogs visited campus including an English lab, chocolate and yellow labs, a poodle, a Bouvier and a Rottweiler. They soaked up the attention and gave students some much needed stress relief.

### Halloween Brings Visitors to Campus

Each year, the College invites our neighbors, the children from the Family Place daycare center, to partake in trick-or-treating within the main building on campus. Mid-morning on Oct. 30, tiny children dressed as ghosts, bees, teddy bears, Frozen characters, police officers and a multitude of other unique, interesting costumes paraded through the College as employees filled their bags with Halloween goodies. The kids' excitement was infectious, and department members gathered on every floor to watch them. It was hard to tell who enjoyed the event more—those handing out the treats or those receiving them.

## December Capstone Project Summary

Each semester, Master's degree-seeking students complete Capstone projects that utilize the critical thinking skills, knowledge, strategies, theories and principles they learned during their time at Clarkson College. The result is a scholarly, evidence-based document that students present to their peers, College faculty and guests during a forum event.

An Alumni Association Board subcommittee and additional faculty members review the abstracts and rank them according to an established rubric. After the final presentations, Alumni Association Vice President Carla Dirkschneider presents certificates of merit to the top three students. During the fall semester, 44 Master's degree-seeking students presented their Capstone projects in Storz Pavilion at Nebraska Medicine on Dec. 8.

Samantha Curto earned first place for her abstract *Increasing Nurses' Knowledge to Communicate with Transgender Patients Seeking Health Care* (advisor Dr. Stephen Hardiman). Second place was awarded to Billie Theel for her abstract *Nursing Uniforms: A Forgotten Reservoir of Bacteria Contamination* (advisor Dr. Jane Langemeier). Kelly Tolley earned third place for her abstract *Incidence of Hospital Acquired Pressure Ulcers in Surgical Patients* (advisors Dr. Martha Sanders and Dr. Layna Himmelberg).

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### ***Increasing Nurses' Knowledge to Communicate with Transgender Patients Seeking Health Care by Samantha Curto***

It is estimated nearly 700,000 people identify as transgender in the United States (Gates 2011). Therefore, with or without realizing it, nurses could care for a transgender patient. Transgender patients have the right to receive

the same competent care as any other patient. However, transgender patients are a marginalized population that face health disparities related to social stigma, discrimination, lack of knowledge and the denial of basic human rights (Markwick, 2016). The purpose of this research was to determine if an in-service focused on caring for the transgender population improved nurses' knowledge in working with transgender patients. This study consisted of a pre-test/post-test descriptive study. Registered nurses at a local area hospital outpatient clinics were asked to participate in a pre-test, followed by an educational in-service and post-test. The data showed the average test score increased by 35 points with a P-value of 0.003. This rise in test scores implied nurses' knowledge did increase from the in-service about caring for transgender patients. Therefore, it would be important for nurses to receive formal transgender training in order to provide more culturally competent care to patients who identify as transgender. Ultimately, educating nurses about the challenges transgender patients face in the health care system could help remove barriers to care and create a safe, inclusive, supportive health care environment (Halloran, 2015). A major limitation to this study was the small number of participants (n=5). Therefore, future recommendations for a similar study would include offering the transgender education to a larger number of nurses.

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### ***Nursing Uniforms: A Forgotten Reservoir of Bacteria Contamination by Billie Theel***

In 2011, the incidence of hospital acquired infections (HAIs) was approximately 722,000 patients (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). One solution to decrease the

spread of HAIs to avoid harm, reduce death and decrease health care cost is appropriate laundering of the health care uniform, a primary source of contamination. Student nurses lack safe laundering knowledge of the nursing uniform. The research question posed was: "For the first-level student nurse, what is the effect of a nurse-led uniform care and laundering educational session on their awareness of the need to change the care of their student nurse uniform and home-laundering practices?" Following a synthesis of health care laundering literature and recommendations, the researcher created a PowerPoint presentation. The quasi-experimental design tested the effects of the PowerPoint presentation with a pre- and post-test survey of a Midwestern college first-level nursing student (N = 15) enrolled in a nursing fundamental course. Significant findings were a 35 percent change of the student nurse's uniform laundering knowledge (pre-test = 59 percent, post-test = 94 percent), and a t-test value of 8.1642 with a p = 0.0001. Implications for nursing education include inclusion of the laundering care of the nursing uniform as an infection control practice to the nursing curriculum. Implications for health care include recommendations for policy and procedure development to educate employees providing care in safe uniform laundering practices to prevent the spread of infection. Future research recommendations include exploring health care facility laundering of the health care uniform.

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### ***Incidence of Hospital-Acquired Pressure Ulcers in Surgical Patients by Kelly Tolley***

Hospital-acquired pressure ulcers are a significant problem in health care facilities all over the United States.

*continued on page 21*

## Graduate Capstone Projects

**CAREY BACZWASKI**

*Decreasing Pediatric Medication Errors: Comparison of Actual Pediatric Weight vs. Standardized Weight on the Broselow Tape*, advisor Dr. Aubray Orduña

**TABITHA BARNARD**

*Critical Care Nurses' Knowledge of Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia & Prevention Measures*, advisor Dr. Janet Henriksen

**KELLY BERG**

*Exploring Surgical Smoke Evacuation to Eliminate Respiratory Illness Symptoms in Operating Room Nursing Staff*, advisor Dr. Renee Ruhkamp

**CHELSEY BINKLEY**

*Increasing Safety & Security Awareness at a Free Medical Clinic in the Midwest*, advisor Dr. Mary Lynn Vogel

**LINDSEY BROIN**

*Knowledge Level of Nurses' Post-Heart Failure Education*, advisor Dr. Amber Wagner-Connolly

**JENNA DESOE**

*Assessment of Nurses' Understanding & Confidence Regarding Sepsis Recognition*, advisor Dr. Pam Holtz

**COLETTE EGBERT**

*Impact of Educational Intervention on Nurses' Knowledge of Pediatric Blood Draws*, advisor Dr. Ann Seckman

**ERIK EVANS**

*Bupivacaine Versus Bupivacaine Plus Fentanyl for Pain Control*, advisor Dr. Sophie Feng

**KATHERINE FRANCIS**

*Shared Technology Services Business Plan*, advisor William Koile

**MEAGAN FREML** *Use of Neuromuscular Blockade & Antagonism of Agents*, advisor Dr. Jayne Cromer

**ANGELA GEHERS**

*Reduction in Laboratory Test Overutilization Through Information Technology Controls Implemented in Physician Order Entry Systems & the Electronic Medical Record*, advisor William Koile

**MACHAELA GUINAN**

*Exploring Casey-Fink Graduate Nurse Experience Survey Results to Support New Graduates' Transition to Practice*, advisor Dr. Renee Ruhkamp

**AMANDA HACKFORT**

*The Contribution of the Quality of Nurses Work Environments in Patient Satisfaction*, advisor Dr. Mae Timmons

**TRAVIS HARGREAVES**

*The Efficacy & Safety of Epidural Anesthesia for Pain Management in Pediatrics with Osteogenesis Imperfecta Undergoing a Lower Extremity Procedure*, advisor Dr. Ann Glow

**AARON HOLVERSON**

*Postoperative Nausea & Vomiting: A Comparative Analysis of Antiemetic Treatments*, advisor Dr. Jayne Cromer

**SARAH INGRAHAM**

*Patient Adherence Prior to & After Nurse Care Coordinator Use of Diabetic Care Pathway Regarding Hemoglobin A1C Status: A Comparative Study*, advisor Dr. Mae Timmons

**AMY JACKSON** *Prevention of Inadvertent Perioperative Hypothermia*, advisor Dr. Sophie Feng

**JEREMY JENSEN**

*Assessment of Intravenous Fluid Volumes in the Prevention of Post-Operative Nausea & Vomiting*, advisor Dr. Ann Glow

**JEFFERY JOHNSON**

*Spinal Anesthesia: Efficacy of Ondansetron on Spinal Sympathectomy & Related Hypotension*, advisor Dr. Adrienne Rochleau

**SHELBY JOHNSON**

*Ondansetron & the Incidence of Hypotension Following Subarachnoid Block in Elective Cesarean Sections*, advisor Dr. Ann Glow

**DEANNA KAUP**

*Rural Nurses' Perception of Professional Work Quality of Life*, advisor Dr. Jane Langemeier

**CARRIE KEPHART**

*Perceptions of Full-Time Associate Degree Nursing Program Faculty About Barriers to Curriculum Revision: A Pilot Study*, advisor Dr. Liz Rogan

**MELISSA KLUTTS**

*Improving Emergency Room Throughput: Altering the Care Technician Role*, advisor Dr. Mae Timmons

**NANCY LAUGHLIN**

*Value Based Home Integration Care for Cardiac Patients: A Business Plan*, advisor Dr. Amy Clark

**WENDY LEVERING**

*Factors Influencing Student Selection of Nurse Anesthesia*, advisor Dr. Ann Glow

**JAMIE LOEFFLER** *The Clinic Expansion of Nebraska Medicine: Oakview Family Medicine*, advisor Justin Avery

**JESSICA LOTHROP** *Factors Affecting the Duration of Breastfeeding in the First Year Postpartum*, advisor Dr. Sue Haddock

**JUNE MYLER**

*Nurses' Perceptions of Skin Assessment Best Practice Effectiveness*, advisor Dr. Stephen Hardiman

**TRAM NGUYEN**

*Nutritional Diabetes Counseling & Patient Outcomes*, advisor Dr. Pam Holtz

**ALYSSA NOVOTNY**

*Daily Second RN Checks: Hospital Acquired Pressure Ulcer Prevention*, advisor Dr. Nina Wardell

**LAWANDA POSS**

*Interscalene Block Patient Education for Prevention of Postoperative Pain*, advisor Dr. Sophie Feng

**MARISSA SADOFSKY**

*EroMetis: Parent-Child Comprehensive Sex Ed Program*, advisor Brad Pfeifer

**ASHLEY SCHMIT**

*Fertility Preservation in Adolescent & Young Adult Oncology Patients*, advisor Dr. Layna Himmelberg

**KAYLA SILVUS**

*Nurses' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Utilizing Two Nurses Versus One Nurse in Changing a Central Line Dressing*, advisor Dr. Stephen Hardiman

## Keep in Touch

### We want to celebrate your life experiences and news.

The Clarkson College Alumni Association and your classmates want to hear about your career achievements, family updates and any personal or community pursuits. Class notes are published two times annually, and photographs accompanying submitted updates are always welcome.

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Submit your note to:  
Rita VanFleet  
101 South 42nd Street  
Omaha, Neb. 68131  
vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu

## In Memoriam

### JoAnn Rashleigh Lemons ('53)

Passed away peacefully on June 16, 2015 at Dunklau Gardens in Fremont, Neb.

### Edith LaVonne Kemper Scott ('53)

Died Jan. 8, 2018 at Westfield Quality Care in Aurora, Neb.

### Lois Marie Robertson Johnson ('54)

Died Nov. 16, 2017 in Neligh, Neb.

following an automobile accident. She was 83 and lived in O'Neill, Neb.

### Jeffery Dale Novak ('95)

Died Nov. 4, 2017 in Leawood, Mo.

### Renee Annette Danker Fox ('97)

Died Nov. 15, 2017 in Omaha, Neb. following complications from an automobile accident.

## 1970s

### Myrna Vasta ('74, '89)

I've had a 37-year career at Creighton University Medical Center working primarily in critical care. I was part of the team transitioning to the Bergan Mercy campus. I obtained my CCRN in 1982 and have maintained it converting to CCRN-K in 2015. Still love all I do in nursing.

### Mary Kay Jordan ('74)

I'm working as a Quality Management RN at the VA. I plan to retire in December.

### Jan McGrath ('77, '92)

I work with Maureen Carraher Haggerty who was my first roommate at Clarkson College in 1974.

## 1980s

### Jean Voege ('81, '84, '94)

Since completing my MSN in Nursing Education in 1994, I've taught in four associate's degree programs, including Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, Neb., Northwest College in Powell, Wyo. and Lane Community College in Eugene, Ore. Since August 2007, I've served as the Nursing Program Campus Coordinator for Des Moines Area Community College in Carroll, Iowa. In this capacity, I have faculty and administrative responsibilities. I've served on the Board of Directors of Manning Regional Healthcare Center in Manning, Iowa since 2014 as well as serving as the chairman for the Organization Committee for the Main Street Manning Project.

is married and lives in St. Louis. He is a Business Analyst for a re-insurance company. Kara is getting married in April. She is a Wellness Coordinator for Immanuel Assisted Living. Kyle is a senior at Nebraska Wesleyan majoring in Accounting and playing football. My husband and I spend our time traveling to Kyle's football games, working and volunteering. Roy and I are ambassadors for Omaha Performing Arts. We have been doing this for several years and enjoy it very much. So much to do and so little time to do it in. We enjoy our life as empty-nesters.

### Diane Milani Kuncl ('87)

I have been married for 30 years to my husband Roy, and we have three grown children: Adam, Kara and Kyle. Adam

### Susan Stogdill ('87)

We had our 40th wedding anniversary Sept. 3. We have two daughters and one grandson. I enjoy my work as CDE at University Clinic on 24th and Cuming Streets. I am thankful for the many opportunities I have had in nursing.

## 1990s

### Mary Dobleman ('94)

I volunteer as a parish nurse and am a volunteer nurse for MRC.

## 2000s

### Cynthia Privitera ('01)

I was widowed in 2003 and remarried Dec. 23, 2008. I have three grown children. Heather has a Bachelor's degree in Special Education and a Master's degree in English as a second language. She has four children aged 12–21 years old. She teaches the latter at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). She also teaches Special Education at Western High School and English to Hispanic parents of her public school students. My son Jeremy is Director of Radiology at Centennial Hills Hospital and teaches at UNLV. He has one son, 18. My son Adam is an electrician living in Seattle, Wash. He volunteers at Seattle Union Gospel Mission and has a 10-year-old daughter.

### Paula Schmidt ('04)

I am the manager for Northern Nevada Medical Center's medical surgical unit. The hospital is located in Sparks, Nev.

### Matt Pospisil ('06)

Matt Pospisil became a Midlands Community Foundation board member in December 2017. The non-profit organization assists with community development by improving Nebraska residents' quality of life. Matt is a vice president with Nebraska Medicine who leads the Nebraska Medicine-Bellevue hospital team.

## 2010s

### Shelby Keller Martens ('14)

Shelby and Tyler Martens of from Missouri Valley, Iowa, were married Oct. 14, 2017 at Hillside Christian Church in Blair, Neb. Shelby works at Memorial Community Hospital and Health Systems as a Radiologic Technologist and Diagnostic Medical Sonographer, and Tyler works at H & H Farms of Honey Creek.

## December Capstone Project Summary

*continued from page 19*

Not only do pressure ulcers cost the health care systems millions of dollars annually, but they also place the patient at risk for pain, morbidity and have staggering mortality rates. Little research has been conducted specifically on the type of mattress that would reduce the incidence of pressure ulcer formation intra-operatively. According to Primiano et al. (2011), the leading cause of an increased length of hospital stay among surgical patients is directly related to positioning in the operating room and subsequent pressure ulcer formation. The purpose of this research was to study surgical patients who were positioned in lithotomy and placed in trendelenberg for robotic procedures and analyze the relationship

between the utilization of the foam mattress or gel mattress during the procedure and the occurrence of skin breakdown over the course of their postoperative hospitalization. Findings indicate that the gel mattress was equivalent to the foam mattress for robotic procedures where the patient was placed in trendelenberg. This was demonstrated by none of the study participants acquiring pressure ulcers post-operatively. A larger study should be done, however, current recommendations would be that both the foam mattress and gel mattress are safe to use and do not cause an increase in pressure ulcers post-operatively.

## DECEMBER 2017

### Graduate Capstone Projects

**CE'ARA SPEARS** *Eastern Nebraska Long-Term Care Omabudsman Verses Call-Light Systems*, advisor Justin Avery

**JESSICA STANLEY** *An Educational Presentation for Nurses About Essential Oils Use in Patients with Dementia*, advisor Dr. Amber Wagner-Connolly

**ELIZABETH TAGGART** *Perceived Factors That May Enhance Parental Involvement in a Preoperative Visit Among Parents of Pediatric Patients*, advisor Dr. Amy Clark

**ADAM THIEL** *A Business Plan to Migrate to More Frequent Home*

*Hemodialysis*, advisor Ms. Carla Dirkschneider

**ANDREA VACHA** *Music as a Nonpharmacological Approach to Postoperative Pain Control*, advisor Dr. Katie Kirkpatrick

**MELISSA VERNON** *Mental Health Respite Center in Nebraska: A Business Plan*, advisor Justin Avery

**LUCAS WESCOAT** *Postoperative Analgesia for Total Knee Arthroplasty: Effectiveness of Intravenous Acetaminophen*, advisor Dr. Adrienne Rochleau

## Academic Honors

Academic honors are conferred on Bachelor of Science and Associate of Science degree candidates who, upon graduation, distinguish themselves by maintaining a high cumulative grade point average. To qualify for academic honors, a student must have completed the minimum required residency hours. Honors are distinguished as follows:

- \*\*\*\* Summa Cum Laude  
3.85 and above
- \*\*\* Magna Cum Laude  
3.75 through 3.84
- \*\* Cum Laude  
3.65 through 3.74
- \* With Distinction  
3.50 through 3.64

## Honor Societies

Honor societies at Clarkson College include:

- λ Member of Delta Chapter Lambda Nu National Honor Society for the Radiologic and Imaging Sciences
- † Member of Omicron Epsilon Chapter Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
- Σ Member of National Society of Leadership and Success Sigma Alpha Pi Interdisciplinary Honor Society

*Note: Honors designations were based upon current information at press time. Clarkson College apologizes for any errors or omissions.*

## Certificate in Imaging Informatics

Francis Y. Frimpong  
Kimberly Miller Σ\*\*\*\*  
Rebecca Moroney  
Jeanette Nava  
David E. Terry

## Certificate in Health Information Management

Gillian Howell

## Associate of Science in Health Information Technology

Sharon Colabello \*\*

## Associate of Science in Physical Therapist Assistant

Patricia Arant \*\*\*  
Lynae Y. Bell \*  
Taylor Culver \*\*\*\*  
Ashley N. Dorzweiler \*\*  
Ashley Amanda Frerichs Σ\*\*  
Hanna Marie Graham  
Toby Granados  
Sarah Hallberg Σ\*\*\*  
Kishara Delaun Hannah  
Heather A. Hansman Σ\*\*\*\*  
Megan C. Kallweit Σ\*\*\*\*  
Jayden Kauk Σ\*\*  
Briar Kinnan  
Hannah McKay \*\*\*\*  
Cameron Pullen \*\*  
Lindsey M. Ritzdorf  
Theresa Staley Σ\*\*\*\*  
Kaitlin BreAnn Walston  
Kathleen C. Zoucha Σ\*\*\*\*

## Bachelor of Science in Medical Imaging

Brennan D. Batien \*\*\*  
Kendra Lea Croghan Σ\*\*\*\*  
Shelby Ganseboom Σ  
Hannah Henderson  
Ashley Ann Konfrst  
Kimberly Miller Σ\*\*\*\*  
Windy Neola Mitchell  
Michelle Marie Molgaard \*\*\*\*  
Jeanette Nava  
Staci Rockwell \*\*\*\*  
David E. Terry  
Katelyn Trail

## Bachelor of Science in Health Care Business

Corey Christensen \*\*\*\*  
Robin Rane Poole Σ\*\*\*\*  
Sunny Reynolds

## Bachelor of Science in Health Care Services

Vanessa Woitaszewski \*\*  
Brooke Elizabeth Wolfe

## Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Nicole Albaugh  
Brianna Jean Barnett \*\*\*\*  
Ellen M. Brightweiser \*\*\*\*  
Melanie Crystal Delgado  
Brittanie K. Dobrovolsky  
Rachel Finnell Σ\*\*\*\*  
Hannah Jayne Fisher  
Hannah Anne Gamble Σ  
Ashley Renae Geddings  
Bethany C. Gerdes \*  
Alesha Lynn Graves \*\*  
Alyssa Harrer \*\*\*  
Shelby Mae Johnson Σ\*\*  
Anna E. Kitsmiller Σ  
Kalvin Krieser \*  
Eunjeong Lee †Σ\*\*  
Alexandria Looock Σ  
Sarah Ann Magill Σ\*\*\*  
Lydia Jean Martin Σ\*\*\*  
Mindi Martinez  
Michaela Ann Michalek  
Julia Moertl Σ  
Darrel Gene Moreland III \*\*\*\*  
Jamie O'Mara \*  
Lauren Brianna Pfeil Σ  
Megan Roberts \*\*\*  
Danielle Lynn Rose \*\*  
Rebecca Anne Rupiper  
Anna Salerno Σ\*\*  
Emily Schieffer Σ\*  
Taylor Sindelar  
Meagin Skutnik \*\*  
Megan Stroyek \*\*  
April Stultz-Kammerer Σ  
Michaela Sutton Σ\*  
Christen N. Taylor  
Nancy J. Theis \*\*\*\*  
Cassandra Kay Thompson \*  
Madalyn Rose Van Scoy \*\*\*  
Nicola Variano  
Nicole Marie Waters  
Rachel A. Wheeler \*\*

Andrea Rose Wild  
Cindy Mimi Yim \*\*\*\*  
Sydney F. Young \*

## Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Health Information Administration

Daniell Lynette Martinez

## Master in Health Care Administration

Katherine Francis  
Angela Elizabeth Gehers Σ  
Jamie Lynn Loeffler  
Cathy Kay Lowrey  
Marissa Sadofsky Σ  
Ce'Ara Spears Σ  
Adam John Thiel Σ  
Melissa Vernon

## Master of Science in Nursing

Carey A. Baczowski  
Tabitha Rae Barnard  
Kelly A. Berg  
Chelsy Rae Binkley  
Lindsey Gleed Broin  
Samantha June Curto  
Paislee Rayne Dalton  
Jenna Lee DeSoe  
Colette Egbert  
Michaela M. Guinan  
Sarah Ellen Ingraham  
Carrie J. Kephart  
Melissa Kay Klutts  
Jessica Xan Lothrop  
June Marie Myler †  
Tram Uyen Nguyen †  
Alyssa A. Novotny  
Ashley Michele Schmit  
Kayla Lyn Silvus  
Jessica Ann Stanley  
Elizabeth D. Taggart Σ  
Billie Theel  
Kelly Anne Tolley  
Andrea Vacha

## Master of Science in Nursing – Nurse Anesthesia

Erik Evans  
Meagan Ranae Fremi  
Travis J. Hargreaves  
Aaron Dean Holverson  
Amy Diane Jackson  
Jeremy Roger Jensen  
Jeffery R. Johnson

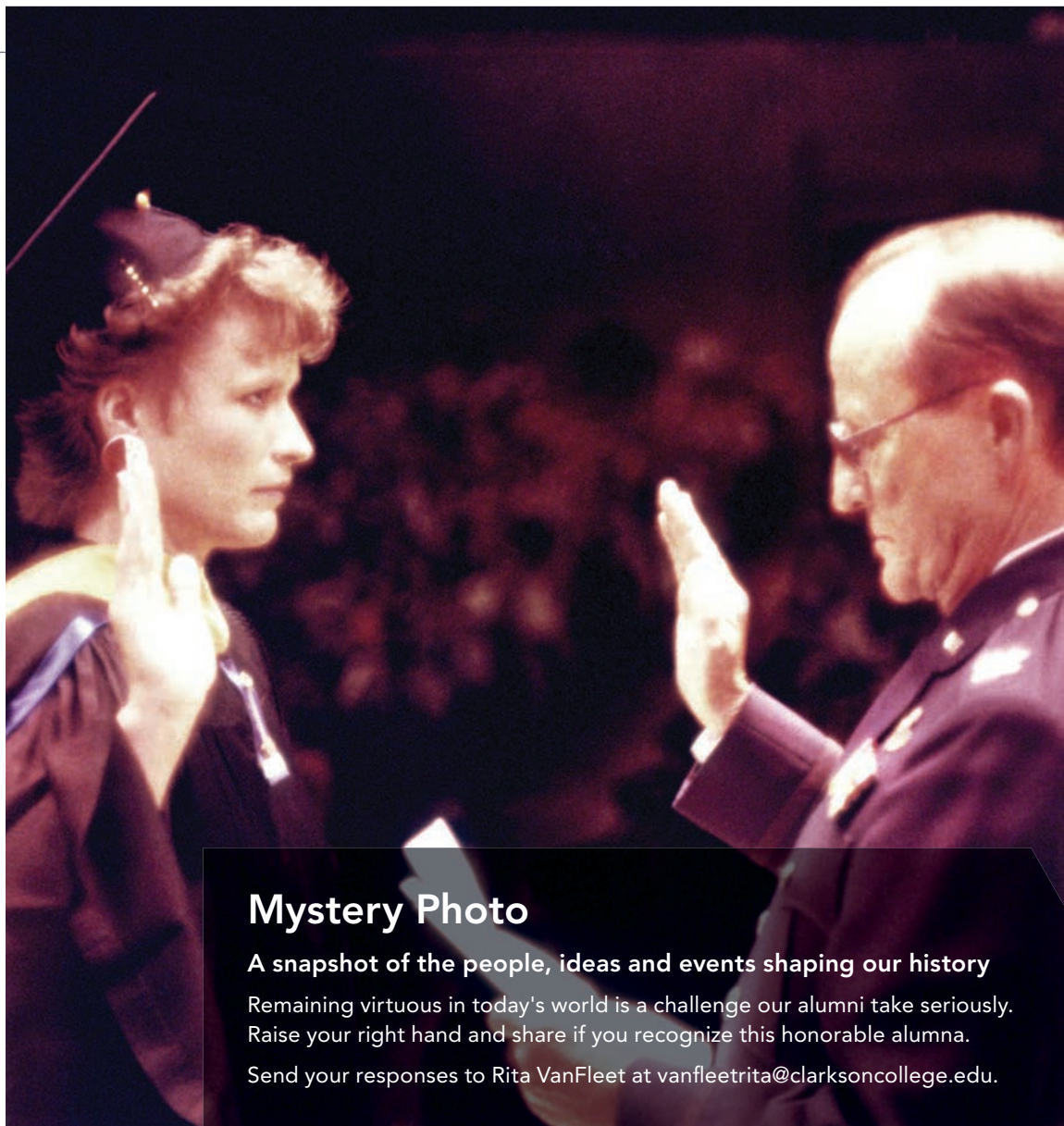
Shelby Marie Johnson  
Wendy Leigh Levering  
LaWanda Kaye Poss  
Lucas James Wescoat

#### **Post-Master's Certificate in Nursing**

Bryan Bader  
Revkah Balingit  
Maggie Marie Conley  
Hayley Elizabeth Heimes  
Linda Hensley Σ  
Laura Loewens  
Rebecca Joy McCallister

#### **Doctor in Health Care Education & Leadership**

Kathleen Anne Harnden



## **Mystery Photo**

**A snapshot of the people, ideas and events shaping our history**

Remaining virtuous in today's world is a challenge our alumni take seriously. Raise your right hand and share if you recognize this honorable alumna.

Send your responses to Rita VanFleet at [vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu).

#### **MYSTERY PHOTO REVEALED**

## **Gather Together**

For nearly 130 years, the College continues to be where the best gather. We bond, grow and forge lifelong friendships. This charming image captures classmates from '77, Julie Hines, Marilyn Miller and Teresa Wall.



#### **Marilyn Miller ('77, '86)**

Well, that's yours truly in the middle, and as you're looking at the photo, to the right is Teresa Wall. She now lives in Kearney, Neb. To the left, well, I have no idea.

On page eight of the issue—the first photo on the top left—that picture was taken by my dad, Bob Miller of Bob Miller Studio. He took a lot of pictures for grade schools, high schools and small colleges. He passed away four years ago at the ripe old age of 94.

#### **Janet Doty-Teten ('94)**

The nurse on the left is Julie Mayberry Hines ('77). She graduated from Hamburg High School in 1974. I have worked with Julie for years and grew up with her in Hamburg, Iowa. She is the oldest of six children. She is one of the most wonderful nurses I have ever had the pleasure of working alongside.



### Dirkschneider Named 40 Under 40 Award Winner

Program director honored for  
dedication to her profession

Alumni Association President Jen Anderson ('10) and Vice President Carla Dirkschneider ('07) celebrate the 40 Under 40 honor during the awards ceremony held Dec. 15.

Clarkson College alumna Carla Dirkschneider ('07), M.S., RHIA, strives to live life according to the Napoleon Hill quote, "If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way." With this motto guiding her, it is no wonder why the Clarkson College Health Care Business and Health Information Management (HIM) Director was selected as a 2017 Midlands Business Journal 40 Under 40 award recipient.

The 40 Under 40 award honors entrepreneurs, executives and professional men and women under the age of 40 in the Greater Omaha, Sarpy County and Council Bluffs area. Award winners must demonstrate strong leadership and management skills as well as a dedication to their profession. College leadership nominated Dirkschneider for her unwavering commitment to carrying out the Clarkson College Mission and Values.

"I am honored to be selected as a 40 Under 40 award winner," she said. "I feel blessed to work at Clarkson College

because I know that I could not achieve anything without the wonderful people around me."

Dirkschneider exemplifies the 40 Under 40 award through her dedication to improving the HIM field and educating new generations of health care students. "I try to put 100 percent into everything I do," she said. "If I see a need or something that requires improvement, I don't stop until I achieve what I want to do."

Growing up on a farm near Dodge, Neb., Dirkschneider knew early on that she wanted to pursue a health care career. "I chose the HIM field because it combined different topics that interested me, including accounting, business, science and computers," she said. "I wanted a career that would last for years, but also offered diverse job opportunities."

Dirkschneider earned a Bachelor's degree in HIM from College of Saint Mary in 2003. After graduation, she worked as a Coding Specialist at the Nebraska Medical Center until a former Clarkson College professor informed her of an open faculty position at the College. The teaching experience inspired a career that continues today.

"At that time, I was ready for a new adventure, so I applied," Dirkschneider said. "I love every minute of it, and I can hardly imagine going back to a practice setting."

In 2007, Dirkschneider earned a Master's degree in Health Care Business Leadership from Clarkson College.

# Scholarship Recognizes Students for Academic Integrity

Award brings awareness to academic excellence and Clarkson College Values

She served as the HIM Program Coordinator until 2008 when she became the Health Care Business and HIM Director. In her role, she oversees four Associate's, Bachelor's and Master's degree program options. Along with developing curriculum, she manages faculty, develops integrated marketing and strategic plans, and serves as advisor to more than 160 students.

Overseeing two academic programs does not stop Dirkschneider from volunteering her time. She joined the Clarkson College Alumni Association in 2008 and currently serves as its Vice President. As the National Society for Leadership and Success (NSLS) co-advisor, Dirkschneider provides professional leadership training to students. Last year, the NSLS recognized her outstanding achievements as a chapter advisor.

Beyond campus, Dirkschneider devotes herself to organizations that work to advance the HIM profession. She is an American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) and Nebraska Health Information Management Association (NHIMA) member. In 2017, she was an AHIMA Triumph Educator Award Nominee for Nebraska.

Dirkschneider and other 40 Under 40 award recipients were honored at an awards breakfast held Dec. 15 at Embassy Suites-La Vista Conference Center in Omaha, Neb.

As one of the five Clarkson College Values, Integrity plays an essential role in every student's life. To honor this Value, the Academic Integrity Education Committee partnered with the Alumni Association to establish the Academic Integrity Scholarship in fall 2016. Nursing student Madison Keysor was the summer 2017 recipient, and Physical Therapist Assistant student Theresa Staley was the fall 2017 recipient. Both exemplify what it means to maintain moral and ethical standards as students and future health care providers.

The award aims to increase academic integrity awareness and recognize students who demonstrate adherence to the College Value. Applicants must also have zero academic integrity violations on his/her record. The \$250 gift is available to undergraduate and graduate students during the fall, spring and summer semesters, and it is intended for academic expenses such as Board exam payments, certification fees, outstanding tuition or book costs.

To apply for the scholarship, applicants must submit an essay explaining what academic integrity means to him/her and how he/she best exemplify the College Value of Integrity. Keysor explained in her essay that integrity is essential in her personal life as well as her academic and professional career. "Here at Clarkson College, I have learned how to be a great nurse and how to be an outstanding person," she wrote. "The instructors help me develop communication and personal skills. They teach me values that help me professionally and personally."

Both Keysor and Staley agree that their time at Clarkson College influenced a lifelong commitment to integrity. Staley understands the importance of integrity in a constantly changing health care world. "I believe maintaining integrity means being open to new ideas," she said. "Our Clarkson College instructors inspired us to maintain academic integrity by constantly challenging us to come up with new ideas."

Like all Clarkson College students, both scholarship recipients understand that demonstrating integrity in their academic, professional and personal lives can help them develop other values. "My time here at Clarkson College has been exceptional," Keysor wrote. "I have developed into the person I always wanted to be. I not only exemplify Integrity in my personal and professional life, but I am now able to uphold the Values of Caring, Commitment, Learning and Excellence."

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"Our Clarkson College instructors inspired us to maintain academic integrity by constantly challenging us to come up with new ideas."

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# College Alumnae & Faculty Honored During March of Dimes' Annual Nursing Awards

Every fall, nurses in Nebraska and western Iowa are honored during the Nurse of the Year awards ceremony hosted by the March of Dimes, a national non-profit organization that works to improve the health of mothers and babies. The awards event celebrates nursing professionals nominated by their colleagues, managers, administrators and patients for demonstrating exceptional skills, leadership abilities and quality of care. During the Nov. 9 event, two Clarkson College community members earned recognition for their outstanding work.

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### Anisa Hoie, Nurse of the Year

The March of Dimes presented Clarkson College alumna Anisa Hoie ('87) with the organization's highest annual honor, Nurse of the Year. With nearly 35 years'

experience, Hoie characterizes what it means to provide compassionate care for her patients.

Hoie began her education at Nebraska Methodist College and graduated from Clarkson College with a Bachelor's degree in Nursing in 1987. She has worked at Children's Hospital & Medical Center in Omaha, Neb. for the last 30 years caring for children with cancer in the Hematology and Oncology unit.

Hoie began her career at Children's on a general surgical floor where she met children with cancer before they underwent surgery. When a position opened in the Hematology and Oncology unit, she decided to care for the children as they went through the treatment process. Hoie's dedication has allowed her to watch patients grow up, walk alongside them during their journey and learn countless lessons from the children in her care.

"I've learned so much about life from the kids," she said. "They taught me not to sweat the small stuff and how important it is to find the good in all things."

Her willingness to learn from her patients is one of the many reasons why Hoie earned the Nurse of the Year Award. Recipients epitomize nursing excellence, and nominees must practice extraordinary care, participate in community service and demonstrate outstanding leadership skills. Through her work, Hoie encourages her fellow nurses and all health care professionals not to let fear prevent exceptional care.

"The biggest thing I tell other nurses is not to be afraid to give of themselves,"



Alumna Anisa Hoie ('87), 2017 Nurse of the Year award recipient. Nursing Instructor and alumna Kassie McKenny ('07) at the Nov. 9 awards ceremony.

she said. "I think sometimes new nurses are afraid of that, but when you give of yourself, the reward is overwhelming."

Hoie lives by this advice and says it has led to a fulfilling and rewarding career. "Nursing is not just a job for me," she said. "It's truly a passion. I've gained so much over the years and feel truly blessed to have worked in this area for so long."

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#### **Kassie McKenny, Academic Excellence Award**

Clarkson College faculty relentlessly pursue academic excellence and encourage their students to do the same. Nursing Instructor and alumna Kassie McKenny ('07) was recognized by the March of Dimes for her devotion to academia and was presented the Academic Excellence Award during the Nov. 9 awards ceremony.

Surrounded by some of the most gifted and accomplished nurses in the area, McKenny felt humbled when she won the award. "It was very unexpected," she said. "Especially since I was in a room with so many incredible nurses."

The Academic Excellence Award honors a nursing instructor who demonstrates distinction in education, conducting research or providing practice expertise to nursing students. Eligible nominees must work as an instructor in an academic setting for at least five years. Award winners must promote a positive nursing image, exhibit strong leadership skills and exemplify an extraordinary level of care and compassion.

These values have been apparent since McKenny's earliest days as a nurse. She began her career at the Nebraska Medical Center and quickly realized that education was her true calling after interacting with new graduates and students on her assigned floor. McKenny joined the College in 2004 after a faculty member recommended she apply for an open teaching position. "It ended up being the perfect fit for me," she said.

For McKenny, every day brings opportunities to interact with passionate nursing students. The Academic Excellence Award is a testament to her desire for educating future health care providers. "This award supports all the work that I do to educate tomorrow's nurses," she said. "It also inspires me to continue dedicating myself to modeling excellence as a nurse educator."



PTA graduates during the December pinning ceremony.

## **PTA Program Graduates 500 Health Care Professionals**

In 2014, the Clarkson College Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program celebrated its 20 year anniversary. The program recently celebrated another achievement as the 500th PTA graduate received her diploma during graduation on Dec. 9. Faculty, students and guests recognized the 500th graduate and the program's graduating class during the pinning ceremony held Dec. 8. The pinning tradition honors students as they complete their academic careers and welcomes them into the health care profession.

Established in 1994 with 16 students, the Clarkson College PTA program is now the largest of its kind in Nebraska and the third in the United States to offer a Bachelor of Science degree option. The department's seven faculty members have been practicing collectively for more than 80 years and educating future PTAs for more than 50 years. The program has continued evolving to meet the changing needs of PTA professionals, establishing it as one of the most reputable, respected programs in the region.

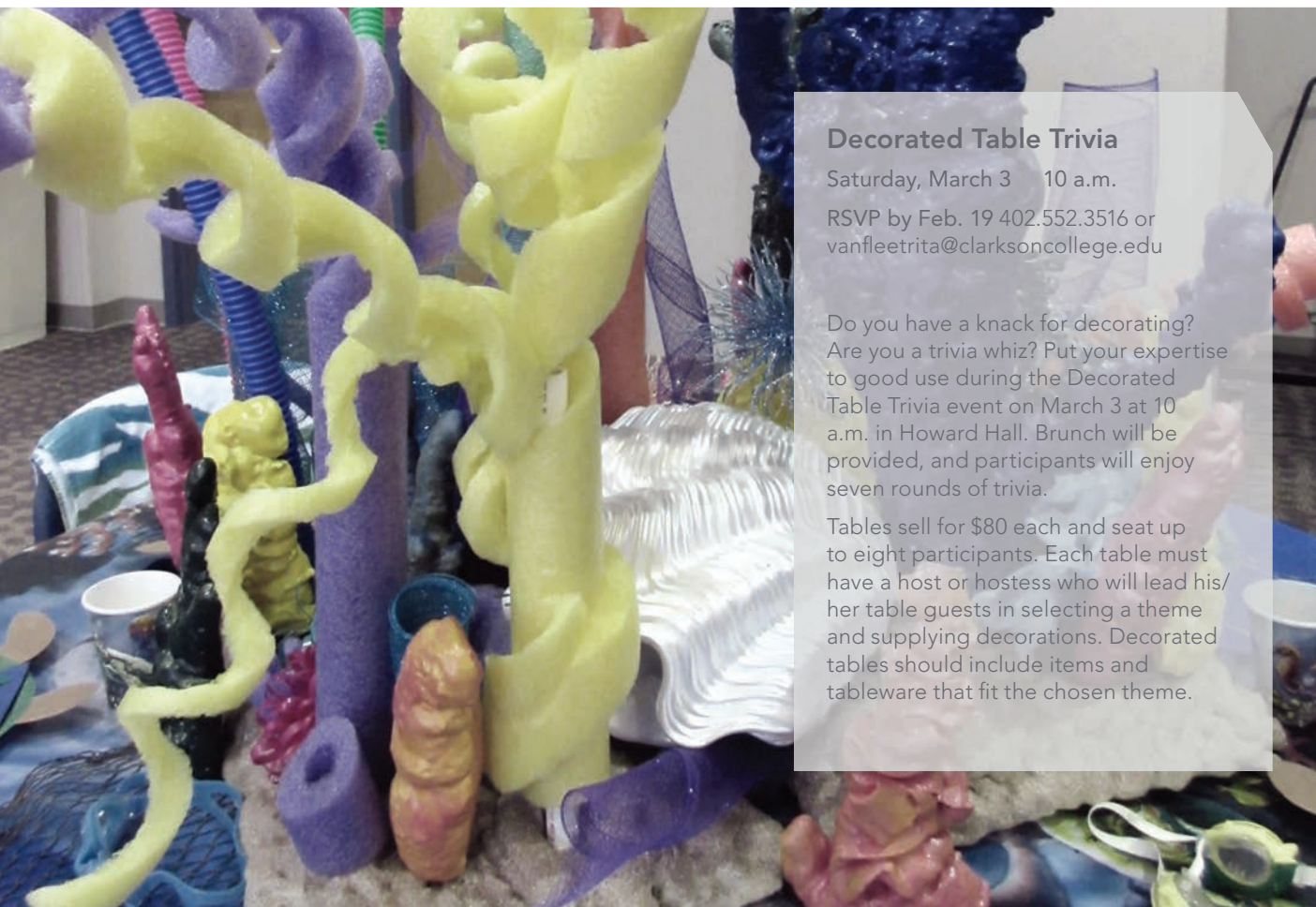


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### Decorated Table Trivia

Saturday, March 3 10 a.m.

RSVP by Feb. 19 402.552.3516 or  
[vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu)

Do you have a knack for decorating?  
Are you a trivia whiz? Put your expertise  
to good use during the Decorated  
Table Trivia event on March 3 at 10  
a.m. in Howard Hall. Brunch will be  
provided, and participants will enjoy  
seven rounds of trivia.

Tables sell for \$80 each and seat up  
to eight participants. Each table must  
have a host or hostess who will lead his/  
her table guests in selecting a theme  
and supplying decorations. Decorated  
tables should include items and  
tableware that fit the chosen theme.