

# Nursing Progress Report

CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY

2021-2022

## Creating a Pathway for Research Excellence





The *College of Nursing Progress Report* is published by the Creighton University College of Nursing for alumni, students, faculty and friends.

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 Creighton College of Nursing

# College of Nursing

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From left, Martha Todd, PhD, MS'07, APRN-NP; Mandy Kirkpatrick, PhD, BSN'05, RN; and Meghan Potthoff, PhD, BSN'01, APRN-NP.

Photo by Dave Weaver

## Message from the Dean

**I AM PLEASED TO SHARE** with you highlights from the College of Nursing in our annual *Progress Report* magazine. At the time of publication, we received news that the state of Arizona will invest \$6 million to build out our health sciences campus in Phoenix and add more nursing students. The investment from the state of Arizona will add classroom space for a third cohort so Creighton can graduate another 60 nursing students a year. Creighton is committed to Arizona and plans to continue to graduate nurses for the state for years.

Among other good news, the College of Nursing received notification from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) that all four of our programs, BSN, MSN, post-grad certificate and DNP, received a full 10-year accreditation, and that all standards were met with no compliance concerns. And thanks to our outstanding faculty and commitment to meet learners where they are, Creighton ranked No. 43 for best nursing program out of 694 institutions in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*.

I also want to take this opportunity to share that on July 1, 2022, we welcomed the Department of Paramedicine to the College of Nursing. This change will allow us to collaborate and develop interprofessional opportunities where we have obvious curricular intersections, such as in the emergency department or ICU. Creighton's Paramedicine program, previously Emergency Medical Services, has been in operation since 1974. It offers an innovative education that includes programs for degrees, certifications and continuing education. I look forward to sharing stories from paramedicine in the years ahead.

I hope you will enjoy reading in these pages about the research and scholarly pursuits of faculty, the awards and accolades they are garnering, the interesting educational models they are using and the



impact they have on students. Those students become alumni who go on to accomplish much in life as you will read about here.

Lastly, I am truly appreciative of all of our faculty and staff — and alumni — for all you do to advance the health and well-being of people everywhere. The College of Nursing continually strives to recognize the important role you play in health care and encourages our alumni as they live their calling. In the spirit of encouragement, we offer a monthly prayer series created specifically for our nursing alumni. Text PRAYER to 402.566.5048 to sign up.

Thank you for being part of Creighton.

**CATHERINE TODERO, PHD, BSN'72, RN, FAAN**  
Dean and Professor of Nursing  
Vice Provost of Health Sciences Campuses



## Join Our Faculty

Creighton nursing is hiring special (temporary) faculty as well as permanent faculty positions on our three campuses. Current open positions are posted on the Creighton Human Resources website, [creighton.edu/hr](http://creighton.edu/hr). Click on the "Search Careers" tab. If you have an interest in teaching and want to learn more, please contact Human Resources at 402.280.2709 or [hr@creighton.edu](mailto:hr@creighton.edu).

In addition to faculty positions, we are seeking professionals who can act as and offer preceptorships for our graduate students. For more information about preceptorships, contact Nancy Bredenkamp, PhD, BSN'92, MS'03, APRN-FNP, assistant professor and assistant dean of graduate programs for the College of Nursing, at [nbredenkamp@creighton.edu](mailto:nbredenkamp@creighton.edu) or 402.460.5826.





DAVE WEAVER



# Game-Changer

New O'Brien Chair revises game-changing nursing assessment tool

BY EUGENE CURTIN

**IN 2008, MARTHA TODD, PHD, MS'07, APRN-NP, HAD AN IDEA.** That idea has since spread the name of Creighton University and its College of Nursing throughout all 50 states, across 32 nations and has been translated into 16 languages, including Chinese.

Fourteen years later, it's time for an update, and perhaps a slightly more entrepreneurial approach to a tool that at its creation seemed no more than a comradely contribution to nursing education.

The Creighton Competency Evaluation Instrument, or C-CEI, is basically a single-page checklist in which the skills students must master to prove competence in nursing are distilled into four categories and 22 nursing behaviors.

Todd, who was recently named the O'Brien Endowed Chair in Health Sciences at Creighton, says the C-CEI was born just as technologically advanced mannikins were enhancing the role of simulation in nursing education.

It seemed to her, and to Julie Manz, PhD, BSN'98, MS'05, RN, who was also present at the creation, that while these sophisticated mannikins provided a transformative experience in an environment where mistakes could safely be made, there existed no reliable method for assessing how well students were learning their lessons. Thus was born the C-CEI and its concise single-page assessment.

"What Martha really envisioned was a broader way to assess nursing student performance using all the things that nurses do," Manz says.

"There is a lot more to assessment than just proving your ability to insert an IV. For example, taking in all the data when you walk into a room, communicating and interacting with other providers, interacting with the patient and with the family. Critical thinking. How do we use our reasoning to solve problems with the patient and help the patient get to the other side of this? All these skills need to be assessed."

And all this, the single-page C-CEI did, checking a "1" when competency was demonstrated and a "0" when it was not. Knowing that they were being graded on their interactions with the mannikins did wonders for student concentration, Manz says.

An article describing what Todd and Manz call their "instrument" was promptly published in the *International Journal of Nursing Education and Scholarship*, and the two women considered their duty done.

"Then it blew up," Todd recalls. "They reached out to us from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, which is the bigwig of nursing where everybody goes to get licensed."

The council was trying to understand the degree to which simulation could replace direct clinical experience with real patients on actual hospital wards. They wanted to use the C-CEI to

conduct a major national survey, which resulted in 30,000 uses of the tool.

"So, our instrument became a big player in the area of policy formation on the national level," Todd says.

Skip now to 2022 and nursing education is moving toward competency-based assessment, defined by the National Institutes of Health as "the knowledge, skills, ability and behaviors that a person possesses in order to perform tasks correctly and skillfully."

"Well, lo and behold, our Creighton competency instrument can assess student performance," Todd says. "So, we think we are rolling into a perfect storm."

Still, given that 14 years have elapsed since Todd, Manz and their team first launched the C-CEI, and given that the American Association of Colleges of Nursing now identifies 240 competencies that must be demonstrated by nursing graduates, Todd and Manz say the C-CEI is feeling "dusty" and needs both updating and a greater technological sophistication.

"We are in the midst of building a C-CEI app," Manz says, "and we would like to maintain a website where we can post updates and training videos. The instrument is so different from other training tools that it really needs a robust training cycle."

But that will take money, and profit was not a consideration when Todd and Manz first launched their creation.

"We had no idea that anybody would be interested," Manz says. "So, we never did address things like copyright or intellectual property or licensing. We learned all these lessons along the way because we just didn't know any better."

"None of us were in it for money, and we didn't expect that it would take off the way that it did. We're still not interested in making money, but we are interested perhaps in charging something so that we can at least maintain an app or a website, to keep things moving forward."

And, of course, being teachers first and last, Todd and Manz hope to structure their revised C-CEI so that nurses or nursing institutions that purchase it might receive continuing education credits for mastering its use.

"You know, education is typically not well funded, and so while we recognize that we have a good product, we need revenue to take it to a different level," Todd says.



**"What Martha really envisioned was a broader way to assess nursing student performance using all the things that nurses do."**

JULIE MANZ, PHD, BSN'98, MS'05, RN





# Discovering a Passion for Research

Inaugural holder of the Keough Family Endowed Chair finds that research goes hand in hand with her roles as clinician and professor

BY MICAH MERTES

**COLLEGE OF NURSING FACULTY** are increasingly known as much for their research experience as their clinical practice. Case in point: Meghan Potthoff, PhD, BSN'01, APRN-NP.

Potthoff — an associate professor of pediatric nurse practice and research — has centered her career on offering the best possible care to children and their families. Though her roles as clinician, professor and researcher now go hand in hand, her path to the latter was an unexpected one.

"If you would have told me when I was an 18-year-old nursing student that I would one day be a faculty researcher, I would have laughed," says Potthoff, who is also a nurse practitioner with the pediatric hospitalist group at Children's Hospital and Medical Center in Omaha.

At first, her only aspiration was clinical practice. But then, over the years, she saw a lot of problems, many methods in need of improvement — particularly in the area of pediatric palliative care.

"As a young nurse, I saw many deaths of children," Potthoff says. "In a lot of cases, we were trying to fit these children into an adult model of palliative care, and it wasn't working very well. It was clear we needed new ideas and better models to fit the needs of the children and their families."

The foundation of Potthoff's research rests on the very questions she's asked herself as a nurse practitioner: *How do we provide better care? How can we reach more people? How could technology or altered models help us provide services in underserved areas?*

Potthoff focused her doctoral research on developing an intervention to help parents of children with a life-threatening illness determine their priorities. The result was a card game called *Go-Wish Pediatrics*.

The game — which includes about 50

prompts — is intended to work like a lighthouse in a fog, helping parents navigate their feelings, fears and hopes in a difficult time. The game, Potthoff says, helps parents ask questions they might otherwise have trouble even asking themselves.

Questions like: *Should I be worried to leave my child's bedside? Is it wrong for me to stress about my finances when my child is going through this? How do I even begin to talk about my child's death?*

The game works like a microcosm for all of Potthoff's research — helping children and families articulate their needs and responding to them. Letting patients inform how best to care for them.

In addition to the life-changing impact such faculty research can have for patients, there's a clear benefit to students as well.

Potthoff says the College of Nursing's increased emphasis on research won't detract from the quality of education faculty provide. Quite the opposite, in fact. Better research means better education. Potthoff, for instance, plans to include students in her own projects.

"It's important for our students to see faculty doing research because it's important for them to think about things on a larger scale," Potthoff says.

"The College of Nursing provides an environment that truly fosters innovative teaching and research. We're training the kinds of professionals and seeking the kinds of solutions that could change the face of health care."

And for nursing students *not* interested in research? Give it some time. You never know.



## The Keough Family Endowed Chair

**THIS SPRING, MEGHAN POTTHOFF** was installed as the inaugural holder of the Keough Family Endowed Chair, the first endowed chair intended solely for the College of Nursing.

"There couldn't be a better first person to hold the Keough Family Endowed Chair," says Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN'72, RN, FAAN, dean of the College of Nursing and vice provost of Health Sciences Campuses.

"Meghan is an exceptionally knowledgeable and empathetic nurse who cares for the entire patient and their family. As a provider, an educator and a researcher, she is the complete nursing professional."

Creighton's 46th endowed chair was created by a gift from Kathy Keough Soto, BSN'75, and Gilbert Soto, BA'72, the Donald and Marilyn Keough Foundation and Michael Keough, in honor of Kathy and Michael's parents, Don, BS'49, HON'82, and Marilyn Keough.

Potthoff says the Keoughs' gift will allow her to dedicate more hours to research in pediatric palliative care. Over the past few years, she has received multiple honors helping her to expand her research.

Potthoff was named the first Lenke Scholar for the College of Nursing's Center for Faculty, Innovation, Research and Education (FIRE). She won the prestigious Cambria Sojourn Leadership Award for her work. Along with associate professor Mandy Kirkpatrick, PhD, BSN'05, RN, Potthoff received a Haddix grant to increase education, research and practice related to palliative care.

▲ From left, Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN'72, RN, FAAN, Kathy Keough Soto, BSN'75, and Meghan Potthoff, PhD, BSN'01, APRN-NP.





From left, Hannah Sefton, BSN'22; Mandy Kirkpatrick, PhD, BSN'05, RN; Michelle Theobald, BSN'22; and Andrew Nguyen, BSN'22.

# ◆ *Making a Plan:* **Kirkpatrick Named Brooks Scholar** BY BLAKE URSCH

**IF YOU ASK MANDY KIRKPATRICK, PHD, BSN'05, RN,** conversations about end-of-life care need to begin far earlier than they often do. For both patients and health care providers.

“We’re so focused on saving lives that, often, talking about death is sort of taboo, and we’re still struggling to get comfortable with those conversations,” Kirkpatrick says.

Kirkpatrick, an associate professor in the College of Nursing, has spent much of her career contemplating death and dying. As a recipient of the prestigious Josiah Macy Jr. Faculty Scholars Program and Jonas Nurse Leader Scholarship, Kirkpatrick has developed innovative approaches to palliative care education.

Now, Kirkpatrick has been named a Brooks Scholar, with funding provided thanks to a generous donation from Ella Stradinger Brooks, PhD, BSN'81. The funding comes as part of the College of Nursing’s Center for Faculty, Innovation, Research and Education (FIRE), a virtual center for clinical nursing research improvement spearheaded by Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN'72, RN, FAAN, dean of the College of Nursing and vice provost of Health Sciences Campuses.

The Brooks gift will fund a portion of Kirkpatrick’s time as she works on her latest project. Alongside co-principal investigator Meghan Potthoff, PhD, BSN'01, APRN-NP, associate professor in the College of Nursing, Kirkpatrick is working to establish an interprofessional clinic at Creighton in which students and expert faculty from across disciplines will work with Nebraska patients on planning for the end of their lives.

Initially funded by a Haddix grant, the project, called

INTERACT, would bring together Creighton experts in law, dentistry, business and other disciplines to establish a clinic where students work with aging Nebraskans on advance care planning (ACP), in which patients make treatment decisions prior to a serious diagnosis. As a Brooks Scholar, Kirkpatrick will have a portion of her time funded as she pursues additional grants and funding opportunities to grow the project.

“When you envision your death, you probably aren’t thinking, ‘I would like to die in a hospital on a ventilator after rounds and rounds of CPR,’” Kirkpatrick says. “You’d want to die in a place that’s comfortable to you, surrounded by the people you love. And you’d want the people that you love to understand what your wishes are.”

The problem, Kirkpatrick says, is that most people don’t want to discuss scenarios like this until it’s too late. Kirkpatrick and her colleagues on the project have found that though 92% of Nebraskans want their treatment wishes to be known when they die, only 1-in-3 have documented what they want their end-of-life care to look like. Nebraskans, she says, are far more likely to engage in estate planning than advance health care planning.

Without that documentation, Kirkpatrick says, distraught loved ones are likely to tell health care providers to do whatever it takes to keep the patient alive, regardless of how it will impact the patient’s final moments.

So far, Kirkpatrick and the team have been holding focus groups to find out what advance care planning resources are already available to aging Nebraskans and identify programming needs at Creighton so that the University is equipped to handle the problem.

“With a program like this, we’re preparing our learners with professional practice, and giving them real-life experience in having these conversations,” Kirkpatrick says. “In the proposed clinic, we hope students from across the University will have the chance to engage with faculty who are already experts in the areas of law, business and health care, and give them the opportunity to provide a community service, working with aging Nebraskans who will benefit from making these decisions early on.”



## **Brooks Makes Generous Donation to College of Nursing**

**MANDY KIRKPATRICK’S RESEARCH** on advanced care planning is possible through the generous donation of Ella Stradinger Brooks, PhD, BSN'81. In addition to funding the Brooks Scholar, Brooks is making an estate gift that will eventually establish an endowed chair for the College of Nursing.

Brooks, who retired in 2016 after a career in clinical nursing and nursing education administration, says she was initially drawn to attend Creighton because it was one of the few institutions that offered an accelerated program.

“It was a great experience in every aspect. I could not come up with one negative experience,” she says of her time attending Creighton. “It seems like whenever I think back on education, Creighton is always top of mind. The faculty were great role models and really knew how to tailor the experience to maximize preparation for practice and lifelong learning. Faith in God was incorporated in clinical practice and healing.”



Brooks

Brooks credits one faculty member in particular, Elizabeth Furlong, PhD, JD'00, RN, associate professor emerita in the College of Nursing, for planting the seed that eventually blossomed into her future career. Furlong recommended Brooks pursue a doctorate, which she did, earning her PhD from the University of Tennessee after first receiving her Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Central Arkansas.

With her husband, Daniel, in the Air Force, Brooks practiced nursing in several large medical centers, primarily cardio-pulmonary units, as the couple relocated. After earning her PhD, she began her career in nursing education working in faculty and administrative positions. Though retired, Brooks still works part-time with various development projects.

She has chosen to donate to Creighton, she says, out of a desire to honor her husband’s memory and give back to an institution that she credits for helping her grow personally, professionally and spiritually.

“First and foremost is my faith in God that is still endorsed by Creighton,” she says. “Prior to my husband’s death, we had discussed setting up our estate to support education and nursing. I have a heart for nursing faculty development, as our programs are only as good as the faculty we have to develop them. Creighton’s nursing school is committed to its faculty, and that aligns with my goals.”

“I’m donating,” she says, “to honor my husband’s memory and also giving according to faith, goals and purposes.”



# Simulation Delivers Dose of Reality

BY EUGENE CURTIN

**WHEN THE PHONE** slammed down, a nursing student learned a life lesson.

“The student was totally shocked,” says Nancy Shirley, PhD, RN. “She said, ‘She hung up on me.’ Yep, that’s exactly what someone would do when you are telling them when you are coming into their home, and they say it’s not the right time.”

Students must understand, Shirley says, that patients being treated at home are always in charge.

“This is not a room where you have just stripped them of all their clothing, and you’ve put them into a sterile environment in a hospital setting, and you can do whatever you want whenever you want. This is their home,” she says.

Shirley, who recently retired and is a former associate professor of nursing at the Creighton University Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix, helped guide the nursing program’s simulation program, which employs mannikins so sophisticated they can cry, give birth, and emit internal sounds that emerging nursing students learn to recognize and understand.

The program also features “standardized patients” — actors playing the part of patients, or perhaps the parents of patients. In all cases, these substitutes for the real thing help students absorb the do’s and don’ts of patient care before entering the room of a real patient in a real hospital setting.

The “patient” who hung up on the nursing student was Shirley herself, playing an elderly woman who was unable or

unwilling to have a nurse visit her with just five minutes notice. She needed 90 minutes notice, she says, and hung up when the nursing student persisted.

In reality, both student and professor were in the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Health Sciences Building in Phoenix, where simulated home visits are conducted in an apartment specially reserved for the purpose.

“Experiencing simulated home visits in such a realistic space is important,” Shirley says. “One of the things that we know is desperately needed in nursing education is learning how to talk to people. You need to know how to ask questions, how to decrease patient anxiety, so we do some of that with role-playing.”

All told, Shirley says, Creighton has invested in simulation training.

“We have a state-of-the-art simulation program here,” she says. “We have mannikins that can give birth. We have child mannikins that can produce tears. We have high-fidelity simulated body parts — whether it’s just an arm or some other part of the body — just really a cream-of-the-crop program.”

Lea Ann Palmer, RN, MSN, coordinator of Creighton’s nursing simulation lab in Phoenix, says the mannikin program is indeed highly sophisticated.

“We have some very high-tech, high-fidelity mannikins for all disciplines to practice on,” she says. “We have a lot of technology available to us. All of our debrief rooms are outfitted with a screen and the ability to watch simulation.”

The repetition that high-fidelity

High tech mannikins and human actors put Creighton’s nursing simulation in Phoenix on the cutting edge

mannikins permit is invaluable, Palmer says.

“Students can see when they have made a mistake, or done something wrong, and then redo it, and redo it, and do it again and again and again, so that they build up the muscle memory, which really is the best way for them to learn a lot of their skills and habits.

“They don’t really get that in a clinical setting.”

Nor is it always just about the mannikin/patient, Palmer says.

“In pediatric care, the mannikin can be the child, but a standardized patient — a real person — will play the parent and give my students feedback on what it was like to be the parent, explain how they were made to feel, how well the child was cared for.

“These standardized patients are a great resource. They give our students feedback they can’t get from the patients they will care for in a hospital. Simulation gives our students valuable experience before they care for real patients.”

The home-visit simulations are especially valuable, Shirley says.

“When you have high-tech mannikins and then also standardized patients, you’ve got the best of both worlds,” she says. “With the mannikin, you cannot hurt anybody, and with the standardized patients, you have communication.

“People, after all, spend only a very little bit of their time in a hospital. They spend much more time in their workplace, their school place or their home. So, performing a simulated home visit in an on-site apartment is a very useful tool.”



**Top left:** Hannah Darling, BSN’21, performs a tracheostomy suctioning simulation in the task-training lab with former faculty member Nancy Shirley, PhD, RN.

**Top right:** Keara Knox, BSN’21, works with a standardized patient in a home care simulation, going over medications in the home care laboratory.

**Middle left:** Amy Hinnant, BSN’22, and Nicolette Clark, BSN’22, check pulse and vitals in the acute care lab simulation with a standardized patient.

**Middle right:** A student works on her IV insertion technique in the task-training lab.

**Bottom:** Matthew Renner, BSN’22, and Rebekkah Lerman, BSN’22, participate in a labor and delivery simulation in the high-fidelity simulation lab.



# The Journey

Incoming student, recent graduate share their stories about what led them to the Creighton College of Nursing

## A TRAVELER'S NEW JOURNEY: GOING TO NURSING SCHOOL

**Alexandra McDermott, BA'22**, has had an experience at Creighton unlike most students.

Through her experience in the Global Scholars Program, she traveled to Australia, New Zealand, the Dominican Republic and Cuba, during her undergraduate studies. In May, McDermott graduated with a major in medical anthropology.

Now, she's about to start a new journey. This fall, McDermott returns to Creighton enrolled in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program.

McDermott has been interested in nursing and the medical field for years. This interest comes, in part, from hearing about the work of her dad, Michael McDermott, BA'83, MD'90, an orthopedic surgeon in Santa Rosa, California. Following discernment and reflection, she decided to pursue a career in nursing.

"I have chosen nursing because not only can I personally care for my patients, but I

can strive to improve their quality of care," she says. "I want to be an advocate for my patients in their time of vulnerability. I truly believe that the nursing profession is my God-given purpose."

The 12-month ABSN program at Creighton gave McDermott the ideal opportunity to accomplish both dreams, complete the Global Scholars Program and pursue a nursing degree.

"When I learned of the ABSN program, I knew that it would be a perfect fit for my Global Scholars experience and support my new goal of attending nursing school."

McDermott has engaged with people from around the globe through her participation in the Global Scholars Program. Founded four years ago by Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, the program provides students four global study and service experiences during their four years in college. The first cohort graduated this year.

McDermott says it opened her eyes to diverse cultures and people.

"My time abroad inspired my studies in medical anthropology," she says. "I want to apply my knowledge of medical anthropology now to be inclusive, apply a holistic approach and see every patient through a broad cultural lens."

McDermott took an indigenous history course in Australia and worked at a nursing home in the Dominican Republic, two experiences that taught her about health care and even further inspired her interest in nursing.

McDermott is passionate about women's and infant health and hopes to address factors contributing to infant mortality in her future nursing career.

"During my time at Creighton and abroad," she says, "I learned how women's health and cultural, ethnic and lower socioeconomic issues contribute to a lack of prenatal care and increase the likelihood of prematurity and infant mortality."

She plans on becoming a NICU nurse, advocating for infants and mothers, but is leaving herself open to other specialties. McDermott is excited to learn more during the clinical experience. She also is interested in incorporating travel into her career and helping people of diverse populations, incomes and accessibility to resources. — **BY KATE MALOTT**

## DNP PROGRAM GAVE THIS NURSE SKILLS SHE DIDN'T FIND ELSEWHERE

When she came to Creighton, **Kelli Saucerman-Howard, DNP'21, RN**, got more. More skills. More courses. More attention. More experience. More knowledge.

Saucerman-Howard is the vice president of patient care services at CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center – Bergan Mercy, a role she has held since 2019.

Before she took her current position, she was enrolled in a DNP program at another institution. But as she interviewed for the



KELLI SAUCERMAN-HOWARD, DNP'21, RN

REBECCA GRATZ

job, she learned more about Creighton and its DNP program.

After speaking with Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN'72, RN, FAAN, dean of the College of Nursing and vice provost of Health Sciences Campuses, she decided to transfer and finish her studies at Creighton. That decision meant taking a bit longer before she'd graduate, but she thought it was worth it.

Saucerman-Howard found a lot to love at Creighton.

She appreciated Creighton's core values and faith-based mission. She loved the individualized attention from faculty. She also found Creighton's program to be rigorous, which she appreciated.

"I wasn't getting my doctorate to check a box. If I was going to do this, I wanted to be invested in the learning experience," she says. "I appreciate the difference between doctoral programs, and it was important to experience that academic rigor and the diversity of the program."

Creighton's program had a greater offering of courses, and she learned things she hadn't experienced in previous coursework. It allowed her to choose from courses that she knew would expand her knowledge.

In particular, she was exposed to courses

in conflict management, which were not a part of her previous university's curriculum.

"These courses were relevant to hospital operations and honed my conflict management and resolution skills," she says.

She was particularly appreciative of the individual attention from her instructors, whom she found to be extremely knowledgeable, easy to approach and invested in their students' success.

Prior to attending Creighton, Saucerman-Howard had been employed in leadership positions, and that's why she was interested in Creighton's Nursing Administration and Leadership DNP track, which prepares nurses as innovative and collaborative leaders in diverse health care settings, where they can improve the quality of health care. She was also appreciative that Creighton faculty tailored her learning to her level of work experience.

"They were great to allow me to branch out," she says. "In the DNP program, I was able to use current research to identify and address organizational change and performance improvement opportunities."

Saucerman-Howard did so well in the program that the College of Nursing invited her back to teach courses at the University a few months after graduating.

After being in multiple DNP programs

**"In the DNP program, I was able to use current research to identify and address organizational change and performance improvement opportunities."**

KELLI SAUCERMAN-HOWARD, DNP'21, RN

and finding her home at Creighton, Saucerman-Howard has a bit of advice for those seeking the same path.

"I tell people considering going back to school to consider their options. Go to the program that has the track you're interested in. Mine was administration and leadership, so Creighton absolutely fell in line for me," she says. "You should really find a place that gives you a good learning experience."

"Pursuing a degree is a financial investment in your future and professional development, so you really want to be able to gain knowledge and practical application from the program."

— **BY KEVIN COFFEY, BA'06**



ALEXANDRA  
MCDERMOTT, BA'22





TRACEY MEDCALFE

## Chang Scholarship Shapes New Generation of Nurses

How might her life have been different without Creighton? “I can’t know for certain how, but it is still important to me to reflect on this,” says Glenda Gill Chang, BSN’74.

“It is daunting to think about how my life would have turned out without financial support from my parents for my undergraduate degree and the other grants I received for graduate school.”

To help make the Creighton nursing experience possible for passionate students in need, Chang established the Chang Nursing Endowed Scholarship.

“I think, ‘Let’s give others a chance,’” Chang says. “I’m overwhelmed by the cost of getting a college education these days. I want to help others who might not be able to attend college, to have the opportunity.”

Chang grew up in Dubuque, Iowa, with three siblings. Chang’s mother and father, the late H. James Gill Jr. and Elsie Gill, valued higher education and put all four of their children through college.

“I continue to have an appreciation

for my parents, and all the others, who supported my education. I do know their assistance made a world of difference for me.”

At an early age, Chang developed a special self-awareness and concern for others thanks to the role models in her life. Her mother was a Sunday school teacher and hospital volunteer who led drives to donate clothes to reservations in South Dakota and North Dakota. She recalls visits



**“I’m grateful to Mrs. Chang for giving me the confidence and motivation to tackle the challenges ahead to achieve the goals in my life.”**

ISABELLE CHIU | SECOND-YEAR NURSING STUDENT

with her grandmother, who was a nurse, to her grandfather’s pharmacy to pick up prescriptions. Chang carries memories of them all to this day.

“What I remember most about them is their care for others,” she says. “And I realize

now, this is probably one of the reasons I went into nursing.”

Chang graduated from the College of Nursing in 1974 and then attended graduate school at the University of Michigan. She found success in her professional career, first as a director of nursing, then as an in-home care nurse, followed by teaching. Chang then took on the role of stay-at-home parent to raise (along with her husband, Wai) three children. Today, the Changs are philanthropic supporters in their California community and graciously support their alma maters.

At Creighton, the Chang Nursing Endowed Scholarship shapes a new generation of deeply skilled and service-minded professionals. Nursing student Isabelle Chiu began her sophomore year this fall as a two-time recipient of the Chang scholarship.

“The financial impact, of course, is so important and also that another person believes in me makes me feel really proud,” Chiu says.

Chiu looks forward to the hands-on experience she will gain in Creighton’s nursing program. She is driven by Chang’s support.

“It’s always been in my nature to help others — it puts a smile on my face,” she

says. “And it’s the care for others that drew me to nursing and to Creighton. I’m grateful to Mrs. Chang for giving me the confidence and motivation to tackle the challenges ahead to achieve the goals in my life.” — **BY NICHOLE JELINEK, MA’15**



Glenda Gill Chang, BSN’74, established the Chang Nursing Endowed Scholarship to make the Creighton nursing experience possible for students in need.

## Haddad Publishes Poetry Collection

For Amy Haddad, there’s something intrinsic to the profession of nursing that makes for a good foundation in the creative arts: Developing a keen eye for detail.

“As a nurse, you never lose your clinical eye,” she says. “When you start to become serious about being a writer, you start to see things in how other writers phrase things or move a story along. You start to see how details illustrate character or backstory. And you focus more on how you might be able to shape that through language in your own writing.”

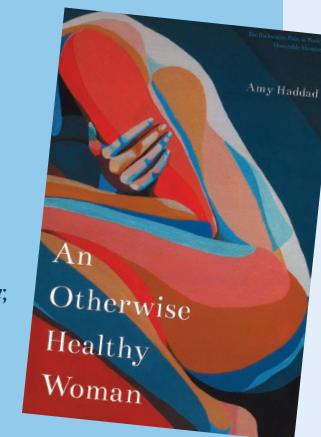
Haddad, PhD, BSN’75, professor emerita and former director of the Center for Health Policy and Ethics at Creighton, this year published her first poetry collection, *An Otherwise Healthy Woman*, through the Backwaters Press. The work explores modern health care, drawing on Haddad’s experiences as a nurse, patient and caregiver.

“All of the poems in the collection are based on my experiences and my creative imagination,” Haddad says. “Every time I find myself in a patient setting, I notice everything and listen to everything too as potential grist for my poem mill. I make little notes on the backs of things — there are certain exchanges or images that happen in waiting rooms, for example, that I might be able to write about or see in a different way.”

### Cat Scan

Inches from my nose, she inspects me  
through slivered parakeet-green eyes  
scanning through the soft tissue, muscle, bone  
on a level no CT or MRI can reach.  
My black and orange calico  
places her clawless paws  
on the red crescent scar  
where my breast used to be.  
Inner lids slowly veiling her eyes  
she kneads my chest  
paws opening and closing  
purring in rhythm  
head down.  
I trace a single line  
from the bridge of her nose  
up to her ear  
ending under her chin.

From *An Otherwise Healthy Woman*,  
also appeared in the *Journal of Medical Humanities*.



Becoming a poet has, in a way, been a strenuous exercise in brevity for Haddad, who retired from Creighton in 2018 and later completed a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at Queens University in Charlotte, North Carolina. As a health care provider and educator, she says, her natural inclination is to explain as clearly and directly as possible.

Poetry, she says, gets to the point of presenting information in a very different way.

“With poetry, you don’t have to explain to the reader every single meaning you intend behind words in a poem,” Haddad says. “The reader is going to decide and interpret what I’m trying to say ... My biggest struggle in writing is to eliminate all of my explanations.”

Haddad’s creative endeavors began early on during her time at Creighton, where, even after starting her nursing studies, she took classes in dance and art history. After graduating, she worked as a nurse with St. Joseph’s Hospital in Omaha, later pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Nebraska College of Nursing and a PhD in adult education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Haddad returned to Creighton in 1985 to teach ethics in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions. She later held the Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Endowed Chair in Health Sciences and held a joint faculty appointment with the College of Nursing.

Throughout her time at Creighton, Haddad says she worked to incorporate art and the humanities into her courses, using poetry and short stories in her lessons with health sciences students and, at times, hosting class trips to local theater productions that related to topics in health care and ethics.

“It was wonderful to have that underpinning of the liberal arts in my education at Creighton, and I was glad to bring that to my students as well,” she says. “As an educator, you hope that you can open the door for someone to enjoy the arts and humanities and have it be a part of their life, whether or not they ever do anything with it career-wise. It just makes them a more well-rounded person.”

— **BY BLAKE URSCH**



# Grand Island Class of 2021 Highlights Creighton’s Reach

Though Kaylee Taylor, BSN’21, stayed close, and Harmony Latham, BSN’21, traveled 849 miles to Nashville, Tennessee, both women can look back on a life-changing year in Grand Island, Nebraska, where the long arm of the Creighton University College of Nursing opened the door to their new lives.

“Thankfully, and by the grace of God, I have accepted a position at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee,” Latham wrote in an online blog.

The Creighton College of Nursing’s Grand Island Campus graduated its first cohort last December when 16 students enrolled in the 12-month Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program received their diplomas during ceremonies at Grand Island’s Riverside Golf Club.

Taylor, a native of Grand Island, was named Student of the Year after graduating from the 3+1 program that permitted her to earn a three-year bachelor’s degree in biology-health systems from Hastings College and then her BSN after 12 months of accelerated study with Creighton. Having earned two degrees in four years, she is now a nurse at CHI Health St. Francis in Grand Island.



▲ Joely Goodman, PhD, left, assistant professor and accelerated faculty chair at the Grand Island Campus, works with Kaylee Taylor, BSN’21, who was part of the first cohort at the Grand Island Campus.

So successful has the 3+1 partnership with Hastings College been that Creighton is now expanding the program to include York University in York, Nebraska; Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska; and Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska.

It’s an expansion that Latham, a native of southern California who moved to Tennessee before deciding to study nursing in Nebraska, urges other potential students to embrace.

“The smaller cohort size was a huge draw,” she says. “I knew that with fewer students I would gain more hands-on time in simulation, clinical rotations would be easier to secure and the instructors were going to know me, my skill level and what I needed to work on to be the best nurse I could be.

“Going to Grand Island and Nebraska was one of the most terrifying decisions of my career, but it led me to a great education, gave me some of my best friends and ultimately created fond memories that I will hold onto for a lifetime.”

Creighton’s innovative accelerated nursing degree responds to a national nurse shortage that has been described as a pending crisis. The number of states experiencing a nursing shortage is expected to increase by 2030, according to an American Association of Colleges of Nursing 2020 workforce survey. The largest of these is California, which is expected to be short 44,500 nurses. The deficit is fueled

by growing populations, the retiring baby boom generation and an anticipated wave of nurse retirements given that more than half of current registered nurses are over the age of 50.

“There is a nationwide nursing shortage, and this shortage is evident in Nebraska,” says Joely Goodman, PhD, RN, assistant professor of nursing at Creighton and accelerated faculty chair at the College of Nursing’s Grand Island Campus. “Every economic region in the state currently has a nursing shortage, and this gap in supply and demand will continue to grow, leaving the need to educate nurses as important as ever.”

The expansion of Creighton’s 3+1 partnerships to more small communities in central and eastern Nebraska is expected to benefit underserved rural communities throughout the state.

“As Creighton expands to different regions of the state, graduates of the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program may choose to work as registered nurses in the communities where they began their college education,” Goodman says. “This would allow Creighton’s graduates to have a positive impact on more of the state since Creighton nursing graduates are well-respected in health care.

“It is an exciting opportunity to be able to have excellent care providers in more rural communities in Nebraska.” — BY EUGENE CURTIN



## Jenkins Recipient of 2022 Alumni Merit Award

**AT THE ANNUAL EVENING OF HONORS**, Creighton University recognizes alumni who have made a difference in their communities. On Aug. 26, Anne Jenkins, BSN’77, was awarded the 2022 College of Nursing Alumni Merit Award.

Jenkins graduated from the College of Nursing in 1977 and became a critical care nurse. In her years as a nurse and throughout her life, she has used all aspects of her nursing and liberal arts education. She specifically credits the Revs. Don Doll, SJ, and Larry Gillick, SJ, along with the late Rev. William Kelley, SJ, for being spiritual guides. Jenkins believes it’s important to remember your mentors and your alma mater and to consider that there are many ways to give back through time, talent and treasure.

“Anne is the first alumna that comes to my mind when I think of someone who is living out their faith and Jesuit values. Every day she tries to help others and she understands the importance of training and educating future Creighton nurses for generations to come,” says one nominator.

## College of Nursing Alumni Advisory Board

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<b>Theresa Franco, BSN’78</b> Ex-Officio I Omaha	<b>Nancy Mehmert Lakier, BSN’75</b> Emeritus I Poway, California	<b>Catherine Adam Pajnigar, BSN’99</b> La Vista, Nebraska	<b>Maureen Kuffel Turner, BSN’74</b> President’s Council I Omaha
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<b>Julie Wilwerding Gortemaker, BSN’06</b> Grand Island, Nebraska	<b>Jenna Cheese Lowndes, BSN’09</b> Ex-Officio I Omaha	<b>Judy Richmeier Pritza, BSN’92, MS’96</b> President’s Council I Omaha	<b>Mary Singsank Woodward, SJN’72</b> Omaha

▲ Harmony Latham, BSN’21, was a member of the inaugural cohort in Grand Island and is a nurse at Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee.



## Hurst New Associate Dean in Phoenix

Helen Hurst, DNP, RNC-OB, APRN-CNM, joined Creighton University on July 1 as professor of nursing and associate dean of the College of Nursing Phoenix Campus.

“I am pleased to welcome Helen Hurst to the administrative team in the College of Nursing,” says Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN’72, RN, FAAN, dean of the College of Nursing and vice provost of Health Sciences Campuses. “Her experience and expertise will help move us forward as we continue to grow in Phoenix.”

Hurst, who comes to Creighton from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, has served on state and national committees related to nursing and health care policy and advocacy. She is currently on the editorial board of the *Journal of Perinatal and Neonatal Nursing*, and has published



Hurst

and presented on maternity care, nursing education, simulation and health policy. A fellow in the Leadership in Academic Nursing Program through the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), Hurst recently collaborated with colleagues at UL Lafayette on a patented design of a women’s mobile health unit for use in emergency preparedness.

As she begins her new role in the College of Nursing, Hurst is excited for the opportunity to work at the Creighton Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix.

“The environment fosters interprofessional collaboration of health care providers that not only focuses on academic success, but also supports spiritual and emotional growth and wellness,” Hurst says. “My hopes are to expand the ability of Creighton to provide highly trained, compassionate nurses and other health professionals to serve the many diverse communities in Arizona. I want us to serve as a model to other entities nationwide of how collaboration in the educational and health care settings can strengthen the health of the entire community.”



▲ Shelly Luger, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, left, works with McKayla Olsen, BSN, at the Heart Ministry Center in Omaha. Olsen is enrolled in the MSN program and is assisting with processes at the clinic and identifying/building on standards as part of her leadership studies.

## Luger Co-Authors Manuscript on Narrative Nursing Leadership

**Narration helps nurses build relationships and share the impact of their practice.**

Shelly Luger, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, an assistant professor in nursing administration and leadership, recently co-led a narrative nursing pilot project designed to see how sharing one’s stories impacts nurses and whether constructs of authentic nursing leadership theory are evident in conversations.

Luger partnered with Joyce Fitzpatrick, PhD, MBA, RN, FAAN, FNAP, author and distinguished professor at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, on this project. Their goal was to empower nurses to tell their stories to improve well-being and prevent stress and loneliness in a high-demand position. Their article, “Narrative Nursing Leadership ‘Story Telling’ and Constructs of Authentic Nursing Leadership,” was published in the February 2022 edition of *Nurse Leader*.

“A big part of leadership is developing relationships,” Luger says. “One of the main purposes of this project was to empower nurses to tell their stories, build relationships and help nurses feel less alone.”

In the narrative nursing leadership project, a diverse group of student nurse leaders from across the country was taught key techniques of storytelling and then asked to share a poignant story from their careers that best exemplified leadership.

Luger and Fitzpatrick found the experience had a positive and powerful impact on participants, evident in their one-word descriptions of the experience, which included connection, trust, empowering and reassuring.

“What we found was that in every one of the stories some of the constructs of authentic nursing leadership theory were presented,” Luger says.

“Nurses have a lot in common. We got a sense of having that opportunity to share stories was in a way improving their wellness, to be able to have some time to talk to others in similar positions about the experiences they have.”

Luger recommends that nurses be bold enough to ask questions, reflect on patient care experiences, and take time to speak about successes and failures.

— **BY KATE MALOTT**

## The Human Engineer

Jim Herman, BSN’18, found his perfect career through the combination of two professions.

Herman was a member of the College of Nursing’s inaugural class of accelerated students in Phoenix. One of several men in the class, he represents a growing trend in the nursing profession, but that fact didn’t garner Herman the most interest. “I was the oldest one in the class — a grandfather!” he says. “That was more entertaining than being a male student.” (He and his wife, who have four sons, have since welcomed two more granddaughters.)

Before turning to nursing, Herman had a long career as a systems engineer at Lockheed Martin. Looking for more flexibility in his job, he was inspired by his wife’s career as a nurse at Dignity Health St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center. And Creighton was launching its Accelerated BSN program. It was perfect timing.

After graduating, Herman moved to Corvallis, Oregon, to work in the Progressive Care Unit at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. COVID-19 hit in his first year as an RN. “I experienced lots of things that can ruin a dinner party conversation,” Herman says, reflecting on his night shifts. “But each day we’d hit the ground running and keep doing what



we do. It was nice to help people and make a difference.”

After three years, an irresistible opportunity arose that would connect Herman’s previous career to his current one — and keep him at the medical center. The new position: RN informaticist, uniting his tech background with patient care “to make the health care workflow even better,” he says. “A nurse is like a human engineer — just a little more human

touch. It’s a perfect match for me.”

Herman is happy he chose the Accelerated BSN, “especially having an established life,” he says. “It was a great program; quick and effective.” Herman and his 20 classmates were well prepared for their next steps. The inaugural Phoenix cohort earned a 100% NCLEX pass rate.

“If I had to do it again,” Herman says. “I’d go to Creighton.” — **BY RACHEL STANKO, BA’03**



## Buerhaus Delivers 2022 Distinguished Scholar Lectures

The College of Nursing honored a nationally prominent health care economist as its 2022 Distinguished Scholar. Peter Buerhaus, PhD, RN, FAAN, FAANP(h), delivered two lectures as part of the college’s annual series of spring lectures, both of which helped nursing administrators understand the significance of an ongoing national shortage of nurses. Buerhaus (pictured with Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN’72, RN, FAAN) is a professor of nursing and the director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Health Workforce Studies at Montana State University College of Nursing.



# Retiring Professor Embodies Jesuit Values

Nancy Shirley, PhD, RN, associate professor, is retiring from the College of Nursing this fall after nearly 30 years of educating Creighton nursing students and serving those in need. Shirley’s tenure at Creighton includes the years 1980 to 1989 and 2003 to 2022. She recalled visiting Creighton prior to starting in 1980.

“I was chatting with a colleague who had spent a couple of weeks earlier that summer in the Dominican Republic,” she recalls. “I was intrigued and then she spoke of serving dinner for the homeless at the Siena Francis House and being sure there were flowers on the tables, and, at that moment, I knew I was at the right place.”

Shirley says she is motivated by working upstream — trying to serve the population, promote health and prevent disease. “I’ve always wanted to work in the community and not necessarily the hospital,” she says. “I volunteered with Head Start between my freshman and sophomore years of my nursing program — my desire to work with the underserved was solidified. I wanted to join the Peace Corps and save the world.”

Over the years, Shirley served a variety of populations in Omaha

and Phoenix as well as in the *campos* in the Dominican Republic as part of 17 service trips with the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) and the College of Nursing fall immersion trips.

“I have loved working with the underserved in North Omaha, the homeless women in recovery, the new moms struggling to adjust and take care of their children and the list goes on.”

At Creighton, Shirley taught undergraduate courses in community health/community mental health, population health and freshman RSP. She has served as BSN program chair; RN to BSN program chair; taught graduate education courses in public health and global health; and served as a graduate track lead. Most recently, Shirley served as interim associate dean for the College of Nursing at the Phoenix campus.

In addition, Shirley served in the Army Nurse Corps Reserves for 23 years. She retired in 2009 and continued teaching ROTC courses to junior nursing students for the next 11 years. Through Creighton, she connected with and volunteered for 10 years with the Ignatian Spirituality Program out of Chicago, serving those experiencing homelessness in their recovery.

Her much-deserved retirement plans include traveling, spending time with family and volunteering to provide end-of-life support to veterans. — **BY NICOLE PHELPS, BA’02**



▶ Nancy Shirley, PhD, RN, and Katie Beckman, BSN’21, in the task-training lab at the College of Nursing in Phoenix.

## Faculty Scholarship July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021

**Hadenfeldt, C., Naylor, H., Jessen, J., Banzhaf, S.,** Martens-Stricklett, K. (2020). Addressing the Opioid Epidemic: Strategies for Interprofessional Health Education, *Health and Interprofessional Practice*, 4, 1 (eP2131, 1-7).

**Hadenfeldt, C.J., Naylor, H., Aufdenkamp, M.** (2020). Escape the Pharmacy: An Active Learning Strategy for the Nursing Pharmacology Classroom, *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 42, 6 (e161-e162).

**Flott, E.,** Schoening, A., **McCafferty, K., Beiermann, T., Hercinger, M.** (2021). The Influence of the DEU Clinical Model on Standardized Test Scores, *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 42, 1 (41-43).

Cousminer, C.L., Wagley, Y., Pippin, J.A., Elhakeem, Q., Way, G.P., Pahl, M.C., McCormack, S.E., Chesi, A., Mitchell, J.A., Kindler, J.M., Baird, D., Hartley, A., Howe, L., Kalkwarf, H.J., **Lappe, J.M.,** Lu, S., Leonard, M.E., Johnson, M.E., Hakonarson, H., Gilsanz, V., Shepherd, J.A., Oberfield, S.E., Greene, C.S., Kelly, A., Lawlor, D.A., Voight, B.F., Wells, A.D., Zemel, B.S., Hankenson, K.D., Grant, S.F.A. (2021). Genome-Wide Association Study Implicates Novel Loci and Reveals Candidate Effector Genes for Longitudinal Pediatric Bone Accrual, *Genome Biology & Evolution*, 22, 1.

**Bold names denote Creighton University College of Nursing faculty**

**Manz, J.A., Williams, K., Jessen, J., Kirkpatrick, A.** (2021). Addressing the Perioperative Nursing Shortage Via a Perioperative Nursing Preceptorship for Baccalaureate Nursing Students, *Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN)*, 113, 1 (52-63).

**Abbott, A.A.,** Koontz, O. (2021). Improving Sleep in Patients with Heart Failure, *American Nurse Today*, 17, 2.

**Burch, A.L.** (2021). Grooming Student Nurses in a New Era: Med-Surg Perspectives, *Med-Surg Nurse Life Magazine*, March 2021 (6-7).

**Manz, J., Iverson, L.,** Hawkins, K., Tracy, M., **Hercinger, M., Todd, M.** (2021). Assessing Student Performance in a Dedicated Education Unit: Validity of the Creighton Competency Evaluation Instrument, *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 43, 3 (184-186).

**Hannaford, L., Kunes-Connell, M.,** Xiaoyue, C. (2021). Predicting Nursing Baccalaureate Program Graduates Using Machine Learning Models: A Quantitative Research Study, *Nurse Education Today*, 99.

**Naylor, H., Hadenfeldt, C., Timmons, P.** (2021). Novice Nurses’ Experiences Caring for Acutely Ill Patients During a Pandemic, *Nursing Reports*, 11, 2 (382-394).

## Jessen Tapped to Guide CIPER

Jenny Jessen, EdD, BSN’04, RN, CNOR, is the new director of Creighton University’s Center for Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research (CIPER).

Jessen has served as a core faculty member in CIPER and as the center’s director for assessment since 2019. She



Jessen

is also an assistant professor in the College of Nursing, where she will retain a half-time role. CIPER is Creighton’s primary vehicle for developing the University’s commitment to

interprofessional health sciences education and the place where interprofessional programs are devised.

“I think interprofessional practice is an area of education that still feels kind of young, even though it’s not terribly young,” Jessen says. “I would like for interprofessional education at Creighton to be seen as a very intentional part of growing a practitioner and preparing them for working in the real world.

“It should be something that is meaningful to our students and faculty, where we work together and think of how to include each other in our teaching. Building team skills for our students is how we address burnout, it’s how we address resiliency, it’s making sure students can work and function in teams.”

Jessen says she recently reviewed student reflections, and a clear theme emerged.

“They all say they want to work with more Creighton health professional students, they want to work with pharmacy students, with medical students, they want to work with the dental students — they want to learn interprofessionally, and we, as faculty, must provide that opportunity,” she says. — **BY EUGENE CURTIN**

## Faculty Awards Highlights

- > **Mandy Kirkpatrick, PhD, BSN’05, RN,** was honored as an International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL) Excellence Award recipient. The Academic Excellence Award is presented to an INACSL member who demonstrates advancing academic excellence in the field of health care simulation and clinical laboratories.
- > **Julie Manz, PhD, BSN’98, MS’05, RN,** assistant dean, Undergraduate Nursing Programs, received the March of Dimes’ Heroes in Action award for her leadership in the design and coordination of a COVID-19 vaccine clinic at Creighton, which vaccinated 42,654 individuals. Because a community clinic of the magnitude required to provide mass vaccinations had not been previously established, Manz was a critical member of Creighton’s leadership team in interacting with the Douglas County Health Department to establish and organize the clinic.
- > **Whitney Van De Graaff, BSN’11, MSN, RN, CPN,** instructor, received the 2022 DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nursing Faculty. The Daisy Faculty Award was created to honor the role that nursing faculty play

- and to recognize their commitment and the inspirational influence they have on their students — our future nurses.
- > College of Nursing professors **Christine Young, BSN’09, MSN’13, RN,** and **Dana Koziel, BSN’09, MSN, RN,** were honored by the Nebraska Nurses Association with the Positive Image of Nursing Award 2022. The Positive Image of Nursing Award is a recognition and award program facilitated by the Nebraska Nurses Association to commemorate National Nurses Week.
- > **Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN’72, RN, FAAN,** dean of the College of Nursing and vice provost of Health Sciences Campuses, received Creighton’s Distinguished Service Administrator Award at the University’s Founders Week Convocation in February 2022. Todero was recognized for helping expand Creighton’s footprint in Omaha, central Nebraska and Phoenix. She also was recognized for the commitment she has made to developing faculty scholarship, research and teaching, her collaboration with Creighton’s clinical partners, her commitment to the welfare of students and her work promoting diversity and inclusion.



# Begley Shares Nursing Expertise With Nebraska State Policymakers

Margaret Begley, BA’90, BSN’91, MS’19, MSN’20, DNP’22, believes great leaders seek out experts in order to make more informed decisions, especially in the realm of public service.

It was a key insight from her fifth, and most recent, degree from Creighton — a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in nursing administration and leadership, which incorporates policy advocacy into its curriculum. The DNP program prepares nurses to engage in policy analysis and advocacy activities to improve health care locally, regionally and beyond.

Begley used her education, as well as clinical nursing experience, to provide testimony to the Nebraska Legislature on efforts to create public health crisis zones and examine the health care workforce shortage in Nebraska.

She worked alongside Nebraska state Sen. Mike McDonnell, her preceptor, a current member of the Nebraska Legislature’s Appropriations Committee. Begley researched issues related to cancer, health care disparities and challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic — pursuing grant support as well as helping determine how best to allocate state and federal funding.



Begley



McDonnell

As part of a local debate, which had the potential to negatively impact the community at large, Begley testified in front of the Omaha City Council in support of the Douglas County health director retaining authority to initiate epidemic-related health mandates and orders. A policy was revised in March 2022, which permitted decision-making control to remain with the current health director.

“It was a great victory for the nursing profession, as well as the greater Omaha community, when the vote was counted, and decision ultimately made, to retain local authority with the county health director, Lindsay Huse. She is a highly respected, trusted, valued and competent DNP,” Begley says.

Begley also states she experienced policy decision-making during a unique time in history — one in which the global pandemic caused a major public health crisis leading

to challenging decisions regarding public health mandates and relief funding. Issues and instances surrounding worker’s rights, and racial injustice and systemic racism also sparked protests and important dialogue locally and nationally.

“From a leadership and policy perspective, I was lucky to be a participant during this critical time in history,” Begley says. “Within the context of everything that was happening in the world, people became less centered on themselves and more invested in the greater good of all. Leadership efforts took place at every level and people examined how they could positively impact future generations.”

The DNP in nursing administration and leadership program is designed to teach ethical leadership, support creative problem resolution, promote inclusivity and encourage interprofessional collaboration. It is a field of study that incorporates policy advocacy in its curriculum to prepare nurse leaders to think critically and use their expertise in an increasingly complex environment.

“Great leaders have key qualities, and when I think of every influential leader whom I have ever worked with or known, advocacy is definitely one of their essential traits,” she says.

Begley was able to share her nursing expertise with policymakers to help influence statewide and local decisions during an extremely complex and challenging time.

“If you look back through history at everything that’s been done in terms of legislation, you must have people in a position who are not only educated but look out for society at large and focus on the greater good. In my policy experience, I was privileged to be part of that greater movement.” — **BY KATE MALOTT**

◀ The Nebraska State Capitol Building in Lincoln, Nebraska. While working on her Doctor of Nursing Practice, Margaret Begley worked with policymakers to provide testimony to the Nebraska Legislature on efforts to create public health crisis zones and examine the health care workforce shortage in Nebraska.



MARY BETH DENNEY

## Why I Give

I know from personal experience how difficult it can be to afford a college education. I paid for my own education, and relied on loans, scholarships and work-study to make ends meet. If not for the community of support from Creighton alumni and administrators, I would not have been able to afford four years of college and earn the quality Jesuit degree that I am so very proud to have. My Creighton education prepared me to be a critical thinker and effective problem-solver, while instilling in me care and compassion for all. It sharpened my leadership and people skills, which have translated into many opportunities in my professional life. No matter the amount, gifts to the College of Nursing can help students on their journey to a Creighton education — just as they did for me.

**Rachelle Owens, BSN’87**  
Director of Patient Access and Strategic Business Solutions  
NS Pharma Inc. | St. Louis

◊ To make a gift to the Creighton College of Nursing, visit [alumni.creighton.edu/forward-blue](https://alumni.creighton.edu/forward-blue) or contact Cody Fuchtman, senior director of development in the College of Nursing, at [CodyFuchtman@creighton.edu](mailto:CodyFuchtman@creighton.edu) or 402.280.2299.

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