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OU recognizes Michigan's finest nurses

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Oakland University's **School of Nursing**, its Board of Visitors, **Providence Hospital** and **WXYZ-TV Channel 7** paid tribute to the nursing profession and the exemplary contributions of eight of its dedicated practitioners at the 16th Annual **Nightingale Awards for Nursing**. The ceremony, which helps raise funds for student scholarships and other department needs, was held May 5 at the Best Western Sterling Inn Conference Center in Sterling Heights.

"Receiving this award is a milestone in my life and career," said Debra Hagerty, director of nursing at Bortz Health Care in Traverse City and a 2004 Nightingale Award recipient. "Bortz is an extended care system, and in my 18 years there, I've worked in all 13 of their facilities. The award provides recognition for all my hard work.

"What I love most about my job is working with the residents and making a difference. We service them and their needs in their 'home.' We have people who come back to us over and over because they know we go above and beyond the call of duty to provide excellent care. Basically, the residents have taught me everything I need to know about nursing."

Nightingale Award nominations are sent to health care agencies all over Michigan. All licensed registered nurses working in the state are eligible. The nominations and support letters are sent to a selection committee, which reviews candidates based on achievements, community service and professional organizations. Committee members independently score each of those criteria and the top scoring candidates comprise the winners and runners-up. Awards are given in seven different categories. In recognition of the number of nominees in staff practice, two Staff Nurse Practice Awards were presented for the first time this year.

Award winners receive a bronze statue of Florence Nightingale, a Nightingale pin and \$1,000. Each runner-up received a plaque, Nightingale pin and a special edition of Nightingale's book "Notes on Nursing."

This year's ceremony drew 770 attendees, the most ever. Among them were several Oakland nursing students who assist the School of Nursing with recruiting activities, fund-raising events and other school functions as members of the Dean's Circle.

"The Nightingale event is very important to students," said Cally Brindley, a senior and member of the Dean's Circle. "Before I attended this event for the first time, I hadn't realized all the impressive things that nurses do. It's very uplifting for future nurses to hear."

Due to the general shortage of nurses nationwide, employment opportunities are plentiful for nursing graduates. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac already has hired Brindley to work as an extern.

"I'll be working in different areas in the hospital and exploring different career options," Brindley said. "Nursing is a great field to go into. Many hospitals want to hire you even before you graduate, so it's a very exciting career choice."

Senior Jennifer Stanis, another Dean's Circle member, wants to pursue pediatric oncology.

"I've always been interested in pediatrics, and I have a history of cancer in my family," Stanis said. "At Oakland, I've had one of the best educations a student can get. I've had a very good relationship with the faculty on both a personal and professional level. They really care about our success."

The 2004 Nightingale Award winners include:

STAFF NURSE PRACTICE
Mary Williams, RN

Williams is a staff nurse on the pulmonary and infectious disease unit at Detroit Medical Center's Harper Hospital. She has achieved the position of unit preceptor, a role many see as the ultimate role for a bedside nurse. She works with new graduate nurses and nurses new to the unit. She is considered the expert at the art of bedside nursing and instills a feeling of security to staff, yet challenges their abilities to meet the highest of expectations. Williams co-founded the unit's Practice Committee to review and make decisions on issues that affect patient care and to improve nursing practice. She organizes conferences on special topics and diseases to keep staff up-to-date and is a member of the Professional Nurse Advisory Council. This continual quest for best practice and the desire to always do things better and get others involved in improving nursing practice gained her recognition as the 2003 Harper Hospital and Detroit Medical Center Nurse of the Year.

STAFF NURSE PRACTICE

Suzanne Frantz, RN, CORN

Frantz is a clinical nurse II in the operating room at Beaumont Hospital, Troy. As a survivor of head and neck cancer she can only be described as inspirational. Her dedication to nursing, practice skills, communication, advocacy and mentoring never faltered even as she faced extensive personal hardships both physically and emotionally. Frantz has been an operating room nurse for 25 years with astute skills in circulating, scrubbing and assisting. Her advocacy for patients goes beyond the operating suite as she is often seen visiting post-op patients on the floor on her lunchtime or after hours to provide continuity in their care. She also founded the Beaumont Hospital Head and Neck Cancer Support Group through the Wilson Cancer Center where she organizes speakers and provides information and Web sites for others with this type of cancer. Her openness and honesty are inspirational to everyone she meets, yet most of her colleagues are unaware of her magnificent accomplishments.

NURSING ADMINISTRATION

Kathleen Holycross, RN, MSN

Holycross is president and chief executive officer of Visiting Nurse Association Inc. (VNA). She successfully acquired and merged the staff and resources of VNA and Renaissance Home Health Care by coordinating task forces of the agencies in every key area. These groups created a unified corporate culture and shared mission, yet never lost sight of quality care or service to clients and enhanced the maternal/child program as well as expanding nursing resources to the community. She created an innovative training program for low-income individuals in paraprofessional careers, providing employment to 350 people as home health aides and certified nursing assistants. The VNA also is one of the largest providers of HIV/AIDS service in the community and was chosen as a pilot site for the introduction of the new 30-second oral HIV/AIDS test. Holycross also was named one of Detroit's most influential women by "Crain's Detroit Business" in 1997 and 2002.

NURSING IN THE COMMUNITY

Anne Sullivan Smith, Ph.D., RN

Smith is a recently retired associate professor from Madonna University. She is a role model for practicing nurses, students and faculty with a deep caring spirit for providing appropriate care to culturally diverse populations. She may officially be retired, but she has not left nursing. She continues to be involved in community activities and obtaining grants to benefit residents in underserved populations. Smith has worked in community-based nursing since 1965 with special interest in serving the needs of frail elderly, poor and vulnerable people. She spent 12 years as a health care consultant regarding development and enhancement of services to the elderly, ill and disabled through accreditation processes for home health providers. She also successfully incorporated her community health nursing students into her activities through creative teaching strategies. Her dedication to recruiting and retaining diverse students into nursing led to her participation on a planning committee that recommended the development of a retention coordinator position at Madonna.

NURSING EDUCATION/RESEARCH

Margherita Clark, RN, MSN, CGNP

Clark is chairperson of the Nursing Careers Department at Lansing Community College. She is a nurse with passion, determination and undying energy to promote nursing and enhance educational experiences for students. Her joy, creative thinking, enthusiasm for her work, and fairness and strength of leadership bring out the best in students and faculty. Under her leadership, the nursing program at Lansing Community College has expanded its admissions of full-time students by 33 percent and part-time student enrollment by another 33 percent through partnerships with Ingham Regional Medical Center and Sparrow Health System. These remarkable changes in enrollment provide registered nurses in this time of need and have led to Clark being asked to provide testimony to the state Legislature in support of Michigan nursing scholarships and to her appointment to the Michigan Board of Nursing.

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Ann Forde, MS, APRN, BC, NP, CDE

Forde is a clinical nurse specialist at Beaumont Hospital, Troy. She is an innovative, dedicated nurse who has a passion to promote nursing and the role of the nurse practitioner. As a certified diabetes educator, Forde goes beyond her role of outpatient diabetes coordinator to chair the Diabetes Plan of Care Committee at Beaumont to improve care on inpatients with diabetes. She has worked in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team to develop protocols on controlling blood glucose levels in cardiology and cardiac surgery patients to help decrease the morbidity and mortality associated with hyperglycemia in this group of patients at Beaumont, Troy. She also recognized a need for education of gestational diabetics and initiated a program for pregnant women to reduce the risk of complications at birth. After completing her normal workday, she facilitates a diabetes self-management support group she established. All of these activities fit well into her role as chair of the Diabetes Advisory Committee that develops policy, practices and programs to provide best practices in diabetes care.

ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING

Kelly Sakalian, MSN, AOCN, CNS

Sakalian is an oncology clinical nurse specialist at Providence Hospital. She functions as a strong resource as evidenced by the development of a "Care Companion and Treatment Organizer" for patients and families experiencing cancer. This tool introduces patients to the cancer center and its staff as well as providing information about their illness and treatment modalities. Patients have described this guide as "giving the feeling of control in an out-of-control time" in their lives. It is used throughout their treatment regimes and assists them in their personal search for information resources. Together with a medical oncologist and oncology pharmacist, she worked to develop the Febrile Neutropenia Pathway. Since it is well known that many cancer patients die from infection during their weakened states, the development and implementation of this pathway was identified as a high priority. In 2003, Sakalian received the first "Kelly Award" from Providence Hospital, named in her honor.

LONG-TERM CARE/REHABILITATION PRACTICE

Debra Hagerty, RN, MSN, NHA, RSW

Hagerty is the director of nursing at Bortz Health Care of Traverse City. She has served as director or consultant at all 13 facilities within the Bortz system. At each one, she has raised the standard of care. Hagerty uses a preventative management approach that engenders proactive and creative solutions to potential resident and employee problems with quality of life and employee satisfaction at the pinnacle. In 2002, she recognized problems associated with the phenomenon of geriatric sundowning. Hagerty developed a means of researching the problems, established activities to combat the wandering, falls and aggressive behavior that can lead to serious incidents and implemented those activities. The resultant decrease in incidents was significant and she wrote an article, titled "The Safety Program, Sunset for Sundowning," which was published in the journal "Nursing Homes Long Term Care Management." This led to the facility receiving the National Optima Award for Excellence in Resident Focused Care and to Bortz Health Care receiving the 2002 Governor's Quality Care Award.

The Nightingale Awards for Nursing coincides annually with National Nurses Week and Florence Nightingale's birthday (May 12, 1820). OU's School of Nursing has partnered with **Oakwood Healthcare System, Providence Hospital** and WXYZ-TV to honor nurses during National Nurses Week. Oakwood and Providence donated a total of \$37,000 to the School of Nursing to support and promote nursing education. WXYZ saluted nurses and OU's distinctive nursing classroom experience during a live broadcast May 4 from Oakwood. WXYZ also is paying tribute to this year's award recipients on a special **Nightingale Awards for Nursing** Web page.

For more information on the awards and OU's nursing program, visit the **School of Nursing** Web site, call (248) 370-4253 or e-mail nrsinfo@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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