

2021 - 2022

# THE FLAME



**THE POWER OF RESEARCH:**

*Dr. Marilyn Prasun  
Heads ISU's  
First Multi-Site  
Clinical Trials*

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## THE FLAME

The magazine of Mennonite College of Nursing  
2021-22 Issue · Published annually

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## IN MEMORY

Our sympathies go to the family and friends of the following:

**COOKE**, Jeanne (Morin) '44, 10/12/21

**WILLIAMS**, Verla (Yoder) '45, 4/11/22

**BURNS**, Madaline (Kegley) '46, 11/2/21

**DUEHR**, Marcile (Sommer) '46, 2/20/21

**KEENEY**, Willadene (Hartzler) '47, 6/13/17

**STORTZ**, Joan (Steward) '47, 1/28/13

**KNUCKLES**, Betty (Wilson) '51, 2/15/22

**LYMAN**, Lois (Lehman) '52, 11/29/19

**MUSZAR**, Barbara (Foulk) '52, 11/13/21

**HAUTER**, Donna (Rankin) '53, 3/3/22

**FORBES**, June (Jacobs) '54, 9/1/22

**MAURER**, Eli '22, 9/17/22

If we've missed a passing, please let us know by emailing [TheFlame@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:TheFlame@IllinoisState.edu) for inclusion in the next issue.

## RETIREMENTS

This year marks the retirement of Dr. Brenda Johnson, Cindy Malinowski, and Associate Dean for Student Services Janeen Mollenhauer. Our flame burns brighter because they were with us, and they will always be part of the MCN family.

## Alumni, complete our survey for a chance to win!

Help us learn what you value as a Redbird alum. Survey participants will be entered to win AirPods, an iPad, Illinois State jewelry, apparel, and more.



Scan the QR or visit:  
[Alumni.IllinoisState.edu/AlumniSurvey](https://Alumni.IllinoisState.edu/AlumniSurvey)

## MESSAGE *from* THE DEAN



**N**ow is a critical time for nursing. Simply put, we need more nurses.

As we look to the future, we know that our aging population is growing. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2030, there will be 82 million U.S. residents age 65 and older. We also know that a large portion of existing nurses is nearing retirement age—nearly 40% of nurses are over 50. And some are leaving the profession for other reasons altogether. However, as you'll see in the pages to follow, MCN is making strides to meet the need for more nurses, particularly right here in Central Illinois.

The nursing shortage is not due to lack of interest. In 2019, over 80,000 qualified students were denied entry to nursing programs due to lack of capacity. We see that here at MCN, where historically 1,000 to as many as 2,000 prospective students apply for about 160 seats. Meeting the challenge of capacity is essential, and it's why MCN charted a proactive plan for growth. Let me tell you about that plan and the projects that support it.

In spring 2022, undergraduate prelicensure enrollment was approximately 632 students. By fall 2025, that number is anticipated to be over 1,000. What is enabling such growth? First, a 16,000 square foot expansion to our Nursing Simulation Lab is on the way, which will allow more students to learn and practice their skills. This addition will more than double the size of the original facility. It will also allow students to have closer contact with faculty, many of whom will have offices there. The new lab is expected to open in 2024.

Next, this past summer, a partnership was officially formed with Memorial Health in Springfield, and a second MCN location is being built out nearby the hospital, repurposing an existing structure and reinvigorating that area of the community. This location is currently under construction and anticipated to open in 2023. Students will complete their clinical experiences in the Memorial system and, hopefully, opt to stay in Central Illinois after they graduate, helping to address the nursing shortage right here in the middle of the state.

I would be remiss when discussing the need to grow nursing if I did not also mention the impact that the research of faculty right here at MCN, including Endowed Professor Dr. Marilyn Prasun, featured on the cover of this edition of The Flame, is having on moving the profession forward. You can read more about that in the pages to follow.

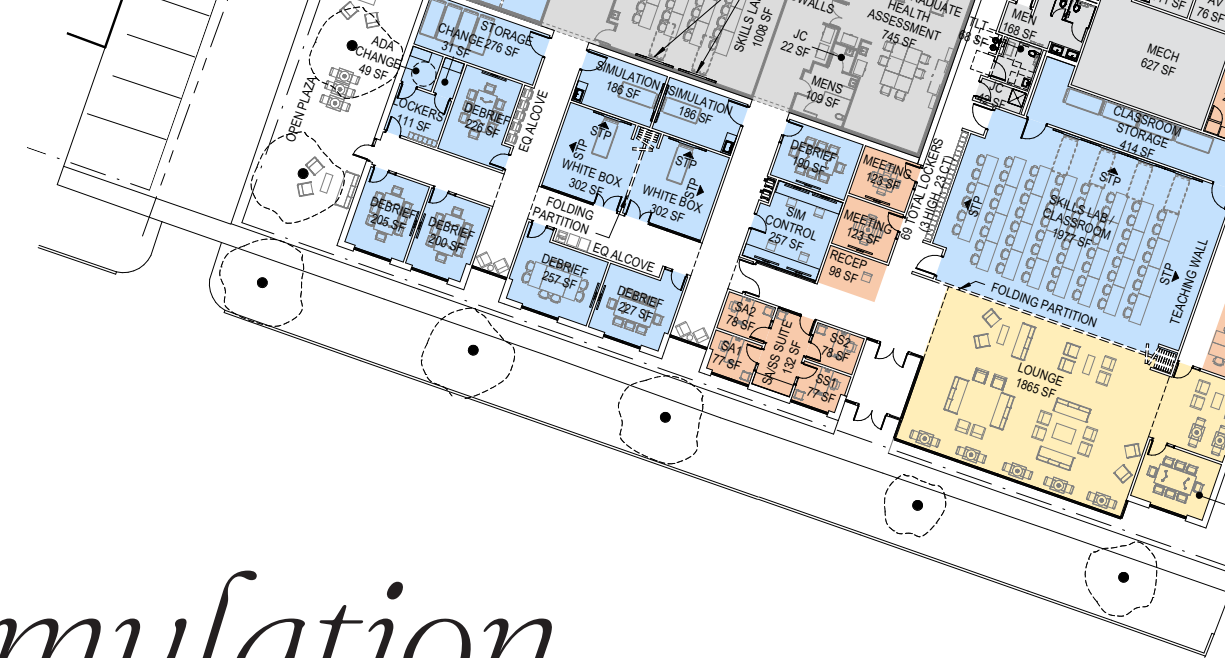
Lastly, but certainly not least, MCN's growth is propelled by the fierce dedication of our faculty, students, donors, alumni, and staff. Together, we will all do our part to address the nursing shortage and safeguard the future of the profession. The need is now.

Sincerely,

Judy Neubrandner, Ed.D., FNP-BC  
Dean, Mennonite College of Nursing



Architect's rendering showcasing the new construction.



# Simulation Lab Expansion Arriving 2024

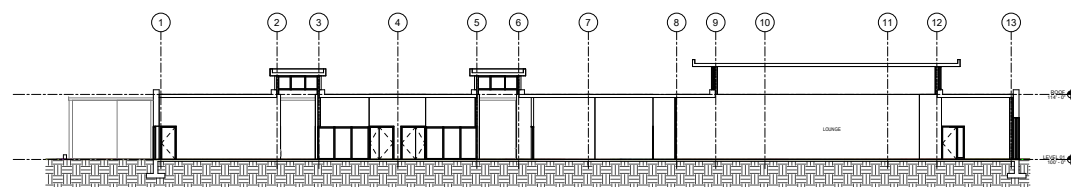
By: Nora Dukowitz and Ashley Bollhorst

Many of the freshmen who started this fall will get to experience a whole new environment when they begin their learning in the Simulation Lab in 2024. A 16,000 square foot expansion is on the way. The \$18 million project will more than double the lab's current size, bringing the total square footage to 25,000 square feet.

This expansion is just one key way MCN is working hard to help answer the need for nurses in Illinois. On average, MCN turns away roughly 1,500 applications each year, in part due to lack of space for more students. The new facility will accommodate more students and more faculty, allowing MCN to graduate more nurses.

"The lab is used nearly every day, and we definitely outgrew the space," explains Joanna Willett, Director of MCN's Simulation Lab.

The expanded one-story lab will feature a multipurpose area with a 60-seat classroom, a state-of-the-art technology room for virtual reality programming,





Overhead view of building expansion.

hospital simulation space, a skills lab, and lecture hall. New office spaces and a student success suite will provide increased opportunity for student interaction with faculty and support staff.

In addition to areas dedicated to academics, thought has been given to other types of spaces. The building's entrance will feature a new Student Engagement and Learning Center—an open space for gathering, studying, supporting, and mentoring nursing students. An outdoor pavilion will provide a place for meetups and study breaks. Quiet study areas and a health and wellness space will provide dedicated places for student support and success.

“I think students will really enjoy learning in the new lab,” adds Joanna Willett, Director of MCN’s Simulation Lab. “This is an exciting time to be at MCN.”

Architectural plans are currently being finalized, but signs of the coming facility are already appearing. Over the summer, buildings were demolished and the lot was prepared for the

“  
This is an  
exciting time  
to be at MCN

Joanna Willett

expansion’s eventual construction site. During this process, lab equipment was relocated temporarily to Williams Hall.

“It was a big job to move everything to Williams Hall this summer, and then to move it back to the existing lab this fall, but we made it work,” explains Willett.

As the project moves forward, MCN has launched a fundraising campaign, titled Legacy of Care: Building Tomorrow’s Nurses, to support the building expansion and equipment costs. The campaign has already raised over \$1 million in gifts, well on its way toward the campaign’s \$5 million goal.

Alumna Beth Mathews, who graduated in ’77 and works in primary care, is excited to be giving to the project.

“I give because I want to make nursing better now and for the future, and it is essential that students have the resources to excel,” says Mathews. “This is something that is enormously important to me, my husband and, in fact, our entire family. Not only do we need more well prepared nurses, we need to look ahead to when we’re older and our loved ones are older. A gift today can have so much impact for years to come. It truly is helping to create a legacy of care, and I am rewarded in so many ways by giving.”

For more information on how to support the new Nursing Simulation Center, contact Jennifer Sedbrook, Development Director for Mennonite College of Nursing at 309-438-7178 or [jsedbro@ilstu.edu](mailto:jsedbro@ilstu.edu). 💡



Angled view of front exterior.

## NEW SPACES COMING WITH EXPANSION

- A Multipurpose area
- B Student engagement and learning center
- C Student success suite
- D Quiet study areas
- E Health and wellness space
- F Outdoor pavilion
- G Simulation control center
- H Collaboration rooms
- I White box innovation and technology rooms
- J Faculty collaboration suite
- K Hospital simulation spaces
- L Small conference room
- M Reception area
- N Faculty suites
- O Locker room
- P Administration offices
- Q Sim lab support space

Naming opportunities are available for donors interested in sponsoring the building or portions of it. For more information, please contact:

**JENNIFER SEDBROOK**  
(309) 438-7178  
[jsedbro@ilstu.edu](mailto:jsedbro@ilstu.edu)

THE POWER OF RESEARCH:

# MCN's Dr. Marilyn Prasadun Heads ISU's First Multi-Site Clinical Trials

By: Nora Dukowitz



“Through research, we can help patients lead better, longer lives. That’s incredibly powerful.”

Dr. Marilyn Prasadun

MCN’s Carle Bromenn Endowed Professor Dr. Marilyn Prasadun knows how devastating heart failure can be. She has seen it run its course a countless number of times in her nursing career. She also knows how crucial research related to the disease can be in mitigating that devastation.

“Many people don’t know that heart failure has a mortality rate of fifty percent within five years. That’s greater than many cancers,” explains Dr. Prasadun. “Through research, we have the potential to make a significant impact on patients’ lives. We can help them lead better, longer lives. That’s incredibly powerful.”

To this end, Dr. Prasadun, who joined MCN in 2019, is heading the first ever large multi-site clinical trials in Illinois State University’s history.

“I observed that when it comes to heart failure, the right treatment at the right time is essential to ensure optimal patient outcomes,” says Dr. Prasadun. “Many health care providers are challenged when it comes to diagnosing and identifying changes in heart failure. I thought, ‘Isn’t there a better way to assess the progression and prognosis of this disease more accurately?’”

Dr. Prasadun’s funded research, aims to answer that very question. However, it does much more than that, too.

“Research begets more research. When others see that we can execute a large research study and produce results, they will be more likely to support funding for other projects, not just at MCN but across campus,” she says.

The research that Dr. Prasadun and others at MCN are doing also helps to attract top tier faculty and students, safeguarding and advancing the nursing profession. Dr. Prasadun takes great pride in the mentorship she provides to her peers and students.

“Whenever you’re actively engaged in research, it pulls people in,” explains Dr. Prasadun. “It’s a great way to learn because you’re living the experience. It’s exciting.”

“

Being actively engaged in research is a great way to learn because you’re living the experience. It’s exciting.

Dr. Marilyn Prasadun

Speaking to her passion and skill in research, Dr. Prasadun was awarded the Heart Failure Society of America’s Nursing Research Leadership Award in October of this year. This award recognizes extraordinary achievement and excellence in nursing that improves outcomes of patients with heart failure.

While Dr. Prasadun is limited at this time with what she can disclose about the clinical trial, she looks forward to sharing the results of her work in the future and to the effect it could have on nursing, patient care, and MCN.

“Make no doubt about it,” beams Dr. Prasadun, “we’re moving nursing research forward.”

MCN achieves

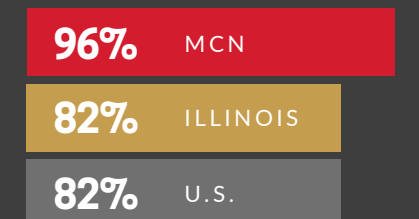
96%

NCLEX pass rate — again

For the second year in a row, MCN achieved a 96% NCLEX pass rate, outperforming the state and national averages of 82%. MCN’s pass rate has consistently been 95–96%, a great accomplishment and reflection of MCN’s hardworking students, faculty, and staff.

It is MCN’s mission to promote excellence in innovation in education while striving to improve health locally and globally through exceptionally well-prepared nurses. We’re proud of you, Redbird Nurses!

2021 NCLEX PASS RATE





# Reunited

## Friends Find Each Other Again After Nearly 45 Years

By: Nora Dukowitz

“  
*Our goal is to be there for each other as a steadfast and loyal support.*”

Ruth Sparks

When the class of 1976 met for the first time, they instantly bonded.

“We became a family immediately in the fall of 1973,” alum Ruth Sparks recalls, “I remember that the school hosted a picnic in the park for all of us the first night we arrived. Almost everyone lived in Troyer Hall our first year. At that point in time, we all cooked for ourselves or in small groups in the kitchens on the first and second floor of Troyer Hall. We studied together, ate together, went to school together, and cried and laughed together. Relationships were built very quickly.

“My most memorable memory is riding an old painted school bus from our dorm to ISU to do our science classes. There weren’t enough seats, so we had folding chairs in the back of the bus. The bus was named Virgil,” Sparks says with a twinkle in her eye.

But despite this close bond, life happened. That tight-knit group of students quickly turned into newly minted grads and went out into the world to find careers and start families. In 1976, it wasn’t as easy to stay in touch as it is today.

“When we graduated, there was no social media, email, and none of us had cell phones. Most of us went straight to work, raised our families, and worked as nurses. Life became very busy for most of us,” explains Sparks.

Friends pose with craft projects



Friends from the Class of 1976 catching up

Then, forty years later in 2017, a wonderful coincidence occurred that set off a serendipitous chain of events, as Sparks’ fellow ’76 alum, Becky McDevitt can tell you.

“In what can only be described as a God moment, Ruth and I reconnected in 2017. My daughter and son-in-law were living outside of Atlanta, GA. My daughter had a baby boy and needed help when she had to return to work, so of course help I did! I happened to be scrolling Facebook and saw Ruth’s name, I ‘friended’ her... and, come to find out, she lived less than ten minutes—about four miles—from my daughter! We reconnected immediately, and over the months that I stayed with my daughter, Ruth and I started thinking about trying to reconnect our class. Facebook was a great tool, and once we found a few, then they knew some, and on and on,” says McDevitt.

It was decided there was something they had to do: get the gang back together. In the fall of 2021, nearly 45 years after that first picnic in the park in ’73, 13 of 36 members of the class of ’76 gathered on Sparks’ farm for three days of catching up on each other’s lives. They even let some husbands tag along. They found that more than half of their class still lived in Illinois, and many had ended up in leadership positions and with advanced degrees.

Since that joyous reunion, they’ve found 32 classmates out of 36. Two more had passed away, and they are still looking for the last two.

The class plans to gather every two years and stays in touch in the meantime through social media.

“Our goal, if I were to speak for everyone, is to be there for each other as a steadfast and loyal support. I have found this reconnection to be one of the most amazing blessings ever. I would encourage students to stay in touch throughout their nursing careers. It is a wonderful blessing to remain connected in this way,” Sparks says with a smile.

Wonderful, indeed.

### SEARCHING FOR CLASS OF 1976 MEMBERS

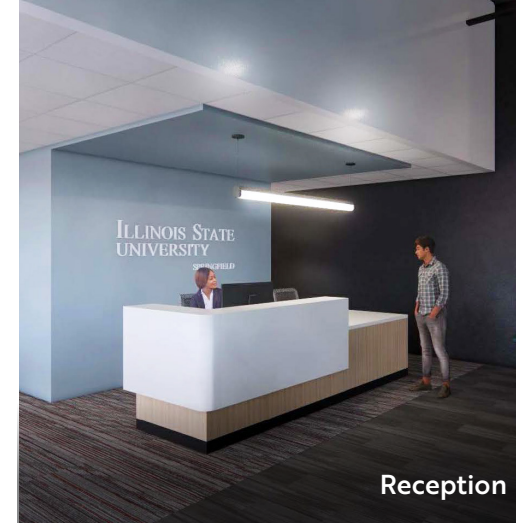
Sparks and McDevitt are still looking to reconnect with two classmates from the Class of 1976.

If you have information, please write to us at:

[TheFlame@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:TheFlame@IllinoisState.edu)



Rendering of the building exterior



Reception



Commons area



Classroom

Renderings of how the new Springfield interiors might look.

# New Springfield Location Opens Fall 2023

By: Nora Dukowitz

To address a critical need for more nurses, Memorial Health and Illinois State University’s Mennonite College of Nursing (MCN) are partnering to open a new MCN location in Springfield to increase the capacity to educate more students to become nurses in Central Illinois. Memorial Health will provide just over \$6 million over the next 10 years to help establish and support the new location.

“This exciting partnership will ultimately improve the lives and health of the people in the communities we serve,” said Ed Curtis, president and CEO of Memorial Health, who announced the initiative along with ISU President Terri Goss Kinzy at a press conference at the Memorial Learning Center earlier this year. “This region, along with the nation and all of Illinois, faces a severe shortage of nurses. With our support, ISU can

produce more registered nurses to serve the health care needs of the communities we serve.”

According to a recent American Association of Colleges of Nursing report, 80,407 qualified applicants were turned away from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2019 due to an inadequate number of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space, and other factors. This contrasts sharply with the growing demand for nurses. As an indicator, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts 175,900 job openings for registered nurses annually through 2029. Many factors contribute to the nursing shortage, including retirements from the profession and other sources of workforce attrition and an increasing number of older adults in need of health care.

The new MCN location will enroll its first class in fall 2023. Students will learn in a renovated building located at 200 N. Grand Ave. West, as well as at Memorial Health clinical sites, giving them a wide breadth of educational experiences.

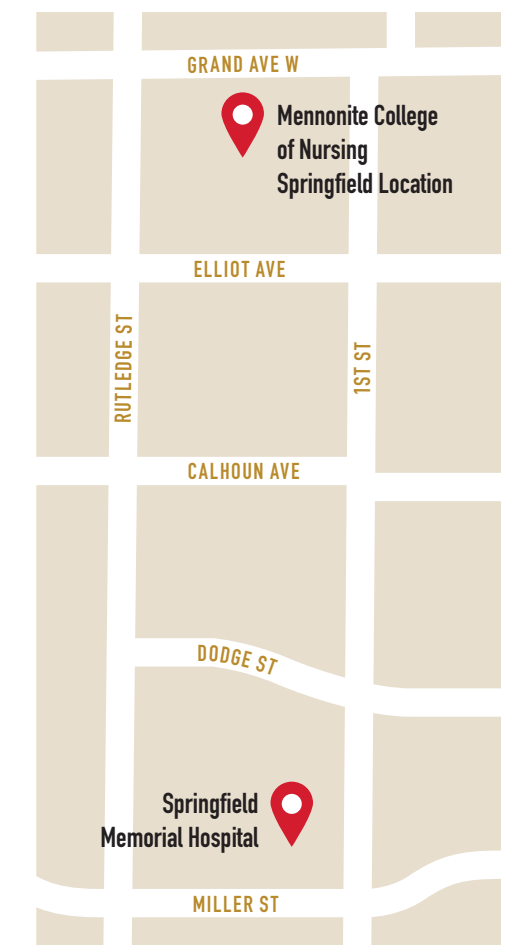
“We need more nurses, and we need them here in South Central Illinois,” said Judy Neubrandner, MCN’s Dean. “By recruiting from the South Central Illinois area and with the opportunities Memorial can provide, we hope they will stay here after graduation.”

MCN has a 100-plus year history and joined ISU in 1999. The College enrolls a freshman class of about 170 each fall, a number that has grown consistently over the years. With a NCLEX pass rate of 96%, beating both the state and national average by 14 points, the program is highly sought after by prospective students.

“If we want to proactively address the increasing shortage of nurses, a partnership like this is perfect. It gives our program more capacity and provides a talent pool for health care facilities right here in the heart of Illinois. It’s a win-win-win,” Neubrandner said.

“We hope many of these future graduates will continue to make the Springfield region their home,” said Marsha Prater, senior vice president and chief nursing officer for Memorial Health. Prater noted that Memorial Health hospitals have received multiple Magnet and Pathway to Excellence designations, which recognize the highest standards of nursing quality. “We look forward to providing these future nurses the opportunity to practice in an award-winning professional practice environment that has committed to raising the bar of nursing excellence, again and again.”

The curriculum and quality at the Springfield location will mirror that of the Normal campus. Prospective students can apply for the Springfield program now at [IllinoisState.edu/Apply](https://IllinoisState.edu/Apply). 📍



MCN’s new location is just a few blocks north of Springfield Memorial Hospital.



Core principles & practices of

# diversity initiative

to be continued post-grant



By: Nora Dukowitz

As part of MCN’s mission to educate more nurses, the College is striving to improve diversity in their student body, specifically increasing the number of students from underrepresented groups and those with economically disadvantaged backgrounds. To attract and keep more students from these key populations, MCN wanted a way to offer enhanced community and increased support for these students in the nursing program.

“A sense of belonging and the tools to excel are an essential part of the learning experience,” explains Cates Corwin, PROUD’s Academic Enhancement Specialist

With this knowledge in mind, a little over five years ago, MCN applied for and received a four-year, \$2 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and U.S. Department of Health. From this grant, the PROUD program was born.

“Everyone embraced the program instantly,” recalls Corwin. “And it worked. We can see this in different ways throughout the program’s five years.”

PROUD stands for Pre-entry and Retention Opportunities for Undergraduate Diversity. It aimed

to attract and retain nursing students from different backgrounds by providing: academic and peer support, mentoring and leadership opportunities, professional development activities, and financial support for qualifying students.

Although the PROUD grant was scheduled to end on June 30, 2021, MCN received a no-cost extension for a fifth year of funding, which meant the financial support could continue until June 30, 2022.



*A sense of belonging and the tools to excel are an essential part of the learning experience.*

Cates Corwin

Though the grant funding has now ended, MCN celebrates PROUD’s successes. From 2018-2022, there were approximately 150 PROUD graduates, and, collectively, those graduates had a 99% pass rate on NCLEX, the licensure exam to become a nurse.

“The whole program was a highlight,” says Corwin. “Our students participated in academic enhancement activities weekly. They attended bimonthly educational events enhancing their knowledge and comprehension of diversity issues on our campus, in our community, and globally. Our students were active participants in service learning activities sponsored by ISU and often assumed leadership roles. The PROUD students were supportive of each other academically, personally, and professionally. I feel so honored to have been the Academic Enhancement Specialist for the PROUD program and cherished my time with each of them each day of each week.”

Following the success of PROUD, MCN plans to continue many of its offerings, such as tutoring, mentoring, social programming, and more, in the College’s student success plan. ❖

## HELPING GUIDE THE FUTURE:

# New External Cabinet

This summer marked the first meeting of Dean Judy Neubrande’s new External Cabinet. Comprised of about 20 diverse thought leaders, the first session kicked off with speaker Mark Pelletier, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Nurse Executive of the Joint Commission, a health care accrediting agency.

Pelletier outlined eight recommendations for the future of nursing:

- 1 Allow for Advanced Practice Nurses to prescribe medications in all 50 states, not just 23.
- 2 Use telehealth to expand health care access in rural areas.
- 3 Support the health and wellbeing of nurses.
- 4 Create more nursing faculty.
- 5 Improve nursing demographics so the population of trained nurses reflects the demographic profiles of the communities they serve.
- 6 Use nurses to address health care inequities.
- 7 Prepare nurses to respond to disasters.
- 8 Let nurses lead in alternative models of care, such as home care.

Going forward, the Dean’s External Cabinet plans to continue adding members, listening to major voices, and undertaking projects that improve nursing and the health of our communities. ❖





# EXPANDING *our team*

*The following faculty and staff have joined our ranks.  
Welcome to the MCN family.*



## **DR. SUSAN HILDEBRANDT**

*Interim Associate Dean  
for Academics*

Dr. Susan (Sue) Hildebrandt joined MCN in July as the Interim Associate Dean for Academics. Most recently, she served as the

Interim Chair of the Department of Special Education from 2019-2022. Dr. Hildebrandt came to ISU in 2009 to join the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, where she spent 10 years coordinating French, German, and Spanish teacher education programs. Her research focuses on language teacher education, educational policy, and the intersection between the two.

Dr. Hildebrandt frequently travels to Wisconsin to support her parents and spend time with her extended family. She and her husband have a cat named Simone, and they like to spend time in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where they have a five-acre woodland respite near Marquette.



## **DR. YAN SU**

*Tenure Track Faculty*

Dr. Yan Su joined MCN's tenure track faculty this fall. She is co-teaching several nursing research courses during the semester. Dr. Su completed her

PhD in Nursing Science with a statistics concentration from the University of Washington in Seattle in 2022. She earned her MS in Gerontology from Iowa State University and her BSN from Shandong University of TCM, Jinan, China. Dr. Su has had extensive experience in research design and implementation and has published extensively in her area of research, which focuses on the relationship between dietary interventions and fatigue in older adults.



## **DR. ANNETTE HUBBELL**

*Tenure Track Faculty*

Annette Hubbell, PhD RN MSN CNS, is an Illinois native and serves at MCN as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Hubbell has been an educator since 2009.

She was inducted as Nurse Leader into Sigma Theta Tau in 2010. Her research focus is with marginalized populations, in particular African American women's health and physical activity.

She lives with her husband Steve and their cat, Tazer. She competed as a natural bodybuilder from 2006 to 2012, earning professional status. Now retired from competition, Dr. Hubbell's current interests include small gardening, cooking, traveling the country in the camper, e-biking, and live music.



## **JILL HOWELL**

*Instructional Assistant  
Professor*

Jill Howell began her career working as a long-term care nurse and as a school nurse. A passion for teaching led her to take her

first full-time teaching position in 2012 with Peoria Public Schools. Howell went on to teach at Illinois Central College in 2019 in the Health Careers department. After receiving her master's in Nursing Education from Grand Canyon University, she joined Illinois State University as a faculty member in Spring 2022.



## **MAUREEN MURPHY RABBITTE**

*Tenure Track Faculty*

Maureen Murphy Rabbitte was born and raised in Chicago. She earned a BSN from Saint Xavier University, Chicago, in 2001. She earned a MSN

in Advanced Practice Public Health Nursing from Rush University, Chicago, in 2014. She completed her PhD from the University of Missouri Columbia in 2021, where she was a National Institute of Nursing Research funded T32 Health Behavior Science Pre-Doctoral fellow. She holds two graduate certificates, one in school nursing from the University of Illinois Chicago and one as a youth development specialist from the University of Missouri. Her research experience is in adolescent sexual health and women's health. She is the Coordinator of Inquiry and Innovation at the Illinois Association of School Nursing.

Maureen is passionate about public health and currently volunteers with the Chicago Medical Reserve Corps. She has work experience as a labor and delivery nurse, a certified school nurse, an assistant professor of nursing, and a nurse manager for Chicago Public Schools. She lives in Chicago with her three children.



## **SHAYLA DENNIS**

*Instructional Experience  
Coordinator*

Shayla Dennis started as MCN's Instructional Experience Coordinator in June. She works closely with Program Directors

and Sequence Leaders to negotiate student requirements with clinical partners and manage preceptors and faculty teaching assignments, as well as class and clinical schedules. Dennis earned her BS in Agriculture in 2014, a MS in College Student Personnel Administration in 2021, and a Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies in 2021 – all from ISU. She started working full-time for ISU in 2015 with Event Management, Dining, and Hospitality, where she supervised over 100 full-time and student employees and ensured safety compliance across dining centers and retail locations.

In Shayla's spare time she enjoys cooking, trying new recipes, traveling, and going on walks.



## **TARYN D. BRADLEY**

*Coordinator of  
Student Success*

Taryn D. Bradley joined MCN as the Coordinator of Student Success in September. She has been an Academic

Advisor for Elementary Education students in the College of Education at ISU since 2018. Additionally, she teaches IDS 128 Thriving in College, Career, and Beyond, and EAF 228 Social Foundations of Education. Taryn is entering her third year of doctoral studies in the Education Administration Foundations department. She is committed to infusing cultural experiences in the Peoria community in her free time. She is currently planning a college fair and career panel for students in Peoria. She is also planning a cultural arts affair for her community.

Taryn is a lover of hip hop culture and a "Sneaker Head." When she is not working and studying, she enjoys spending time with her dog, Louie, and catching up on her favorite television shows and podcasts.



## **JODEE CESARIO**

*Office Administrator for  
Prelicensure Admissions  
and Compliance*

Jodee Cesario started at MCN in March as the Office Administrator for Prelicensure

Admissions and Compliance. Cesario's role allows her the opportunity to communicate directly with students as she supports them through enrollment and helps them prepare to begin each new clinical experience. She comes to MCN with seven years of experience in the public sector, where she was responsible for detailed record keeping and reporting in various capacities, as well as maintaining sensitive and confidential information.

On a more personal note, Jodee enjoys riding her moped through Uptown Normal and Miller Park. She loves spending time with her wife and their two cats, Elizabeth and Prudence, and she will never pass up a Harry Potter marathon.



## ANTONIO KAYAMBA

*IT Associate*

Antonio Kayamba began in his role as IT Associate in February and hit the ground running. Kayamba is a Redbird alum, having graduated with his BS in Computer Systems Technology in 2018. Since then, he has worked in several IT roles, from Support Specialist to Consultant to Field Engineer, for companies such as Hemmersbach, an IT infrastructure service company in Bloomington, and Flexitech, Inc., an automotive parts manufacturer in Normal. Kayamba has extensive experience in providing software and hardware troubleshooting and maintenance support.



## KIRSTEN CROW

*Instructional Assistant Professor*

Kirsten Crow lives in Washington with her husband, 15-year-old son, and their German Shepard. She also has a stepdaughter and a granddaughter that live very close. She has been a nurse for a little over 10 years. Her nursing background includes bedside nurse, charge nurse, and educator. She has worked at Saint Francis Medical Center Peoria and Peoria County Jail and taught part-time at Illinois Central College, Bradley University, and ISU. She taught a CNA course, Med-surg, OB, and Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing part-time while working at OSF.

In her free time, Crow enjoys fishing, watching her son do motocross, and being with family.



## KILEIGH GUIDO

*Assistant Dean for Student Services*

Kileigh Guido joined MCN in 2017 as an Academic Advisor for the Traditional BSN, Accelerated BSN, and RN to BSN programs. Throughout her time at MCN, she has transitioned from the role of Academic Advisor, to Director of Prelicensure Advising, to the recently created position, Assistant Dean for Student Services. She came to MCN with seven years of experience in higher education, formerly supporting and teaching students in various roles at Kendall College and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Guido is an alumnus of ISU, earning a bachelor's degree in Psychology and minor in Creative Writing in 2008. She also earned her master's in School Counseling from Roosevelt University in 2010. Currently, Guido is pursuing her PhD in Higher Education Administration at ISU.

Guido is a mother to three children, ages 5, 2, and 6 months. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her children and husband. She also has three pets, two terrier dogs and a cat. She and her husband enjoy trying new restaurants and coffee shops, as well as going to concerts and comedy shows.



## MELISSA MOODY

*Director of Admissions and Compliance*

Melissa Moody accepted the new position of Director of Admissions and Compliance in August. In this role, she will provide leadership and management for all admission processes and student health and safety compliance protocols. Moody earned her MA in Sociology from ISU and is certified as a Professional Coach by the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching. She has over 20 years of academic advising and coaching experience and has served as Academic Advisor with MCN since 2006, as well as the Transcultural Coordinator from 2013-2020.

Melissa is a licensed private pilot and is a proud member of a new local flying club operating a refurbished 1956 Cessna. She loves music and enjoys spending her free time outdoors hiking, mountain biking, traveling, and exploring as often as possible.

## CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY:

# 2022 Award Winners

### 🌿 Early Career Achievement Award 🌿 *Catherine Bailey, BSN '16*

Bailey began her nursing career as an LPN. She then completed her ADN at Heartland Community College in 2010. She later graduated from MCN's online RN-BSN program in 2016. As an RN on an inpatient oncology unit, Bailey discovered a passion in caring for cancer patients, and later transitioned to become an Oncology Nurse Navigator.

"I am grateful and humbled to receive this award from my Alma Mater," Bailey says. "MCN was an integral part of my development as a nurse, and I attribute much of my success to the education and guidance that I received during my time in the RN-BSN program."

### 🌿 Spirit of Nursing Award 🌿 *Carol Hany Carter, BSN '85*

Carter graduated with MCN's first BSN cohort in 1985. In 2019, she received a School Nurse Professional Educator Certification from MCN and is enrolled in MCN's Nursing Leadership and Management program. She works as a Certified School Nurse and is engaged in several leadership activities.

"I consider myself fortunate to have been affiliated with so many wonderful nurse role models," says Carter. "I plan to do all I can to carry out the Spirit of Nursing in my community and beyond."

### *Mary Lou Kauffman '81*

Kauffman received her nursing certificate from Mennonite School of Nursing in 1981. She has worked for 20 years as a lead RN and Clinical Assistant. In June of 2021, Kauffman was nominated for Best Nurses in Atlanta by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution newspaper.

Kaufmann's summer vacations have been the same for the past 40 years – she travels from Georgia to Illinois to serve as the campus nurse for the Illinois Association of Junior High Student Council Camp, where she is known as "Mama Louie." Kauffman's hospitality gifts and servant heart are beyond measure.

Every spring, MCN alumni from far and wide gather to reconnect, honor milestone reunions, and recognize award winners. This year, the event was able to occur in person, a welcome change of pace from the last few years of virtual get-togethers. Alumni enjoyed the opportunity to sit across the table from one another and catch up while celebrating our 2022 award winners. ✨

### 🌿 Distinguished Alumni Award 🌿 *Betty Rosendahl Wagner*

Wagner received her certificate in nursing in 1948 from the Mennonite Hospital School of Nursing. She worked in various hospitals and in eye surgery, retiring in her 80s. In 2018, Wagner established an endowed scholarship for a nursing student, believing it was important to help future nurses.

"I am very humbled and grateful to receive this award," says Wagner. "I spent all my life doing nursing, and surgery was my first love. I always enjoyed working with people, and to this day, that's what I miss most in retirement—the people."

### 🌿 Service Award 🌿 *Jennifer Jacobs Banaszak, BSN '99*

Banaszak received her BSN from MCN in 1999 and her MSN in 2003 from the University of Phoenix. While she was at MCN, she was the Class President and was among the first to graduate from MCN at ISU in December 1999. Banaszak has worked as a nurse, adjunct instructor, and case manager for worker's compensation, and volunteers in supporting the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I am extremely honored to have received the Service Award for 2022," says Banaszak. "If my work and volunteering made people's lives a little better and helped to instill hope during this pandemic then I feel I have accomplished a great feat."



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[Nursing.IllinoisState.edu](http://Nursing.IllinoisState.edu)



## SAVE THE DATE

The following events have been scheduled:

### WINTER COMMENCEMENT

Saturday, December 17, 2022

### GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION

Friday, April 28, 2023

### BIRDS GIVE BACK

Thursday, February 23, 2023

### MNAO AWARDS & REUNION BANQUET

Saturday, April 29, 2023

### MCN RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Thursday, March 23, 2023

### SPRING COMMENCEMENT

Friday, May 12, 2023

For the latest information, please visit [Nursing.IllinoisState.edu](http://Nursing.IllinoisState.edu).

