Anna Storvick’s passion for helping others doesn’t stop with patients. The future nurse practitioner wants to help nursing students follow in her footsteps.

She’s the fifth recipient of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing’s Pay it Forward endowed scholarship, established in 2004 by Bette Brotherton, MSN ’85, and Doreen Wise, BSN ’68. Grateful for her scholarship, Anna feels that helping others is the least she can do.

Whether it’s allowing a student to observe her at work, financially supporting an underprivileged student or simply sharing her experiences over coffee, Anna will be enriching the lives of others.

To support dedicated nursing students like Anna through scholarship endowment, please contact Sydney Haffkine at (615) 322-8851 or sydney.haffkine@vanderbilt.edu. You may also visit www.vanderbilthealth.org/givetonnursing to learn more.

“We value excellence and innovation in preserving and advancing the art and science of nursing in the scholarly domains of education, research and practice. These values are pursued through the integration of information technology and faculty-student interactions and transactions, while embracing cultural and academic diversity.”

—Anna Storvick, 2010 master of science in nursing candidate
make connections@vusn

We want to reach out to you. Pick one or all of the ways below to stay in touch with your classmates, faculty and School:

Facebook: Join more than 1,000 fans at www.facebook.com/vanderbiltschoolofnursing
Twitter: Follow us on www.twitter.com/vanderbiltnurse
Submit your e-mail address to www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/gogreen so we can send you quarterly electronic updates.

Visit Nurse magazine online to obtain additional information on various articles, get updates about faculty, view videos and provide comments
www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/nurse/SP10

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Enjoy pictures of recent School of Nursing events.
When I came as Dean in 1984, we were celebrating our 75th year. Little did I realize that I would lead the School into our 101st year! Our Centennial year gave us a wonderful opportunity to look at where we’ve been and where we are headed as a School of Nursing and as nurse professionals, and to collect and organize 100 years of memorabilia. It was exciting to connect and re-connect with many of you during the year’s special activities. This academic year, I celebrate my 26th anniversary as your dean and as the second longest seated dean of School of Nursing in the country!

I first went into nursing because I believed then, as I do now, that there is no other career that offers as many opportunities. I see this played out every day when I hear about the wonderful work of our alums or meet with students to talk about their career paths. Nursing touches and changes the lives of people like no other profession.

During my years as dean, I have been fortunate to play a part in the development of the Prespeciality (bridge), the Ph.D. and the D.N.P. programs, and this fall we launch our first non-nursing degree – a Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics with a focus on administration or informatics. The School has continuously reinvented itself and is distinguished among its peers, with innovations in academics, faculty practice, research, informatics and an unparalleled focus on activities in the community.

The way we teach nursing has evolved over time. During the past several years, our school has embraced technology and used tools including many online learning applications, to enhance our teaching methods. Therefore, our learning experiences provide greater access to information for our students.

Vanderbilt University School of Nursing owes our successes to many women and men who challenged the status quo, met problems head-on and set precedents at the school – nationally and internationally.

Our collective history is remarkable. I am honored to have made a contribution for the past 26 years, along with so many talented faculty, staff, students and alums. We are each part of this special community of compassionate, intellectual and resourceful members and together we build, reshape and fortify today’s students and future generations. While we have accomplished so much together, I firmly believe the best is yet to come.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Vanderbilt Nurse, enhanced with input from our alums, that reflects innovative work being done by our faculty and some amazing personal stories.

Sincerely,

Colleen Conway-Welch, Ph.D., C.N.M., F.A.A.N., F.A.C.N.M.
Nancy and Hilliard Travis Professor and Dean of the School of Nursing
colleen.conway-welch@vanderbilt.edu
During Colleen Conway-Welch’s 26 years as dean, Vanderbilt Nurse shares some key numbers that reflect how the school has grown and continues to prosper under her leadership.

- 4,851 students have been pinned
- 31 pinning ceremonies
- $66,083,016 in grants have been raised for VUSN research, renovation and initiatives
- $33,922,897 in scholarships have gone to offset tuition costs for more than 88 percent of VUSN students
- 1,859 students have been inducted into Sigma Theta Tau
- 3 honorary degrees she has been awarded
- 18 different countries represented among VUSN students/graduates
- 6 ribbon cuttings
NEW WAYS TO LEARN  •

Vanderbilt University School of Nursing is pioneering the use of smartphones as teaching tools. The School is one of the first in the nation to use a new application that transforms wireless devices, including Blackberry, iPod, iTouch, and laptops into classroom response devices for enhanced learning.

“Students in our program have multiple exposures to computers and cell phones,” said Susan Newbold, Ph.D., R.N., associate professor of Nursing. “The time was right to take the classroom response systems to the next level. We piloted the idea in January, and it is being used by about 30 percent of our students this fall semester.”

Classroom response systems (or clickers) are a proven way to stimulate learning by engaging students in a different way, allowing students to provide instant feedback to faculty. They participate more fully during class time, improve performance and help turn lectures into more intimate settings.

National research has shown that these systems improved performance scores on exams.

“The School of Nursing is the first on campus to use this application, and was actually one of the first schools nationwide to use it,” said Derek Bruff, Ph.D., assistant director at the Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt.

VUSN faculty have been using the new tool to help with taking attendance, administering tests and quizzes, asking opinion questions and encouraging anonymous feedback. Many of the features can be integrated with a Blackboard learning system that is used for various elements of course delivery.

Newbold believes it can help both students and faculty.

“It allows instructors to focus on teaching rather than grading. By using it for administrative tasks such as attendance, grading and even in concert with our Blackboard system, it saves precious classroom time for more learning,” said Newbold.

The ResponseWare application can be used with Macintosh or PC platforms; wireless smart phones or laptops. The cost to students is $35 for the software version and $40 to $60 for the handheld device.

NURSE-MIDWIFERY PRACTICE EARN NATIONAL HONOR  •

Vanderbilt University School of Nursing’s Nurse-Midwifery practice is among the best large practice groups in the country, according to the American College of Nurse-Midwives.

The School’s Nurse-Midwifery practice was recognized as the best practice for the highest rate of first trimester patient entry into care among high-volume certified nurse-midwifery practices (500 or more births per year), with 74 percent of clients entering into prenatal care within the first trimester.

“Our nurse-midwifery practice makes a difference in traditionally underserved communities as well as among private patients throughout Middle Tennessee,” said Bonnie Pilon, D.S.N., R.N., senior associate dean for Faculty Practice. “It is gratifying to know that our approach may help others across the nation improve their own health care delivery services.”

The nurse-midwives see patients at two community sites. Last fiscal year, the practice delivered 799 of the 2,900 babies born — roughly 28 percent — at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and this year, the practice is on track to deliver more than 1,000 babies at VUMC.

“We made some great decisions focused on increasing access to care, and they have paid off in the long run,” said Tonia Moore-Davis, M.S.N., C.N.M., clinical practice manager for the Nurse-Midwifery practice. “Dividing the practice into two locations allowed new prenatal patients to be seen by a faculty certified nurse-midwife within 14 days rather than four weeks.”

The group also reached out to different communities in Nashville, such as the Somali Community Center, Shade Tree Clinic and various Hispanic groups to underscore the importance of early prenatal care.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR PRENATAL HEALTH  •

The Vanderbilt Schools of Nursing and Medicine have come together to improve prenatal care in a clinical partnership called the Shade Tree Early Pregnancy Program (STEEP).

Second-year medical students Marissa Blanco, Kelly Bingham and Erin Toaz saw a need for targeted prenatal care, so they applied for grants to support the once-a-month clinic.
held at Shade Tree, the free full-service clinic run by VUSM students. The students have received a $5,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Nashville, and another $12,000 from a private family foundation.

“Dr. (Charles) Rush stepped in and said he would help with a monthly clinic and would bring third-year students who are in their ob/gyn rotation,” said Bingham. “Then, the VUSN Nurse-Midwifery clinical faculty agreed to come and bring nurse-midwifery students, so now we have a team. The interesting part is how much the medical students are learning from the nurse-midwifery students, and vice versa.”

The goal is to get women like Dayana Moran, a 27-year-old expectant mother pictured above with first-year medical student Sarah Proffitt, into STEPP as early in their pregnancy as possible. Students start the women on prenatal vitamins and provide all the needed lab work. The women receive a comprehensive prenatal visit from either an ob/gyn or a nurse-midwife faculty member.

“STEPP is a bridge to get people in need into care,” said Tonia Moore-Davis, M.S.N., R.N., C.N.M., head of the VUSN nurse-midwifery practice. “These women and their unborn babies needed to see a practitioner right away, and get to a place that can offer continuous care covering prenatal, birth and postpartum.”

Low-risk patients will automatically be admitted into the nurse-midwifery faculty practice and be seen at regularly scheduled intervals throughout their entire pregnancy.

**GRANT: TELEHEALTH, INFORMATICS**

Vanderbilt University School of Nursing has received a new $1.3 million grant from the Health Resource and Services Administration (HRSA) for faculty development in informatics, simulation and telehealth.

“Today’s nursing faculty are faced with the complex task of educating nurses for a world facing a workforce shortage, increasing patient complexities, and an ever-increasing dependence on technology for patient care, documentation and communication,” said Betsy Weiner, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., senior associate dean for Informatics at VUSN and principal investigator of the grant. “On top of that, patient safety and quality are important priorities.”

According to the Institute of Medicine’s 2003 report on health education, the education of health professionals is viewed as a bridge to quality care. This grant will address faculty development in areas that are both new to nursing and instrumental in meeting educational challenges. VUSN has partnered with the University of Kentucky on this project.

Plans include piloting the project in Kentucky and Tennessee, followed by a regional board representing 16 Southern states with a high incidence of life-threatening diseases. The goal in the final years is to expand offerings to all nurse educators in the nation. The grant will run concurrently with Weiner’s earlier $1.6 million HRSA grant for faculty development in simulation.

**HEREFORD SOCIETY LAUNCHES MATCH CHALLENGE ••••**

With the average debt load of a nursing student soaring to $80,000, the Julia Hereford Society (JHS) has rededicated itself to raising scholarship money for Vanderbilt University School of Nursing. Named after Julia Hereford, a 1936 graduate and Dean from 1949-1965, the group is composed of donors who give $1,000 or more annually to the JHS scholarship fund at VUSN.

“We have to do something about the debt load of nurses or the future of private schools of nursing is in jeopardy,” said VUSN dean Colleen Conway-Welch, Ph.D. “Ninety-five percent of our students receive financial assistance of some sort, so the funding we receive from the Julia Hereford Society is critical.”

This fall, JHS President John Michael Briley, D.N.P., (M.S.N. ’94) pictured above with Dean Conway-Welch and Associate Professor Judy Sweeney, (M.S.N. ’75, B.S.N. ’70), announced a match program. Specifically, he will match the first 25 new members up to a total of $25,000.

“My family wanted to do something in honor of Colleen’s 25 years as dean. I’m able to do the work that I do every day because of her leadership,” he said. “Vanderbilt is the railroad line that quality rides on. That’s why the match is so important to me. We have the opportunity in 2010 to impact the School of Nursing like never before.”
Briley is a 1994 master’s graduate and founder and president of Primary Care Specialists-South in Jackson, Tenn. “We really need to make a big dent in the debt load of our students,” said Jeff Balser, M.D., Ph.D., vice chancellor for Health Affairs and dean of Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. “We want students to not be limited because of their debt. We want them to pursue their dreams and lead.”

Both Balser and Conway-Welch had academic scholarships and say they would not be in their positions today without that financial assistance.

**TWO KEY PROMOTIONS AT VUSN**

Becky Keck and Sarah Ramsey have both been promoted to key positions at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing. Keck, pictured above left, has been named to a newly created role as Senior Associate Dean for Administration and Operations/Chief Administrative Officer, and Ramsey to Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

Keck, M.S.N., R.N., NEA, BC, has served in many administrative capacities throughout her 17-year career at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in nursing finance and operations and participating in key initiatives such as the Magnet Recognition Program. In 2007, she joined the School of Nursing as the Clinical Director for Geriatric Services where she served as a faculty member in the Health Systems Management specialty as well as the Clinical Director for Geriatric Services for University Community Health Services.

Keck’s initial nursing career started in medical/surgical nursing and surgical intensive care. She has held nursing management positions at a community-based hospital in Lexington, Ky., and at the University of Kentucky Medical Center. She is a native of Bowling Green, Ky., with strong ties to Western Kentucky University, where she earned her associate and bachelor Degrees in Nursing. She completed her Masters in Nursing with a concentration in nursing administration at the University of Kentucky.

Ramsey, M.Ed., pictured above second from the left, has served in various capacities at VUSN for more than 17 years, and has held the position of director of student affairs since 1995. She is the touchstone for more than 700 nursing students at any given time and oversees the school’s milestone events such as orientation, three separate pinning ceremonies and graduation. She also serves as the primary referral source for students who need personal or academic counseling.

Other than a two-year stint at a Nashville securities brokerage firm, Ramsey’s career and education have been focused at Vanderbilt. She started her career in Vanderbilt Development and served as an undergraduate admissions counselor for three years.

She earned both her Master of Education degree in Higher Education Administration and her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Vanderbilt University.

**DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT**

Adolescents with type 1 diabetes have a new, effective tool to improve self-management – an Internet-based program called YourWay.

Shelagh Mulvaney, Ph.D., assistant professor at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, led the first-ever study of a Web-based intervention to improve glycemic control among adolescents with Type 1 diabetes. The study was recently published in the journal Diabetes Care, and the results were presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Research on Internet Interventions in Amsterdam.

“It is very challenging to cope with diabetes as a teenager,” said Mulvaney. “We wanted to take an approach that used real-world experiences and capitalized on the interest many teens have for the Internet and new technologies.”

Mulvaney enlisted help from colleagues at the Vanderbilt Eskind Pediatric Diabetes Clinic, securing 72 study participants, 13 to 17 years old, with type 1 diabetes. One group received conventional care and the other received conventional care plus access to YourWay.

A multidisciplinary team of diabetes professionals, researchers, young patients, and volunteers wrote and edited Web site content that included six multimedia scenarios that these adolescents often face. The stories focused on...
key psychosocial barriers to self-management, such as time pressures, competing demands such as school and social goals, embarrassment, and modeled approaches to coping and problem solving.

The YourWay site also included a personalized home page, guided applied problem-solving, a peer forum, social comparison of responses with other adolescents, help from a problem-solving expert, and weekly e-mails to encourage participation.

“Dealing with a chronic disease is difficult for anyone,” said Mulvaney. “It is particularly daunting for teens diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, and transition to successful self-management is critical for the rest of their lives.”

The results are promising as glycemic control, problem-solving, and self-management adherence improved. Most of the adolescents viewed all stories at least once and completed the problem-solving activities, perhaps because the stories were rated as highly relevant and realistic.

Mulvaney and collaborator Russell Rothman, M.D., have also created a parallel problem-solving Web site for parents of teenagers with diabetes, and adapted the YourWay Web site for adolescents with type 2 diabetes. Mulvaney and Kevin Johnson, M.D., have designed a text messaging intervention that will be tested this spring.

SUPPORTING TOMORROW’S FACULTY

Becoming a nursing professor is a little easier for Vanderbilt University School of Nursing students thanks to a $512,800 grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The grant will help fund a loan forgiveness program for nursing students who want to become full-time faculty upon graduation.

“The only way we, as a country, can help avoid nursing shortages is by having more nurse faculty,” said Linda Norman, D.S.N., R.N., senior associate dean of Academics for the school. “This grant will help many of our nursing students as they prepare for a career in nursing academia.”

The HRSA nursing faculty loan program provides a loan of up to $30,000 per year to students that can be used for tuition, fees and books. The program will forgive 20 percent of the total loan amount each year for the first three years that the student works as full-time faculty following graduation. In the fourth year of employment as a nurse faculty member, the payback is 25 percent. After four years, the student will have 85 percent of this loan repaid.

VUSN has received HRSA nursing faculty loan forgiveness funds since the federal program started five years ago, but never at this level of funding. Last year, HRSA provided $164,000 worth of funding.

“This really opens opportunities for those who want to be nurse educators and shows the agency’s commitment to nursing education,” Norman said.

In addition to the HRSA loan forgiveness grant, VUSN was also recently awarded a $245,000 in scholarship monies for advanced nurse education training, specifically for master’s and doctoral students.

EXAMINING HEALTH DISPARITIES AS SOCIAL JUSTICE

Students, faculty and staff packed the auditorium to hear Wayne Riley, M.D., M.P.H., MBA, deliver the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Lecture in January. Riley, CEO of Meharry Medical College and professor of Medicine at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, shared what he believes King would think about health care disparity and inequity in America today.

On the topic of inequities, he shared continued concerns regarding the physician workforce; specifically, that less than 2 percent of U.S. physicians were African-American in 1960 and that, according to the latest data available, only 4 percent of U.S. physicians are African-American and 5 percent Hispanic.

Yet, studies show that minority doctors have a great propensity to practice in underserved areas. He noted the same trend lines were true for nurses.

“African-American physicians tend to gravitate toward the areas that are underserved. This has been our calling for many years, and highlights the fact that, Dr. King would argue, it is an investment that pays off in terms of where they work,”
said Riley, who called for greater diversity, and more women, throughout all health care professions and academia.

While discussing health care disparities, Riley cited crucial gaps in care between different populations across the lifespan, with studies showing life expectancy for black men and women remains roughly a decade less than white men and women.

“Dr. King would be very worried about this body of work that would indicate that we have a lot to do in the house of medicine, and he would challenge us to do better,” Riley said.

As part of this event sponsored by the Schools of Nursing and Medicine, the Martin Luther King Jr. Service Award was presented to dual recipients: VUSN’s Bonnie Pilon, pictured above right on previous page with Dean Conway-Welch, D.S.N., R.N., was honored for expanding access to health care for Nashville’s underserved and VUSM’s Adetola Kassim, M.D., M.S., for his extensive work with stem cell research.

**EASING LYMPHEDEMA •**

There is only one standard treatment for lymphedema – a chronic condition in which the lymph drainage system is compromised and fluid accumulates in the body – but Sheila Ridner, Ph.D., M.S.N., is investigating a promising laser treatment.

Ridner, assistant professor at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, has been awarded a $50,000 grant from the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) to study how different types of lymphedema treatment impact symptoms, quality of life and arm swelling.

Ridner teamed up with fellow ONS member Ellen Poage, M.S.N., who practices at Rehabilitation Associates of Naples, in Florida. The clinic had recently purchased a laser therapy system, and after six weeks of use was seeing significant reduction in arm swelling.

The study will randomize 90 participants at the Florida clinic into three groups — laser treatment only, manual lymph drainage only and a combination of both. It will also work to determine effective doses of laser treatment.

“Manual lymph drainage lightly massages the body to open lymph channels to drain away from where fluid accumulates. It is not a cure, it just reduces volume. The laser likely stimulates the lymph system itself. Lymph moves more efficiently,” Ridner explained.

The laser therapy system has advantages over manual lymph drainage. The laser is FDA-approved and could potentially be used at home by lymphedema patients. The handheld device is easy to apply and the treatment is painless.

“Lasers have been used for wound healing and sports injuries for years. The concept that they could be helpful in wound healing is not new, but lymphedema treatment is a new application of the technology,” Ridner said.

**HEALTHY HEAD START •**

More than 120 community children converged on Alumni Lawn this fall for relay races, tug-of-war contests and healthy snacks at the Fall Field Day Festival. The event was hosted by Vanderbilt University Healthy Head Start, a group of students dedicated to promoting healthy living through education and active lifestyles.

Like many good ideas, Healthy Head Start started with a well-taught college course.

As a junior, Brian Mayrsohn, like hundreds of other undergraduates, opted to take Vanderbilt University School of Nursing instructor Jamie Pope’s nutrition class last year. He had always been interested in the topic, but did not fully understand the broad impact of poor nutrition until one particular class.

“Professor Pope used a series of U.S. maps to show how every few years our population was getting more and more obese,” Mayrsohn said. “I wanted to do something.”

So, Mayrsohn joined with fellow undergraduate Kristy Hamilton and together they founded Vanderbilt University Healthy Head Start which has served nutritious feasts to kids at a local Boys and Girls Club, taught 4- and 5-year-olds at the Edgehill Community Center about the enjoyment of eating fruits and vegetables, and partnered with the YMCA of Middle Tennessee to teach children about healthy lifestyles.

The key to the group’s success is making it fun.
As a researcher at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, Michael Vollman, Ph.D., R.N., is examining the impact of depression in patients with heart disease, and especially those diagnosed with heart failure.

“We have at least 10 years worth of solid research evidence indicating that once a patient with heart disease develops a clinically significant depression, things get very complicated,” said Vollman, assistant professor of Nursing. “Their clinical trajectory worsens due to a number of psychosocial, behavioral and biological factors, some of which we are just now beginning to explore and understand.”

Through his secondary research faculty appointments in cardiovascular medicine and psychiatry, Vollman is working with colleagues around the Medical Center trying to sort out this critical issue because depressive symptoms impact morbidity and mortality, as well as decreased quality of life.

Complicating the issue, a significant number of patients do not respond to conventional depression treatments, and results from earlier clinical trials are inconclusive about the most effective treatments for co-morbid depression in patients with heart disease. So, researchers are now focusing on identifying personal and environmental factors that affect a patient’s response to depression treatments.

Vollman is finishing a National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Nursing Research-funded study that examined the longitudinal relationships between coping behaviors and depressive symptoms in patients living with heart failure. A secondary aim of this study examined the potential effects of coping behaviors on biological mechanisms critical to heart failure disease progression, namely, systemic inflammation and sympathetic nervous system activation.

Vollman’s future research plans include a pilot study testing the effectiveness of nurse-administered depression treatment interventions in community-living patients with heart failure. He also sees an opportunity to design studies that target the effects of depressive symptoms among newly diagnosed patients with heart failure as these patients have a higher prevalence and greater severity of depressive symptoms.

Finally, he hopes to collaborate with colleagues in the Medical Center’s Department of Pharmacology in exploring potential myocardial protective effects associated with use of some anti-depression medicines.

He admits, however, that while research focusing on heart disease and depression is promising, it also is very humbling.

“Our research participants are absolutely amazing,” he said. “More often than not, they tell me they want to help so the next generation of patients with heart failure will have better treatments and a better life.”

– KATHY RIVERS
OPENING A NEW DOOR

When one door closes, a different door may open – at least that’s what three Vanderbilt University School of Nursing graduates think. These resilient individuals prove that while adversity cannot be avoided, it can reshape our purpose.

BY JESSICA PASLEY
ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE CUTLER
Re-Defining Her Life

In 2006 Tammy Hakim moved to Franklin, Tenn., from Michigan with her family. Two months later, Hakim’s husband of nearly 12 years died at the age of 38. He had been diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer 10 months prior.

She was left with no local family support, two young children and her grief. Not yet ready to return to nursing, she went to Graceworks Ministries seeking volunteer opportunities.

Hakim spent the next three months creating a business plan for a nonprofit faith-based clinic called Graceworks, and when it opened, Hakim was the nurse manager. Graceworks Health Clinic, a nonprofit, faith-based organization that provides health care services for the working uninsured, students with no insurance, and individuals between jobs in Williamson County, opened in 2007 with Hakim serving as the nurse manager.

But still she felt something was missing.

Hakim always had a love for older people. Geriatrics, she admitted, has been her passion. But after serving as the primary caregiver for her husband and bonding with other patients and families during his doctor visits, she also felt drawn to palliative care.

She applied to the adult nurse practitioner program at VUSN, but also

Tammy Hakim’s smile is one of peace and strength. This single mother of two uses her experience and education to help hospice patients – for the same organization that helped her husband in his final weeks.
wanted to pursue palliative care. Thankfully, Vanderbilt allowed her to experience both.

“I thought it would be hard to do, but that was where my heart was,” she said, “now, I’m a palliative care nurse practitioner with a mostly geriatric population. These are my two loves. What a fit. I feel truly blessed.”

Soon after receiving her advanced practice degree, the organization that took care of her husband in his final weeks – Odyssey Health – offered her a position within its newly created palliative care division.

A coincidence? Not if you ask Hakim:

“I think your life is dependent on what you make of it and what your focus is,” she said. “Each day, it is important to find the blessing and continue looking ahead for the good things that are to come even in the midst of darkness.

“For me, I look to the sky and I can envision a big angel looking down and smiling,” she said. “Jeff always told me I should always follow my heart. Faith has been a huge part of my life and to see how God’s plan and purpose have worked out – in my soul mate’s death I was able to see a vision and purpose.

“And it’s hard to see the good in it. But for me, knowing that he is smiling and that something positive came out of a negative…Just seeing how everything has panned out. I am able to bring peace and comfort to people. I am able to help them through their journey. I’ve been there and walked through it.

“I am thankful that, in something so tragic, something so beautiful came out of it too,” Hakim said. “Life can throw different trials in people’s paths and we find ourselves asking ‘why, why, why.’

“I have a ‘feel good’ feeling in my heart that lets me take a breath and smile.”

FINDING NEW STRENGTH

Fellow nurse practitioner Melissa Bolton, M.S.N., also knows she made the right decision to pursue an advanced degree.

Bolton was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2004, after years of experiencing a myriad of symptoms ranging from blurred vision and unexplained falling to numbness and tingling in her extremities.

“You want to kick and scream and cry,” said Bolton of the news of her life-changing illness. “But even at that point you are relieved because you finally have a name for what is going on.”

Bolton began experiencing problems in 1989, which lasted a few months. It wasn’t until 2002 that the symptoms returned. She admitted that it took falling in 2004 with her then 6-month-old son in her arms (he was not injured) to return to the doctor to figure out what was wrong. After her diagnosis, she continued to work as a registered nurse for a pulmonary physician in Jackson, Tenn., whose practice called for rounding on patients throughout a 600-bed hospital.

One year later, when her second child was 1-month-old, a mild MS flare-up prompted her to look at the bigger picture – the future.

“At that point I knew,” said Bolton. “I was considered high risk by insurance companies. That is when I knew I had to work to have group insurance. I knew

After being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, Melissa Bolton wanted to inspire others with her own resolve. She is a role model to co-workers and 5,500-plus Facebook followers, but perhaps most importantly, to her own children, Anna, left, and Alex.
“I am thankful that in something so tragic, something so beautiful came out of it too. Life can throw different trials in people’s paths and we find ourselves asking ‘why, why, why.’

that a job as a nurse practitioner would be more stable and flexible, and that if the MS left me with some sort of disability, I could continue to work in an office setting or teach nursing to others.

“It was at that point I decided I was going back to school.”

Already armed with her B.S.N. from the University of Tennessee at Martin, Bolton entered the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner program at VUSN via the school’s modified distance format in 2006. This program allows students to continue their normal work life while pursuing a degree with comprehensive campus visits several times a semester, online conferencing and video-streaming. Practicum placements are arranged in the student’s hometown with Vanderbilt-approved agencies and preceptors.

“There was a lot that was motivating me. I always say, ‘I have MS, but it doesn’t have me.’ I’m not going to let myself be limited by it. You can’t ignore the disease, but you can always continue to have a positive attitude and do the best of your ability to push through any obstacle.”

A flare-up at the end of her spring semester proved difficult for Bolton, but it also fueled her desire to make the best of her situation. She completed her course work on time. A few months after graduating in 2007, she returned to work at the Jackson Clinic in the pulmonary division.

Bolton has the most common form of MS, relapse-remitting. It has been 16 months since her last flare-up. She is enrolled in a clinical study for the Novartis drug Fingolimod, which she credits with keeping her relatively symptom free.

“There are still days when I want to kick, scream and cry,” said Bolton, but for the most part she takes it all in stride.

She started a Facebook page cause called “Living with Multiple Sclerosis” which has an international following of nearly 5,500. Plans call for her to facilitate a support group for young adults with MS in Jackson.

While Bolton’s reason for pursuing her masters was a practical one, her journey has proven to be a life lesson.

“I am an example that a person with MS can still have kids,” said Bolton, mom to Alex, 6, and Anna, 4. “You can still be a nurse. It’s something I tell my children — no matter what, you get up and you keep going. As hard as things seem, no matter how bad you get knocked down, you’ve got to keep pushing.”

CHARTING A NEW DIRECTION

While resilience, faith and a spirit of determination are factors for both Hakim and Bolton, they said the support of Vanderbilt instructors played a key role in their success. Tanya Sorrell, M.S.N., agrees. It was the encouragement from peers and colleagues that served as a guiding force throughout her entire career. But it took a sometimes fatal sting of a 3-inch scorpion to change her career path.

A lifelong mental health enthusiast, Sorrell received her bachelor’s degree in pre-med and psychology from Louisiana State University, a Master of Science degree in clinical and health psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi, and in 2004 earned her psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner degree from Vanderbilt.

“I always knew I wanted to work in the mental health field,” said Sorrell, also the 2004 Founder’s Medalist. “Every job I ever had was in mental health.

“The more I worked in the field, I saw patients falling through the cracks. I knew there was something missing and I could play a part in helping patients.”

In 2008 Sorrell had a full plate as a family psychiatric nurse practitioner with Community Mental Health in Yuma, Ariz. She was juggling patients in a crisis hospitalization unit, in a psychiatric nursing rotation as a teacher at Arizona Western College, and served as a preceptor for nurse practitioner students at the University of Arizona and Arizona State University.

“I knew that I always wanted to give back,” she said. “That was a big part of my drive. I recognized that I liked my role as a teacher and a trainer. And I was
content, until I was stung by a bark scorpion. Everything changed.”

A bark scorpion is one of the most venomous in North America. It can produce severe pain, numbness and tingling, as well as difficulties breathing. Symptoms can last up to 72 hours.

“If I would go awhile without breathing, my stepmother would push on me and I would reflexively take a deep breath. She said that, all the way to the hospital, I kept saying ‘I have too much to do still, God, I am not ready to go.’ She felt it was like my prayer. She said when I breathed out I said ‘not yet.’

“I guess that has always been in the back of my mind – I have a purpose. I see the bigger picture.”

Sorrell spent a few days in the intensive care unit. During her recovery, which included months of neurological rehabilitation, she began practicing Tai Chi to regain her balance and coordination. It was during her medical leave that her position was eliminated. Worried about her future as well as the well-being of her patients, Sorrell turned to her peers, who suggested she open her own practice.

In 2009, Sorrell opened Yuma Mental Health and Wellness Center, with a focus on a holistic approach to mental health, and in her first year, was selected by *Advance for Nurse Practitioners* magazine as one of the top entrepreneurs.

“I would have never thought to open my own business without the encouragement from my colleagues,” said Sorrell. “Sometimes you have to take a step back and try to figure out where you fit into the bigger picture.”

“Being stung by that scorpion was my greatest ‘aha’ moment yet,” said Sorrell. “I would not have taken a detour along the holistic path had I not needed it in my own recovery.”

Sorrell’s clinic is unique in Yuma – it’s tagged as the only holistic-based mental health program that offers a one-stop shop for medication management, educational groups, Tai Chi, yoga, therapeutic acupressure and massage.

“Holistic mental health services are integral to mental health,” she said. “One thing about being a nurse practitioner, (we) look more at the person than the diagnosis.”
After her son Christopher was born, Tracey Stamper could recite all the numbers: Jan. 12, 2010; 5:27 p.m., 7 pounds, 14 ounces; 19 ¼ inches.

But to her, the most important number was his gestational age. Her healthy baby boy defied the odds and was born at 39 weeks, nearly full-term.

Stamper is just one participant in Tennessee Connections for Better Birth Outcomes (BBO), a study investigating how all babies can go the gestational distance – especially important since Tennessee is ranked the 45th worst in the nation for pre-term births.

“Prematurity and infant mortality are huge problems,” said Melanie Lutenbacher, Ph.D., M.S.N., F.A.A.N., a principal investigator for BBO. “Mothers who have had a premature baby are more at risk to have another premature baby. We wanted to do something to help change those numbers and improve outcomes for mothers and babies.”

Home Visits

The study is for pregnant women ages 18 to 40 who have previously given birth prematurely. They are randomized into two groups. One receives care from Vanderbilt obstetric or nurse-midwifery clinics, and the other group receives the same care plus regularly scheduled prenatal home visits by a nurse-midwife during pregnancy and 18 months of postnatal home visits by a nurse.

Now in its fourth year, BBO is funded by a $2.5 million grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee and has already enrolled more than 200 pregnant women.

Just as prematurity crosses all racial and socioeconomic lines, study participants come from a range of backgrounds.

On the home visits, nurses follow protocols based on research of risk factors associated with prematurity. Nutrition, stress, depression, dental health, abuse, pregnancy spacing, smoking and drug use are all considerations and factored into the interventions.

“We can’t just take our finger and point to one cause of prematurity,” Lutenbacher said. “Women may be genetically predisposed to prematurity, but without an environmental trigger, it may never surface. So, we’re looking at risk factors that we may be able to modify and improve to hopefully prevent the trigger.”

Nurse-midwives are uniquely prepared to address the myriad risk factors, says Tara Lynchard, M.S.N., C.N.M., with BBO.

BY LESLIE HAST
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUSAN URMY
Tracey Stamper adores son Christopher. Her fears for his health have been replaced by dreams for his future.
A Look Inside Nurses for Newborns

Nurses for Newborns is a natural fit when it comes to collaborating with the Better Birth Outcomes study. This separate, non-profit nurse visitation program for at-risk mothers and babies is important in preventing infant mortality.

“The first 18 months is most critical for a child,” said Vicki Beaver, M.S.N., R.N., executive director of Nurse for Newborns of Tennessee. “We are certainly helping the next generation of children, but we are also helping women learn how to get through the struggles that come with raising an infant.”

Nurses for Newborns provides postpartum home visits to Better Birth Outcomes participants and care to thousands more throughout seven counties in Middle Tennessee. More than half of those visits were to babies who began life in a neonatal intensive care unit and are medically fragile. It also serves families for whom poverty is the primary risk factor, families headed by a caregiver with medical or mental challenges, and teen mothers.

Beaver, a 1973 B.S.N. graduate of Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, said she understands why mothers appreciate the extra assurance Nurses for Newborns provides.

“We live in a world where many of us don’t live near our mothers, and Nurses for Newborns becomes that safety net,” she said.

Because many infant deaths are sleep-related, Nurses for Newborns strongly emphasizes the “back to sleep” movement, which calls for infants to sleep on their back. But they often run into generational differences.

“Many young mothers who hear us tell them to put their babies to sleep on their back have their mothers telling them to use the stomach position. We have to teach across generations and keep reinforcing the message.”

Home visits are valuable because nurses can see what a baby’s environment is like and eliminate transportation and child care issues for their clients.

Nurses for Newborns can begin to see mothers during their pregnancy and may follow the child until their second birthday. The nurses provide assessments, education and often supplies such as diapers or clothing. For more information, visit www.nfnf.org.

“We address a woman as a whole person and not just a pregnancy or diagnosis,” she said.

Babies born prematurely can have developmental problems and are more prone to infections and respiratory issues, not to mention the toll a premature birth takes on the family.

“Everyone has that idealistic view of how their birth is going to be and what it will be like when they get to take their baby home. But a lot of times, the birth is so early that the crib isn’t set up and they haven’t bought everything they need,” Lynchard said. “Imagine the stress on that mother. Women tend to take things on themselves and wonder what they could have done differently to carry their baby to term.”

That’s why mothers are so eager to enroll in BBO when they become pregnant again.

Success Stories

Nurse-midwife Lynchard made home visits to Stamper throughout her second pregnancy. During Stamper’s first pregnancy, she was hospitalized for high blood pressure and gave birth at 34 weeks. She was determined to carry her second baby, Christopher, to term.

Stamper’s blood pressure was perfect throughout this pregnancy, but she had a new concern – type 2 diabetes. Lynchard helped keep her blood sugar under control and made sure she was getting proper nutrition.

“Our whole family changed our diet,” Stamper said. “We get fresh fruit instead of canned and don’t buy snacks to keep in the house.”

Stamper credits Lynchard for making her pregnancy much less stressful by taking time to explain everything, and her partner, Tommy West, said he noticed a difference.

“Tracey seemed to get more out of the visits and had more information about the pregnancy,” he said. “Because she had a more friendly relationship with Tara, she was calmer and more able to process and remember the information she was getting.”

This close, personal relationship with a nurse is a cornerstone of BBO.

“Our moms say our nurses are like a friend who is always there and has expert information,” Lutenbacher said. “That is such a huge part of nursing – developing those relationships and giving holistic care.”

The nurses carry a cell phone, so they are available to answer questions 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. This gives women ready access to their nurse interventionist and an additional safety net if concerns arise.

“We want them to have a good experience, especially since most of the time their preterm birth was traumatic,” Lynchard added. “We want it to be better this time.”

Stella Johnson is a 20-year-old mother hoping for a better birth experience her third time around. Her first child, Jaden, was born via Caesarean section due to fetal distress, and her second child, Christian, was born at 36 weeks when Johnson developed preeclampsia.

“I was completely unprepared,” she
said about Christian’s birth. “I went in to the doctor for a normal checkup and they said my protein levels and blood pressure were off.”

She went to the hospital for lab work, but instead of going home, she was induced. Johnson wants this pregnancy to be different.

“I like having someone to call,” she said. “Last week, I was having pains and Tara immediately told me what to do. It’s helpful to immediately get in touch without having to wait.”

Home visits are relaxed and casual. Children and grandparents are invited to participate. For instance, at one of Johnson’s recent home visits, her older son was amazed at the whoosh-whoosh of the baby’s heartbeat that filled the living room, so Lynchard let him hold the fetal heart monitor wand.

Lynchard believes home visits are valuable because she gets a glimpse into what a mother’s life is really like.

“With clinic visits, most moms try to present their ‘best face,’ but they can be more relaxed and more themselves when I’m coming into their living room. It helps me see the overall situation.”

Johnson is also a full-time retail supervisor and a full-time sociology student at Fisk University. The biggest concern with her pregnancy is stress – an issue strongly associated with preterm birth and something BBO addresses with a frequently used stress management protocol.

Lynchard individualizes her guidance based on women’s interests and responsibilities.

“We work on ways mothers can cope a little better. Stella seems to be very rejuvenated by her classes, so I use that as a focus. I had another mother who had painted in her past, and we got her back into her art.”

Postnatal Care

After the babies are born, the BBO nurse-midwife, and nurses contracted separately through Nurses For Newborns, a separate non-profit nurse visitation program, make a joint visit to the mom before hospital discharge.

This “handoff” helps maintain continuity of care from the prenatal to postnatal periods.

Nurses from Nurses for Newborns continue to follow BBO study protocols for these visits, which focus on any risk factors identified in the prenatal period, increasing the time span between pregnancies, and any new factors identified since the birth.

At the home visit two weeks after his birth, Christopher Stamper had grown 1½ inches and gained 1 pound, “But it’s all in his cheeks!” his mom joked. He is in perfect health – he is a great sleeper and even has a full head of hair.

The numbers don’t lie – 39 weeks truly is a better birth outcome.

“People ask ‘What can I do to help?’” Lutenbacher said. “The answer is to educate yourself, family members, friends and co-workers about risk factors for preterm birth and that they may be modified. Encourage adoption of healthy behaviors now, and encourage all pregnant women to seek care early. Everyone needs to be involved.”

web link

To check out a slide show of the home visits, go to www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/nurse/SP10

We want them (the mothers) to have a good experience, especially since most of the time their preterm birth was traumatic.
Q + A

What do you want everyone reading this to know about the new program?
It is unusual to have a School of Nursing expand to offer academic degrees to other health care professionals. But, the nursing profession can teach dietitians many lessons and provide key insights. It’s a fabulous opportunity for both professions to interact and learn from each other academically and professionally. We offer two specialty tracks at the master’s level – Nutrition Informatics and Nutrition Management in Health Care Systems.

Why is now the right time to launch this?
Several reasons . . . the School of Nursing has been very, very successful with its undergraduate nutrition courses, but there are no academic programs at Vanderbilt University for those who want to pursue the profession. There is a renewed interest in nutrition practice and research throughout the University which is driven by changes in health care delivery and the epidemics of obesity and diabetes. Tennessee is the third highest state in the incidence of obesity. It’s the first time in our nation and in our state, where malnutrition is affecting every life stage, every disease state and every health care setting. We can’t ignore nutrition anymore because these problems are not going away. We need to create advanced degree programs that train a whole new cadre of dietetics professionals whose knowledge and skills can make a positive impact on this health crisis.

Why does this make sense for a school of nursing?
Because there are many similarities in terms of practice...
and philosophy between nursing and dietetics. For one thing, they are both predominantly female professions. And, nurses have been very successful in creating advanced degrees and career paths that moved their profession beyond bedside nursing. The profession of dietetics is working on that, too.

What kind of graduate student are you trying to attract?
We want students who want to advance dietetics practice by learning specialized skills that require assuming greater responsibility and accountability in the profession. Our students will need to create new markets for dietitians in terms of jobs and raise awareness for the value of the profession. We want pioneers because we have chosen two unique specialty tracks – especially our nutritional informatics track, which we believe is the first program to offer this as a dietetics specialty.

What is Nutrition Informatics?
There’s a whole new opportunity driven by biomedical and nursing informatics to apply advanced technology to dietetics research, teaching and practice. The electronic health record is a strong example of how informatics can be used routinely in nutrition screening, but there are many other applications such as using digital photography to record and measure food intake or using wearable electronic devices for dietary assessment or using handheld devices to calculate nutrient needs or deriving formulas for enteral and parenteral nutrition.

What are some other changes?
Technology in dietetics is also being used for food and supply inventory management, in research for large software databases of foods and beverages that allow nutrient analysis, in electronic systems for reimbursement of medical nutrition therapy, and most recently in using Internet resources to provide nutrition education and counseling. Also new, due to the bioterrorism events we face, is the use of technology in food surveillance.

What is Nutrition Management in Health Care Systems?
Many dietitians in management positions have learned on the job. Traditionally, management in our field has meant the hospital clinical nutrition manager or food service administrator. But there are many other opportunities with advanced academic training. For example, dietitians can be excellent case managers. Most dietitians have years of clinical training, building on comprehensive academic training in health and disease, so there is no educational or technical reason that we can’t assume those responsibilities. It is also important to the future of dietetics that dietitians are involved in decision making. Our profession does not have staffing ratios in health care settings. So there may be 10 dietitians for a 600-bed facility or 35 dietitians for the same facility – this significantly impacts the quality of care. But, if dietitians have positions that enable them to participate in higher level decision-making these types of quality issues can be improved.

What is the course delivery for this program?
We will use the block format already in place at the School of Nursing, with a three- to seven-day block on campus at the beginning and end of each semester, and course delivery online in the middle. Distance education is relatively new in dietetics so this is another lesson we are learning from nursing.

What is the Lipscomb connection with this program? 
Lipscomb undergraduates can do a 3-2 program – three years at Lipscomb and two years at VUSN. They would graduate with a bachelor’s from Lipscomb and a master’s from Vanderbilt in five years. Lipscomb is also offering a one-year undergraduate certificate in dietetics for Vanderbilt undergraduates so that a VU undergrad could enter our master’s program with a bachelor’s degree in another field.

How did you first get interested in the world of nutrition and dietetics?
I started my health career with a bachelor’s in speech and hearing sciences. After graduation I taught sign language to deaf kindergarten and first graders in Georgia. During this time, my father was diagnosed with colon cancer. He had all these
gastro-intestinal problems which resulted in severe weight loss and a rapid decline. So, I became interested in the role of food and nutrition. After he died, I relocated from our family home in Massachusetts to Florida and pursued my master’s in nutrition. I worked for many years at the University of Miami /Jackson Memorial Center as the chief dietitian on their nutrition support service.

Did you have an "aha" moment that prompted you to pursue your Ph.D.?
As a dependent practitioner, I had to rely on physicians to write orders for nutrition care plan implementation. I started collecting outcomes data on my patients that was heartbreaking. I found that 57 percent of my plans were either not being implemented or inaccurately implemented. That propelled me to present my results to the chairs of surgery and medicine. They were as shocked as I was at the gap in care delivery. So we decided to pursue getting me clinical privileges for nutrition order writing. It was a long process, but we achieved it. After that, I decided I wanted to continue to do research that has the potential to impact clinical practice.

Why did you want to be the program director?
We have an untapped opportunity to combine the quality of teaching that VUSN is known for with the high-impact research being conducted at Vanderbilt. We can use this to produce advanced practice dietitians who will use their knowledge and skills to move our profession forward in new and great ways.

There’s a whole new opportunity driven by biomedical and nursing informatics to apply advanced technology to dietetics research, teaching and practice.
With the support of the School of Nursing, I recently traveled to Botswana to assist in a pre-opening nurse training program for a new hospital being built on the outskirts of the capital city of Gaborone. Bokamoso Private Hospital is a private, not-for-profit facility owned by the Bokamoso Private Trust that was established by two of the country’s health schemes, the Botswana Public Officers Medical Aid Scheme and PULA Medical Aid Fund. The word “bokamoso” translates from Setswana to mean “the future.” For the people of the region, it is the future of good health. It is a state-of-the-art health care facility that, among other things, offers specialty services people previously had to travel long distances to find, making this level of care difficult to obtain and, in the process, taking them away from their families and their support system.

Nursing in Southern Africa faces many of the same challenges we see ourselves facing here today. There is a shortage of licensed staff as well as nurse educators. For the nurses in the area, Bokamoso is the promise of a more advanced nursing care model. By raising the bar on the standard of health care in the area, the hospital was also offering the opportunity for advancement of nursing skills and knowledge. Prior to the scheduled opening of the hospital, I, along with three other nurses from the United States, worked with 30 of the nurses on three main specialty areas: accident and emergency, critical care and pediatrics. We lectured on various subjects of importance and set up simulation labs to teach new skills and reinforce the safe practices of old ones.

Working with the local nurses was wonderful. They were very receptive and eager to learn. Some of the nurses did not have textbooks or stethoscopes of their own. For many of them we were able to help supply those things. Undoubtedly, we gained quite a bit of knowledge from the locally-sourced nurses and the people who we encountered in our short time there, and we were not without our share of exciting moments either: a fender-bender, a lock-in at the training center, and close encounters with lions, elephants, and hippos, among other animals.

It was the trip of a lifetime. It was much more than just providing a service and leaving. It was the sharing of knowledge, skills, and supporting the hope of something better. Regardless of where or who you are in this world, we should all have easy access to quality health care. We are, in truth, one world and we must work together, learn from each other, and help one another. I am so very thankful for this opportunity and for all those who help support it.

Ke a leboga. Tsamaya sentle. (Thank you and go well.)

Betsy Perky, right, recognizes Koziba, a Gaborone nurse with a pin for completing the nurse training.
40s

Eunice Moe Brock, BSN ‘41, is writing a book, “Search for a World View that Will Harmonize Science and Religion,” about her years living and working in China.

Martha Crews McBurney, BSN ‘47A, is a retired profession who enjoys traveling with her husband.

Bess Winchester Isaacs, BSN ‘47B, enjoys working at the family hardware store 50 hours a week.

50s

Florence Rogers Van Arnam, BSN ’52, has been curator of the Robb House Medical Museum in Gainesville, Fla., for 28 years. She has consulted on a new medical museum for Edison College in Fort Myers, and received a Historic Preservation award from the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Peggye Guess Lassiter, BSN ’57, MSN ’62, is enjoying retirement with husband, Robert, in Lorton, Va.

Carolyn McKelvey Moore, BSN ’57, MSN ’59, recently retired from a 52-year career in health, higher education and philanthropy.

60s

Elizabeth Curtis Cook, BSN ’60, and husband, Joe (M ’64), have relocated to Chapel Hill, N.C., after spending 25 years in New York. They have three daughters and six grandchildren.

Phoebe Giffen Hood, BSN ’60, is a part-time nurse practitioner in a primary care office, and runs a bed & breakfast out of her home all year. She has 12 grandchildren.

Ellen Durham Davis, BSN ’63, was designated as a 2009 Fellow in the American Association of Diabetes Educators, and has been a Diabetes Clinical Nurse Specialist at Duke University Health System in Durham, N.C., for 32 years.

Carrol Ann M. Smith, BSN ’64, visited Xi’an, China, to teach public health to a group of graduate nursing students at Jiaotong University, part of the country’s efforts to revamp its health care system.

Connie Keith Reid, BSN ’65, retired three years ago and spends time on hobbies, volunteering and traveling.

Patricia Clinard Sutherland, BSN ’65, retired in September 2009, after 35 years in mental health nursing. She lives with her husband, Pete (BA ’65), in Nashville.

Karen Fishman, BSN ’68, is a proud, one-year survivor of breast cancer. She works as a nurse in the Child Sexual Abuse Clinic at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center in St. Louis.

Sandra Jones Campbell, BSN ’69, gave the keynote speech for the 100th anniversary of the Florida Nurses Association, entitled “Nightingale on Nursing Now,” while dressed as Florence Nightingale.

70s

Betsy Weil Spomer, BSN ’70, MSN ’71, lives in Boise, Idaho, with her husband, Ron, and has spent the past 23 years as a flight nurse for Life Flight.

Cheryl Cox, MSN ’72, is a faculty member in the Department of Epidemiology, Cancer Prevention and Control at St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital. She has been awarded two R01 grants and one R21.

Vicki Schwartz Beaver, BSN ’73, is executive director of Nurses for Newborns of Tennessee, which received the "Making a Difference" Award from the Center for Nonprofit Management. She lives in Nashville with her husband and two children.

Sherry Bratton Leffers, BSN ’73, continues to work on many community projects in Tampa, Fla., including the Tampa Museum of Art, Henry B. Plant Park and Faith Café.

Brenda Thomas Harris, BSN ’73, and her husband, Richard, moved from Cincinnati to Tellico Plains, Tenn., in 2007. She volunteers for the local animal shelter and the couple has three grandsons.

Diane Ribblett Settlage, BSN ’73, and her husband, Steve, have lived in Richmond, Va., for 33 years. Diane has been busy raising her children, now adults, and enjoys time with her two grandchildren.

Marie Hall Smith, BSN ’74, chairs the Nursing Advisory Council for the University of Texas in San Antonio School of Nursing, is a Texas Lutheran University regent and volunteers with Haven for Hope. She has two grandchildren.
Services, which developed a program at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga School of Nursing under the leadership of the Family Nurse Practitioner Concentration coordinator, Carol Caine Guess, in 2006. She has a private psychotherapy practice, precepts medical students, teaches part-time at Lipscomb University and has left a three-year writing program at the Washington Center for Psychoanalysis.

Carol Caine Guess, BSN ’76, MSN, is working for Alexian Brothers in their geriatric clinic in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Chris Benz Smith, BSN ’76, is coordinator of the Family Nurse Practitioner Concentration at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga School of Nursing and works in University Health Services, which developed a new model for university campus health care. She traveled in February with the Children’s Nutrition Program of Haiti.

Anne Atkinson Peterson, BSN ’77, MSN ’93, is founder/president of Your Healthcare Partner, in Nashville, which works with elderly clients. She sits on the boards of the Tennessee Organization of Nurse Executives and the Middle Tennessee Kidney Foundation. She lives with her husband and son, Will.

Terri Conant Taylor, BSN ’77, retired from the Army Reserve in 2005, after 28 years of service. She is becoming credentialed to have her own panel of family practice patients. She and her husband have two sons.

Nancy Hutches Bowers, BSN ’78, works for the American Society for Reproductive Medicine developing and implementing online continuing education for physicians, nurses and allied professionals. She and her husband, Kerry, (BE ’78) have three children.

Rita Moffat Krolak, MSN ’79, is a research coordinator of the Pregnancy Health Interview Study at Boston University. She and her husband, Pat, have three children and two grandchildren.

80s

Chris Skinner Fox, BSN ’80, is pursuing her DNP at Rocky Mountain University for Health Professions while working and traveling as a CRNA. She has three children.

Debra Fox-Howard, BSN ’81, MSN ’84, is retired and lives with her husband and son in Northern Connecticut.

Scott Howell, MSN ’81, is retired from the State of Georgia Dept. of Human Resources and welcomed his first grandchild in April 2009.

Catherine Gamble Mezmar, MSN ’81, is Chief of Quality Management for the Veterans Administration - Texas Valley Coastal Bend region. She serves on boards of the Texas Medical Auditors Association and the American Association of Medical Audit Specialists. Her husband, Michael Mezmar, MSN ’81, is a financial adviser and analyst in Harlingen, Texas.

Meredith Happ Weintraub, BSN ’81, has worked for 25 years at Children’s Hospital in Birmingham, Ala. – 23 years as a nurse practitioner in the pediatric oncology division. She and husband, Gary, have three teenage boys – twins Eric and Brian (12) and Alex (15).

Ginny Place Myer, BSN ’75, and her husband, Chuck, (A&S ’75), are the general chairs for Reunion 2010 and invite everyone to come back to campus to reconnect with classmates Oct. 21-23.

Fern Tate Richie, BSN ’75, MSN ’83, received her Master of Theological Studies from the Vanderbilt Divinity School in 2006. She has a private psychotherapy practice, precepts students, teaches part-time at Lipscomb University and has started a three-year writing program at the Washington Center for Psycalanalysis.

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Melissa Ottenville Winsor, BSN ’81, is a Certified Registered Nurse First Assistant in Atlanta. She remarried in 2006 and started her own first assisting company in 2007. She and her husband have two children.

Julie Bomberger Lindley, BSN ’83, was promoted to Director of Health Services, Health & Physical Education for the Grapevine-Colleyville Independent School District in Texas.

April Jackson Dumon, MSN ’84, coordinates the Nurse Residency Program for new graduates and the nursing clinical advancement for St. Vincent Health Systems in Little Rock, Ark. She is married and has a daughter.

Sheryl Jackson, MSN ’84, joined Vanderbilt’s orthopaedic/urology service as a staff nurse, after working as a nursing educator in Turkey for 16 years.

Robin Rosen Schuman, BSN ’84, is a senior medical consultant for a medical defense law firm in New York City. She and her husband celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary in November.

Amy Blevins, BSN ’85, just returned from Jimani, Dominican Republic, with an orthopaedic surgical team that assisted Haitian earthquake victims. She lives with her daughter in the San Francisco Bay area and works as an operating room nurse and a nurse practitioner for Ritter Health Center and for Operation Rainbow, a non-profit group which sends orthopaedic surgical teams to Central and South America.

Laurie Howard Gaston, BSN ’86, lives in Pensacola, Fla.,
with her husband, Dave, and their five children.

Lana Leinbach Yaney, BSN ’86, was re-elected as a reviewer for the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Journal. She has worked as staff CRNA at South Shore Hospital in Weymouth, Mass., for 18 years and is a clinical instructor for graduate level nurse anesthesia students at Northeastern University.

Leanne Crabtree Busby, MSN ’87, was named director of the Tennessee Regents Online Nursing Degree Program.

Annamarie Geppert Hellebusch, BSN ’88, MSN ’90, and her husband, Stroud (A&S ’87), welcomed their second daughter, Grace Elizabeth on Nov. 25, 2009, joining big sister, Morgan.

Ron Smith, BSN ’88, retired from the Veterans Administration in Murfreesboro, Tenn., in 2000. He and his wife, Barbara, have two children and enjoy their houseboat on Center Hill Lake.

Susan Johnson Mayer, MSN ’89, completed her EdD in Higher Education Leadership, minor in Healthcare Education at Nova Southeastern University in May 2009. Her dissertation was titled: “Effects of Gender Roles on Male Associate Degree Nursing Students.” She is on faculty at Glendale Community College in Glendale, Ariz.

Suzanne Knubel Vincent, BSN ’89, MSN, MPH, has worked at the National Institutes of Health, as a medical missionary and as a PNP in Hematology/Oncology. She and her husband married in 2004, and recently adopted twin girls from China. They reside in Falls Church, Va.

Mary “Meme” Barham Johnson, BSN ’84, MSN, (center) is a long-term care consultant in Northeast Louisiana and president of The University of Louisiana at Monroe School of Nursing, Lambda Mu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI), recipient of the 2009 Chapter Key Award.

90s

Susan Braun Duggar, MSN ’91, is the vice president of Nursing/Chief Nursing Officer at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center, the only hospital in South Carolina that has met the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Magnet Designation for nursing excellence.

Anna Eubanks Pearce, MSN ’91, is a medical review specialist at First Acceptance Services. She was recently married to Douglas Pearce, M.D. (PB ‘90), who is the medical director for the Comprehensive Heart Failure and Transplant Program at Saint Thomas Heart Institute.

Jan Brach, MSN ’92, is working on a book, “A Place Called Berry Hill: Tales by the Kids Who Lived There in the ’40s and ’50s,” a collection of first-person memories by 17 storytellers.

Karen Kraft Hummel, MSN ’93, works at the county hospital’s urgent care clinic in Greenfield, Ind., as a family nurse practitioner. She has three children – Heather (9), Nathan (7) and Peter (3).

Kristin Metcalf-Wilson, MSN ’93, is on faculty at the University of Missouri, practices general gynecology at Planned Parenthood and serves on the board of the Women’s Policy Alliance. She has two sons and is pursuing her DNP.

Jane Worley, MSN ’93, is in private practice in New Hampshire, teaches at Umass School of Nursing and consults with the State of Vermont. She lives with her husband and son,
Benjamin, adopted from Kazakhstan three years ago.

Susan Hargrove, MSN ‘94, works at the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville, Tenn., in the Ob/Gyn resident clinic. She is planning an October wedding to Chris Hutchinson.

Frances Likis, DrPh, MSN ‘94, CNM, received the prestigious 2009 Kitty Ernst Award from the American College of Nurse-Midwives.

Bridget M. Wilson, MSN ‘94, has worked at UC Davis Medical Center, Department of Neurological Surgery in Sacramento, Calif., for the last 10 years. She has a 24-year-old son.


Connie Cherosky-Miller, MSN ‘97, finished a three-week fellowship in Underserved Medicine at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine in September 2009, the first class that accepted non-physicians.

Jennifer Hannagan Kim, MSN ‘97, a VUSN faculty member, published “Assessment of Safe Living for Seniors” in the July/August 2009 issue of The Journal for Nurse Practitioners.

Stephanie Wallace, MSN ‘97, completed her post-masters in FNP at University of Alabama, Birmingham.

Jessica Manke Dieseldorff, MSN ‘98, is lead clinician at Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, Watsonville, Calif. She is one of 60 advanced practice clinicians being trained to perform first-trimester abortions as part of a University of California San Francisco research project that seeks to demonstrate mid-level clinicians can perform early abortions as safely as physicians can.

Meredith Schrader Florentz, MSN ‘98, works in labor and delivery in Maplewood, Minn. She and her husband have twins, both with special needs.

Tracey Robinson Harris, MSN ‘98, opened Apogee Elite Laser in July 2008, in Nashville, after working in The Laser and Skin Surgery Center in New York for several years. She has two children: Laura (5) and Gardner (2).

Amy Butler La Frenz, MSN ‘98, works as a Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner at the Women’s Care Center at Pinehurst Surgical in Pinehurst, N.C. She and her husband, Matt, are parents to Jake (7) and Brooke (5).

Pat Walker Cooper, MSN ‘99, earned her DNP in May 2009, from Case Western Reserve University, after working in long-term care consulting and earning her hospice and palliative care nurse practitioner certification. She is an advanced practice nurse at Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital in Somerset, Ky.

Mary Katherine White, MSN ‘99, is the Medical Director for Camp Kudzu, a camp for children from throughout Georgia who have type 1 diabetes.

2000s

Gary L. Grover, MSN ‘00, recently retired from the Federal Bureau of Prisons after 20 years of government service. He also worked for Memphis Lung Physicians.

Adriana Kain Kinn, MSN ‘00, is the nurse practitioner for a Naples, Fla., physician who focuses on medical weight loss and preventive medicine. She and her husband, Tim, married in 2006, and have two children.

Teresa Diane Buck, MSN ‘01, married Richard Jason Kee on Feb. 13, in Jackson, Tenn. The couple reside in Lewisburg, Tenn.

Jacky Eldon Carver Jr., MSN ‘01, was appointed by...
Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen to the Tennessee Medical Examiner Advisory Council and serves as vice-chairman of the Board of Directors of the Smith County Help Center. He is also on the Advisory Council of the Upper Cumberland Human Resources Agency.

Kim Vernier, MSN ’01, works at the Middle Tennessee Medical Center and Baptist Hospital in Murfreesboro, Tenn., with patients who have diabetes. She and her family have a new home after her home was destroyed by the April 10, 2009, tornado in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Ashley Christine Walters Falls, MSN ’02, is a psychiatric nurse practitioner near Charlotte, N.C. She and her husband welcomed son, Maxwell “Max,” on Jan. 2, 2009.

Caroline Portis-Jenkins, MSN ’02, and her husband, Aaron, welcomed second child, Clayton Aaron, on March 20, 2009. He joins big sister, Margo.

Jason Boylan, MSN ’03, and business partner, Rob Mabry, M.D., opened, 3rd and Church Healthcare, in Nashville, which combines urgent and chiropractic care in one facility.

Tanya Sorrell, MSN ’03, has been accepted as a fellow in the ANA’s Minority Fellowship Pre-Doctoral Program starting this fall at University of Alabama.

Ty Williams, MSN ’03, finished a Post-Master’s Certificate at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Nursing in the Family Nurse Practitioner Specialty and is now dual certified as an acute care nurse practitioner and a family nurse practitioner.

Tana Coleman, MSN ’04, moved to Orlando, Fla., with her husband, Keith, and daughter, Ana. She works as an acute care nurse practitioner in the Emergency Department for Florida Emergency Physicians, who cover all the emergency departments for the Florida Hospital System.

Nicole Demetriou, MSN ’04, is a family nurse practitioner in a Tampa retail clinic and is pursuing her PhD/MPH in applied anthropology/global health practice at the University of South Florida. She also helped train midwives in Liberia with Peace Corps Response in 2009.

Terri McLeroy Hartman, MSN ’04, is a manager in the Privacy Office at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, which oversees health record privacy and protected health information.

Jennifer Hicks, MSN ’04, teaches in the VUSN pre-specialty program, and was appointed Coordinator of the Lipscomb/Vanderbilt Partnership Program in November 2009.

Beth Barry, MSN ’05, married Matthew Whitworth on Dec. 20, 2009, at Amelia Island, Fla.

Amanda Decker, MSN ’05, lives in Fairview, Tenn., with her husband, Tim, and son, Griffin Lee, born April 20, 2009. She is a nurse practitioner with University Community Health Services at the Dickson Co. Schools Family Clinic.


Caroline Harris, MSN ’05, is a suicide prevention nurse practitioner at the Nashville and Murfreesboro Veteran’s Administration hospitals. She and her husband, Joe, have two sons: Jack (9) and Finn (2).

Lisa Hoopes, MSN ’05, and Trey Holloway, (BA ’06) are planning to marry on July 31 in Washington, D.C.

Lauren Lee Ryan, MSN ’08, is the Clinical Coordinator of the Interpregnancy Care Project at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Miss. She married her high school sweetheart, Brant, in August 2009.

Laurie B. Ford, MSN ‘08, shown above at VUSN’s graduation, joined VUMC’s SICU. She is the mother of four daughters, the last born just before her School of Nursing graduation.
Cynthia Malowitz, MSN ’05, received a post-graduate certification as a family nurse practitioner from UT-Houston. She is owner/president of the newly opened Bay Area Quick Care, in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Victor Czerkasij, MSN ’06, was published in The Nurse Practitioner on dermal fillers, The Clinician Review regarding Hansen’s disease, a series on women’s skin issues in Women of Spirit, and is an associate lecturer with Fitzgerald Health Education Associates. He is also a member of the National Conference for Nurse Practitioner Planning Committee.

Dorothy J. Dunn, MSN ’06, earned her PhD, in December 2009, from the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, Florida Atlantic University (FAU). Her dissertation work: “What Keeps Nurses in Nursing: A Heideggerian Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study.”

Bethany Massey, MSN ’06, recently became the Director of Health Services at Lipscomb University in Nashville and is the first nurse practitioner at the university.

Maryann “Sharma” McAlwee, MSN ’06, is an instructor at University of Central Florida. She was recently diagnosed with breast cancer and hopes to be cancer-free by the end of 2010.

Sherry Miller, MSN ’06, completed a post-master’s family nurse practitioner program and is working at Saint Thomas Health Services, in Nashville, setting up heart failure clinics in outlying areas.

David M. Haggard II, MSN ’08, joined from the University of Missouri Kansas City with a DNP in December 2009.

Melissa Moore, MSN ’07, welcomed her third child, Austin Blaine Moore, on Sept. 1, 2009.

Lauren Pearce Smalley, MSN ’08, and her husband, Patrick, married in March 2009. They live in Dallas, Texas, where Lauren is a Neurosurgery Nurse Practitioner at Parkland Hospital/UT Southwestern.

Jessica VanMeter, MSN ’07, works in the Regional Burn Center at VUMC. She recently traveled to Ireland and Scotland and has trips to Haiti and Austria planned in 2010.

Keith Adkins, MSN ’08, joined Louisville Heart Specialists at Jewish Hospital in Louisville, Ky., and welcomed daughter, Addison Jules Adkins, on Nov. 4, 2009.

Susan Dawson, ’08, earned her post-master’s in the psychiatric nurse practitioner specialty and was recently promoted to Vice Chancellor at Allen College in Waterloo, Iowa.

Angel R. Epstein, MSN ’08, works at a community mental health center in Daytona Beach, Fla. She recently attended the U.S. Psychiatric and Mental Health Congress in Las Vegas and APNA Clinical Psychopharmacology Institute Conference in Reston, Va.

Stephanie Fisher, MSN ’08, works as an advanced registered nurse practitioner at St. Louis Medical Clinic, a family practice and urgent care center in Chehalis, Wash.

Amazing Avara Fountain, MSN ’08, works at Central State Hospital in the forensics unit. She recently married her husband, Chip.

Michelle Deal Cantwell, MSN ’09, married Timothy Cantwell one week after passing her ANCC certification.

Mary Fuller-Fougerousse, MSN ’09, relocated to Tucson, Ariz., and works at Southeastern Arizona Behavioral Health Services. She is opening her own private practice in the spring.

IN MEMORIAM

Florence Burns Hilsenbeck, BSN ’40, died Feb. 18, 2009, in Spanish Fort, Ala.

Suzanna Wiesehan Hershey, attended 1945, died Nov. 21, 2008, in Nashville.


Mary G. Coward, BSN ’59, died Dec. 7, 2009, in Knoxville, Tenn.


Dorothy Culpepper Buoni, BSN ’60, died Sept. 20, 2009, in Merritt Island, Fla.

Col. Linda Schroeder, BSN ’65, died May 19, 2009, in Loveland, Colo.

Sarah Brooke, BSN ’69, died March 2, 2009, in Metairie, La.

Nancy Maurer Splinter, BSN ’69, died Nov. 13, 2009, in San Diego, Calif.

Mary Ella Brentlinger, BSN ’78, died Oct. 23, 2009, in Eugene, Ore.

Elizabeth Krebs, BSN ’79, died July 11, 2009, in Nashville.


Ruth Humphreys Harkreader, MSN ’92, died Oct. 14, 2009, in Brentwood, Tenn.


Christina Little Monroe, MSN ’95, died May 31, 2009, in Allen, Texas.

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www.vanderbilt.edu/nursing

CALL FOR NURSING ALUMNI AWARD NOMINATIONS

The School of Nursing Alumni Association board of directors welcomes your nominations for alumni awards. The awards will be given at the School of Nursing Reunion Brunch on Saturday, Oct. 23. When making nominations for the awards listed below, please include a letter of recommendation addressed to the dean on each nominee explaining why you believe that person should be honored. The deadline for submission is Monday, Aug. 2.

The Alumni Award for Clinical Achievement in Nursing – The Alumni Award for Clinical Achievement in Nursing is presented annually to a graduate of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing for outstanding contributions in clinical, patient-centered practice.

The Alumni Award for Excellence in Nursing – The Alumni Award for Excellence in Nursing is presented annually to a graduate of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing who is a national or international leader in nursing issues.

Friend of Nursing – The Friend of Nursing Award recognizes significant local or national contributions or both to the profession of nursing from an individual who is not a nurse or Vanderbilt University School of Nursing alumnus.

The President’s Award of Distinction – The President’s Award of Distinction is presented to a graduate of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing who is recognized for distinguished contributions to nursing and to the community.

Honorary Alumnus – The Honorary Alumnus is awarded from time to time by the Vanderbilt School of Nursing Alumni Association in recognition of significant contributions to the School of Nursing by an individual whose academic credentials were obtained elsewhere.

Submit your nominations by e-mail to: susan.shipley@vanderbilt.edu, fax (615/936-0236) or mail to the following address:
Dean Colleen Conway-Welch
School of Nursing Development and Alumni Relations
2525 West End Avenue, Suite 450
Nashville, TN 37203
reunion brunch 2009

The 2009 Reunion was a time for old friends to reunite and share memories.

The newest Quinqs from the Class of 1959 were recognized with a special medal from Dean Colleen Conway-Welch. Everyone received the Apron Project book, “Gotcha Covered: A Legacy of Service and Protection,” spearheaded by Ginger Manley (BSN ’66, MSN ’81). The book includes stories from many VUSN alums, and book royalties go to support microcredit educational loans for private nurse practitioners in Kenya.

See more Reunion 2009 pictures at Vanderbilt Nurse magazine online.

PHOTOS BY LEIGH HOSEK BROWN

Top right: Whitney Simmons Wormer (MSN ‘03), on behalf of the VUSN Alumni Board, presented Dean Colleen Conway-Welch with an engraved crystal vase recognizing the dean’s 25 years of leadership.

Middle right: Phoebe (Jo) Shackelford, (BSN ’59), along with the other alumni celebrating their 50th anniversary since graduating from the School of Nursing, received a peach corsage in honor of the School’s peach regalia color.

Bottom left: (L to R) Sara Hampshire (BSN ’71, MSN ’75), who received the Clinical Achievement Award, is pictured with Frances Edwards (BSN ’53, MSN ’76) and Adrienne Ames (MSN ’75).

Bottom right: (L to R) Pictured with Whitney Simmons Wormer and Dean Colleen Conway-Welch, Sheila Ridner (MSN ’00, PhD ’03) received the President’s Award of Distinction.
Vanderbilt University School of Nursing was the proud sponsor of this year’s Pink Out! Game, a special women’s basketball game that honored breast cancer awareness and research.

This year’s game pitted the Vanderbilt Commodores against the Kentucky Wildcats.

It was a time for Middle Tennessee nursing alumni and current students to come together to support this important cause. In addition to the game ball presentation, Professor Joan King, (BSN ’72, MSN ’75) a 12-year breast cancer survivor, shared her message of hope to all those following the game on the radio.

See more Pink Out! pictures at Vanderbilt Nurse magazine online.

PHOTOS BY TOMMY LAWSON

Top left: Dean Colleen Conway-Welch and former Vanderbilt Commodore basketball player Rhonda Blades Brown (MSN ’96) share the honor of receiving the game ball.

Middle left: Current students and friends got in on the fun too. Pictured (L to R) are Emmy Wyss, Nicole Robinson, Mike Presley and Lauren Doppelheuer.

Bottom left: (L to R) Deb Partee (BSN ’79, MSN ’83), her husband Al, and Associate Professor Susie Adams reconnect during the game.

Bottom right: Bottom right: Melissa Hauck (BSN ’72) and her grandson, David, enjoyed the Sunday afternoon game that went down to the wire.
A smart plan for these challenging times...
for you and the School of Nursing

When you establish a charitable gift annuity, you’re giving yourself a steady stream of payments for life—guaranteed. You’ll also receive a charitable deduction. And you’re supporting the School of Nursing.

Let our planned giving professionals tailor a charitable gift annuity just for you.

Benefits on a $10,000 single-life charitable gift annuity*

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*minimum age of 65 (deferred at 55) and gift amount of $10,000
Tax deductions current as of February 2010.

To learn more about charitable gift annuities, please contact the Office of Planned Giving at (615) 343-3113 or e-mail plannedgiving@vanderbilt.edu.