

Vital Signs



MERCY COLLEGE
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

A partner with Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines

WINTER 2006



DIVERSITY WELCOMES DIFFERENCES

Also Inside: Accreditations
Show Strength in College
Programs

F R O M T H E P R E S I D E N T

knowledge

My first few months as interim president at Mercy College of Health Sciences have brought me great satisfaction. What a talented team we have here, and what a wonderful job they do on behalf of our students!

Results of our recent accreditation visits look very positive in all areas. The Nuclear Medicine program was granted a maximum initial three-year accreditation, and the Diagnostic Medical Sonography and Associate of Science in Nursing programs received excellent recommendations with final results to be announced in the spring.

reverence

The visiting teams shared many positive stories and comments about our people, programs and commitment to caring. Congratulations to everyone for maintaining such high quality in our programs. Your work is recognized and appreciated.

integrity

Our future looks very bright as we continue to build upon the strengths of those who have gone before us. Our faculty is talented and committed; our staff is dedicated to offering the best service to the students and support of the faculty, and our alumni are among the best and most loyal of any collegiate institution. Our graduates have an unequalled competence and depth of training, and we are proud of our strong history, our healing mission and the rich Mercy College experience.

As I look forward, I see a number of great opportunities to build on this history of excellence and on the tradition and values of the Sisters of Mercy.

compassion

First, we must continue to have solid, strategic direction. It is important for a college to have a vision for the near and distant future, and, along with our board, we are now carefully reviewing and updating our strategic plan.

Next, we must continue to invest in technology, asking 'what can we offer to students that is on the cutting edge?' This will mean growing distance learning and web-based programs that are high tech and high touch.

excellence

Finally, but equally important, is the further development of relationships with other colleges, clinical sites, businesses, our medical partner Mercy Medical Center and our community. We exist in a very competitive and ever-changing environment. Staying competitive is key to attracting students and assuring success for our graduates.

I welcome your thoughts and suggestions over the next few months as we continue to chart the course for the future of Mercy College.

Barbara G. Becker

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The accreditations received and the significant impact it has on our students.

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Profile of Sapphire Cureg and the awareness she has spread.



On the Cover:

Pictured: Sapphire Cureg, MCHS Diversity Liaison; Maureen Boyd, Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN); David Lam, ASN; Mandy Mason, Associate of Science in Diagnostic Medical Sonography; Marqueta Bibbin, ASN; Jennylee Prones, ASN; Vivian Phabmixay, ASN

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Interim President Takes Education to Heart

Barbara Decker has taken a number of various paths in her career, but all roads seem to have led to the same destination. As interim president of Mercy College of Health Sciences, Barbara is right at home in the field of education.

One of seven children and the daughter of an Italian mother and a father from Mexico – neither of whom graduated from high school – Barbara was raised to believe education is extremely important in life. She took that advice to heart.

Born in Des Moines, she graduated from Drake University with a bachelor’s degree in history and sociology, followed by a master’s degree in public administration and a doctoral degree in law. She initially taught at Marshalltown High School, and then took a position in the personnel department of the Des Moines Register.

“I wanted to get into this new field called personnel,” she recalls. “We are constantly interacting with people. This is what I enjoy. I have the opportunity to educate others while they are educating me, both formally and informally. It all centers around human interaction.”

After the Register position and ten years with the Syntex Animal Health company – a position that required a great deal of travel – Barbara returned to Drake University to become Vice Provost of Human Resources. It was during her 13 years in that position that she completed her law degree. She graduated from the Drake Law School and was admitted to the Iowa State Bar in 2000.

At that point she asked herself “where do I want to be right now?” and a position as Administrator, Human Resources and Diversity Services at Mercy Medical Center seemed the perfect fit. “Mercy, with its values, mission and everything they do to integrate these into their everyday workplace environment, was the best place for me,” she says. That was in 2001.

Barbara moved to the position as interim college president four years later in the fall of 2005. “I want to emphasize the importance of recognizing and developing people,” she says of her new role at Mercy College. “I like giving people opportunities to grow. And it’s about relationships, too. I really enjoy interacting with the students, staff, faculty and alumni as well as talking with people in the community about the college.”

She and her husband Larry Willis, director of manufacturing and business development for Diamond Laboratories, live in the Des Moines area. Her son, Casey Decker (wife Karon) recently gave her a granddaughter, six-month-old Grace. “Family and faith are very important to me,” Barbara says.

“I intend to focus on executing the charge which I have been given; move the college forward.”



Business After Hours, Patricia Clare Sullivan Center Showcased

On November 10, 2005, Mercy College of Health Sciences welcomed more than 100 guests at a Business After Hours in conjunction with the Greater Des Moines Partnership to showcase the completion of the Patricia Clare Sullivan Center. The community met the interim President, Barbara Quijano Decker, and an official ribbon cutting ceremony took place. Pictured from left to right: Dave Vellinga, President and CEO of Mercy Medical Center, V. Eloise Bruce, Mercy Auxiliary President, Barbara Q. Decker, Interim President, Dianne Liepa, Senator Harkin Representative; Martha Willits, President of Greater Des Moines Partnership; and Bill Knowles, Chairman of MCHS Board of Directors.

C O L L E G E H I G H L I G H T S

New Faculty



Margaret Richey

Division of Nursing
Assistant Professor

Margaret serves as the Course Coordinator for Nursing Care Management. She graduated from Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in 1982. She completed her Bachelor and Master of Science in Nursing at Drake University. As an alum, she is honored to teach for her alma mater.

Deb Taylor

Division of Nursing
Nursing Instructor

Deb is a long time PRN clinical instructor who has accepted a full time position this fall.

Dana Oteker

Division of Allied Health
Radiology Instructor

Dana is the new clinical instructor for the Radiology Program. She graduated from Mercy College of Health Sciences in 2001. She is married and the mother of a 16-month-old daughter named Lydia. She also has two dogs Baxter and Bella.

New Staff



Carolyn Bucklin

Student Services
Assistant Registrar

Carolyn joined Mercy College in August as Assistant Registrar. She has a BS in Business and a broad background in Student Services. She is married, has a 7-year-old daughter and an assortment of pets.



Lance Pfantz

Library and Media Services
Library Assistant

Lance is the new Library Assistant and is primarily responsible for circulation and interlibrary loan. He has previous experience with the college as Audiovisual Technician and Technology Coordinator. Lance also works on the technical crew for the Iowa Lottery Powerball broadcast. Lance has a BS in telecommunicative arts from Iowa State University and supports Cyclones' athletics.



Melissa Miller

Institutional Advancement
Graphic Designer

Melissa came to the College in October from Triplett Office Essentials where she served as a graphic coordinator. She received a BA in graphic design from Grand View College in 2001. She was married in October of 2004.

Congratulations

Theresa Smith

Division of Allied Health
Certificate Programs Coordinator

Theresa graduated from the University of Iowa with her Master of Science in Nursing in December 2005.

Tom Iverson

Finance and Technology
College Technology Specialist

Tom married Heather Cramer on December 10, 2005, at Calvary Baptist Church in Indianola, Iowa.

Vicki Campbell

Division of Nursing
Assistant Professor

Vicki has a new role as a Grandma!! Talan Scott arrived at 5:22 p.m. on November 28, 2005.

Employment Opportunities at Mercy College

Division of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Assistant Professor of Psychology

Division of Allied Health
Chair Diagnostic Medical Sonography Program

Chair Radiologic Technology Program

Division of Nursing
Chair - Bachelor of Nursing Program

Administration
President

Contact Emily Holliday
Human Resources Coordinator
for more information at
eholliday@mercydesmoines.org
Phone: (515) 643-6640



2005 Holiday Alumni Luncheon

College Staff who attended the alumni luncheon pictured from left to right: Nancy Tremmel, Connie Clark, Sapphire Cureg, Barbara Braband, Carolyn Kern, Vicki Campbell, '00, Joan McCleish, '80, Judy Monroe, Joann Olson, '68.



Introducing the New Director of Development

In November 2005, Joe Rippetoe accepted the position of Director of Development for Mercy College and assumes day-to-day responsibility for fund raising and alumni relations. Joe comes to the College following more than 20 years in fund raising at Des Moines Area Community College and Iowa Methodist Hospital.

Alumni and friends can reach Joe at either his new e-mail address of jrippetoe@mercydesmoines.org or by phone at (515) 643-6638.



Accreditation Shows **STRENGTH** *in College Programs*

“We are **educating** people in the **health care** field who will be in life and death situations,” says Provost John Nies, Ph. D. “The **quality** of the **education** determines the quality of our graduates and the health care they provide.”

by Linda Montet **T**oday’s health care careers are among the most promising and rewarding professions. But embarking on a career in the health sciences can mean choosing among many colleges – an often confusing and time-consuming process.

That’s where measuring academic strength comes into play. Accrediting bodies visit and review Mercy College and all of its clinical programs, frequently granting maximum accreditation in every area. It is important to know the institution you choose can give you an excellent education, and Mercy College repeatedly receives high marks for its educational standards.

“We are educating people in the health care field who will be in life and death situations,” says Provost John Nies, Ph. D. “The quality of the education determines the quality of our graduates and the health care they provide.”

There are three critical areas in which academic strength is measured by accrediting organizations, says Dr. Nies: quality of faculty, curriculum and facilities.

Any review of faculty includes both academic or classroom preparation and clinical experience. “Having faculty with experience in the field is not only important,” he says, “in many fields it’s required. They must have clinical competencies in order to teach.”

Mercy College of Health Sciences curriculum ensures that students are gaining the knowledge to successfully complete licensure examinations. In addition, all health sciences programs at the college are firmly grounded in a liberal arts and sciences curriculum. A review of facilities includes appropriate classroom space, outstanding clinical sites and support services including an excellent library, Nies explains.

The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools accredits Mercy College. In addition, specific programs must be accredited by the appropriate national agency for that health care field, according to Nies. Each of them has a separate accreditation process.

Nies recommends checking several indicators to determine the quality of a college. “First look at the percentage of students who pass licensure exams. Then look at program retention rates and finally look at employment rates of graduates.” These three areas, he says, indicate whether students are receiving a good education.



Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) and early recommendations indicate a very positive maximum eight-year accreditation (final results are expected in February). The BSN program received a maximum initial five-year accreditation in 2000 and will be reviewed again this winter by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), a division of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

“We have a **strong** reputation among the accrediting agencies for a tradition in educational **excellence**,” Shirley Beaver emphasizes, “and that tradition continues. Accreditation is really a **hallmark** for an organization.”

Nursing Accreditation

Shirley Beaver, dean of nursing, agrees that accreditation is critical to the nursing program. After many years as a diploma program, the Division of Nursing now includes Associate of Science (ASN) and Bachelor of Science (BSN) programs.

Last November, she and the other nursing faculty and staff completed an ASN review by the National League for Nursing

The extensive reviews included dozens of components, including mission and governance, consistency of policies, faculty qualifications and performance, program design, curriculum, fiscal and learning resources, federal compliance, student services, clinical learning environment and much more.

Students benefit when the program undergoes a comprehensive accreditation, Beaver says, “because it allows for transferability of our courses to other

NATIONAL SURVEY

In 2005, Mercy College participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, a national survey of 257 institutions in 38 states. The survey assessed the degree to which students are engaged in learning and campus activities, and how that reflects on retention and graduation rates.

“Although we are not a community college,” says Hugh Hansen, Mercy College Dean of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment, “there are similarities. Many Mercy College students are receiving associate degrees and commute from home to campus.”

Several areas were covered in the study; here are the Mercy College scores:

Active and collaborative learning

(students will learn more if they are actively involved in their education).

Score = 94th percentile.

Student effort *(the amount of work and effort students must put in to be successful).*

Score = 82nd percentile.

Academic challenge *(the degree to which students find their work challenging, intellectual and creative).*

Score = 100th percentile.

Student-faculty interaction *(effective contact with teachers inside and outside of class).*

Score = 94th percentile.

Support for learners *(using career counseling, social support, help coping with non-academic responsibilities).*

Score = 25th percentile.

The premise of the study is the more students are engaged, the more they will learn and the more likely they will be to complete their education, says Hansen. In the spring of 2006 a survey engagement will be completed by faculty, and participation in a survey for four-year schools is in the future.

“Over the past few years,” he says, “we’ve increased our admission standards and the rigor of the curriculum, and we’re doing very well in terms of the board pass rates. Academically we have a very strong college.”

educational programs, and it is an excellent external benchmark of quality. It also helps in marketing and recruitment of student, faculty and staff.

“We have a strong reputation among the accrediting agencies for a tradition in educational excellence,” she emphasizes, “and that tradition continues. Accreditation is really a hallmark for an organization.”

Allied Health Programs

The Nuclear Medicine Program, only in its fourth year, received a maximum three-year accreditation award in October, 2005, from the Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology (JRCNMT).

Graduation rates for students in the
NUCLEAR MEDICINE
 Certificate Program were **100%** in 2004 - 2005.

An advanced specialty and a branch of medical imaging, nuclear medicine uses radioactive isotopes to image the function of any part of the body. It is a one-year program which starts in the fall and runs through three semesters. Most students go through a radiology or nursing program before entering nuclear medicine, and all students have at least an associate degree in a health care field or a bachelor's degree when entering the program.



Pictured above: Stacy Lawson, Nuclear Medicine Program Coordinator demonstrates a procedure to her students.

Pictured bottom-right: Nancy Zylstra, Surgical Technology Coordinator follows her student, Jason Pettegrew, through his final examination of a surgical procedure.

Pictured right: Janet Roberts-Anderson, Medical Assisting Program Coordinator plays patient as her student, Jesse McIndille completes the final examination for Medical Assistant Clinical Procedures I.

They receive a certificate in nuclear medicine upon completion, and take national board exams which require completion of an accredited program. Twenty students have graduated from the program in the past three years.

The Surgical Technology Program has also received top marks from its accrediting agency the Accrediting Review Committee of Surgical Technologists (ARC-ST). Initially accredited in 1999 for the maximum five years (the program began in 1998), a 2005 review granted the program a full 10-year accreditation. The program is also reviewed by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).


Just as in the other allied health and nursing programs, surgical technology faculty and staff do a complete self-study assessment in advance of the visit, including program goals, resources, lab set-ups, clinical sites and many other components to give reviewers a complete picture of the program.

Graduation rates for students in the
SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY
 Certificate Program were **88%** in 2004 - 2005.

Once a year a program assessment exam is given with results getting better every year. Fifty-six students have graduated from the 11-month program, which allows students to move into a two-year associate degree if the student chooses.

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography Program is also reviewed by CAAHEP. Faculty and staff just completed its most recent accreditation review in November, with results to be announced in April.





Public Notice

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program at Mercy College of Health Sciences is hosting a site visit from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) February 27-28 and March 1, 2006. The BSN Program received initial accreditation from CCNE September 29, 2001, for the maximum period of five years and is seeking continued accreditation with this visit. An extensive self-study has been completed and submitted to CCNE.

Members of the nursing community and the public at large, as essential elements of the College's constituents, are encouraged to meet with the site visitors on February 28, from 4:00-5:00 p.m., in Rm. 130 of the Sullivan Center, to provide comments regarding the BSN program and its graduates. If unable to attend the meeting, written comments that will be shared with the site visitors are welcome and are to be addressed to the program administrator, Ms. Shirley Beaver at the following address:

Shirley Beaver, R.N., M.N., C.N.A.A., Dean of Nursing
 Mercy College of Health Sciences
 928 6th Avenue
 Des Moines, IA 50309

*If desired, written comments may be sent directly to
 CCNE at the following address:*

CCNE
 One Dupont Circle, NW
 Suite 530
 Washington, DC 20036-1120

The program was first accredited in 1997 for the maximum five years in its initial concentration of cardio sonography. An OB/GYN concentration, added in 1998, received maximum accreditation in 2004 for three years. This most recent accreditation visit included both cardio and OB/GYN tracks.

Graduation rates for students in the **DIAGNOSTIC SONOGRAPHY** Certificate Program were **75%** in 2004 - 2005.

Medical sonography is an imaging science that uses ultrasound waves to create images of internal body structures. The program began as a certificate program at Mercy Hospital in 1991 and now offers an Associate of Science degree. Some 80 students have graduated from the two-year, six-semester program in the past six years.

CAAHEP also accredits the Medical Assisting Program, an 11-month program offering a certificate upon completion. Students can go on to complete an Associate of Science in Medical Assisting by completing two additional semesters of study.



MEDICAL ASSISTING

was awarded the maximum three-year accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs for the first time in August 2005. The graduation rate for students in this program is 83%.

The first medical assisting class graduated in 2004 and the first on-site accreditation visit was completed in April, 2005. In August, a maximum three-year accreditation was awarded showing students learned 72 competencies in 32 content areas.

Medical assistants are multi-skilled, health care professionals who work primarily in ambulatory care settings greeting patients, taking vital signs, running waived lab tests, drawing blood, doing EKGs and performing limited x-ray. Fifteen students have graduated from the program.



DIVERSITY WELCOMES DIFFERENCES

“We will see **faces** from all walks of life laughing and talking about **customs** and **traditions**, with an increased sharing of knowledge by everyone.”

Health Sciences Help to Break Down Barriers

by Linda Montet

Sapphire Cureg has a great vision for the future at Mercy College. She sees many people working together in different capacities helping students. It will be a welcoming environment with students from many difference backgrounds communicating with each other, and cultural barriers eliminated.

She sees diversity fully integrated into the health care curriculum, with students continually learning about differences in people from other countries and cultures. We will see faces from all walks of life laughing and talking about customs and traditions, with an increased sharing of knowledge by everyone.



Sapphire wants to build on the progress she's seen in the two years she's been Mercy College Diversity Liaison. "We've taken small steps, but we're seeing growth.

But diversity is more than numbers of students, she says, and it cannot be relegated to an individual or a department. "It's about everyone having a willingness to share, with a more respectful environment regarding beliefs and values."

Minority recruiting efforts are paying off, she believes, because the college has successfully tapped into the community decision-makers who help get the word out. New diversity-based programs are showing success as well.

Diversity Projects

"Many colleges are reaching out to young kids," she says, to make them aware of careers in health care at an early age. That's the reason for the Moulton Project. Partnering with Des Moines' Urban Dreams organization, faculty and staff from Mercy College lead programs at local schools (Moulton Elementary and Harding Middle School). They talked to children about nursing, radiology, surgical technology and other college disciplines to motivate them toward careers in health care.

It may be as simple as showing them human x-rays, or helping them brush their teeth the correct way. "We want to ease their fears," explains Cureg, "and give them information on their health. At the very least, they see we are a caring college."

A minority mentoring program will be launched in the spring of 2006, offering formalized student-to-student training. Mentors will teach new minority students "the ropes" and the "road map" of the college, with the goal of building confidence and cultivating a sense of communal life. Sapphire believes this new program will increase retention and help see minority students through to graduation. Right now, she holds breakfast sessions for minority students at the college. Students can feel free to give opinions, voice concerns and offer suggestions, as well as listen to other students' experiences.



Sapphire Cureg

Currently the diversity liaison for Mercy College of Health Sciences, Sapphire has had an extensive career in education, planning and communicating in the health care field. She holds a doctor of education – guidance counseling and a master of public administration from Drake University as well as a bachelor of science degree from Far Eastern University, Manila, Philippines. She was a nursing home administrator for Hillhaven Healthcare Corporation in California, special projects manager for Mercy Hospital Medical Center in Des Moines and director of strategic planning and marketing for Hospice of Central Iowa. Before coming to Mercy College, Sapphire served as an executive officer for planning and organizational development for the Iowa Department of Human Services.



Mercy College Diversity Advisory Committee Members

Sapphire Cureg, Ed. D.
Diversity Liaison

Jose Angel, M.D.
Mercy Central Internal Medicine Clinic

John Paul Cardenas
former Director of Iowa Department of Human Rights

Cyndi Chen
Commissioner on the status of Asian and Pacific Islanders in Iowa

Steve Eckstat, D.O.
Mercy West Medical Clinic

Rep. Wayne Ford
Executive Director of Urban Dreams

Vince Lewis, Ph.D.
Principal, North High School

Denise Nichols
Pharmacist, Mercy/Mayo Clinic

Brian Tingleff
Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Pat Scherer
St. Ambrose Refugee Coordinator

Michele Soria
Executive Director for the Iowa Council for International Understanding

Nancy Zylstra
Surgical Technology Program Coordinator



She is creating a minority scholarship fund which is in the early stages. It will function like an adopt-a-student program, she says, and many current health care professionals will have the opportunity to participate in funding. Initial interest has been very positive.

A multi-cultural day will be held at the college this spring, to promote cultural awareness to the college and the community. Students, families and the general public, will learn about college programs and sample international foods and customs.

Sapphire, whose native country is the Philippines, doesn't just rely on her own extensive background in health care management to guide her diversity programs. She has appointed a diversity advisory committee of community minority leaders and health care professionals to offer advice and counsel in programming and increasing minority enrollment.

"My unit is still like a newborn baby," she says, "we're still in the developmental stage. We're evolving. When you look at the demographics of our community, state and nation, I think we have an obligation to represent those demographics within our college. I don't want us to be all the same. I want to see differences, with all of us on the same page in encouraging diversity."

“Many colleges are reaching out to young kids,” says Sapphire Cureg, to expose them to **careers** in **health care** at an early age.”

by Linda Montet

Great Careers in Two Growing Fields

Jobs in two fields of study at Mercy College are expected to grow much faster than average for all occupations through the year 2014, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

As technology advances and the population grows and ages, medical assisting is projected to be one of the fastest growing occupations in the United States. Surgical technology is also expected to provide good job opportunities as baby boomers age and numbers of surgeries increase.



Medical Assisting

Medical assistants are multi-skilled health care professionals working under the supervision of licensed physicians and physician assistants. Their competence in administrative and clinical procedures is filling a critical need in ambulatory care settings.

The field attracts both high school graduates and individuals starting a second career later in life, according to Janet Roberts-Andersen, Medical Assisting Program Chair. "Last year, of my nine students, four were over 40, the rest were under 30," she recalls. "Many of them travel quite a distance to attend classes here."

The medical assistant is often the first to arrive at the clinic each morning, pulling charts, calling in prescriptions, making referrals for patients. They return calls to patients, take them to exam rooms and record vital signs. After the patient has been seen by the physician, the medical assistant may draw blood, perform EKGs, administer immunizations or even perform spirometry on asthma patients. They may assist in minor office surgery such as sutures or skin biopsies.

According to Roberts-Anderson, "medical assistants may see 40 patients during a day, yet they tend to like the clinic setting, and are comfortable with the flexibility. It is exciting to care for people and to not know what's going to happen each day."

Medical assisting, she says, is a good way to get into the medical field in a short time. It can be stressful, but it is always changing and jobs are available right now. Some students graduate from the 11-month program, receive their certificate with experience and may go into clinic management or specialize in back office procedures, insurance or coding.

Surgical Technology

Traditionally, the role of scrubbing in surgery has been filled by a registered nurse, but in recent years a new specialty field has emerged known as surgical technology.

Trained only to work in surgery, the surgical technologist creates and maintains the sterile field around the patient, gathers, prepares and organizes surgical instruments, supplies and equipment and passes instruments to the surgeon. He or she stands next to the surgeon, protects the patient and makes sure everything the surgeon needs is ready and available.

It is an 11-month certificate program that can be extended into a two-year associate degree if the student chooses to go on for more education. Up to 20 students can take the course each year.

"Our students are interested in the career because they want to care for people," says Nancy Zylstra, Surgical Technology Program Chair. "They like the hands-on aspects of the job."

It is a well-paying job, she says, and one of the U.S. Department of Labor's top five jobs in demand in the country right now. "We have wonderful grads. Most of them are working and have great jobs."



“Dream BIG; don’t be afraid” says new Navy nurse

by Linda Montet

Amy Franken woke up one morning in 2001 and realized her life was going down the wrong path. She wasted no time. She picked up the phone, called her parents and said, “I want to become a nurse.” Four years later, on August 27, 2005, she was commissioned as an ensign in the Navy Nurse Corps.

Jim and Julie Franken of Indianola were already proud of their daughter – even before she made that call. After graduating from Indianola High School in 1996, she had attended Western Illinois University on a basketball scholarship, graduating in December 2000 with a BS degree in sports management. By early the next year she was living in Minneapolis and working as a personal trainer.

“Everybody at Mercy was extremely wonderful,” she says, “and Dr. Connie Clark and Barbara Braband were especially awesome. They inspired me!”

“I was working at a job I really didn’t like,” she recalls. “Then, I went on vacation in Mexico and realized that the world was much bigger. That’s when I made the call.”

She began her nurse training at Mercy College in the fall of 2002, the same year she signed up for the Naval Reserves. Once she entered the Navy’s Nurse Candidate Program (selected as one of 50 out of 2,000), she was discharged from the Reserves to pursue her degree.

She attended college, worked at Mercy Hospital and set her course for a future in the U.S. Navy. By 2004 she had received her associate degree in nursing (ASN), and in August 2005 Amy completed work for her bachelor’s degree (BSN).

In high school, she says, “It was always my dream to be a Navy nurse. Some of the best nurses are in the Navy. Then, after the September 11 [2001 terrorist attacks] I decided this is what I really wanted to do.” (Amy’s grandfather served in the Army during World War II, and an uncle and two cousins also served in the U.S. Armed Forces.)



Pictured above: Amy Franken is holding her commission from President Bush and her Bachelor of Nursing Diploma.

“It’s wonderful,” she says. “I’m not confused anymore.” Amy knows exactly what she wants, and she’s going after it. September 17 she left for the East Coast to begin her Navy training. She traveled first to Newport, Rhode Island for a five-week Officer Indoctrination School (OIS) where she focused on leadership, basic officers’ training, and improving physical fitness.

Following OIS, Amy was to be stationed in Portsmouth, Virginia, for 12 weeks of medical-surgical orientation. After completing this orientation, she was eligible to apply to work in other areas within the Portsmouth Naval Medical Center.

As she packed her bags, Amy had a few words of thanks to the staff at Mercy College. “Everybody at Mercy was extremely wonderful,” she says, “and Dr. Connie Clark and Barbara Braband were especially awesome. They inspired me!”

Amy also credits Dr. Ben Gaumer of Indianola for encouraging her in her Navy career. A rear admiral in the Naval Reserves, and a former employer of Amy’s mother, Dr. Gaumer was the officer who performed the August commissioning ceremony.

As for the future, Amy sees herself eventually overseas in a Red Cross tent. “But first I want to be a really good Navy nurse,” she says. If early life successes are any predictor, it’s a good bet she’ll be one of the best.

2006 Alumni Phonathon Coming February 7 - 15th



If you live in central Iowa and want to volunteer to spend an evening calling some of your classmates to ask them to support the College, call Joe Rippetoe.

Mercy College students will again be calling alumni and friends on five evenings in **February (7, 8, 9, 14 & 15)** to help raise money for the General Scholarship Fund. After hearing of complaints about the tone of some callers who contacted them during last year's phonathon, Joe Rippetoe, Development Director, has decided not to use a professional fund raising firm to contact alumni this year. Instead, Rippetoe is soliciting the help of current Mercy College students to make calls during five evenings next month. A temporary telephone bank will be set up in a classroom in the Sullivan Center to accommodate up to ten volunteer callers each night.

Last year, 304 alumni responded to the College's appeal for support of the General Scholarship Fund, raising more than \$16,000. The fund is used to support a number of student scholarship programs including the Community Service/Student Leadership Scholarships, Freshman Academic Scholarships, Transfer Student Academic Scholarships, Frank Harkin Memorial Scholarships, Latinos Unidos Scholarships and financial assistance for students interested in either the Medical Billing & Coding Certificate or Pharmacy Technician Certificate Programs.

If your telephone rings one evening in February be sure to pick it up, it might just be a Mercy College student trying to reach you. If you live in central Iowa and want to volunteer to spend an evening calling some of your classmates to ask them to support the College, give Joe a call. He can arrange to have you spend time calling old friends and catching up on all the news and raise some dollars for the next generation of nurses and allied health professionals.



Holiday Luncheon Moves to Sullivan Center

The 2005 Christmas Luncheon moved to the college campus to celebrate the season and afford alumni an opportunity to enjoy the new Sullivan Center. More than 50 alumni and guests filled the Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Iowa Lecture Hall. Entertainment was provided by the Dowling Catholic High School Brass Ensemble. Alumni were introduced to the Interim President Barbara Q. Decker and new Development Director Joe Rippetoe.

Don't forget to nominate someone for the distinguished alumni or distinguished friend of Mercy College award. The deadline is February 28. Forms were mailed to alumni in January. Additional information and forms can be found at the College website.

2006 Alumni Association Calendar of Activities

February 7-9, 14-15
Alumni Phonathon

February 7
Washington D.C. Alumni Gathering
Host: Barbara Decker and John Nies

February 28
Distinguished Alumni Nomination Deadline

March 7*
Scottsdale, AZ Alumni Gathering
Host: Joe Rippetoe

March 14*
Houston, TX Alumni Gathering
Host: Brian Tingleff

March 28*
The Villages, FL Alumni Gathering
Host: Brian Tingleff and Patricia Clare Sullivan

April 4*
Denver, CO Alumni Gathering
Host: Joe Rippetoe

April 18*
Los Angeles, CA Alumni Gathering
Host: Joe Rippetoe

May 12
Golden Years Alumni Luncheon
Location: Sullivan Center

June 3
107th Annual Nursing Alumni Banquet
Location: West Des Moines Marriott

June 23
Mercy College @ Iowa Cubs Baseball vs. Omaha Royals
7:05 p.m., Principal Park

The Fourth Annual Charity Golf Tournament

On September 6, 2005 Mercy College held the Fourth Annual Charity Golf Tournament to raise additional money for *Mercy College General Scholarship Fund* to benefit students interested in pursuing a career in health care.



Ball Construction Service



U.S. Surgical

Mark your calendars for this year's golf tournament
September 5, 2006
at Briarwood Golf Course in Ankeny
Shotgun start is 8:00 a.m.

2005 Mercy College Charity Golf Tournament Sponsors

Ball Construction Services, LLC	Nadler Brothers Company	U.S. Surgical
Des Moines Truck Brokers, Inc.	Saxton, Inc.	Wolin Mechanical Electrical Contracting
Graham Construction Company	Sheet metal Engineering	Ziegler Inc.
Ideal Floors, Inc	Sigler Printing	
Iowa-Des Moines Supply Inc.	The Straub Corporation	

Unexpected Gathering Held for New England Alumni

The arrival of Interim President Barbara Decker and the upcoming baptism of her first granddaughter in the Bronx, New York afforded the Institutional Advancement Department an opportunity to offer alumni from throughout New England the chance to gather for dinner.

On short notice, Abby Jones, ASN'02 and Marianne Emanuel, D'74 and her husband, John, joined President Decker for dinner in nearby Hackensack, New Jersey. While the crowd was small, everyone had a great time. Several other alumni gatherings are planned for later this spring (see calendar at left).

***If you will be in the area on vacation and want to join us, please contact Joe Rippetoe.**

STUDENT FOCUS



Mercy students sang Christmas carols at the House of Mercy and Bishop Drumm Retirement Center in December.

Student **experiences** at Mercy College are filled with events that bring to **life** the **spirit** of Mercy.



The first student Senate sponsored blood drive was held in November.



Students took a break from class to play football in the Sullivan Center courtyard in September shortly after sod was laid!



BSN Students sponsored a flu clinic and BP screening at Westview Church in Waukee in October.



Students in the BSN Theories of Leadership/ Management course presented their final projects to faculty and students in December.

News & Notes

85 **Linda (Tiernan) Johnson '85** is employed at Iowa Health Home Care-InTrust as an RN. Her husband Timothy is employed at Union Pacific Railroad and they have two sons.

Kori (Foust, Pierce) Rowles '85 is employed at the Heart of Florida Regional Medical Center in Davenport, FL as an RN in Same Day Surgery. She and her husband Brian have four children and live in Frostproof, FL.

Christine Schmidt '85 is employed at Iowa Methodist Medical Center (Adult E.D.) and Mercy Medical Center (Cardiovascular). She and her husband Jeffrey, a civil engineer for the State of Iowa, have four girls and live in Ankeny, IA.

Phyllis Kay Stevens '85 retired four years ago from the State of Iowa's Department of Inspections and Appeals Health Division. She has three children and three grandchildren.

Currently she enjoys volunteering at the Des Moines Playhouse, Court Appointed Special Advocates for children, and works part-time as a retail associate at J. Jill women's clothing store in the Jordan Creek Mall in West Des Moines, IA.

Geralyn (Crall) Thomsen '85 is employed as a Clinical Coordinator at the Trinity Physician Hospital Organization in Rock Island, IL. She and her husband Mark, a Project Manager for John Deere, have three daughters and live in Bettendorf, IA.

Kristi (Zimmerman) Willson '85 is employed with Principal Financial Group as a Medical Management Consultant in Des Moines, IA. She her husband Bob and their two children live in Johnston, IA.

Marriages

08 **Kellie Jo Schachtner '98** married Paul Cooper on September 10, 2005 in Clear Lake IA. She is employed at Oakwood Care Center in Clear Lake and her husband is a self-employed farmer.

99 **Jodi Brown '99** of Dow City, Iowa married Jerrod Henningsen in Denison, Iowa on October 22, 2005. She is employed as a surgical technologist Nebraska Orthopedic Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska. Her husband is a Crawford County Deputy Sheriff.

99 **Rebecca Helle '99** married Jason Gaul on June 18, 2005 in Edgewood, IA. She is employed as a Radiologic Technologist at Regional Medical Center in Manchester, IA. Her husband is a self-employed farmer.

00 **Kelly Fynaardt '00** married Cory Nyden on September 9 in Oskaloosa, IA. She is an RN as an RN in the Perinatal Diagnostic Center at Mercy Medical Center, Des Moines and he is a division marketing manager at John Deere Credit in Johnston, IA.

02 **Amber Dau '02, BSN '03** married Lance Scott on August 27, 2005. Amber is the Director of Nursing at Avoca Nursing and Rehab and he farms with his family in the Avoca area and operates Cropwatch Scouting and Precision AgServices.

03 **Elizabeth Kenney '02** married Brett Dannels on May 28, 2005 in Newton, IA. She is employed as a Surgical Technologist with Skiff Medical Center in Newton and he with the Pella Corporation.

05 **Alisha McCaughey '05** married Charles Fees on August 6, 2005 live in Carlisle, IA. She is an RN in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Blank Children's hospital and he is employed with Robison Electric.

05 **Jaci Wittry '05** married Darin Tebbe, in West Des Moines on October 22, 2005. She is currently working as a registered nurse at Digestive and Liver Disease Consultants in Clive. Her husband is employed with Wells Fargo as a Finance Manager in Des Moines.

06 **Nicholas Flies '06** married Abby Thompson on December 16, 2005. Abby is beginning her final semester of nursing at Mercy College and Nicholas, an ISU graduate, is employed with John Deere AMS.

Births

93 **Sheila Rees '93** and her husband welcomed their daughter Ashley Nicole to their family on August 17, 2005.

Sympathy

Your prayers are requested for the family and friends of these graduates who died recently.

Helen M. (Stence) Allen
Class of 1940

Kathryn Rae (Jones) Shadle
Class of 1972

A Special Request...

A Personal Reflection

Your personal reflection could get published in an upcoming issue of Vital Signs, the College alumni magazine!

A reflection is an opinion resulting from careful consideration. In the Mercy Community, we begin each gathering with a "reflection," a time to pause from our busy days. Everyday, lives are touched by your caring hands in service to others.

Everyone enjoys reading short stories written with inspiration and heartfelt emotion. We would like to share with the readers of Vital Signs, a "personal reflection" from experiences of Mercy students, alumni or College staff that they have encountered in their roles in health care/education.

Please limit your submission to 300 words or less describing your personal experience. Don't forget to include your full name, graduation year/program, mailing address, daytime phone and e-mail address with your submission in the event we need clarification.

ARE ALL SUBMISSIONS PUBLISHED?

Vital Signs magazine has space limits, therefore we will keep all submissions for future consideration as additional space permits. If your submission is chosen we will notify you of the date your reflection will be published.

DEADLINE

Please submit your story by March 31, 2006 for consideration for the upcoming Spring 2006 issue.

Submit your story via e-mail (preferred) to:
mmiller3@mercydesmoines.org

POSTAL MAIL OR FAX TO:
Mercy College of Health Sciences
Attn: Melissa Miller/Reflection
928 6th Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50309-1239
FAX: 515-643-6698

The Bag Of Cookies

At an airport one night
With several long hours before her flight.
She hunted for a book in the airport shop,
Bought a bag of cookies and found a place to drop.

She was engrossed in her book but happened to see,
That the man sitting beside her, as bold as could be,
Grabbed a cookie or two from the bag between,
Which she tried to ignore to avoid a scene.

So she munched the cookies and watched the clock,
As the gutsy cookie thief diminished her stock.
She was getting irritated as the minutes ticked by,
Thinking, "If I wasn't so nice, I would blacken his eye."

With each cookie she took, he took one too,
When only one was left, she wondered what he would do.
With a smile on his face, and a nervous laugh,
He took the last cookie and broke it in half.

He offered her half, as he ate the other,
She snatched it from him and thought...ooh, brother!
This guy has some nerve and he's also rude,
Why he didn't even show any gratitude!

She had never known when she had been so galled,
And sighed with relief when her flight was called.
She gathered her belongings and headed to the gate,
Refusing to look back at the thieving ingrate.

She boarded the plane, and sank in her seat,
Then she sought her book, which was almost complete.
As she reached in her baggage, she gasped with surprise,
There was her bag of cookies, in front of her eyes.

If mine are here, she moaned in despair,
The others were his, and he tried to share.
Too late to apologize, she realized with grief,
That she was the rude one, the ingrate, the thief!

*How many times have we absolutely know
that something was a certain way, only to
discover later that what we believed to
be true...was not?*

*Always, Keep An Open Mind And An
Open Heart, Because... You Just Never
Know..."You might be eating someone
else's cookies...*

Provided by Dr. Joe Moravec. D. Min.





A partner with Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines

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