



ECHO

Spring 2023

ST. JOHN'S
COLLEGE
ALUMNI
NEWSLETTER

A Division of St. John's College



Greetings fellow St. John's Alumni,

As Alumni Board President Brandon Leonard is working on his FNP, he needed to shift some priorities and has decided to step down to a general board member position. My name is Linda Blakley ('82), and I have been named acting president of the alumni board. I am an associate professor at St. John's College (SJC), one of five alums who are full-time faculty members. For those of you I do not know, I would like to share some background. I completed my RN-BSN through McKendree College, my MSN through St. Louis University and recently my DNP through the University of St. Francis in Joliet in 2021. I have two children. My son, Evan, lives in New York City. He and his wife, Danielle, just blessed our family with a baby boy in March (on his momma's 40th birthday). My daughter, Michelle, lives in Kirksville, Missouri, with her husband, Jerry, and their three children. I now have grandchildren ranging from a newborn up to teenagers. I still live in Springfield, Illinois.

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The board is preparing for the alumni banquet on Saturday, Oct. 7 at Northfield Center in Springfield. We will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the class of 1973 and the 25th anniversary of the class of 1998. The fall banquet will continue as planned, but we also would like to arrange another event for those who are not interested in the alumni banquet. If you have any ideas for the event, including time and possible location, please let us know.

The Distinguished Alumna for 2023 is Dr. Jane Diers ('85). Please see page 3 for a lovely article on Dr. Diers. The Young Alumnus for 2023 is Jacob Bunte. Jacob is a graduate of the MSN FNP program and is the first student in the MSN-DNP program at St. John's College. Nomination forms for Distinguished and Young alumna can be found on the college website at sjcs.edu/alumni.

Also on the college website is a link to the logo wear store. If you are interested in seeing additional items for sale in the alumni section, please let us know, and we will attempt to accommodate. Visit www.hshs.org/StJohnsCollege/Alumni.

If anyone is interested, there are open offices on the alumni board, as well as for members at large. Responsibilities include monthly meetings, which are both in person and on ZOOM. This means you can be on the board even if you do not live in central Illinois. We are all proud of our alma mater and what the education provided, both formally and informally, as an entry into the nursing profession. I would like to encourage you to consider becoming involved as a member or an officer of the alumni board. Please contact Kris Maurer (mksj@38aol.com), nominating chair, with any interest.

I look forward to seeing you at the alumni banquet on Oct. 7. It does not need to be an anniversary year for you to attend. All SJC alumni are welcome.

Best Wishes,
Linda L. Blakley, '82



Chancellor's Message

Hello alumni, and happy spring!

It is a time of transitions at St. John's College. On Dec. 16, 2022, Dr. Judy Shackelford retired as dean of academic affairs. Judy was at St. John's for 36 years, the last five as dean. I'm grateful for all her contributions, including accreditation of the master's program, approval of the Greenville partnership and approval of the LPN-BSN program.

In January, we welcomed Elaine Hardy, Ph.D., RN, as dean of academic affairs. Dr. Hardy arrived just in time to represent the college through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) site visit. The visit was positive and a necessary step in the accreditation of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program and reaccreditation of the master's program. Also in January, we welcomed the first spring admission students.

This is one of the enrollment strategies to accommodate students who are academically

and emotionally ready to begin the nursing program. We are seeing growth in interest in the LPN-BSN pathway and BSN-DNP programs.

The college was fortunate to receive a homelessness grant for \$50,000 to assist students who need food and rent assistance. The college pantry, Chiara's Cove, is being stocked with non-perishable food items, personal care items and gift cards to help meet their needs. There is a current assessment of mental health needs among our students. A common theme at many nursing colleges in Illinois is the need for emotional support and stress-relieving activities. As you know, nursing school is difficult. It is especially challenging when juggling multiple roles, such as student, parent, spouse, child to aging parents and part-time worker. The dean of students, faculty advisors and administration are committed to enhancing current resources for students to help manage their stress.

Plans are underway for the alumni banquet on Oct. 7. This year's distinguished alumna is Dr. Jane Diers. Jane was dean of academic affairs when I first started at St. John's College, and I learned so much from her. Congratulations, Dr. Diers.

Twenty-four graduates will participate in commencement at 3:30 p.m. on May 12 at Christ the King Parish. Dr. Wesley McNeese will be the commencement speaker.

Finally, I have decided to step down as chancellor of St. John's College after seven years. In July, I will become the president of OSF College of Nursing in Peoria and Rockford. I would like to thank the Alumni Association for its support. Our students have benefited from your contributions toward scholarships and our precepting of students in the hospital and the community. Also, thank you to the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis for giving me the incredible opportunity to lead the college. I'm proud of the growth in programs, such as the LPN-BSN pathway, Nursing Pipeline Preparatory program (NP3), DNP program and the Greenville partnership. I'm also proud of increasing diversity in the student body by 30 percent. A more diverse nursing workforce contributes to improved health outcomes in our communities. This is my legacy.

Peace and joy,

Charlene S. Aaron Ph.D., RN

Charlene S. Aaron Ph.D., RN
Chancellor and professor

Welcome Dr. Elaine Hardy



I am Elaine Hardy, Ph.D., RN, and I serve as the dean of academic affairs at St. John's College. I come from a family of 10 children, and my parents instilled Christian values in all of us. Diversity was a major part of our upbringing, as well as respecting and caring for others.

I earned my associate degree in nursing from Purdue University Northwest in 2000; my Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)

from Indiana University Northwest in 2002; my master's (with a clinical nurse specialist concentration in adult health with a special focus on diabetes) and post-master's certificate in nursing education from Purdue University Calumet; and my doctorate in nursing from the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) in 2011. I also completed my dissertation on racial identity as predictors of physical activity in midlife African American women at UIC.

I have been teaching undergraduate and graduate nursing students for 20 years and have realized my core values have shaped me for the position I currently hold. I am a servant leader who recognizes that achievements are not accomplished alone and give credit where credit is due. I value people and think of ways to add value to people. I appreciate individual diversity, which brings a richness that you do not get in homogenous groups. I try to promote professionalism and the profession by being a role model for others and always giving back.

I am grateful to and honored by the alumni of the St. John's College who share the legacy of the Hospital Sisters in the mission and vision of this institution. This opportunity has allowed me to share my values with an awesome institution that holds values as a roadmap for excellence in our chosen profession.

Distinguished Alumna Dr. Jane Diers, RN



Dr. Jane Diers was nominated by her daughter Lindy Manual; Janis Waite Hayden, Ed.D, RN; and Brenda Jeffers, Ph.D., RN. Dr. Diers is a 1985 graduate of St. John's School of Nursing. She furthered her education at Illinois Wesleyan University (BSN) and Illinois State University (Ed.D).

A common statement from her nominations was about Jane's positive personality. Dr. Hayden stated, "Jane is the kind of person one wants as an employee, a nurse, an educator and a friend." Her nominators also emphasized Jane's mentoring skills, her extensive committee work and how she set high expectations for students.

Dr. Jeffers, former chancellor of St. John's College of Nursing, noted Jane's contributions to pediatric and intensive care nursing. She also praised Jane's multiple years in nursing education and how she shared her expertise and caring philosophy with students.

As dean of academic affairs, Jane led the college through undergraduate curriculum revision during its

transition from school of nursing to college of nursing. She ensured the college's first graduate programs met rigorous curricular standards and the graduate program achieved national accreditation. Her mutual respect for others was demonstrated on a day-to-day basis through her interactions and decision making, even when difficult situations were presented. Her creativity, joyful manner and playful spirit were infectious and resulted in several social events that encouraged the college to build community and cohesion.

A popular phrase these days is that nurses need to be more resilient. According to Dr. Hayden, "Jane wrote the book on resiliency." Her nominators commented on how she worked full time while raising five children. Jane's daughter Lindy remarked that her mother started nursing school in 1982, and at that time, she had a 9-year-old, a 7-year-old and 6-month-old twins. Aside from her academic and professional achievements, Jane would always put her family first. Lindy said, "My mother is the most generous person I have ever met."

In retirement, Jane and her husband of 50 years, Jon, enjoy spending time with their children and nine grandchildren.

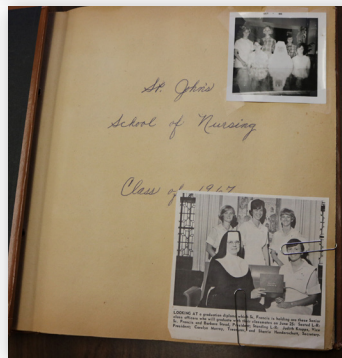
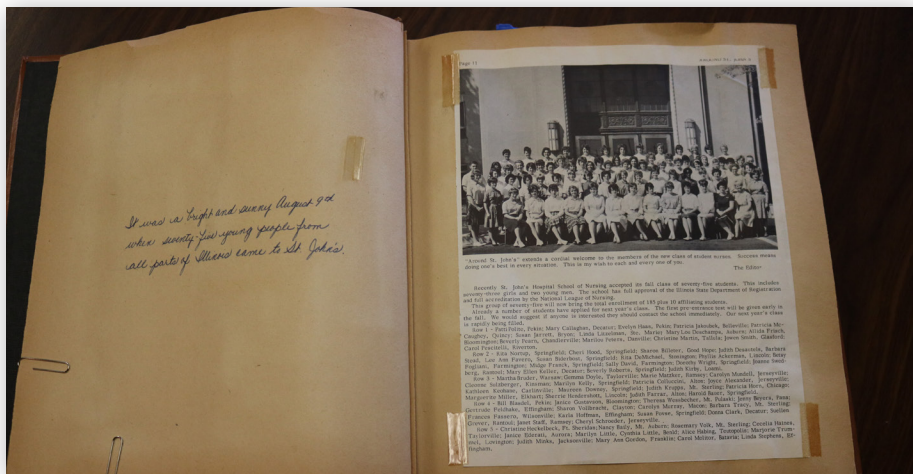
Young Alumnus Jacob Bunte, RN



The St. John's College Young Alumni is Jacob Bunte, MSN, RN. Jacob graduated from Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville with his BSN in 2016; received his MSN FNP from St. John's College in 2020; and is now our first and only DNP student.

Jacob served in the Army from 1996-2004 as a specialist and now works for Orthopedic Center of Illinois in Springfield.

Memory lane from the class of 1967



Sherrie (Hendershott) Grisham, senior year class secretary of the class of 1967, presented a scrapbook to Chancellor Charlene Aaron to be kept at the college.

From NICU to college: Twins have strong connection to St. John's



Born nine weeks early, by emergency cesarean section, the Obert twins of Liberty, Illinois, spent several weeks in St. John's Hospital's NICU. Justine and Zoey have both always wanted to be nurses and are now students at St. John's College of Nursing.

Justine and Zoey are general juniors and have both received scholarships for their first year. Justine received the St. John's College Board scholarship and the Teresa Mueller, RN, '88 scholarship. Zoey received the St. John's College Board scholarship and The Honorable Matthew and Kristina McCarthy Maurer, RN, '88 scholarship.

"Being awarded scholarships has opened up different opportunities for us. We are so thankful for the donors who contribute to the education of nursing students. These scholarships help us to achieve our dreams and worry less about the cost."



"Our favorite part of St. John's College of Nursing is the feeling of it being like a home. The atmosphere is one of a kind. The experiences we have had at St. John's so far are extraordinary."

— Justine and Zoey Obert

About the scholarships

The Honorable Matthew and Kristina McCarthy Maurer, RN, '88

This scholarship was established to support two academically talented students by The Honorable Matthew and Kristina Maurer. Kristina is a proud graduate of St. John's College and a proud St. John's nurse. She has been with St. John's her entire nursing career. Kris also serves on the St. John's Foundation Leadership Council, St. John's Alumni Association Board and St. John's College Board of Directors.

St. John's College Board

Annually, members of St. John's College Board of Directors are invited to contribute to this scholarship which was established under the direction of the board chair, Aggie Hayner. Aggie gave the first contribution to this fund in 2014. Aggie Hayner passed away in 2019.

Teresa Mueller, RN, '88

Teresa Mueller Memorial Scholarship is given by The Honorable Matthew and Kristina Maurer (McCarthy, '88). Teresa and Kris were friends and classmates while enrolled at St. John's School of Nursing. Teresa was an accomplished nurse who lived life to its fullest. She was dedicated to her family and friends. Teresa was an inspiration and exemplifies the best in nursing and humanity.



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www.hshs.org/stjohns/giving

Bev.Neisler@hshs.org
Natalie.Donaldson@hshs.org



Dr. Muiyiwa-Ojo receives IBHE Nurse Educator Award



"As a recipient of the FY23 IBHE Nurse Educator Fellowship Award, I am overwhelmed with gratitude to the students, professional staff, faculty and administration at St. John's College of Nursing for providing me with the opportunity to pursue my passion for academic excellence. Being recognized by my peers and colleagues for my contributions to the field of nursing education is an honor I will always cherish. This award validates the hard work and dedication that I have put into my role as a nurse educator, and it motivates me to continue striving for excellence. I am proud to have the opportunity to inspire and shape the future of nursing through my teaching, and I am grateful for the IBHE for recognizing the importance of this work. This award serves as a reminder that my efforts are making a positive impact on the lives of my students and ultimately, on the quality of patient care in the health care system."

— Ife Muiyiwa-Ojo, DNP, MSN-Ed, MBA, NP-C, CCRN, CNE

About the award

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) administers the Nurse Educator Fellowship Award program, which is exclusive to nursing programs accredited by either the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the Association Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and approved by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR). This yearly grant, which is awarded based on a competitive selection process according to Illinois statute (110 ILCS 205/9.32), is designed to promote the retention of highly qualified nursing faculty at higher learning institutions that confer nursing degrees.

Alumni Board Spotlight

Trisha Owsley

RN | Class of 2000



The St. John's College Alumni Board welcomes Tricia Owsley ('00) as its newest member. Tricia has a Master of Arts from the University of Illinois Springfield, a graduate certificate in health care management, and a Jurum Doctorate (JD) with specializations in health law and policy, and business and transactions law. She has focused her practice on health care compliance and actually likes to write policies.

Tricia has two four-legged friends, Maddy Cat (18 years old) and Katie Cat (6 years old). She enjoys swimming, running, biking and hiking.



Save the Date

St. John's College of Nursing Scholarship Brunch

For scholarship donors, faculty and students
September 15, 2023
Northfield Inn, Suites and Conference Center
3280 Northfield Drive, Springfield, IL 62702

Alumni Banquet

October 7, 2023
Northfield Inn, Suites and Conference Center
3280 Northfield Drive, Springfield, IL 62702

Nurses Week

May 6 - 12, 2023

Meet the recruiter



Alisha Williams

In December, St. John's College welcomed Alisha Williams in the role of student recruiter. Alisha comes to us from Midwest Technical Institute and has vast recruiting experience.

Alisha's enthusiasm, energy and experience has resulted in increased applications to St. John's College. She also gained access to college fairs with which we were previously not affiliated. Our recent Springfield Chamber of Commerce membership is opening more doors for networking, as well. Each week, Alisha posts pictures on social media about where she and I.V. have visited.

Alisha has two children and lives in Chatham.

Hi! I'm I.V.



You are cordially invited to the
2023 St. John's College Alumni Association

Alumni Banquet

Saturday, October 7

5 p.m. | Foundation reception for class agents & alumni

6:30 p.m. | Banquet and dinner

Northfield Inn, Suites and Conference Center
3280 Northfield Drive | Springfield, Illinois

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

of attendees _____ Class of _____

Please select your entree choice and if you'd like dessert:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bruschetta Chicken | <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken Marsala |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian (gluten free) | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian (vegan) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dessert (tuxedo truffle mousse cake) | |

50-year class only:

- ☐ I would like to buy a composite picture for \$10.

Please enclose \$35 per person.

Graduates of 1971, 1972 and 1973 attend free.

To RSVP, go to sjcs.edu/alumnibanquet or cut out and mail this form by Sept. 5 to:

St. John's College, Alumni Banquet
729 E. Carpenter St., Springfield, IL 62702

APPLICATIONS NOW ACCEPTED.

BSN program partnership between Greenville University and St. John's College of Nursing

Nursing students at Greenville University (GU) located in Greenville, Ill., can work toward a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) through St. John's College of Nursing (SJC). GU's pre-nursing curriculum provides an outstanding knowledge base for entry into nursing programs. SJC's program boasts a 100% placement record for nurses who pass their licensing exam and a competitive NCLEX pass rate.



**For more information
on the program, visit:**
greenville.edu/programs/nursing

100%
JOB PLACEMENT
AFTER GRADUATION

99%
RECEIVE FINANCIAL
AID ASSISTANCE

50
SJC AVAILABLE
SCHOLARSHIPS

Mail-in Ballot | Slate of Officers - 2023

St. John's Nursing Alumni Association

President (Two-year term.)

☐ Write in: _____

President elect (One-year term.)

☐ Write in: _____

Vice president (One-year term.)

☐ Write in: _____

Secretary (Two-year term.)

☐ Write in: _____

Treasurer (Two-year term.)

☐ Write in: _____

Board members (Two-year term.)

☐ Write in: _____

☐ Write in: _____

Nominating chair (One-year term.)

☐ Write in: _____

Please mail ballot to:

Kris Maurer
St. John's College
729 E. Carpenter St.
Springfield, IL 62702

Current officers and board members

President: Linda Blakley, '82

Vice President: Vicki Luff, '84

Secretary: Sister Gertrude O'Connor, '63

Nominating chair: Kris Maurer, '88

Board members: Brandon Leonard, '18

Brianne (Arnold) Holmes, '10

Charlotte (Heldorfer) Bivens, '80

Christine Jarmer, '11

Carrie (Brock) West, '02

December 2022 graduation commencement held



Ten* students graduated with Bachelor of Science (BSN) degrees in nursing from St. John's College of Nursing on Friday, Dec. 16, 2022. The Baccalaureate Mass and Commencement was held at Christ the King Parish in Springfield, Illinois.

HSHS St. John's Hospital will employ six of the students from this graduating class. The college's partnership with St. John's enables students to gain hands-on experience and familiarity with hospital staff and procedures.

The college offers a licensed practical nurse (LPN) to BSN program, registered nurse (RN) to BSN online program, Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN) programs and recently announced its Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program at the start of the 2022 fall semester.

Accelerated class of 2022 graduates:

Brittany Fleetwood, BSN, Springfield, Ill.
Brandon Marcy, BSN, Riverton, Ill.
Kaylea Malott, BSN, Carrollton, Ill.
Margaret Prather, BSN, Springfield, Ill.
Trenton Turner, BSN, Jonesboro, Ill.
Allison Ward, BSN, Kincaid, Ill.
Kailey Weaver, BSN, Springfield, Ill.
Salam Zaidan, BSN, Burbank, Ill.

** Not all graduates are pictured or listed.*

Alumni News

Romana Welsh, '62

Have been retired for 28 years from Mercy Hospital in Washington, Missouri. Retired and doing well.

Barbara (Stead) Maley, '67

News: Eleven members of this class were able to come together for the 2022 St. John's College of Nursing Alumni Banquet to celebrate our 55th anniversary! We missed our classmates who were unable to attend and remembered those we have lost over the years — 10 from our class of 61 graduates. In attendance were: Allida (Frisch) Altemus, Kathy (Keohane) Baker, Gemma (Doyle) Burke, LeeAnn (Favero) Cicci, Joni (Smith) Dennis, Betsy (Fogliani) Kimbrell, Carol (Pescitelli) Marada, Rita Nortrup, Cecilia (Haines) Yonker, Susan (Biderbost) Klemm and myself. Our senior year class secretary, Sherrie (Hendershott) Grisham, informed us she has kept a scrapbook for our class and recently presented it to Chancellor Charlene Aaron to be kept at the college of nursing. (See page 3 for photos.) It is available for classmates who may want to wander down memory lane!

Work: Retired in 2012 from HSHS St. John's Birth Center (now Women and Infant's Center) after 40 years as a staff nurse and charge nurse in labor and delivery, staff educator and nursing informaticist.

Email address: rbmaley68@gmail.com

Kathy Bramlet, '80

Continue to work on a medical-surgical floor at St. Anthony's Hospital in St. Petersburg, Florida. Took a trip with my husband to the Holy Land in November 2019 and then Yosemite National Park with family. Still enjoying working!

Condolences

Antoinette "Toni" Marx, '54. Passed Aug. 25, 2022.
Deborah "Debbie" J. Waitkus, '70. Passed Nov. 19, 2022
Sister Jocelyn Serwatka, O.S.F. Passed Nov. 21, 2022
David Raga, '71. Passed March 14, 2023
Joyce E. Deal, '83. Passed March 14, 2023
Nancy Jo Buckles (Ananias), '69. Passed Feb. 4, 2023.



A Division of St. John's College
729 E. Carpenter Street
Springfield, IL 62702

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Please take time to drop us
a note about your professional
activities, honors, employment
or other items of interest.

Please mail to:

St. John's College
729 E. Carpenter St.
Springfield, IL 62702

Or email:

information@sjcs.edu

Name _____

Year graduated _____

News _____

Where are you working? _____

Email address _____

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