



A Division of St. John's College

ECHO

Spring 2021

ST. JOHN'S
COLLEGE
ALUMNI
NEWSLETTER



President's Message

In the world of health care, we experience so many different emotions every day — joy, frustration, fear, satisfaction, anger, belonging, sadness and so many more. Right now, many in health care are hopeful. Hopeful that the declining cases of COVID mean we are getting control of this virus. Hopeful that the vaccines will be accepted by the majority of citizens as it becomes available. Hopeful that life, both inside and outside of health care, will return to “normal,” even if that normal looks a bit different. I am thankful that, as nurses, we are resilient and adaptable. We find ways to treat patients in the worst of situations, many times to the detriment of ourselves. Nurses, as a whole, are selfless. I am very proud to belong to the profession of nursing.

The 2020 alumni banquet was postponed with hopes for a celebration in April 2021. However, due to gathering limitations, and in extreme consideration of the safety of our alumni, an April celebration will not be held. Current plans are for a combined 2020/2021 alumni banquet on October 2, 2021, at the Northfield Center. We will just have to make it bigger and better! Mark your calendars!

The 2020 Distinguished Alumni of the year is Dr. H. Catherine Miller. Dr. Miller was interviewed about her career and history of nursing, and the video and interview were published on social, local and hospital media.

Although the December graduation was virtual, it was very professional and special. The alumni board met with the graduates via Zoom. Board members shared career stories and some tips and tricks, and the students shared their journeys to and through nursing school. In place of the usual graduate luncheon, the alumni board provided each graduate with a box lunch and a random gift card to a local eatery, coffee shop or gas station. As we know, all nurses appreciate free food!

The alumni board has continued to meet regularly via Zoom. This has actually allowed members to attend who previously couldn't due to travel times, childcare issues or geographic distance. The alumni board is looking for graduates to join the board. We are especially interested in graduates from the last 10 to 15 years, but everyone is welcome. We meet monthly, and the time commitment is minimal. The alumni banquet is the major event each year, along with celebrating the graduates each semester with a meet-and-greet luncheon. You don't have to live in the Springfield area to be a member since technology allows us to meet remotely. If you are interested, please email me (cmbivens29@gmail.com), Kris Maurer (mksj38@aol.com) or Teresa Villaran (teresav@me.com). Support your alma mater and represent your class.

I have enjoyed being a faculty member at St. John's College of Nursing. Everyone has been welcoming and supportive. Teaching nursing via Zoom has been challenging, but as nurses do, everyone rose to the challenge and exceeded expectations! What a wonderful profession. I pray everyone stays safe and healthy.

Respectfully,
Charlotte M. Bivens
(217) 725-6781 | charlotte.bivens@hshs.org

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Chancellor's Message

Hello, alumni members.

As I reflect on the last six months, I feel very positive and hopeful about the accomplishments that keep coming out of the college despite the challenges of COVID-19. We graduated 18 accelerated students in December, and 100 percent of them work at either HSHS St. John's Hospital or HSHS St. Mary's Hospital! Our faculty learned many tools and techniques to offer the nursing theory online and to offer skills lab as part of clinical. They also continued to give our students hands-on clinical experience at St. John's.

In November and February, we were able to engage 15 high school freshmen and sophomore students in the Nursing Pipeline Preparatory Project (NP3). This after-school program gives students a head start into what a nursing career looks like through hands-on activities that relate to their current STEM coursework (science, technology, engineering and math). They also are introduced to other health care professionals as they problem-solve case scenarios together. When these students reach their junior and senior years in the program, financial aid counseling and scholarships will be available for those who wish to continue their education in nursing. St. John's Hospital, The Community Foundation and the City of Springfield support the NP3 program.

The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine provided opportunities for our students to participate in the vaccine clinics. This history-making community clinical experience has been exciting for the students. Students and faculty realize the significance of contributing to the health of so many people in the middle of a pandemic is important and meaningful service.

The pandemic has increased stress levels for many people. Mental health services are limited right now due to social distancing and infection control measures. St. John's College is addressing the mental wellness needs of the community by partnering with the City of Springfield through a virtual Tic Tok clinical experience with faculty and students. Weekly virtual sessions can be accessed on the City of Springfield website. Anyone with a computer or smart phone can receive the information. Soon, we hope to use the communication system to address disparities in health illuminated by COVID-19.

In this season of Lent, our faculty has donated gift cards to grocery stores in lieu of the college's Chiara's Cove food bank. Since students are attending online, the food bank was not being used, and food was expiring. We donated the salvageable food to a shelter. Now, the students can express a need to me, and they will be given a gift card.

I want to say how much I appreciate your generosity through scholarships and operations funding. COVID-19 has put an incredible amount of pressure on our students. Many lost their tech positions at St. John's Hospital. Some needed assistance with books, uniforms and amplified stethoscopes. Because of your support, we were able to provide for the students in need. Thank you!

The alumni banquet scheduled for April 10 is being postponed until October 2, 2021. Yes, we will be celebrating the classes of 50 years and 51 years at the same time! It will be double the fun! Mark your calendars!

Grateful,

Charlene A. Aaron PhD, RN

Charlene A. Aaron, PhD, RN
Chancellor



Scholarship established in memory of Amy Jones, RN

On December 1, 2020, our dear friend, mentor and colleague, Amy Jones, received her angel wings before any of us could say goodbye. The news of Amy's untimely death shocked and saddened us all.

To honor Amy's memory, her friends and family have established the Amy Jones Memorial Scholarship Endowment at St. John's College of Nursing. This fall, a \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a promising student who demonstrates a passion for the nursing career. Amy was an enthusiastic mentor to many nurses. She devoted her 39-year career to St. John's Hospital where she lived the four pillars of Respect, Care, Competence and Joy each day.

Amy oversaw a multitude of patient-centered service lines. She always had a smile, a friendly hello and an encouraging word for everyone she met. She put her heart and soul into St. John's, always keeping the care of the patients in the forefront. The depths to which she is missed cannot be put into words.

To contribute to the Amy Jones Memorial Scholarship Endowment, go to giving.hshs.org/AmyJonesMemorials, or make your check payable to HSHS St. John's Foundation c/o Amy Jones Memorial Scholarship and mail to HSHS St. John's Foundation, 800 E. Carpenter St., Springfield, IL 62769.

**For more information, contact
Bev Neisler with HSHS St. John's
Foundation at 217-757-6804 or
bev.neisler@hshs.org.**



Dr. Jill R. Engel receives 2021 Distinguished Alumna Award

Jill R. Engel, DNP, ACNP, FNP, NEA-BC, FAANP, serves as the associate vice president for heart services for nursing, operations and patient care services and interim vice president and service line executive of heart and vascular services for Duke University Health System. Since starting her career at Duke, Jill has held a variety of clinical and administrative positions including clinical operations director for advanced practice and associate chief nursing office for heart services. In addition to her leadership roles, Jill has maintained her bedside practice as an acute care nurse practitioner (ACNP) in the cardiothoracic intensive care unit at Duke University Hospital, where she staffs per diem.

Dr. Engel serves as a reviewer for The Journal of Nurse Practitioners and has published and presented nationally and internationally on a variety of clinical, operational and leadership topics, including enhanced recovery after cardiac surgery, cardiac surgery advanced life support and advanced practice provider models of care. Dr. Engel is a member of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, Sigma Theta Tau, the American College of Cardiology and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, where she serves on the multidisciplinary membership committee. Dr. Engel is certified as an ANCP, family and adult specialties and maintains her critical care RN (CCRN) and CCRN cardiac surgery specialist certifications, as well as her nurse executive advanced certification. Dr. Engel was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners in 2011 and completed the GE Health Management Academy Nurse Executive Fellows Program in 2018.

Dr. Engel received a diploma in nursing from St. John's Hospital School of Nursing in 1985 and completed a BSN, MSN and post-master's NP certificate from the University of Illinois Chicago. Dr. Engel completed a doctor of nursing practice and became a Post-Doctorate Quality Implementation Scholar at Duke University School of Nursing in Durham, NC, where she also serves as clinical associate faculty.

Jill lives in Morrisville, NC, with her husband, Samuel, who is the associate dean of education at Campbell University.



"I knew from my St. John's perioperative, ICU and cardiac rotations that I was destined to care for heart patients. My maiden name was Brandt, and my sister, Beverly (Brandt) Wodtka, graduated from St. John's three years ahead of me. My sister-in-law Maria (Engel) Rexroad graduated from St. John's two years after me. Both of them are still practicing today."

"My husband and I love to travel, golf and enjoy our Westie, Hamish!"

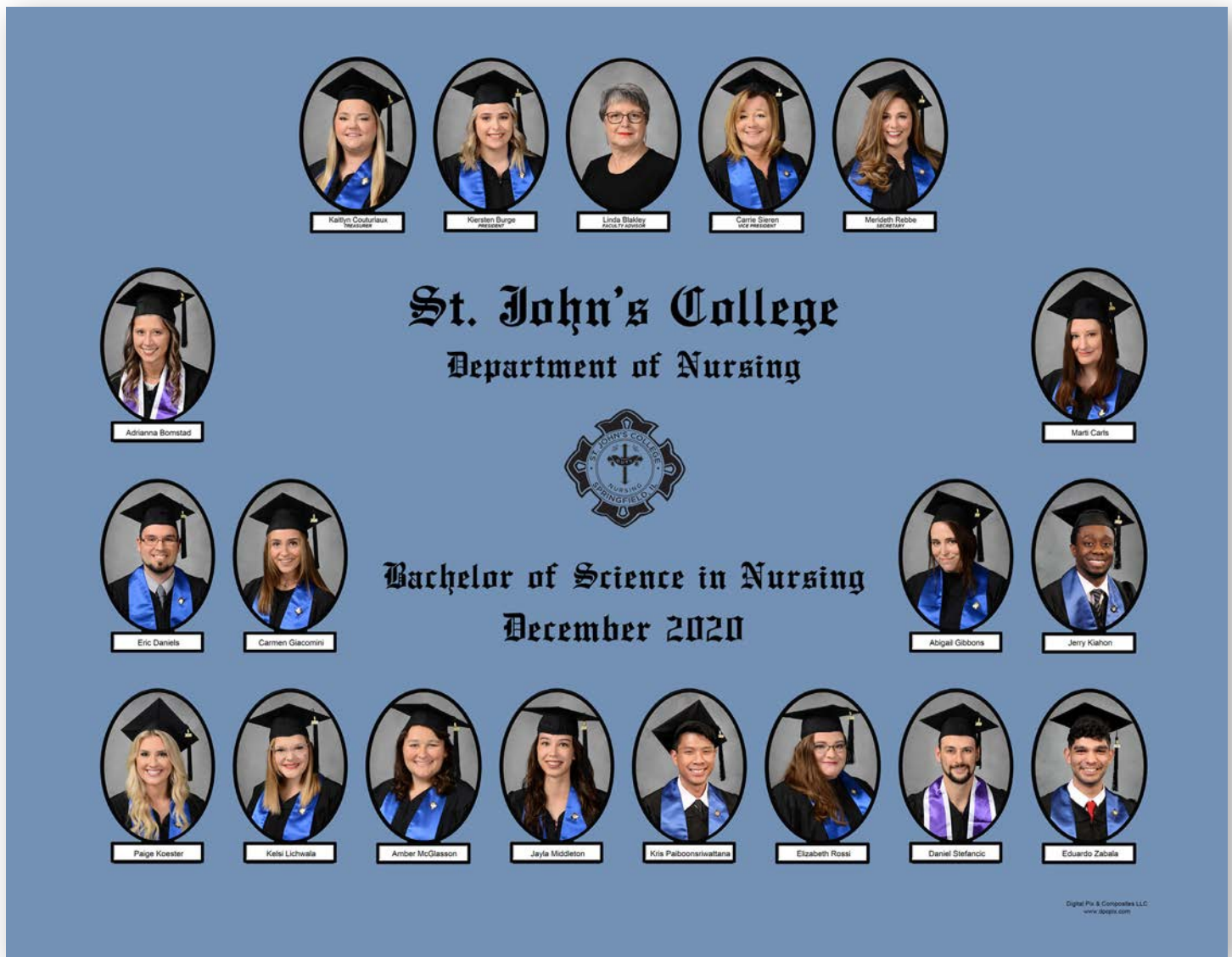
Board Member Spotlight



Vicki Luff

Vicki Luff graduated from St. John's School of Nursing in 1984 with a nursing diploma and associate degree from Springfield College of Illinois. She went on to get her BSN from Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville and her master's from St. Francis University in Joliet, IL. Vicki will celebrate her 46th wedding anniversary this year. She has three children and three grandchildren.

Vicki continues to work at Central Counties Health Center as a clinical quality coordinator. She enjoys baking, reading and playing cards with her grandchildren.



Graduating Class of December 2020

The fall 2020 graduation ceremonies may have been cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but our graduating class was still honored with a virtual graduation. Please join us in congratulating our newest graduates.

Adrianna Bomstad, Springfield, IL
Kiersten Burge, Riverton, IL
Marti Carls, Springfield, IL
Kaitlyn Couturiaux, Waverly, IL
Eric Daniels, Taylorville, IL
Carmen Giacomini, Springfield, IL
Abigail Gibbons, Rochester, IL
Jerry Kiahon, New York, NY
Paige Koester, Teutopolis, IL
Kelsi Lichwala, Springfield, IL
Amber McGlasson, Petersburg, IL
Jayla Middleton, Salem, IL
Kris Paiboonsriwattana, Bangkok, Thailand
Merit Rebbe, Chatham, IL
Liz Rossi, Roby, IL
Carrie Sieren, Jacksonville, IL
Daniel Stefancic, Chatham, IL
Eduardo Zabala, Rushville, IL

Alumni retiring from St. John's College



Michelle McCarthy

DNP, RN | Class of 1977

What do you teach?

"In my 10 years of teaching at the college, I have been fortunate to teach in all three of our programs — prelicensure BSN, RN-BSN and master's. For the last few years, I have mostly taught in the MSN program in the areas of health care leadership, evidence-based practice, quality and safety. I also teach community and public health nursing to BSN students."

How many years have you been teaching at St. John's College?

"I've been at St. John's 43 years, and 10 of those years have been at St. John's College."

Why do you like teaching at St. John's College?

"As a lifelong learner, I thoroughly enjoy sharing my knowledge and experience with students while simultaneously learning from them. Because the teaching assignments I have been given align with my clinical practice experiences, I have been able to provide students with 'real world' application of the theory they are learning. My colleagues and administration share a deep commitment to the highest standards for nursing education and have supported my suggestions for innovation and improvement in our curriculum. I have been given great opportunities to collaborate with my peers in the development of advanced nursing degree programs (MSN and DNP) which build on the rich history and tradition of the Hospital Sisters who developed the first nursing programs."

What is your most memorable experience at St. John's College?

"While working as a clinical instructor with students in med-surg nursing, I assigned a student to care for a patient who was imminently near death. The student was a bit anxious as she had never cared for someone close to death, and she had many questions about what to do or say. As I coached her about how to proceed, I made the comment that even though the woman was not conscious, our job was to be a healing presence to her through the dying process. Later that day in post conference, this student shared her experience with her fellow students and reflected back what I had taught her. That made a huge impact on me as I realized the influence my words and actions had on the students I was privileged to teach."

Lisa Lanzotti

MSN, RN | Class of 1980

What do you teach?

"I am adjunct clinical faculty for the community health nursing course."

How many years have you been teaching at St. John's College?

"I have been at St. John's College for five years."

Why do you like teaching at St. John's College?

"I love teaching at the college. The students are so happy and eager to learn. In the community health course, students are given the opportunity to observe nursing outside of the hospital walls. Students spend time with nurses in various roles, such as school nursing, home health nursing and public health nursing, to name a few. It really opens the student's eyes to

the important work community health nurses do. I also appreciate the great working relationships I have with my colleagues."

What is your most memorable experience at St. John's College?

"My most memorable experiences at the college are recent ones. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many changes to how services are implemented in the community. Recently the students have helped administer both the flu shot and the COVID vaccine to individuals utilizing drive-thru clinics. We have found these clinics to be efficient and an easy way to mass vaccinate. It has been rewarding for students to be part of this history-making endeavor."

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729 E. Carpenter Street
Springfield, IL 62702



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Charlotte Bivens

MSN, RN | Class of 1980

What do you teach?

"Fall 2020 - Health Assessment labs, clinical for N446 Senior Immersion.
Spring 2021 - clinical for N446 Senior Immersion. I'm working with Dr. Julie Varns on documents to submit for simulation center accreditation."

How many years have you been teaching at St. John's College?

"This is my first year teaching at St. John's College. I have been an RN at HSHS St. John's Hospital for 41 years."

Why do you like teaching at St. John's College?

"Everyone at the college has been very welcoming and supportive. I feel that my knowledge, opinions and expertise are valued."



What is your most memorable experience at St. John's College?

"I have been involved with previous graduations as I am a member of the college board, and they are very memorable. Due to COVID, the December 2020 graduation was not held in the traditional manner. We had the students come in to get their diplomas, cords and a 'goody bag.' Faculty dressed in regalia and had signs of support and encouragement for the students. Very special."

Alumni News

Condolences

Marie Isert (Schrage), '46. Passed November 25, 2020

Geraldine Ramsay (Staley), '46. Passed November 26, 2020.

Pauline C. Haarmann Zimmerman (Heischmidt), '53. Passed December 10, 2020.

M. Joan Boarman (Adams), '59. Passed December 6, 2020

Kathleen Marie Vehovic (Renfrow), '74. Passed December 16, 2020.

Clara Hilquist (Richter), '56. Passed December 23, 2020.



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