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FALL 2022

# nurse



## Following God's Lead

Elizabeth Bossert, PhD, RN reflects warmly on her career at the Loma Linda University School of Nursing that has spanned over four decades of service and taken her from faculty member to Dean of the school.



LOMA LINDA  
UNIVERSITY

School of Nursing



## letter from THE DEAN

### Seasons of Life

*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1*

**F**OR ME THE SEASON OF RETIREMENT HAS COME. I was increasingly feeling the need to consider moving to the next step in life. I have learned when faced with a major change to talk with people who understood what the change would mean, pray, take time to be sure that He was leading in that direction. The outcome was the decision to retire in summer 2022.

In my years at the School of Nursing, I worked for three other Deans, Marilyn Christian (Smith, Gearing) hired me. Helen King was my next dean, followed by Marilyn Herrmann. I thank each of them for their part in my academic trajectory. When I started so many years ago, I had no idea I would be on the list of Deans. It has been a challenging and interesting role. Some projects moved forward as expected, and on other days, I had to remind myself to pause and listen to God's direction in the situation.

Over my 44 years of LLUSN, many changes have occurred. A few examples: the change from pin striped uniforms to scrubs; increasing the number of students accepted;

expansion of the faculty and staff to accommodate the increase in number of students; increasing the number of classrooms available to include all of West Hall; possible additional space needs for the continual growth of the number of students; changes in processes due to the COVID pandemic in both the didactic and clinical portions of the nursing classes; partnering with the School of Pharmacy and School of Medicine to facilitate Interdisciplinary team work; and increased opportunities for students to participate in short term LLU mission trips, a life changing experience for many.

A common question is, what are your plans for retirement? I don't have a goal to visit all countries in the world. I do enjoy the California, Oregon and Washington coast line so I may explore that more. And I think a train trip across Canada, especially in the fall, would be wonderful! There are many options to be explored. And it is taking more time than expected to care for my changing health care needs. Flexibility in daily life is essential.

It has been a privilege to serve as Dean of the Loma Linda University School of Nursing. My parting advice: Continue to follow God's leading in all things.

May God continue to bless the School, students, alumni, faculty and staff.

Elizabeth Bossert, PhD, RN  
Dean

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Bossert, as she  
says goodbye to her  
time at the Loma  
Linda University  
School of Nursing.

Natan Vigna

# Elizabeth Bossert, PhD, RN

DEAN OF  
THE SCHOOL  
OF NURSING,  
2015 TO 2022

## *Following God's Lead*

By Nancy Yuen



Elizabeth Bossert is confident that her 44-year career at the School of Nursing, which culminated in her eight-year tenure as dean, is a result of trusting and following God's plan for her life. Dr. Bossert led the School of Nursing as its dean from 2015 to 2022. While she was dean enrollment expanded, with over 800 students currently enrolled in its bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs.

Dr. Bossert's nursing education began at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California, where she completed her AS degree. She went on to complete her BS degree in Nursing at Walla Walla College.

Her introduction to Loma Linda University came when she was accepted into the Master of science degree program at the School of Nursing in the mid-1970s.

At the time she applied to the program she was a member of Pacific Union College's (PUC) nursing faculty and was teaching on the college's Glendale campus. Her first two years of teaching nursing reinforced her decision to pursue education as a career.

PUC offered to pay for her master's degree if she agreed to continue teaching there after she completed the program. "I decided not to accept their offer," she says. "I am uncomfortable with a long-term plan as it does not leave flexibility to adapt as God leads." Her decision gave her the freedom to remain at Loma Linda when she was asked to join the School of Nursing faculty. "It was just one of many doors that God opened in my life," she says.

In her master's program Dr. Bossert focused on maternal-child nursing and teaching. She completed the MS program at the School of Nursing in 1977.

Dr. Bossert joined the School of Nursing faculty in 1978, teaching pediatric nursing in the School's undergraduate program. She continued working at the School until her retirement in 2022, leaving only when she moved to San Francisco to pursue her doctoral degree at University of California San Francisco (UCSF) in 1987.

At UCSF, her studies focused on research and parent-child nursing. She completed the doctoral degree program at UCSF in 1990.

When she returned to Loma Linda in 1990 Dr. Bossert again taught Pediatrics in the BS program for several years, and gradually began teaching in the School's graduate programs. The courses she taught included parent-child theory, research, and advanced role development. Her research focused on children's

responses to hospitalization and illness, pain and other symptoms experienced by children with cancer.

During her time as a faculty member, she was a part of a research team that included Lois Van Cleve and Marilyn Savedra. Together the team secured two RO1 grants from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research. Her research was published in numerous refereed journals. She also served as reviewer for the Journal of Nursing Scholarship, the Journal of Pediatric Nursing, the Journal of the Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, and Pediatric Nursing.

In 2005, Dr. Bossert was named Associate Dean of the School, and director of the graduate program. This role continued for nine years, until Marilyn Herrmann, dean from 2005 to 2014, retired.

On December 15, 2014, Dr. Bossert's appointment as the sixth dean of the School of Nursing was announced at a special luncheon on the Loma Linda University (LLU) campus. After the announcement was made, Ron Carter, PhD, LLU provost, said, "Becky is no stranger to administration. She has helped us in so many central committees. She has been the assistant chair of the university academic affairs committee. We've worked together on a number of research projects. She's had many hats."

Dr. Herrmann worked with Dr. Bossert as faculty member and then more closely after she became associate dean for the graduate program. In January, 2015, Dr. Bossert began her leadership as dean. Dr. Herrmann notes, "She was well qualified. She didn't call me very much; she encouraged others and led by asking 'what would you do?' That's a good sign that someone is confident, a servant leader."

During her deanship, Dr. Bossert worked to fulfill a promise in the Dean's message on the School's website: to cultivate an environment that helps students develop to their fullest potential. It was important to create a place where faculty could also grow to achieve their fullest potential.

As she worked with young faculty, she recognized the challenges they faced as they considered both career and family. As they progressed in their careers, she made it a point to listen while encouraging them to define and pursue their goals.

Bonnie Meyer, MS, RN, retired assistant professor of nursing, a long-time faculty member, became director of the School's Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) at the same time Dr. Bossert became dean. "I appreciated how she always showed interest in hearing updates/progress reports about

*“God is leading the School and the University. If we remember that the organization isn’t ours, it’s His, Loma Linda will thrive.”*

the ACE department,” she says. “Dr. Bossert was always pleased to hear about our successes. She was encouraging of new ideas to improve the department and when we faced challenges, she was willing to discuss them and help problem solve.”

Dee Hart, PhD, RN, emeritus associate dean, observes, “Dr. Bossert often gave of her precious time to listen thoughtfully when a faculty member or a student requested counsel regarding a difficult problem or challenging situation. She genuinely and carefully considered the issues involved and quietly but firmly described her decision. You could depend on her to be honest in her opinions, advice and counsel.”

She continues: “I believe the caring support during a challenging time makes students want to try harder and Dr. Bossert cared about the students. A few times she and I had to meet with students who weren’t doing well in school or who had gotten themselves into some kind of difficulty. Dr. Bossert was honest about the consequences, while showing compassion and support toward the student.”

Drawing from her experience studying at UCSF, Dr. Bossert mentored colleagues. Dr. Herrmann recalls that when she was pursuing her doctoral degree at Claremont University: “Becky offered to share her own dissertation with me to use for a guide. This was very helpful. It provided perspective from another institution, and I was confident I wasn’t missing anything.” Dr. Bossert also assisted Dr. Dee Hart. “Dr. Bossert willingly shared her knowledge and personal experience with me through my doctoral dissertation experience,” she says.



#### **INTERNATIONAL WORK**

Responding to the growing number of international requests in the areas of education and consulting, the School’s global outreach program that had begun when Dr. Helen King was dean expanded, providing opportunities for Dr. Bossert to travel internationally. She taught courses in the School of Nursing’s off-campus degree program on three continents: Asia, South America and Africa. The program was designed to provide advanced education to nurses, nurse educators and administrators who were working at educational institutions around the world. When the fifth cohort finishes, more than 140 international students from 34 countries will have been awarded degrees from Loma Linda University.

As growing numbers of nurses have completed School’s off-campus degree program, their influence is being felt at clinics and hospitals operated by the Adventist Church. “President Richard Hart has shared that while traveling internationally, he meets leaders in Adventist educational and health care organizations who are graduates of the program. The graduates of the program are making a difference around the world.”

In addition to teaching courses in Argentina, Thailand and South Africa, Dr. Bossert's educational, professional, and research activities at the School of Nursing took her to Australia, China, England, Ireland, and Peru.

During her tenure as dean, educational programs were developed to meet contemporary needs of nursing. While she emphasizes that a team was responsible, programs that formed and grew under her leadership include the BS/MS to PhD program, the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program concentrations, the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Programs, and the Clinical Nurse Specialist Program.

Meaningful interactions with faculty often took place outside of formal meetings. Dr. Bossert made it a practice to walk through the halls at West Hall and if a faculty member's door was open she would ask if the person had a few minutes to share about their course.

"Some of the most meaningful conversations took place during those times," she says.

"Dr Bossert made herself available to faculty both by making rounds regularly and stopping by offices to chat," says Barbara Ninan, EdD, RN, retired associate dean, undergraduate program, "and by making time for faculty to schedule appointments with her if they needed more time to share concerns and/or ask for guidance on a particular topic."

Today's nursing students are being well prepared as they develop the knowledge and skills to use their voice to impact patient care, she says. Nursing education is transitioning to competency-based learning: flipping the classroom with

students arriving in class prepared to discuss how to apply the information to patient care.

The profession has come a long way from 1900, Dr. Bossert muses, when the following statement was published in the first issue of the *American Journal of Nursing*: "The nurse is an intelligent machine to do what the physician directs."

Interprofessional education is encouraging nursing students to consider the interplay with other disciplines in patient care as they interact with students from the Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy, modeling real-life communication that will happen in the hospital setting.

Looking forward, Dr. Bossert is confident that each of the school's programs have the potential to accept more students, and to grow. "With growth comes the need for space," she says. "Careful planning has kept us focused on where nursing is going," says Dr. Bossert. Her experience and insight will continue to help shape

the School's path, as appropriate situations arise. For example, she has been asked to join the School's Alumni Board.

President Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, says, "Dr. Bossert's long career at Loma Linda has always exemplified a life of commitment to this institution and to the profession of nursing. She has guided the School of Nursing through unprecedented growth and a continuing impact on the world by its graduates."

In national professional meetings over the years, Dr. Bossert was impressed by world renowned institutions' interest in Loma Linda's worldwide network. "God is leading the School and the University," she says. "If we remember that the organization isn't ours, it's His, Loma Linda will thrive."

In her retirement, she is looking forward to spending time by the ocean. While she anticipates many other adventures, she doesn't feel pressured to set goals right away. "I'll take it a day at a time," she smiles.



# Meet Gloria Mattson Huerta

*Our new Alumni  
Association president*

**By Meghann Heinrich**

**G**loria Huerta's, DNP, FNP-C, NHDP-BC, AGNP-C, CNS, RN career is marked by firsts and a remarkable list of non-traditional nursing roles which have shaped the leader, teacher, and nurse she is today. "I tell my nursing and nurse practitioners students, 'Keep your eyes and ears open, you never know where God will lead you.'"

The eldest of six children, her childhood was spent moving around the country due to her father's military career. While they lived in several states, her mother's deep familial roots in Central Texas made the Lone Star State feel the most like home. When it came time for college, Dr. Huerta attended the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, a small private institution in her home state. Her initial ambitions were to prepare for medical school, but God had other plans. She earned a bachelor's in nursing in 1975 instead, becoming the first in her family to complete an undergraduate degree.

Shortly after graduation and her first short-lived nursing job, Dr. Huerta grew discouraged with the profession, "It wasn't what I thought it would be; there were many aspects of that job that weren't in line with how I had been trained." Ready to give up on nursing altogether, she took a year of graduate study in sociology and anthropology at Texas A&M University. "It gave me a great basis in social determinants of health. We didn't call it that back then, but that is really what it was: looking at individuals' needs and how to meet them." Those skills informed her approach to nursing for the rest of her career.

Following her one-year hiatus, Dr. Huerta moved to Southern California ready to give nursing another chance, and this time it felt right. Over the last forty some years she has held positions ranging from acute care (continuously working in some form of emergency medicine since 1983) to teaching, disaster relief, and administrative roles. She became Riverside County's first director of emergency medical services, a position she built from the ground up while completing her master's and becoming a certified clinical nurse specialist through Loma Linda University School of Nursing (LLUSN). "The [master's] program at Loma Linda was perfect for me... I was taught to look at quality improvement, identify needs, assess situations, and develop new programs; exactly what I was doing for Riverside County." Following her work for the county, she was recruited to serve as the only nurse in the Riverside County Fire Department. "That was

really the most fun job I've ever had. Not only was I able to do program development, quality improvement, and education, but I also responded to emergencies which gave me back the joy of serving patients again."

You've likely deduced that Dr. Huerta likes to stay busy. She has been known to hold up to three jobs simultaneously, including teaching positions at community colleges and private universities. She's been instructing EMTs, nursing and nurse practitioner students since 1978, a testament to her passion for education. She describes her teaching approach this way, "I like to lead students to the truth, but let them discover it for themselves... I want them to rationalize... and think through things, that is the only way they will become great, competent, safe practitioners."

In 2015, LLUSN reached out to Dr. Huerta, inviting her to return and revamp the family and adult-gerontology nurse practitioner (FNP and AGNP) programs. At the time, she was not looking for a change of pace, however, she loves a challenge and the position offered just that. "It was too good an opportunity to turn down: returning to Loma Linda where my roots were. I did my master's here, I'd taught here years prior, and it just seemed like this was where God was leading me back to." Under her watchful eye, the FNP program came to be recognized as one of the best programs of its kind in California.

Today, Dr. Huerta contributes to LLUSN on many levels: as the doctor of nursing practice program director, the former FNP and AGNP course coordinator, the LLUSN Safety Committee chair, as an assistant

professor, and as an alumna.

When she considers the future of LLUSN, she envisions growth in interdisciplinary collaboration.

“Nursing looks at nursing, and while we talk about interprofessional education, I think that as the School of Nursing and as an alumni association we can be more engaged with our colleagues outside our discipline. It will make our program stronger and it will make our graduates more functional.”

Dr. Huerta comes to the LLUSN Alumni Association presidency with clear objectives for the coming year. She has her sights set on increasing engagement among alumni outside of the greater Loma Linda area. “We have a mission and the ability to include our worldwide alumni in our programs and activities.” In addition, she would like to draw in alumni from LLUSN graduate programs, recognizing that historically the Alumni Association has focused on the undergraduate population. “I’d love to engage with our master’s and PhD graduates as well, I think they have a lot to offer to society and to our Alumni Association.”

While her life has taken a myriad of twists and turns, Dr. Huerta attributes her successes and singular career path to God. She has worked in and attended several faith-based institutions, but she holds that Loma Linda University stands apart in its lived mission. On being an LLUSN alumna, Dr. Huerta has this to say, “I know that I am one of many who have traveled this journey. We [alumni] have different personalities and skill sets, but we all share the same philosophy: we all believe in making man whole.”



# First Flight

*Dawn Graves reflects on her time as Loma Linda's first transport nurse*

by Nancy Yuen

The Loma Linda University Medical Center Air Medical Service was inaugurated on May 22, 1972, the same year Dawn Graves completed nursing school at Loma Linda. On June 5 the program began its service, marking the first time a helicopter operated by a California hospital was used for patient transport.

In the 1970s women were encouraged to become teachers, secretaries, or nurses. Dawn chose the profession that best suited her personality—nursing.

While there were nursing schools closer to her home in central California, “I didn’t want to attend a party school,” she recalls. At the suggestion of a Seventh-day Adventist neighbor, she applied to the School of Nursing.

Hers was the last class before the School moved into West Hall. When she attended, nursing administration was located on the sixth floor at the Medical Center and labs were taught in the basement.

“Nursing school was the best thing that ever happened to me,” she says. “I feel I received the best education in my field anywhere. Our instructors were exceptional and supportive, and the support from fellow classmates was the best I’d ever experienced.”

Dawn recalls studying concept maps that faculty member Dr. Dorothy Marten drew across the board during her senior year. She found the class challenging. “I learned so much from Dr. Martin about thinking things through—cause and effect—that paid dividends when I started flying,” she says.



As a young nurse Dawn wanted to pursue new challenges. To her that meant working in critical care. However, she soon learned that new nurses were hired to work where they were most needed and she worked NOC shift on Loma Linda's GYN/Oncology unit. She liked the team but when working nights proved challenging she moved to days, working on the nursing float pool. "I enjoyed it because I'd often be assigned to work on critical care floors," she recalls.

At the time nurses wore a standard uniform: white dresses, white hose and white shoes; some wore the traditional white nursing cap. Dawn began wearing the cap after numerous patients asked if she was old enough to be a nurse. "Wearing it seemed to solve the problem," she says.

She smiles as she recalls the last time she wore the cap. "I was working IV Therapy while a paramedic student shadowed me. I leaned over to start an IV as he, being taller, watched over my shoulder. When I stood up the corner of the cap almost put his eye out. I never wore a cap again."

Dawn would sometimes hear the transport helicopter arrive and would turn to see it land. One day she as she watched through the window, the team offloaded a patient and rolled the gurney off the helipad into the hospital. She decided she wanted to be a part of the transport team. "Growing up in the military may have influenced my interest," she muses. "My father's last assignment was a missile site out the back gate of Travis Air Force Base. Planes flew overhead all the time."

After she asked Bennie Scott, an EMT who was also a medical student and firefighter, if nurses were a part of the flight team, he relayed the question to administration.

A short time later Thomas Zirkle, MD, FACS, senior vice president, and Dawn happened to be at the same place in the hospital at the same time. He interviewed her for a position on the transport team in the hallway outside of the staff elevators. After a second interview, she was offered the job.

"The first time I put on the uniform was surreal," she says. "I'd been wearing pantsuits up until then but the uniforms were better. They were real flight suits made in L.A.; they had lots of pockets which was always helpful."

While many of the flights transported patients from outlying hospitals to Loma Linda, the team occasionally completed rescue flights. There were also transports from small outlying hospitals to hospitals such as Good Samaritan, Hoag, USC, UCLA, San Geronio and Huntington Beach. "What was fun," she says, "Is that very few hospitals had helipads so we landed in some strange places such as vacant lots and hotel parking lots."



Weather and visibility were always factors, and the pilot had the say as to whether the team could fly. One night the team flew to the low desert through Banning pass and the sky was crystal clear. On the return flight they encountered a bank of dense fog and had to land at Banning Airport; Loma Linda called for an ambulance to pick them up and transport them the rest of the way to Loma Linda.

"We were, as the pilots sometimes said, flying by the seat of our pants," she muses. When glass IV bottles proved to be ineffective in flight due to the lower air pressure Dawn figured out a fix, using a second bottle and an 18-gauge needle. "It was then that I realized why we needed to take physics to become a nurse," she says. "The glass bottles were eventually replaced by IV bags. Today there's much more equipment and more medications than were available 50 years ago, and they have pumps to run IVs."

"I'm not sure what fascinated me about the program initially," she says, "but I discovered I was a little bit of an adrenalin junkie." As she looks back, she says the School of Nursing gave her the confidence she lacked when she began training.

She left the program in 1977, when she accepted a position as EMT Instructor/Paramedic Coordinator and in 1982, she began working at Redlands Community Hospital in the Mobile Intensive Care Nurse. She then accepted a position at Riverside City College, as instructor for the Nursing and Medical Assisting Program.

Dawn retired on April 20, 2022, and enjoys spending time with her husband. She has kept contact with her classmates and coworkers at Loma Linda, and can be found taking ballet classes three times a week.

# Academic Center for Excellence:

*The power of prioritizing  
whole student care*

by Nancy Yuen



There's a connection between School of Nursing alumni who are providing outstanding and compassionate care in complex and everchanging areas of medicine and the student who is questioning if their journey to nursing might end before it is realized.

The connection extends to include diligent students who are at the top of their class yet are struggling to balance success with prioritizing the self-care needed to create the resilience that will be needed to lift and sustain them during long and meaningful careers, and it encompasses faculty who, when invited to share their own stories, reveal that their compassion arises from struggles and discovery in their own lives.

At the School of Nursing whole student care, inspired by Loma Linda University Health's tradition of wholeness, extends beyond the traditional classroom to the School's Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) department. As the department's eight faculty members work with students, "We've seen so many success stories," says Lydia Curteman, DNP, RN, ACE director.

While the department and its resources are available to all nursing students, those who receive a "C" or a non-passing grade in their first or second quarter are required to register for Nursing 244 Strategies for Academic Success. During the quarter-long class they meet one to one with ACE faculty for an hour each week.

"Every aspect of ACE is designed to help students not just survive, but thrive," says Dr. Curteman. "As we work with students, we

encourage them. We let students know they've taken the first step and that we're already proud of them. We want them to do well academically, gaining the knowledge they need to become successful nurses."

During the initial meeting between faculty and student, the student responds to questions: What is a big challenge for you? What is your goal?

"It's important that they are honest with themselves," says Dr. Curteman. "ACE is a safe setting, and we encourage vulnerability as students verbalize their challenges and learn to identify their strengths."

A student's goal may be as simple as wanting to feel less stress when preparing for or taking test or stating that they want to graduate from the School of Nursing. Next, they begin to create goals.

For over-achievers, this may include creating strategies for self-care. "If they focus on creating

balance in their lives now they can form habits by the time they are at bedside to help them avoid experiencing burnout as a nurse," she says.

Some of the programs offered arose from the students themselves. Students are finding support from each other in tutoring and peer support groups, each with a faculty sponsor.

In the ADHD peer support group, "Students learn simple techniques, such as sitting in the front row in class to improve focus," says Associate Dean Dr. Brandie Richards, FNP, DNP, RN, "and in the Parents in Nursing School group, students realize they aren't alone as they learn how others are managing being a parent while in school."

Dr. Curteman began working in ACE in 2017. In 2020 she became its director, accepting the challenge because she could see the department's potential. "I've been in the same shoes as many of





the students we work with,” she says. She remembers struggling to find balance as a nursing student while completing the School’s BS program. At the time she was caring for a loved one and was experiencing health issues; she also faced financial challenges.

“My dream is for ACE to be a whole student center,” she says, “a place where any nursing student can receive support and resources in a warm, welcoming and safe environment.”

As an example she shares the story of a student who was referred to the department because of low test scores. When it was learned she couldn’t afford prescription eyeglasses, funds were provided for her to purchase them. Finally able to see to study, her test scores improved.

When alumni from the class of 1972 learned about how ACE is helping students they wanted to help. The class celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022, and chose to support the department with their class gift. “They are remarkable women who exemplify resilience. We’re grateful they chose to support the next generation of nurses with their generous class gift,” says Dr. Curteman.

The School’s commitment to caring for the whole student through ACE is beginning to be reflected visibly. “We found that after completing Strategies for Academic Success, fewer students were leaving before finishing the program,” says Dr. Richards.

Today, more than 50 percent of students in the School of Nursing are first-generation college students. “Typically, parents can guide their children while they’re in school. Students who are the first in their family to attend college, however, aren’t able to benefit from knowledge shared by family members,” says Dr. Richards.

“Students now more than ever need additional support,” she continues. “If we want to ensure the success of upcoming generations, we need to be sensitive to students with learning disabilities and mental health disparities.”

The department’s impact is also being felt in the makeup of the student body. As Dr. Richards, who chairs admissions, reviews answers to the question,

“Why did you choose to apply to the School of Nursing,” some responses indicate that they applied because when they learned about ACE they knew the School cares about its students.

Jessica Goodson, class of 2022, learned about ACE during orientation, and would come to ACE with a formidable challenge—she was determined to pass Pathophysiology. “I failed the second test miserably,” she recalls, “and would need to achieve such a high percentage on the final to pass that I’d been advised to withdraw from the class and retake it.”

Jessica had decided to become a nurse after experiencing the impact nurses make when a family member was treated for a rare disease. She’s the first person in her family to attend college. Her father attended trade school and her mother traveled to the U.S. to harvest strawberries and avocados as a 13-year-old.

At ACE, “I learned not to memorize the material for the test but to think about how to apply it. I didn’t see



family or friends as I was focusing on studying for the final; I gave it my all,” she says. At the most challenging points, she found compassion and comfort at ACE, she says.

After taking the final, she texted her professor to thank her. Not only had she done well, “I learned that only two students with scores similar to mine had made the percentage jump needed to pass the class,” she says.

“As I’ve worked with ACE, I’ve learned that it’s OK to struggle. Some students may not have to try as hard and though I may have needed to try ten times harder, I value my education even more deeply.”

Jessica began working on the



LLUH transplant unit on October 31. “Whether the patient receives a new kidney, liver or pancreas, transplants are a miracle. They are given an amazing chance at a new life.”

Drs. Richards and Curteman are pleased to see alumni who actively participated in ACE as students return to the School as clinical instructors and tutors. “They faced challenges and experienced how resources they received helped them succeed. Now they want to help and give to others,” says Dr. Richards. “The blessings continue to pour out.”

### **HISTORY OF ACE**

Perhaps the thread that so strongly connects students, faculty and alumni could best happen in a place whose first 100 years have been summarized with the phrase, “A Century of Caring.”

While the history of ACE reaches back to the late 1990s, the program remains the same, says Dr. Curteman. From its roots when it was known as the Learning Assistance Program (LAP), at the core of ACE is a passion for helping students maximize their learning potential.

The beginnings of ACE date back to the late 1990s when faculty members Vaneta Condon, PhD, RN associate professor and Charlie Jo Morgan, PhD, RN, assistant professor, studied the best way to offer services to help students learn skills essential to successfully

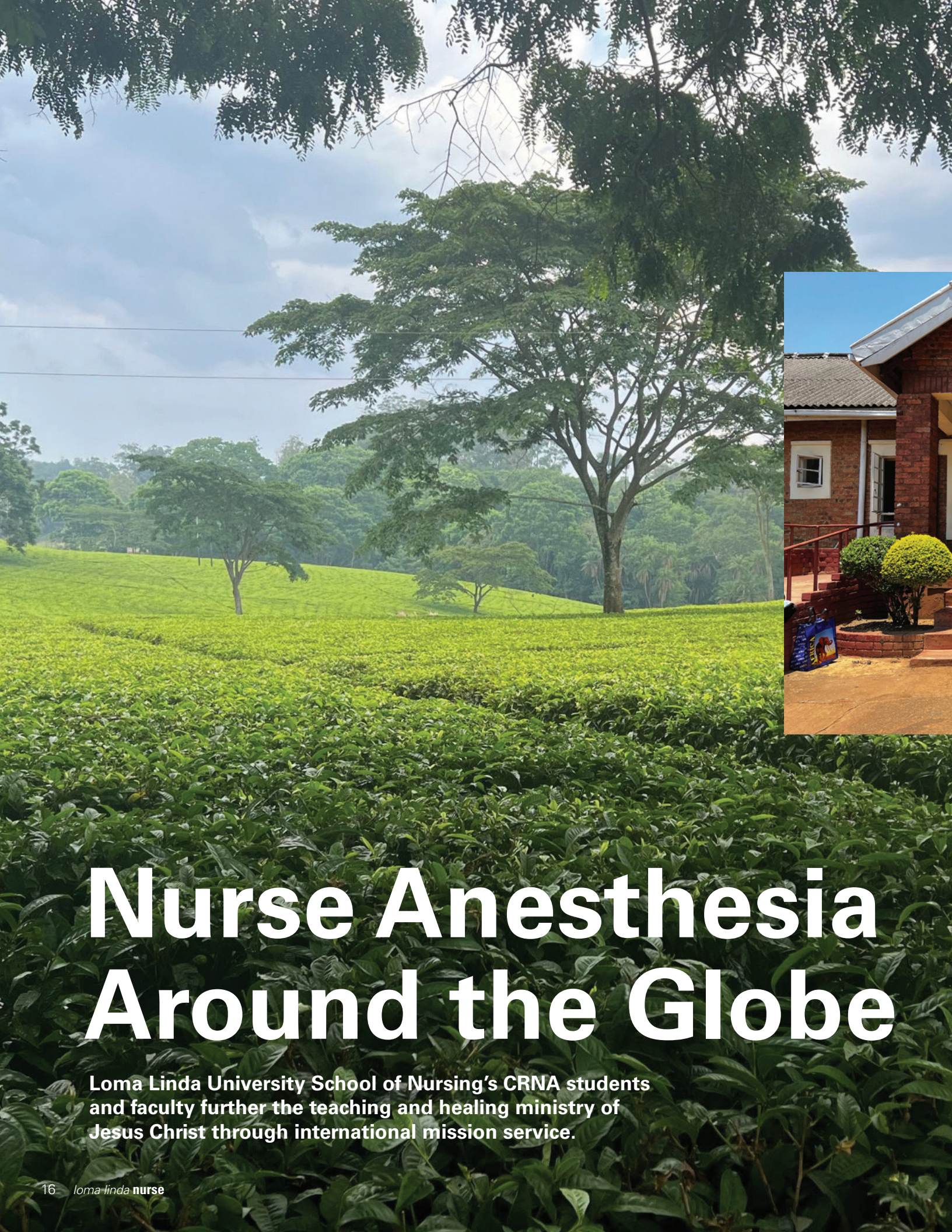
completing nursing school. The program they created, Success in Learning: Individualized Pathways Program included recruiting students from underrepresented backgrounds and providing coursework emphasizing math, medical terminology, writing, critical thinking and study skills. In 2000, nearly 80 students entered the program. Dr. Condon went on to found the Learning Assistance Program (LAP), which provided workshops to support students’ academic success.

In 2009, when Dr. Condon retired, Dr. Barbara Ninan was named director of LAP. She helped define the department as a nursing student support department. She also instituted mentor training and motivational interviewing.

Five years later, when Dr. Bonnie Meyer became director, the department was renamed ACE. During her tenure a strategies support group that had formed under Dr. Ninan’s leadership was formalized as a course.

Services offered to students continued to expand after Dr. Curteman became director in 2020, when Dr. Meyer retired. Training on coaching is emphasized and faculty sponsors for student-led support groups have been added. The department actively works with students, preparing them to apply and interview for nursing positions after graduation.





# Nurse Anesthesia Around the Globe

Loma Linda University School of Nursing's CRNA students and faculty further the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ through international mission service.



by Brianna Bolaños

The Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program of the Loma Linda University School of Nursing, Nurse Anesthesia Concentration offers a didactically front-loaded, 39-month, full-time graduate curriculum designed to educate critical care registered nurses in the nurse anesthetist role across the lifespan. LLU's program began in 2011 as a MS, CRNA program and transitioned to a DNP in 2018. Currently the program accepts 18 students each Fall for the following year. Upon completion, graduates are able to exercise advanced levels of clinical judgment, systems thinking, and expanded responsibility, as well as become accountable for planning, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based strategies.

Service has long been ingrained in the history of Loma Linda University School of Nursing and the CRNA students have embraced this specifically. They have chosen to emulate Jesus as a core part of their curriculum through mission trips. The mission of the CRNA program is, "...dedication to professional excellence, compassion in clinical practice, education and research, while furthering the healing and teaching ministry of Jesus Christ through commitment to whole person care and Christian values."

In 2012, LLUSN began offering missions trip opportunities specifically for CRNA students. "I think the primary reason mission trips were started



comes back to the foundation of who LLUSN is. We are here to serve others. Participating in an anesthesia mission trip is a way to use the skills and training God has given us to help others in need. It also helps students think outside the box while delivering anesthesia in austere environments where they don't have access to all the drugs and equipment they have in developed countries," shares Dr. Shawn Collins, Dean of Graduate Studies, PhD, DNP, CRNA, FAANA. Students currently have the opportunity to travel to Valle De Angeles in Honduras and Malawi, Africa.

Student Karin Nercissian spent time in Honduras in July 2022. When asked about choosing LLU and her inspiration to pursue missions, Nercissian shared, "I chose LLU because not only is it a faith-based institution, but its core values closely align to my own; values such as humility, emphasis on teamwork, and whole person care deeply resonate with me. From being treated at LLUMC after a horrific car accident to eventually working here, I feel a compelling sense of warmth in this environment" shares Nercissian. "I had wanted to go on a mission trip for a while, and as soon as I saw that LLU incorporates international service opportunities into our academic curriculum I knew it would be the perfect opportunity. I see mission trips as a way of



modeling Christ and serving others the way He did. It allows us to fully trust God while we stretch beyond our comfort zone and accept the challenge of being in unfamiliar settings with limited resources."

Dr. Eric Molina, DNAP, MSNA, CRNA, Assistant Director, Director of CRNA Admissions, leads the trip every summer to Valle De Angeles, a small city about a 1.5 - 2 hour bus ride from the capitol city of Tegucigalpa. "We are supporting our otolaryngology physicians who are performing surgery in a rural area at Hospital Adventista Valle de Angeles and we see anywhere

from 80-100 surgeries a week. These trips allow for our students to develop in many ways that force them to think outside the box and utilize minimal equipment while delivering safe anesthesia care."

Alexander Honore, graduating from LLUSN CRNA in December 2022, just came back from Honduras in July. "I had heard from other alumni that the mission trip opportunities are very good clinical experiences because you are working with inferior equipment and fewer options of medications than what we have here in the United States, so it will greatly





*“This experience greatly improved my abilities and comfort in the operating room and I know it did for my colleagues as well.”*

improve your anesthesia skills and comfort level. But I was also really inspired to be able to take my trained skills to an area that is severely underserved and give these people the opportunity that they may not have had without our help,” says Honore. “This experience greatly improved my abilities and comfort in the operating room and I know it did for my colleagues as well. I would definitely like to join this group of medical professionals again once I am a licensed anesthesia provider in the future.”

The cases that come into Hospital Adventista Valle de Angeles and Malamulo Adventist Hospital, are often life-changing for the patients. With little access, and few opportunities, “Some that particularly stand out to me are the pediatric patients. We have performed 3 tracheal surgeries on pediatric patients that allowed them to permanently have their tracheostomy removed,” says Molina.

Nercissian reflected that many of the cases were personally impactful: “I was able to provide anesthesia for pediatric and adult patients undergoing a variety of surgeries, including tonsillectomy, thyroidectomy and advanced airway tumor debulking cases. I can recall a very distraught mother who drove over six hours to bring her young child in for a unique airway issue. I was able to talk to them regarding the anesthesia aspect of the surgery. I assured them that we were there for them, and I prayed to God to guide our hands in our

work. The gratitude and relief she shared with me was truly remarkable. She burst into tears while thanking us for our service because there was nowhere else that she could go. It was in that moment I realized we were truly making a difference in peoples’ lives.”

“We went with some ENT surgeons from LLU to provide specifically ENT surgeries. Dr. Eric Molina brought myself and three other CRNA students, Kim Gnuschke, Josh Toppenberg, and Karin Nercissian. We were there to provide anesthesia services for 3 operating rooms so the ENT surgeons could perform their procedures. One specific story that stood out was a 7-year-old girl that had a mass on her vocal cords and it hurt her to speak. And she was so brave walking into that OR with almost no fear, she hopped up on the OR table and she didn’t seem scared at all. After she was induced with anesthesia, the surgery was performed successfully without any issues. It felt good to be able to be a part of this little girls’ journey to be able to speak without discomfort and live a more normal life,” says Honore.

Dr. Vanessa Jones-Oyefeso, DrPH, MSNA, CRNA, Program Director/Assistant Professor hopes that this becomes a long-standing tradition for future graduates. “It is an honor to serve the global community and for the students to hone their anesthesia skills in international settings.” The faculty and students hope that these stories will inspire others to do similar work in their communities.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD RECIPIENT

# GABRIELLE MARTINEZ

## God's Timing by Nancy Yuen

Gabrielle Martinez's introduction to the School of Nursing can be summarized in four words, "Hurry up, then wait!" As she looks back, the 2022 President's Award recipient marvels at how God's timing was just right – creating opportunities for her to find her passion, develop leadership skills, make friendships and become prepared to pursue a career as a NICU nurse.

Gabrielle had excelled at sports since childhood. She played soft pitch softball, enjoying the team dynamics and the challenges of competing and traveling to games. She worked diligently, and her skill on the softball diamond led to an offer of a scholarship from University of Montana in Missoula (UOM).

Gabrielle decided to become a nurse after seeing the care her mother, who worked in the profession, provided to patients and their families. The Division I softball scholarship made it possible for her to complete the prerequisites for nursing school. After graduating from Redlands High School she moved to Montana, attending UOM and competing on the university's softball team. She would go on to be named a four-time Big Sky Scholar-Athlete (2014-2018), playing the infield-second base position.

After completing her degree in health and human performance, with an emphasis in exercise science from UOM in 2018, she returned home to Redlands. As she prepared to enter nursing school, "Loma Linda wasn't on my radar," she says. She had hoped to attend another Christian university but after that door closed she called the School of Nursing.

During the call, "I learned that the next round of applications was due the next day!" she recalls.



*“We followed nurses as they cared for COVID-19 patients. We learned through adversity to become stronger nurses.”*

She met the deadline, studying for the nursing entrance exam over the weekend. “It was an emotional 24 hours!” she says.

Gabrielle was accepted into the following cohort; she would wait one quarter before entering the program as a member of the class of 2022. “I’m so glad it worked out that way,” she says.

While she and her classmates initially attended classes in person, school continued as the world paused during the pandemic. “After the first quarter, the next four quarters were completed online; the sixth and seventh were hybrid and the last quarter was in person,” she says.

During clinicals in August, “We followed nurses as they cared for COVID-19 patients,” she recalls. “We wore N-95 masks and full gowns and saw patients who had been diagnosed with COVID declining.” She joined School of Nursing students giving immunizations at COVID-19 vaccine clinics that were held at the University’s Drayson Center. As she and her classmates worked on the front lines of the pandemic, “We learned through adversity to become stronger nurses,” she says.

Gabrielle had entered the program with the desire to make a difference through leadership, and took on responsibilities including spiritual vice president, Association of Student Nurses (May 2021 to May 2022); and social vice president for her junior class. She treasures the friendships and relationships that were created as she pursued her passion for leadership and mission work. She also volunteered as a mentor at the School’s Academic Center for Excellence, helping to empower and encourage nursing students.

She excelled academically and her name was on the Dean’s List numerous times. She was inducted into Sigma Theta Tau in 2022 and was awarded the Alumni Scholarship (Spring 2022) and the LLUSN Henry Leadership Scholarship (Winter 2021).

Gabrielle marvels at God’s timing as the pandemic began to ease before graduation and she was able to participate in two mission trips to Mexico and one to Brazil. On the Brazil trip, the team had the privilege of providing care to 422 patients, serving communities, orphans and indigenous people through health fairs, clinics and health education. The Loma Linda students also held Bible school and provided donations of food and clothing. These experiences helped fuel Gabrielle’s desire to continue joining mission trips in the future.

The 2022 President’s Award was presented to her at the School’s conferring of degrees ceremony for the School. She was recognized for her outstanding academic performance, leadership, and community service engagement.



# Catching Up With NANCY BRASHEAR, LLUSN's First BS-PhD Graduate

by Amy Prindle

Nancy is currently a nursing instructor for the undergraduate nursing program at LLUSN and a per-diem patient care nurse. She'd had an inspiring journey toward her PhD in Nursing, and her research could significantly improve the future of neonatal care.

#### HOW DOES YOUR STORY BEGIN?

I am first-generation born in the United States. My parents emigrated from Mexico around 50 years ago and worked hard to provide a good life. I grew up in the public school system, then attended Citrus Community College, where I learned about Loma Linda University. I continued my prerequisites at La Sierra University before finishing my Bachelor's at Loma Linda, and I became the first of my family to graduate college.

#### WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE ON NURSING AS A CAREER?

My mother always wanted to be a nurse, and I think she transferred that desire to me! I also knew I wanted to work with kids. So from very early on, I wanted to be a nurse or a teacher—and now I'm both!

#### WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT TEACHING AT LLUSN?

I teach in the very last quarter of nursing school, and I love seeing the students transition into professionals. Sometimes you can notice that light-bulb moment when everything starts coming together for them. It's amazing to see them grow and get excited about their careers, ready to make a difference.

#### WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO PURSUE A PHD IN NURSING?

To be honest, I thought I was all set after finishing my undergrad. I'd fulfilled this goal for my family, and I was going to be a happy, comfortable nurse in patient care. But I felt God nudging me.

## What were the long-term results of our methods of care and procedures? These questions didn't have clear or immediate answers.

A few years after working full time in the NICU, I often found myself thinking about what happens after our patients move on. What were the long-term results of our methods of care and procedures?

And I would keep coming up with more questions, wanting to find out all the reasons behind what we do. And many of these questions didn't have clear or immediate answers.

So I continued my education, also realizing just how much I love academia. I found the PhD program to be a great fit for me.

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR PHD RESEARCH.

There is so much focus on studying medicine and procedure, so I wanted to look at the impact of the basic level things we do. Little things can mean so much.

For infants receiving intensive care, I studied the effects of handling their oxygen use at tissue level, specifically the kidneys and brain.

For a long time, neonatal nursing focused on "cluster care"—doing everything in a short time, such as bathing, diaper changes, blood draws, etc. The hope was that it would lessen stress by giving the baby more time to rest with longer periods in between care. But we found that during cluster care, oxygen utilization decreased. Trying to get everything done at once stresses them out, and they can't regulate themselves. And when routine handling was spread out, oxygen levels were more favorable.

(Her dissertation, "The Physiological Effects of Handling in Moderate to Late Pre-term Infancy Receiving Neonatal Intensive Care," is en route for publishing in *Advances in Neonatal Care*.)

#### WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, AND EDUCATION ALL AT ONCE?

I heard many well-meaning versions of, "You can't do all this at once. It's too much." But I was determined. I didn't want to reduce my work schedule or leave patient care. During the data collection period of my research, I would even come in to collect data in the middle of the night!

I would think about a quote from Nelson Mandela: "It all seems impossible until it's done." For me it was just putting one foot in front of the other and getting it done, no excuses.

I also really appreciated the mentorship I received. Dr. Danilyn Angeles (Professor at the School of Medicine) was instrumental in guiding my research, and Dr. Ellen D'Errico, PhD, RN (Professor and Program Director at the School of Nursing) guided my education.

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

My husband, Fred, is a Master's prepared photography professor. My son, Frederick, is currently in college, and my daughter, Teresa, is in nursing school.

*(Looks like the mother-daughter tradition continues!)*

# Nolan Dukes

## *A Survivor's Story*

by Brianna Bolaños



Coming from a family of five boys, Nolan has long known the value of a close-knit family and having their support. As a young child, he would walk around his home with his doctors' kit, assessing and checking on each member. "I grew up helping care for my cousin who was born with a developmental delay and I also helped care for my great grandpa who had had three strokes. This is where my nursing life began. I had my Nana, who was a

nurse, to look up to. I saw how much of a positive impact she made, so I decided to follow in her footsteps."

When Nolan started college at Riverside City College, he received his associate's degree in science and mathematics. Soon after, he followed his medical passion and went to Northwest College and received his LVN license. "When I began practicing in 2016, I found that being a nurse is truly what God wanted me to do, and I loved it." While working as an LVN, Nolan also worked at a

restaurant, where he ran into some current Loma Linda University School of Nursing students. They encouraged him to apply to LLUSN for his BS. Having always admired LLUSN, Nolan decided he wanted to be part of the LLUSN legacy.

Spring of 2019 started Nolan's LLUSN journey. "I am so blessed and honored to have been able to attend Loma Linda School of Nursing. Every day of nursing school was a challenge. I quickly learned that there were some amazing teachers who genuinely

care about you. They call you to make sure you're ok if there's a day you seem off. They also teach not just from their hearts, but from their experiences, their love for their patients, and from their love for nursing."

#### **From parent...**

During Nolan's second quarter at LLUSN his son was sick with life threatening RSV and was admitted to LLUMC. On his breaks between classes, he would run over to LLUMC to be with his wife and son. He attended study groups to not get behind, and slept in his car in the hospital parking lot some nights to be close by. During this time, Nolan credits Professor Lisa Hanson for being his support. "One mentor that I look up to the most, and I am so thankful that God brought her into my life, is Lisa Hanson. Lisa allowed me to call her and ask questions whenever my wife and I were worried. We would send her videos of my son's breathing to know whether we needed to go back to the hospital once he was home. She put on extra study sessions from her home computer, to make sure we all understood the information when we were confused and stressed out."

#### **...to patient...**

And then, COVID-19 hit the world, and it changed everything for LLUSN students. While still able to maintain clinicals, courses shifted to online. Gone were the in-person tutor opportunities and the

after-hours white board study sessions. Students took care and precautions in all areas to be sure that their patients received the best care but that they also went home safe to their families. "COVID-19 is a sick, cruel, unbiased, and unforgiving monster, and it changed my life forever. I worked in the hospital doing my clinical shifts for almost a year when COVID swept the world. We were finishing our fifth quarter which composed of Adult Health 3, and I ended up contracting COVID. After nearly a year of caring for patients with this virus, washing my hands vigorously, and wearing my PPE, I got COVID from a family member at Thanksgiving in 2020."

COVID 19 was life-threatening for Nolan. Waking up in the middle of the night with his heart fluttering, his wife called for an ambulance to take him to the emergency room. Nolan was diagnosed with COVID induced pneumonia, where his oxygen saturations were in the mid 80's and his ability to exchange oxygen was fading fast. "I counted every breath and I prayed to God to help me. I asked Him for his breath. I asked Him to help me get home so I could kiss my wife, and

I could hold my boys. I told Him that I still had so much to give and I had so much work left to do for Him. He held my hand, He watched over me, He gave me strength, and He gave me breath." The hospital workers were understaffed and exhausted. "I am so thankful for their dedication to their trade and the pledges they took as healthcare providers. I learned so much about not only myself and how precious life really is, but God showed me how hard it is to be in that hospital bed. He opened my eyes to how important it is to be that shining light in my patients' darkest hours." Nolan felt the support of his teachers and especially his classmates during this time. His classmate, Mike Zapatosky began a prayer group for Nolan. "Mike was there for me and my family and reached out to my wife to help be the bridge between her and the school when I was hospitalized with COVID induced pneumonia. He was so selfless. He even helped me prep for my state boards months after he had already passed them. We still hang out today and I foresee us being friends for many years to come."

#### **...to professional.**

Nolan graduated and proudly walked the stage at LLUSN in the Spring of 2022. He was recently hired at the Loma Linda Children's Hospital Pediatrics Emergency Department. Nolan shared, "I am so excited to get this journey started, but I am nervous because I take care for these children very seriously. I have my beautiful wife, Staci Lynn, and our three boys Russell, Dean, and Reid. Our lives are crazy and hectic, but we cherish every moment we have together. I feel so blessed to have been given this opportunity at LLUMC, and hope to someday continue to give back by becoming a Family Nurse practitioner."

# HOMECOMING 2022



**The 2022 Homecoming Weekend festivities** brought a welcome energy back to Loma Linda University School of Nursing. The halls of campus surged with energy as alumni reconnected with each other and had the opportunity to meet current students as well. In addition to revisiting West Hall, LLUSN's alumni family celebrated the school's 117th year with a host of class reunions, as well as the penultimate LLUSN Homecoming Brunch at the Mission Inn Hotel in Riverside to honor the classes of 1962, 1972, 1982, 1997 and 2012.



# Homecoming Honor Classes & Merit Scholars



**Class of 1962**

**1962:** *Front:* Nellie Kimborough, Marilyn Kelln;  
*Back:* Gwendolyn Chung, Carol Cruise, Janiece Barlow



**Class of 1972 -Masters**

**1972 (Master's):** Vilma Raettig, Linda Levisen, Bonnie Myer



**Class of 1972**

**1972:** *Front:* Barbara Holm, Cynthia Potts, Lauri Rootvik, Liz Wise, Judy Twigg, Priscilla Obst;  
*Middle:* Lorita Larsen, Maureen Rasmussen, Donna Coldwell, Jill Rich, Kristine Dortch;  
*Back:* Judith Vycmeister, Dawn Graves, Halcyon Hamel, Nancy Munn, Cheryl Fox



**Class of 1982**

**1982:** Keri Medina



**Class of 1997**

**1997:** Sara Ramos (Gil)



**Class of 2002**

**2002:** Angelika Ashburn, Jennifer Stagg



**Class of 2010**

**2012:** *Front:* Jishiell Argueta, Jessica Ann Manalo, Lydia Curteman, Darlene Casel;  
*Back:* Helena Van Doren, Poonam Laxingia



**Merit Scholarship Winners**

(From left to right)  
Janet Donnelly (faculty), Alyssa Bozarth, Kimberli Holloway, Caroline Janssens, Manveer Sekhon, Denise Topete and Chelsea Bartlett (faculty)



ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

# Liz Atchison Wise

by Jackson Boren

Liz Atchison was born at the Loma Linda Sanitarium in 1950. She grew up as the youngest of four children in San Bernardino, California. She graduated from Loma Linda Academy in 1968 and continued her education with a BSN from Loma Linda University. For the last half of her senior year of 1972, she volunteered to go to Vietnam during the war. Only one student was selected. Liz had a cousin serving in the military in Vietnam and through a local chaplain she was able to connect with him via helicopter where he was camping with his unit in the jungle. She worked in surgery at the Adventist Hospital in Saigon and helped to deliver babies and went out to the countryside providing vaccinations and public health checks. Once a week she went to the military hospital in Saigon and assisted with surgery and taught classes to student nurses. After graduation she worked at Loma Linda University Hospital on the pediatric unit. Liz stated, “I loved working on Peds and have a special love for kids since my mother ran a very large nursery school that was connected to our house in San Bernardino while growing up”.

Her experience in Vietnam led to her meeting her future husband. Greg Wise was a medical student at LLU heard about Liz’s time in Vietnam and invited her to give a mission talk at Azure Hills SDA church. That invitation led to a romance, and they were married in February 1974 in the San Bernardino SDA Church.

Greg was doing his residency in internal medicine at LLU while Liz continued to work in the peds department. She was taking care of a 3 ½ year-old girl who came in the hospital diagnosed with a 3-pound malignant Wilms tumor. She underwent successful surgery with removal of her kidney and spleen but required chemotherapy and radiation. At that point she weighed 14 pounds and looked like a Vietnamese orphan. Her foster parents were not able to care for such a fragile child, so she had nowhere to go. Liz somehow convinced the hospital to allow her to take Shellie home with her. Along with Shellie, Greg and Liz took in her younger brother Roger, which was only 10 months younger and who had been in a separate foster home. So after being married for 11 months, they had two kids at home. Shellie required great care as she was severely emaciated and didn’t want to eat. She didn’t smile for almost two months. Greg and Liz secured a leave of absence from work and took the kids on a 6-week trip around the U.S. so they could meet Greg and Liz’s extended family and see some National Parks. During that trip they had to give her IV chemotherapy, so it was providential that they had the necessary medical expertise. Over time she thrived, but they were at a dilemma as Greg was committed to overseas mission deferment after his residency. Liz affirmed, “We had fallen in love with these kids that we had

worked so hard to help and prayed that God would place them where He felt was best for them.” Shellie and Roger’s mother did not want to let her kids leave California or be adopted. Eventually their mother realized that she could not provide the care they needed and agreed that Greg and Liz could adopt them.

In January 1977 they spent the next six years in mission service at Bella Vista Hospital in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. Due to the political restraints that required public service for the government before being allowed to work at the Adventist hospital, Liz stayed busy taking care of her two kids plus a toddler and new baby. During her time in Puerto Rico, she scheduled speakers to come in for continuing education to keep her license active as well as those of other RN wives. Toward the end of their six-year term in Puerto Rico Liz’s dad became very ill and Greg was offered a faculty position in the School of Medicine. They returned to LLU in 1983 giving Liz almost two years with her dad before he died. During the 13 years they spent in Loma Linda, Liz worked as night nursing supervisor at Loma Linda Community Hospital and Banning Hospital. She also worked at San Bernardino and Riverside County Pediatric areas through Registries to keep her pediatric skills active. She then chose to work days and accepted a position to reorganize the same-day surgery area at Loma Linda Community Hospital. Her next opportunity was to be the lead RN in a 2-year research project in case management at Jerry L. Pettis Veterans Hospital. This project working collaboratively with other lead RNs positioned in certain VA Hospitals across the states became the model for in-patient and out-patient case management across all VA hospitals in the U.S.

In 1997 Greg was invited to become the chief medical officer for Kettering Medical System in Ohio. For the first time they were empty nesters. Liz stated, “I was ready to have 1 job and be able to go home when done with no other responsibilities.” They were then notified that Shellie who was living in California was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia. To be closer to Greg and Liz, she along with her husband and three young boys moved to Kettering where she underwent extensive chemotherapy. Unfortunately, she died 14 months later from a superinfection post a successful bone marrow transplant in Cleveland. Liz was heavily involved in consoling the boys and nurturing them in adjusting to their tragic situation with the loss of their mother.

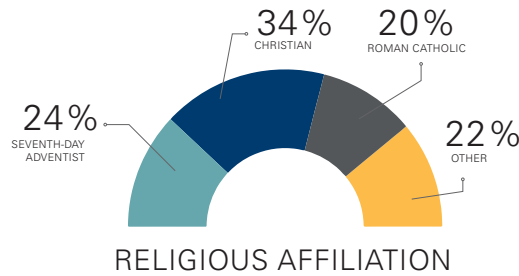
When they originally arrived at Kettering she started as a case manager in the new department that was being developed. Because of her knowledge of case management, she subsequently became the manager of case management and social services. As the government developed new clinical quality measures for pay for performance, Liz implemented a new clinical documentation specialist program that worked closely with utilization review, bedside nurses, and physicians. More accurate coding of diagnosis and comorbidities improved the case-mix index and led to better reimbursement and risk-adjusted outcomes. She was promoted to become the first Vice President of Clinical Quality that included case management, social services, clinical documentation specialists, utilization review, clinical outcomes, infection control, patient relations and regulatory/accreditation preparedness. Kettering became nationally recognized for quality achieving many awards including

Solucient 100 Top Hospitals and Thompson Reuters Top 15 healthcare systems in the U.S. Premier Inc. recognized Kettering as one of their top performing hospital systems and Greg and Liz were invited to make several presentations at their national meetings. Premier Inc. also asked them to do a consultative engagement with United Kingdom’s National Health Service and were invited to make presentations in Manchester, England. They were also invited to provide a 3-week consultation for Huashan Worldwide Medical Center in Shanghai, China, in its eventually successful attainment of International Joint Commission Accreditation.

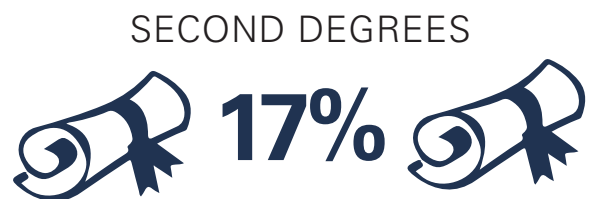
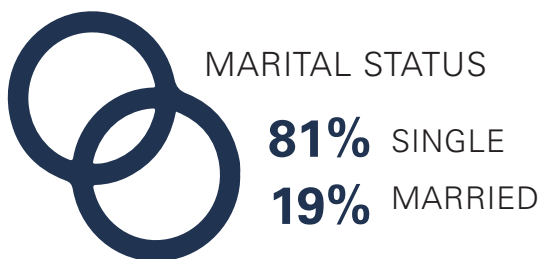
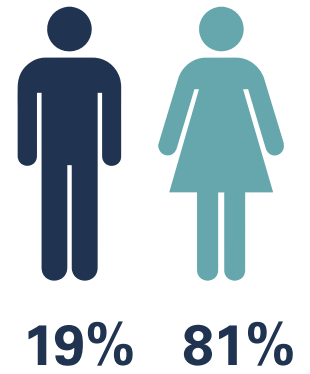
Liz fully retired in 2012. They still have a home in Kettering but spend most of the year in Punta Gorda, Florida where they live on a large marina and have a 38-foot catamaran sailboat on which Liz serves as the Admiral. Their kids now live in the same time zone—New York, Ohio and Michigan. Liz remains busy sewing for her family and making quilts for local charity organizations including Head Start programs and Veterans Association. With 10 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren, she is still always around kids.

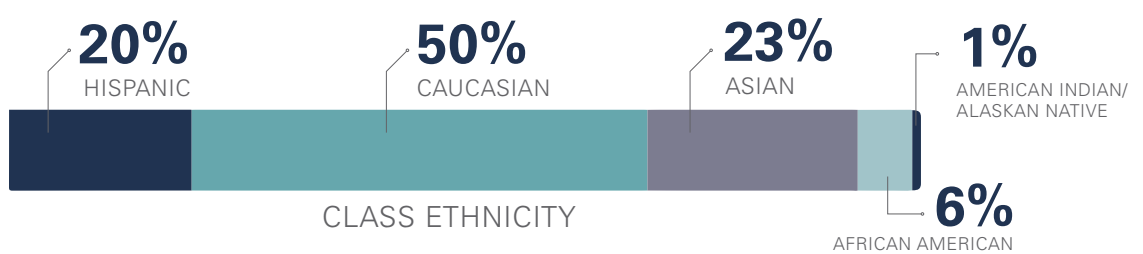
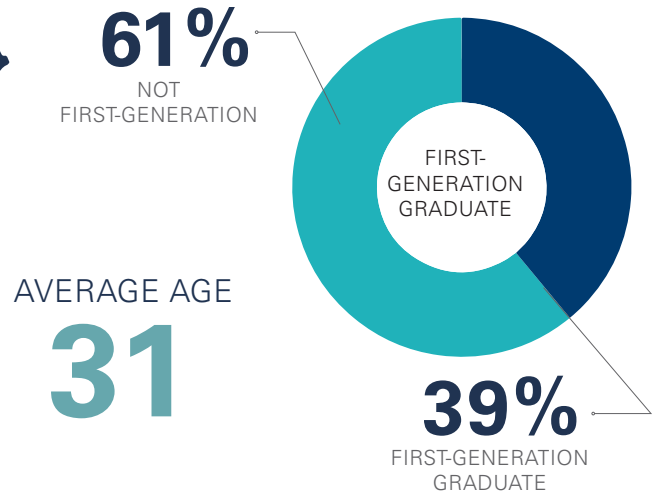
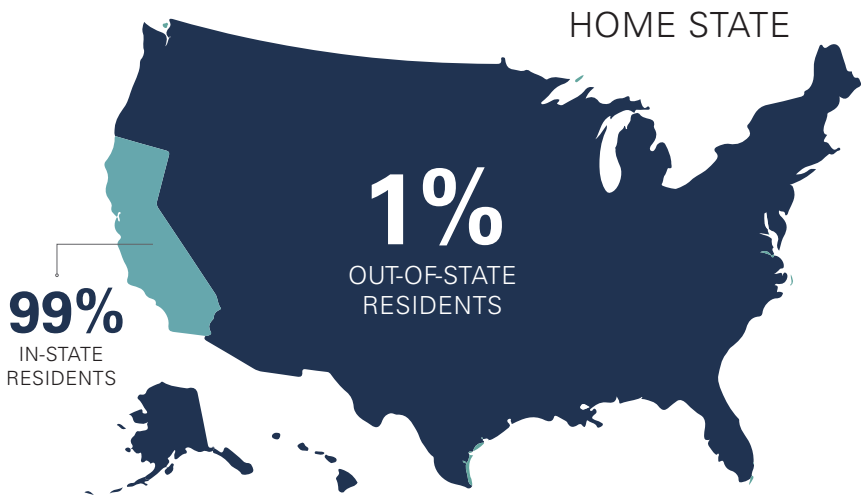
“I am humbled to receive this recognition as Alumnus of the Year. I deeply appreciate the close support of my classmates over the last half century and gratefully reflect on the incredible impact the LLU School of Nursing has had on my life. Nursing has enabled me to be of service to others, it led me to meet my husband, it afforded the opportunity to rescue two very challenged children, it gave me the empathy and patience to raise four kids and it allowed me to improve systematically the clinical outcomes for our patients.”

# Class of 2022 BY THE NUMBERS



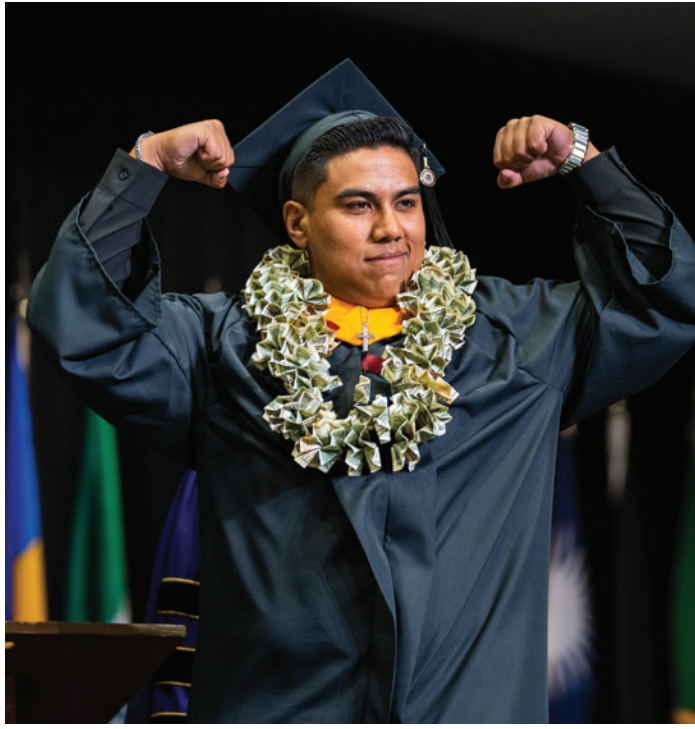
## CLASS GENDER





# COMMENCEMENT 2022





**Loma Linda University School of Nursing** enjoyed a return to a time-honored tradition this year with the first in-person commencement ceremony since 2019. Graduates and their families enjoyed the sights and sounds of the penultimate LLU graduation weekend event held once again in the Drayson Center Opsahl Gymnasium. This was the 116th class to graduate from the school since its founding in 1905, and consisted of 230 graduates from its various undergraduate and graduate programs. Commencement speaker and Class of 1960 alumna, T. Grace Emori-Elder addressed the graduates with a message of encouragement and hope, giving them perspective on the journey they have traveled to this point and what lies ahead. It was an event that celebrated the milestone of graduation but even more so acknowledged the unprecedented obstacles faced by each of the graduates while attending nursing school during the pandemic.



2021-2022

# FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

- Savci, C., **Akinci, A. Ç.**, ÜŞENMEZ, S. Y., & Keleş, F. (2021). The effects of fear of COVID-19, loneliness, and resilience on the quality of life in older adults living in a nursing home. *Geriatric Nursing*, 42(6), 1422-1428. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gerinurse.2021.09.012>
- Savci, C., **Cil Akinci, A.**, & Keles, F. (2021). Anxiety levels and clinical decision-making skills of nurses providing care for patients diagnosed with COVID-19. *Electronic Journal of General Medicine*. 2021; 18 (6): em322. In.
- Savci, C., **Akinci, A. C.**, & Keles, F. (2021). The association of perceived sociability and social intelligence with loneliness in online learning among nursing students. *Nurse education today*, 105226.
- Savci, C., Zengin, N., & **Akinci, A.** (2021). Development of the health literacy scale for protection against COVID-19. *Electronic Journal of General Medicine*, 8-8.
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