



# A Message from the Dean

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to share that we are back in full force in the College of Nursing. Although students were always learning during this last year, we had to modify our classes and how we gathered in our building. We are now evaluating the many lessons learned during our experience with COVID-19 and will keep those activities that made us stronger. As you can see in this newsletter, we continued to have students, staff and faculty excelling in their scholarship and service to others. I am so pleased they were recognized for their outstanding contributions.

If you are in Iowa City this summer please stop in and see the newly renovated Jerold and Jacqueline Dock Terrace. It is a beautiful location to sit and relax and enjoy our beautiful perch above the Iowa River.

Regards,



## Garr Bestowed with Hancher-Finkbine Award

University of Iowa College of Nursing Diversity Coordinator Valerie Garr was recently announced as a recipient of the Hancher-Finkbine medallion.

Considered one of the most prestigious awards at the University of Iowa, the tradition of awarding Hancher-Finkbine medallions was established in 1964 and serves to recognize nominees who exemplify leadership, learning, and loyalty.

Garr, who has cultivated learning at the UI for 32 years, leading workshops on cultural competence and health care disparities, privilege and power, diversity and leadership, and student success strategies, was formally presented with one of the coveted medallions during the 2021 Hancher-Finkbine Dinner, which was held virtually on Tuesday, April 20.



“Val is a highly effective communicator and consensus builder for cultural competence,” said Linda Liu Hand, director of the college’s Office for Nursing Research and Scholarship, who nominated Garr for the award. “She is outstanding and diplomatic when it comes to networking across academic disciplines to develop, execute, administer, and assess sustainable programs and initiatives that have empowered UI to increase its understanding of diversity and social justice issues for positive impact on climate, programming, and success.”

Named after the founder of the Finkbine Dinner, William O. Finkbine, and for Virgil M. Hancher, a student guest at the first dinner who later served for 24 years as president of the university, seven Hancher-Finkbine medallions are awarded annually: four to outstanding students, one to faculty, one to a staff member, and one to an alumni who has attained special distinction.

## BSN Student Selected as Student Employee of the Year



Current Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) student Michaela Inman has been named the University of Iowa's Student Employee of the Year.

Inman is a research assistant for College of Nursing Assistant Professor Julie Vignato, PhD, RN. She was nominated by Dr. Vignato and selected as the overall University of Iowa winner, beating out the other 67 nominees from this year's campaign.

"This award attests to the fact that I am eager, determined, and passionate about the work that I do. I believe it signifies that I have demonstrated growth as a BSN student and as a research assistant, and that my work has been meaningful," said Inman.

Inman, who is also a certified nursing assistant at UnityPoint Health in Des Moines, met Dr. Vignato as a sophomore and instantly became interested in her research on pregnancy pain and postpartum depression.

"Michaela is a delight to mentor due to her thirst to learn. She is hardworking, caring, insightful, and dedicated," said Dr. Vignato. "She is a role model for other undergraduate students in research through her active participation and analysis."

Moving forward, Inman, who is slated to graduate in December of 2021, plans to utilize her experiences from Dr. Vignato's lab as a gateway to pursue her own areas of research.

## Segre Recognized as Distinguished Scholar

Associate Professor Lisa Segre has been selected to receive the College of Nursing's second annual Distinguished Scholar Award.

The purpose of this scholar designation is to recognize outstanding faculty contributions of a mid or senior faculty member who has a distinguished career in advancing nursing science, education and/or practice through scholarship. Recipients have a proven track record of providing leadership in advancing research and/or scholarship in a field that contributes to nursing science knowledge and practice improvements.

Dr. Segre has become renowned for the development and evaluation of maternal depression screening and treatment programs with an emphasis on low income and ethnic minority women.

"Dr. Segre has established herself to be a distinguished scholar and has advanced knowledge for nurses and other health care providers in the area of improving the emotional well-being of Iowa mothers," said Sandra Daack-Hirsch, interim executive associate dean, who nominated Dr. Segre for the award.

In 2021, Dr. Segre was also selected by the Council on Teaching to receive the President and Provost Award for Teaching Excellence.



# Cooper Leads the Fight for Equality in Health Care

By Shelbi Thomas | IOWA Magazine

Black mothers in Iowa are six times more likely to die from childbirth than their white counterparts. That's twice the national average.

As a Black mother and nurse practitioner who has dedicated much of her career to maternal health care, University of Iowa College of Nursing Assistant Clinical Professor Lynette Cooper (BSN '03) finds these results from a recent Iowa Department of Public Health study unconscionable. She and others at the college are researching why such health disparities persist in the United States, especially when compared to other developed nations. "We're still working on the answers," says Cooper, "but we do know a huge factor is systemic racism."

Many of Cooper's students at Iowa have heard of the Tuskegee Experiment, a 40-year study of untreated syphilis conducted by the U.S. Public Health Service on hundreds of African American men without their knowledge, consent, or welfare in mind. Whistleblowers brought a halt to the experiment in 1972, but Cooper says the pervasive mistreatment and exploitation of vulnerable patient populations throughout history have led many African Americans to distrust physicians and health systems—and even avoid care.

After years as a neonatal intensive care unit nurse, mom-baby nurse, and family nurse practitioner in Iowa, Cooper returned to her alma mater in Fall 2018 to teach UI nursing students about issues of implicit bias and racism in medicine so they can work to build trust with patients and improve health outcomes. "This information is just as necessary as learning about the medications you're going to administer," Cooper tells students. "People don't like to think racism is an issue in health care, because most of us go into health care for altruistic reasons and genuinely try to do our best, but the studies show we've got work to do."



## STAY CONNECTED

We want to hear from you!  
Let us know what you've been up to. Send us your name, year of graduation, address, email and activities to:

[collegeofnursing@uiowa.edu](mailto:collegeofnursing@uiowa.edu)

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# Paying it Forward

When Jessica Henderson (BSN '04, MSN '09) is waking a patient after a major medical procedure, she still remembers the sage advice she learned from Dr. Edward Thompson, who was the University of Iowa's Anesthesia Nursing Program Director from 1998 to 2009.

"One of the first things he told me was that, if a patient doesn't wake up to your normal voice, they're not ready to wake up," said Henderson, who is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) in Bloomfield, Iowa. "Ed always had a calming voice, and if you're calm, then your patient—and the entire operating room—is also calm. Ed was always so supportive and encouraging."



This fall, a scholarship honoring Edward and his wife, Sheila Thompson, will be awarded for the first time to a graduate student within the UI's College of Nursing Anesthesia Program. Henderson and classmate Dr. Randy Cornelius (MSN '09, DNP '15) started a campaign in 2009, as graduate students, to create the Dr. Edward S. and Sheila A. Thompson Graduate Scholarship.

"We were talking one day and realized that there wasn't a scholarship for CRNA students," said Cornelius. "Ed trained so many CRNAs throughout Iowa, and we thought this was a great way to say thank you for everything he did for us."

While several former graduate students made contributions to the scholarship efforts, it did not reach its fundraising goal until recently when the Thompsons made a generous gift of their own. The Thompsons—who now call Naples, Florida, home—understand the sacrifices their students made to get a great education.

"Growing up and in college, neither one of us had much," said Edward. "We attended a commuter college, lived with our parents, and worked to afford school. During my anesthesia training, Sheila taught full-time, and I had the G.I. Bill and a work-study scholarship. We know that becoming a CRNA is a very long and arduous process, and we only hope that the scholarship will help support students and also continue to increase in its amount."

Under Edward's direction, the UI Anesthesia Nursing Program rose to a No. 5 ranking in the country. Today, the program continues to be ranked in the top 10 in the nation.

The Dr. Edward S. and Sheila A. Thompson Graduate Scholarship is the first endowed scholarship for graduate students within the UI CRNA program, which means that students will benefit from financial support for generations to come. Cornelius is especially grateful to the Thompsons.

"Ed took a chance on me," he said. "At that time, you still had to take the GREs to get in. I didn't have the best GREs, and I wasn't a stellar student. But now I'm excelling in my profession and giving back to my profession—just like Ed and Sheila did."

*Learn how you can make a difference by going to our planned giving website or by contacting Dayna Ballantyne, director of development, at [dayna.ballantyne@foriowa.org](mailto:dayna.ballantyne@foriowa.org) or 319-467-3727.*

## Alumni Awards

The University of Iowa College of Nursing has established two alumni achievement awards: the Outstanding Young Alumni Award and the Distinguished Alumni Award.

The Outstanding Young Alumni Award recognizes graduates who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and achievement in nursing or related fields of health care, or have made significant contributions to their community. The Outstanding Young Alumni Award will be given to an individual who has graduated from the University of Iowa College of Nursing with a BSN degree since 2015.

The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes a graduate who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and achievement in nursing or related fields of health care, or has made significant contributions to their community. The Distinguished Alumni Award will be given to an individual who has graduated from the University of Iowa College of Nursing with a BSN or a graduate degree.

The Distinguished Alumni Award recipient will be invited to be the speaker at the BSN commencement on May 14, 2022.

More information can be found at [nursing.uiowa.edu/alumni-friends/awards](https://nursing.uiowa.edu/alumni-friends/awards)

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