

Celebrating

SCHOOL OF NURSING DISTINGUISHED FACULTY

Carolina alumni and friends have generously given to create named professorships that support School of Nursing faculty who strive for continued health care discovery and breakthroughs. Each named professorship creates a legacy, a story about someone who believed in the promises of nursing research, teaching and practice. Those legacies will get retold for generations to come as the professorships create opportunities for the School of Nursing to recruit and retain faculty who have distinguished themselves as being amongst the best the discipline has to offer.

Professorships come with protected time and/or funds for advancing scholarship and professional development. These benefits become an investment in excellent faculty and their promise of creating a better future for patients and their families and for the delivery of health care.

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ALUMNA RETURNS TO UNC

Yolande E. Beerstecher created the Beerstecher-Blackwell Distinguished Professorship in memory of her daughter Carol Anne Beerstecher-Blackwell, a pediatric nurse who was also very interested in the care of the dying. The professorship supports interdisciplinary work aimed at the management of life-threatening illness, end-of-life care

or palliative care in adults or children. It helped us convince Sheila Santacroce, the current Beerstecher-Blackwell Distinguished Scholar, to return to her alma mater.

Dr. Santacroce says that she feels a responsibility to honor the intention of the professorship. This led her to take a leadership role in the process of renewing the NIH chronic illness training grant that supports SON doctoral students. “As an alumna of the SON’s doctoral program and knowing how important this grant is to the overall academic and research mission of this School, I wanted to participate,” she says. The protected time meant that she had more time to contribute to this endeavor than most associate professors.

Dr. Santacroce studies adolescents and young adults who survived childhood cancer. She seeks to understand whether they have an increased risk of future cardiovascular disease because of chronic psychological stress and the uncertainty they feel about their future. She used the professorship’s discretionary fund to conduct a pilot study that adds a new component to her research. “I wanted to look at more than their psychological health by adding a biological component that would indicate the physical health of the children,” she says. “Federal and foundation funding is so competitive that you cannot submit grant proposals without some preliminary work, which requires time and money.”



Sheila Santacroce
Beerstecher-Blackwell
Distinguished Scholar

CAMPUS-WIDE RECOGNITION

Established through an endowment in 1917 by Mary Lily Kenan Flagler Bingham, Kenan professorships support outstanding faculty members across the campus. In 1996, Dr. Merle Mishel was appointed a Kenan Professor in recognition of her work in uncertainty management. She developed the Theory of Uncertainty in Illness, which refers to the patient's ability to understand the illness situation, to provide meaning to the situation and to participate productively with their provider in a plan of care. The scales she developed to help investigators measure uncertainty in illness are used in 30 countries and have been translated into many languages.

More than a decade after receiving the professorship, Dr. Mishel says that the Kenan Professorship is so woven into her professional life that it is sometimes hard to separate out the direct benefits. She has directed the NIH chronic illness training grant since 1996 and says that the Kenan Professorship likely helped her gain the letters of support from across campus needed to successfully renew the grant. "A Kenan professorship is acknowledged as an achievement across the whole university," she says.

Margarete Sandelowski also holds a University professorship; she is the Cary C. Boshamer Distinguished Professor in the School of Nursing. Drs. Mishel and Sandelowski competed with professors from across UNC Chapel Hill for these prestigious professorships. In addition to the stature that comes with all distinguished professorships, having Kenan and Boshamer Professors in the School of Nursing serves as an important recognition for nursing within a top-tier research institution.

Cary Carlisle Boshamer established



Merle Mishel
Kenan Professor
of Nursing



Margarete Sandelowski
Cary C. Boshamer
Distinguished Professor



Kathleen Knafl
Dr. Frances Hill Fox
Distinguished Professor

the Boshamer Distinguished Professorships to support UNC professors who achieved reputations of national and international success. Dr. Sandelowski's SON colleagues nominated her to compete for the professorship. "It was an honor to be acknowledged in this way," she says. "The buyout of time left me more time to work on my scholarship, and the accompanying stipend allowed me to purchase professional materials and services."

Her research is focused on developing methods to synthesize the findings from the many reports of qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods studies published each year in targeted domains of research. Synthesizing research findings establishes an evidence base for practice and identifies knowledge gaps and areas for future inquiry. Although it is challenging to pull together findings from methodologically diverse studies, without the effort, research findings will remain isolated and will not contribute to practice.

COMBINING RESEARCH AND ADMINISTRATION

The Dr. Frances Hill Fox Distinguished Professorship was established by Dr. Frances Hill Fox, a physician who served the School of Nursing for 38 years. She was a member of Elizabeth Scott Carrington's Advisory Board, which established the School in 1950, and was a charter director of the School of Nursing Foundation. This professorship made Carolina attractive to Dr. Kathleen Knafl. "I liked the combination of being in a dual administrative and faculty role," says Dr. Knafl, Associate Dean for Research and Frances Hill Fox Distinguished Professor. "It gave me the opportunity to be involved in a premier research office and to have a distinguished professorship that provided me with time to further develop my research and that included mentoring as an expectation."

Dr. Knafl hired a research assistant with the funds that are part of the

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professorship. “The resources that came with the professorship were a significant factor in making it possible to be in an administrative position and stay productive as an investigator,” she says. Together with colleagues, Dr. Knafl has developed the family management style framework, a conceptual framework for understanding how families incorporate a child’s chronic condition into their everyday family life. She and Janet Deatrick, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, were invited to serve as guest editors of the February 2012 issue of the *Journal of Family Nursing*, which is focused on applications of the family management style framework to new populations in new cultural contexts.

Recently, Drs. Knafl and Sandelowski received a \$1.6 million dollar NIH grant for a study that will make use of Dr. Knafl’s expertise in children and the family as well as the methods for synthesizing research that Dr. Sandelowski and her research team refined. “The discretionary funds that Dr. Sandelowski and I had from our professorships jointly supported the preliminary work that in the end generated the NIH grant,” Dr. Knafl says. Read more about the grant on page 4.

COMMITTED TO HEALTHY AGING

When Mary Happel Palmer was recruited for the SON’s Helen Watkins and Thomas Leonard Umphlet Distinguished Professor in Aging, she was intrigued by the remarkable story of Helen and Tom Umphlet. “They fell in love and married when they were each in their 70s, not knowing that they would have only 18 months together before he would die of cancer,” she says. Mrs. Umphlet established the endowed



Mary Happel Palmer
Helen Watkins and Thomas Leonard
Umphlet Distinguished Professor in Aging

professorship to honor her husband because he so valued the nurses who had worked with him. He was affectionately known as “Dr. Tom” during his 40-year career in internal medicine.

Dr. Palmer stays in touch with Mrs. Umphlet and has shared the couple’s

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story of love and generosity across the United States and as far away as Australia. “The Umphlet Professorship helps support my involvement in multiple interdisciplinary projects and efforts to increase the SON’s visibility,” Dr. Palmer says. She advocates for interdisciplinary work within geriatrics and aging and educates many on preparing for the aging population. For example, Dr. Palmer is currently interim co-director of the UNC Institute on Aging with Dr. Dilworth-Anderson from the School of Public Health. She also co-directed the Rand-Hartford Interdisciplinary Aging Research Center with faculty from the UNC Schools of Social Work and Medicine. Two

SON faculty members were among the mentees who received interdisciplinary research training through the center. Dr. Palmer has also mentored a medical student participating in the School of Medicine’s Medical Student Training in Aging Research (MSTAR) Program, which is administered by the National Institute on Aging and the American Federation for Aging Research.

“I am proud to be the steward of the Umphlet endowment here at UNC Chapel Hill,” says Dr. Palmer. “It has provided me the opportunity to work with colleagues and students towards making a real difference in the lives of older adults.”

ADVANCING HEALTH CARE

Dr. Barbara Mark was recruited to UNC Chapel Hill to become the Sarah Frances Russell Distinguished Professor in Nursing Systems. This professorship was established in 1996 through a gift from Carl Vernon Russell in honor of his wife, Sarah Frances Russell, a 1959 alumna of SON’s master’s degree program.

Dr. Mark says that the most important aspect of the professorship is the dedicated time it includes. When she arrived at UNC in 2001 she used that time to reestablish a focus on nursing health services research in the doctoral program. This area of research

applies the unique perspective of nursing to questions involving health care, including its quality, effectiveness, and cost as well as access to care, workforce issues, and dissemination and translation of research into practice. She went on to use the protected time to achieve funding for the NIH institutional training grant “Research Training: Health Care Quality and Patient Outcomes.”

This interdisciplinary grant includes nurses, physicians, social workers and pharmacists. Dr. Mark says that the doctoral and postdoctoral fellows who were supported with this grant have been very successful in gaining faculty positions and beginning their own funded programs of research.

Dr. Mark also uses the protected time to mentor faculty, postdoctoral fellows and international visiting scholars. “Each

of us operationalizes our professorship time a little differently,” she says. “I try to bring my strengths to the unique opportunities at UNC to enhance research in ways that probably wouldn’t be possible without the professorship.” ■



Barbara Mark
Sarah Frances Russell
Distinguished Professor

TERM DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS AND SCHOLARS

Five SON faculty members are distinguished term professors or scholars, appointments offered based on exceptional contribution to nursing scholarship, practice and engagement. Term professorships come with many of the same resources as endowed professorships but are limited to a shorter renewable term, typically three years. Those with the designation of “scholar” are associate professors.

Dr. Linda Beeber
Frances Hill Fox Term
Distinguished Professor

Dr. Beeber has taught and practiced psychiatric nursing for over 35 years and was instrumental in beginning the School’s psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner program. Her research centers on depression in various patient populations. Most recently, she developed and tested an intervention that provides home-based counseling to low-income Latina mothers who have young children and who are experiencing depression.

Dr. Linda Cronenwett
Beerstecher-Blackwell
Term Distinguished
Professor

Dr. Cronenwett, SON dean from 1999 to 2009, is the co-director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Executive Nurse Fellows program and the principal investigator of the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) national initiative, now in its fourth phase of funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She chairs the North Carolina Quality Center Board of Trustees and serves on the boards of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation.

Dr. Sandra Funk
Frances Hill Fox Term
Distinguished Professor

Dr. Funk has a distinguished career in nursing science and a sustained legacy of mentorship to faculty and doctoral students. She led the development of the School of Nursing Research Support Center and has served on multiple NIH study sections. She is an expert in research methods and measurement, has co-edited multiple books and has collaborated on essential research on chronic illness management. She is also co-developer of the BARRIERS to Research Utilization scale.

Dr. Marilyn Oermann
Frances Hill Fox Term
Distinguished Professor

Dr. Oermann has a long and sustained career of mentorship to faculty and nurse educators around the world and a prolific program of innovative scholarship pertaining to nursing education. She has written 13 books, many chapters and more than 130 articles in peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Oermann has also led nursing education through her national contributions as a leader in the National League for Nursing.

Dr. Mi-Kyung Song
Beerstecher-Blackwell
Term Distinguished
Scholar

Dr. Song’s research pertains to end-of-life decision making and palliative care for patients with chronic illness and their caregivers. At this early point in her career, she has already had remarkable success with obtaining funding and has published multiple articles. Her research provides patients, their families, and critical care providers with guidelines that enhance the likelihood that crucial conversations will occur in a timely fashion and with honesty and sensitivity.