



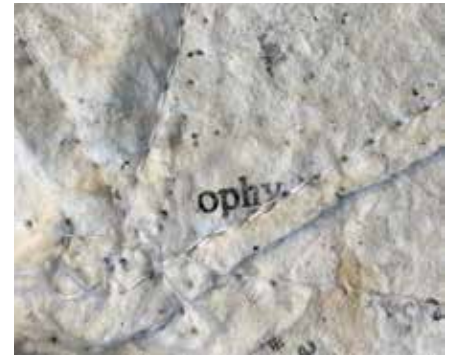
# HOLY CROSS HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER 2024-25

## Blood, Sweat & Tears: The Pinafore Project

*A fine-art project  
by Karen Fowler  
(McIntyre '76)  
RN, BScN, MN*

Read more  
on Page 7



EXECUTIVE REPORT  
PAGE 2

EXECUTIVE LISTING  
PAGE 3

SEPTEMBER LUNCHEON  
PAGE 4

BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS  
PAGE 7

MEMBERSHIP REPORT  
PAGE 9

COURTESY COMMITTEE  
PAGE 13

TREASURER'S REPORT  
PAGE 14

ANCESTRY PROJECT  
PAGE 16

NURSES IN PROFILE  
PAGE 18





# EXECUTIVE REPORT

PAT JEFFERY ('78)

2024 was my first year as President, and the learning curve was not as steep as I'd feared as I had a wonderful group of ladies guiding my every step.

Following elections at our AGM in March, all executive positions remained the same except for Vice President, which sadly had no takers. I think what scares people off is they automatically think that agreeing to be Vice President means you are being groomed to step into the President's shoes one day. This is not true. While past president Elaine McKiel has temporarily assumed the role of VP to lessen the workload on me, two grads have recently come forward to help on the various committees. This has been very much appreciated.

The Executive sadly lost a vital member of our team last September with the sudden, unexpected passing of Pat Bowers (Stark, September '61) just one week before our annual banquet. For 23 years, Pat was the heart and soul of our alumni. She was the driving force behind many successful banquets, detailed membership records, and my trusted partner on the Ancestry Project. In addition to her administrative talents, she was a joy to work with. We miss her.

On a happier note, our smaller quarterly luncheons (which double as our general meetings) were held at the FCJ Centre on March 6th, June 12th, and December 4th. As always, the company was enjoyable and the food delicious.

Our December FCL luncheons typically have the lowest attendance as weather is so unpredictable at that time of year. This year we were surprised when 34 enthusiastic grads showed up, making it the best attended of the three luncheons. Yvonne Stappler deserves much credit as she does such a great job with her phone fan-out.

At that meeting, there was some discussion regarding whether we should continue with the smaller luncheons. The response was a resounding "YES". As we age, getting together over lunch and sharing stories keeps us young at heart. So, no matter if 50 grads show up, or 5, we will continue having the smaller luncheons.

Dates for the 2025 luncheons are: March 12th, June 11th, and December 3rd. Make sure to circle September 21st on your calendars as once again the Carriage House will be the site of our annual banquet.

With Pat's passing, I have taken on her role as Membership and Banquet Registrar. Incredibly, as of December 31, 2024, I have already received payment from 19 grads for their 2025 memberships, as well as 5 grads that have paid for the September banquet as well.

As for the 2024 newsletter, I have lost count of the number of handwritten "Thank you" comments added to the bottom of the returned membership and banquet forms. Fabulous! I read every word! Brings back wonderful memories! I look forward to the alumni stories!

In charge of the newsletter and the website, Sharon Iversen, yet again, did a masterful job of designing not only the cover and layout, but compiled the various reports including the Nurse in Profile section.

While we relish our past, we also look to the future by staying current and striving to make the world a better place. We continue to provide bursaries to our alumni as well as to U of C undergraduate nursing students. We donate to isolated and vulnerable seniors at Christmas time as part of the Seniors Secret Service program. We also donate to the Calgary Food Bank. We send cards of condolence to grads who have lost a loved one.

We maintain a website ([www.hxhnursing.com](http://www.hxhnursing.com)) and collect alumni biographies as part of the Ancestry Research Project. We have a display at U of C and another at Rockyview Hospital, along with the memorial quilt and

the time capsule, also at Rockyview Hospital. And last, but certainly not least, our Nuns and Nightingale statue in front of the Holy Cross Hospital continues to stand proudly as we have the grounds landscaped and rejuvenated each spring.

And we do all that, with an executive with an average age of 75+.

I would like to mention that some of our grads have gone above and beyond to support the Alumni. We would like very much to identify those individuals with a life membership pin. So please nominate a fellow classmate or other grad you feel worthy of this honour.

In closing, I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming luncheons and banquet and please remember that your annual membership fees and donations is what keeps the Holy Cross School of Nursing Alumni alive and kicking.

## EXECUTIVE & COMMITTEE

### 2024 Executive:

President: Pat Jeffery  
Past-president: Elaine McKeil  
Interim Vice President: Elaine McKeil  
Honorary Past-president: Rita Williamson  
Recording Secretary: Marie Sushelnitsky  
Treasurer: Sheila Padley  
Member-at-large: Patty Hnatiuk

### Directors of Standing Committees:

Membership: Pat Jeffery  
Newsletter Editor: Sharon Iversen  
Contacts Committee: Yvonne Stappler  
Courtesy Committee: Dolores Bramall  
Archives Committee: Dolores Bramall



# SEPTEMBER LUNCHEON

MARIE SUSHELNITSKY (MALONEY '70)

I was honored to be the Masters of Ceremonies at our annual luncheon on September 15th, a "three-peat" for me and it was special.

To say that this event was unique would be an understatement for sure! With the sudden and unexpected passing of our beloved membership chair and luncheon registrar, Pat Bowers, one week prior to the event, we were all in the state of shock. The executive members regrouped quickly to pull together the final details of the program and complete the many event details.

This year, the number of registrants including invited guests and caregivers, was 144.

Menu choices, special orders, and appetizer choices had to be confirmed! Seating arrangements had to be finalized! Program adjustments were dramatic! Presentations needed replanning and adjusting! Table markers had to be revised and distributed! Displays were augmented and reorganized! Phone calls were prolific, and sleep was limited!

The Carriage House venue was again exceptional to work with and the food was amazing. The coffee bar, cash bar and appetizer service were well-received. We will continue with those in the future.

On the day, parking was a bit of a challenge with weddings and other events being hosted by the hotel. This resulted in a full house for the Carriage House Inn, but fortunately, it was easy to drop off passengers and then look for a spot. We are working on ideas to help ease the parking concerns for next year's event.



Seating plans were a challenge right up until the start of the event. We had some known (and some unknown) cancellations and no-shows. As always, nurses think on their feet and can cope with the unexpected---and we did just that!!

The result was a spacious, inviting atmosphere that allowed for visiting, easy movement, and fostered the renewal of friendships.

We were able to continue with the theme of "Keeping Memories Alive".

As MC, I contacted representatives of the classes celebrating landmark reunions (1974, 1969, 1964, etc.) to provide their thoughts and memories from days gone by. What a variety of responses we received!!!! It's amazing to realize the magnitude of "change" we have all experienced in our chosen profession.

This theme was particularly fitting for our luncheon as we remembered our fellow alumni

executive member, Pat Bowers. With the help of all executive members and their willing helpers, we managed to host one of the most emotional and special alumni gatherings I have ever attended. I am confident when I say that Pat Bowers would be proud of us! As Pat said in last year's newsletter "I really do love my alumni job as Registrar-especially when I see the excitement and fun that the attendees have as they reconnect with their classmates."

It was special for the members of the Bowers family as well. Pat's husband, Doug, and her daughter, Colleen, were honoured and pleased to attend and be able to hear so many special stories and memories about Pat. They were very moved by the tribute on the display table dedicated to Pat's memory and many photos were taken to "keep those special memories alive". Doug and Colleen were presented with floral arrangements in honor of Pat and a fitting and special tribute to Pat was presented to the members attending the luncheon by our President, Pat Jeffery. Following the luncheon, Pat's family departed and used the rest of the day to say their final farewells to their beloved wife and mother with spreading of her ashes.

Pat Bowers was a remarkable person, and we all feel the impact of her loss and we recognize how much she did to contribute to the alumni and the success of these events. She will be missed tremendously!

To be as successful as our Holy Cross Alumni Association is, "LEADERSHIP" is a compulsory attribute. This year we were pleased to recognize and honour some of our past Presidents with a small floral arrangement to thank them for their dedication, leadership, time and efforts given to the Holy Cross School of Nursing Alumni Association.

Those present and honoured included Joan Scott ('53), who held the position of President



from 1980-81 after taking over from Vi Baay ('52); Rita Williamson ('51) who was President from 1995 – 2013 after taking over from Ella Benner ('39) who followed Coral McDonald ('46); Barb Nesselbeck ('60) who held the President position from 2013 to 2021; Elaine McKiel ('51) who served from 2021 to 2023; and our current President, Pat Jeffery ('79). It was a pleasure to acknowledge and thank them in person. Luncheon registration forms are included with this newsletter. Remember, every effort will be made to seat you with your graduation classmates, but, if you would like to sit at a different table, please indicate that on your registration form. This is important information when developing the seating plan.

It is our goal to host the annual September luncheon on a "cost recovery basis" and keep the registration fee to \$55.00/person. Food costs, venue rental, supplies and flowers are continually rising in price. You should know that your registration fee of \$55.00 does not cover all the expenses and the final payment for the luncheon is supplemented by alumni income.

Please identify any mobility issues and remember to note any food sensitivities or allergies so we can accommodate you with an appropriate luncheon choice.

The deadline for registration is August 25, 2025. It is essential we receive your registration by then to finalize arrangements with the hotel. There are no refunds after September 9th, 2025 as our commitments to the Carriage House Inn are "written in stone" as of that date.

Reserve your room early at the hotel using the information on the registration form. It is becoming very popular to celebrate those special class reunions and focus the activities at the Carriage House Inn as the main meeting place. It is convenient, affordable and simple to book!

Stay safe! Stay healthy! And we look forward to seeing you in 2025!



See you at the Luncheon!



**We look forward to the 2025 Luncheon to be held on Sunday, September 21, 2025.**

**It will again be held at the Carriage House Inn (9030 Macleod Trail South) with doors opening at 11:00 am.**

## *Class of 1970 55th Reunion*



**Our 55th Reunion will be held on the weekend of September 19-21, 2025 culminating with attending the Alumnae Luncheon.**

**For more information and to update your contact information, contact Marie Sushelnitsky (Maloney'70)**

**Phone : 403 278-4722**

**Cell: 403 651-9423**

**Email: sushel.j.m@shaw.ca**

**Address: #2416, 2330 Fish Creek Blvd S.W.  
Calgary, Alberta. T2Y 0L1**



# BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS: NURSING PINAFORE

KAREN FOWLER (MCINTYRE '76) RN, BSCN, MN

This is a photo of an old fashioned life sized nursing pinafore that I made. During my Master of Nursing program at the University of Calgary (2000-2010) I reached a personal crossroads - to continue in Nursing or switch to Fine Art. Ultimately I chose to combine these two vocations by doing my options in fine art while completing core nursing classes. The following paragraphs are written to help the viewer understand how, why and when this 'nursing pinafore' came to be made.

In order to proceed, a professor from the fine art department agreed to mentor me as a student if I applied and was accepted to a One Week Self-Directed Creative Residency at the Banff Centre. I did apply, was accepted and received university credit. Also, during this time a landmark study appeared from the University of California. It was titled 'Biobehavioral Responses to Stress in Females: Tend-and-Befriend, Not Fight-or-Flight" (Taylor et al, 2000). This ground-breaking research highlighted the role the hormone oxytocin played in female bonding and response to stress. This study and subsequent implications became the foundation of my conceptualized art work and guided my nursing process.

With this in mind I proceeded with my prerequisite art exhibit for the Faculty of Fine Art and how these concepts could be shared with the field of nursing in order to finalize my MN requirements. For the art show I constructed seven sculptural 'dresses' to be displayed highlighting the symbolism of connection, attachment and female bonding using previously earned techniques and materials traditionally used in 'women' work'. This included sewing, quilting, basket-making, knitting, needlework, and natural dyes. One of these pieces is what you see here and particularly relates to nursing.





The frame or armature is a cross made from red dogwood (a common plant used in basket construction) secured at the 'neck' with a god's eye (a god's eye is a technique connecting the fibres in a way that it will stay together). The skirt and bodice are made from my old Holy Cross nursing notes which I had been going through in efforts to clean out my cupboard. The idea occurred to me to tear up the notes and remake paper into squares, divide them on the diagonal and then sew them together using the machine and finally attaching to the armature. In order to do this I used cheesecloth as an underlying skirt. To complete this piece I attached my Holy Cross Hospital hat pin to the bodice. It was very pleasing to me that the 'cross' replicated the wooden cross of the armature as well as our hospital's name - Holy Cross. The pinafore idea was attributed to my friend's sister showing me how she would get into her very starched and stiff uniform and pinafore and then go to work!

Also what stood out for me during the making process was how at one point the pinafore actually felt like it had turned into a wedding dress as I was constructing the back, or the train from cheesecloth. As I continued to finish this piece the title of 'Blood Sweat and Tears' emerged as I thought of all the physical, emotional and spiritual energy that I had put into this work both in real life and art form. In addition it was so fun and exciting to see tidbits of our nursing jargon pop out in a few pieces of the remade paper. I love to remember how my classmate would always scribble on my notes

***Thank you for keeping all of us in touch. My memories and the friends I made – and still have, are a gift.***

***- Elizabeth Vander Zee (1965)***

during our classes and what fun we shared. I have had the opportunity to showcase this piece a few times and am always surprised from the comments. One in particular that I didn't think of was how the cheesecloth looked like bandage material! My original rationale for using cheesecloth was that it was a material that I had used in past projects at the college of art to represent 'my soul' - similar to how a mantle will light up on a Coleman lantern. Currently this piece is standing on an antique intravenous / or dressmaking base.

Many times I have considered what would be the best way to preserve this piece and find a permanent home somewhere where it could be viewed and shared in a three dimensional format. A large plexiglass case in a health facility is potentially how I can see it being housed. With this in mind I approached the HCH alumnae for possibilities. This was well received as I brought this work to the last alumnae lunch and will bring it to the March and June 2025 lunches for further budget and placement suggestions.



Taylor, S.E., Klein L.C., Lewis.B.P., Gruenewald, T.L., Gurung, R.A.R., Updegraff, J.A. (2000). Behavioral Responses to Stress in Females: Tend-and-Befriend, Not Fight-or-Flight. Psychological Review, 107, 411-429.



# MEMBERSHIP REPORT

PAT JEFFERY (JENSEN '78)

While our membership numbers increased by 9 in 2023, they were down by 16 this year. Of the 963 living alumni, 236 are currently paid-up members. The numbers have been in slow decline over the past 6 years; something not totally unexpected as we lose approximately 33 grads with each passing year.

And you must remember that grads who have received a Life Membership are not required to pay an annual membership, so that would increase our numbers by 15 to 251.

And I have more encouraging statistics. In 1997, 1812 Holy grads were alive, with a paid membership of 410 = 22.6%.

In 2024, 963 are alive with 236 paid memberships = 24.5% (26% if you include the Life members).

**So, while our graduate numbers have declined, the percentage of alumni memberships have increased.**

Another reassuring fact was this year 285 grads (29.5%) paid their membership, or paid to attend the annual banquet and made a donation to the alumni. In many cases, they paid all three.

I'd like to send a huge thank you to everyone who renewed their memberships or donated to the alumni this year as they are our only sources of funding.

Help us stay connected by renewing your active membership and by attending our functions. The Alumni holds three (3) lunch meetings each

year at the FCJ Centre and one annual banquet/luncheon.

If you have a change in your status or you have a classmate you are looking, for please contact:

Patricia Jeffery (Jensen 78) at patjeffery@shaw.ca or 403-830-7735  
President / Membership & Banquet  
Registrar / Ancestry Project

***Thank you so much for all you do to keep us informed about our fellow alumni. I look forward to the newsletter always. I am sorry I will be in Hawaii when the reunion is happening.***

***-Annette Vasseur (1966)***

***Love the newsletter – found a classmate in one of the old pics – Joan Connolly – 1958 Sept class. Neat!***

***-Celine Helfrich (1958)***

## LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Life membership is an honour presented to an active member for outstanding service to the Association, the profession of nursing, or to the community.

### **Do you know a classmate who fits these criteria?**

As Pat Bowers and I have been doing the Ancestry Project these past years, we have learned that we have some amazing alumni members. If you are an active member, please consider nominating someone for a Lifetime Membership.

The name of each nominee must be supported by the signatures of 10 active members and submitted in writing to the President. The completed nomination form shall be forwarded to the Executive Committee for review and approval. Life members pay no dues.

### 2023 Life Membership Recipient

Mary Ellen Speers

By Marie Sushelnitsky

As an active and contributing member to the Alumni Association, she has maintained her membership and has participated in alumni programs by being the recipient of numerous bursary awards. She has spoken at alumni quarterly lunches and has been an integral part of the organizing team for her Class '77 reunions.

She had a forty-four-year career as a Registered Nurse before retiring from active nursing in 2021. Her career included Intensive Care Nursing, Diabetic Educator and Research nursing, acting as a Nurse Investigator with the Medical Examiner's Office, and Emergency Nursing. As a colleague and co-worker, she could always be depended upon to do more than her share to complete the tasks at hand. She always worked at maintaining a pleasant, cooperative work environment. Her professionalism and respect for her patients and co-workers was exceptional. Her role as a strong patient advocate was exemplified daily in her work performance. Her calm and caring approach to her duties benefitted her patients as well as her colleagues. Her commitment to her profession was demonstrated in her never-ending efforts to remain current in her skills and knowledge-base by attending numerous continuing education presentations throughout her career and in her post-retirement years.

Her service to her community has been exceptional. She volunteered on missions to Africa and was "Co-Team Lead" on missions to Nicaragua, Guatemala and the Philippines. She learned to speak Spanish so she could volunteer twice as part of a medical/nursing team in Guatemala providing vision care, medical care, and assisting in building clinics and schools. She successfully



completed an internationally recognized course on infectious diseases in England. With that knowledge she effectively contributed to the care provided on her missions, and here at home during the H1N1 and Covid crises. Our recipient also acts as the pianist for her church group, actively participates as a volunteer at her community legion organization, is heavily involved in the dressage horse community, and is a Canadian Blood Services donor.

As a friend, you could ask for no better! With her witty sense of humor, she is always there for you. Dependable, giving, honest, caring, generous and genuine are just some of the terms used to describe her by her many friends.

Mary Ellen Speers (Douslin '77) uniquely demonstrates the core meaning of "service to the association, profession and community". She is a deserving candidate for the Life Membership Award for the Holy Cross Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association.

## 2024 Life Membership Recipient

Sharon Iversen

By Pat Jeffery

During her 45-year nursing career, this amazing individual worked at both the Rockyview and the Holy Cross from 1978 to 1980. She then worked at the Grace Hospital surgical unit from 1981 to 1983, and from 1984 to 1987 in the Foothills Hospital neurosurgical ICU.

After receiving her Bachelor of Education in 1986, she transitioned her career to staff education as a Clinical Development Nurse and then from 1993 to 2000 Sharon worked as a Diabetes Educator. She received her Masters of Workplace Learning in 2001.

From 2000 to 2011, her career path led to a role as Bereavement Educator for the Grief Support Program and from 2011 to 2023 she was the Project Lead for Advance Care Planning for the Provincial Palliative and End of Life Care Program. As such, she was very involved with developing the 'Green Sleeve' which is a plastic pocket found at the front of every adult hospital chart in Alberta. It provides important advance care planning information about a patient's wishes including their Personal Directive and Goals of Care Designation order.

During the 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games, Sharon was on the volunteer team tasked with providing medical care for members of the International Olympic Committee. I was the Finish Leader of the Luge event and when a member of the IOC visited our event, it was if we were in the presence of a GOD; at least that's how they and their security detail made us feel. So, I have the utmost admiration for this individual for having to deal with them daily.



In addition to her job, she has volunteered for Feed the Hungry Program and Seniors Secret Service Society of Alberta. When she has a spare moment, she enjoys golf, sewing, developing the Alumni newsletter and maintaining our website. As an active and contributing member to the Holy Cross Alumni Association, she has maintained her membership, acted as our Treasurer from 2018 to 2023, and has been an integral part of organizing her Class of 1978 reunions.

She is very proud of the fact that she followed in the footsteps of two family members who graduated from the Holy Cross Hospital: her mother, Katherine Kovacik Hvizdos (Class of 1950) and her aunt, Anne Brown Hvizdos (Class of 1951).

Despite a serious health issue, she maintained her duties as our Treasurer and as a trusted friend! When I had complications following major surgery last year, despite being ill herself, she came to my house to supply me with food and some much-needed emotional support, for which I am forever indebted.

The Alumni is pleased to award Sharon with the Life Membership Award.

## *Alumni, Alumna, Alumnae:* What's the Difference?



### **What does 'alumni' mean?**

Alumni is the plural form of alumnus, so you'd use it when referring to more than one graduate. The only time you wouldn't use alumni is if all the graduates are female. That's right, if there's a group of 1,000 female grads and one male, you'd still use alumni.

*In 1978 and 1979 The Holy Cross School of Nursing graduated two male nurses therefore we are alumni not alumnae.*

### **What does 'alumna' mean?**

An alumna is one female graduate. For example, Pat Jeffery is an alumna of the Holy Cross School of Nursing.

### **What does 'alumnae' mean?**

Alumnae is the plural form of alumna, so you'd use it when referring to more than one female graduate. It's a very common word in the context of all-female colleges such as Barnard, who proudly refer to their alumnae stories.



# 2024-25 COURTESY COMMITTEE

*Remembering Alumni who have passed away*

DOLORES BRAMELL (TENCH '58)

If you are aware of an Alumni member or family member who has passed away, please inform the Courtesy Committee: Dolores Bramall (Tench ' 58) [dbramall@telus.net](mailto:dbramall@telus.net).

## RIP 2024

Iris Dorothy Swidinski (Stuart 1949)  
Marie Therese Clark (Berze 1950)  
Josephine "Josie" Urban (Chrumka 1951)  
Viola Theresa Baay (Aiello 1952)  
Lois Clara Ketchey (Tetzlaff 1953)  
Mary Lillian Finch (Long 1953)  
Noreen Peebles (Muirhead 1953)  
Monica Ruth Metka (Holden 1955)  
Hazel Marie Haggerty (Gordon 1956)  
Oriol Ellen Miller (Howie 1956)  
Mary Delores Lockie (Chaput 1957)  
Noreen Kary (Manion 1958)  
Patricia Kenney (Johnson 1959)  
Patricia Bowers (Stark 1961)  
Laurette Jean Standish (Blackwell 1962)  
Rosemary Lynne Wilson (Porter 1962)  
Marlene Alma Wensel (Hoffman 1963)  
Bonnie Claire Schmelke (Gessner 1965)  
Faith Arlene Andersen (Siewert 1970)

## RIP 2023

Olinda Droz (Frasch 1946)  
Anne Margaret Willows (Wallace 1950)  
Martha (Meg) Giesinger (Fridgen 1951)  
Marie Jose Niwa (Lijdsman 1951)  
Betty Dolores Feschuk (Aune 1952)  
Doreen Peterson (Rushton 1952)

Barbara Janet Kwasney (Holmes 1953)  
Diana Gonsalves-Norford (Paulhus 1953)  
Evelyn Fleming (Taft 1954)  
Vietta Johnson (Clifford 1955)  
Ann Schofield (1955)  
Lena Scott (Tessari 1955)  
Dolores Fitzsimmons (Deck 1955)  
Yvonne-Marie Johnson (Zanny 1957)  
Betty Lou Markle (Hess 1958)  
Betty Fox (Stevens 1958)  
Edna Mcdonell (Woitte 1960)  
Joy Bekker (Cushing 1961)  
Marilyn Sereda (Platzer 1961)  
Karen Jessie Atkinson (Lloyd 1962)  
Gail Barton (Manders 1963)  
Denise Mackness-Charlton (Prefontaine 1963)  
Marilyn De Pena (Carr 1964)  
Suzanne Truba (Thomas 1964)  
Irene Porter (Brummund 1966)

## RIP Family Members

Elaine Orlita (Fleury 1953): Husband 2022  
Genevieve Mccarthy (Velker 1954): Son David  
Mildred Krenzle (Velker 1954): Nephew David  
Caroline Johnson (Thumlert 1961): Husband  
Patricia Ann Bateman (1963): Son Steven 2023  
Maureen Robertson (Mcgrath 1963): Sister  
Frances Howell (Morris 1966): Husband  
Kimberley Hilton (Williams 1967): Sister  
Judith Mcintyre (Sturdy 1968): Brother  
Debra Jennings (Mcdonald 1974): Brother



# TREASURER'S REPORT

SHEILA PADLEY (CARLETON '64)

Thanks to your continued support of membership fees and donations, our bank account maintains a healthy balance.

**Bank balance as of January 17, 2025 is \$18,584.14.**

When paying your membership fees or donations, we accept cash or cheque ONLY. We are presently researching to see if we could accept e-transfers using our present account.

We have a request. When making a payment, please combine all payments into ONE cheque then write the breakdown costs on the cheque so we know what you are paying for (e.g. luncheon \$50.00; dues \$20.00, etc.) When we get multiple cheques from one person this increases bank charges. Yes, they charge us per cheque at the time of deposit.

We made several donations in 2024:

- \$1000.00 to the University of Calgary Nursing Bursary fund
- \$1000.00 to the Veterans Food Bank
- \$1000.00 to Seniors Secret Service Society of Alberta

"This past year we have been inundated with the needs of hundreds of Veterans and First Responders. We are grateful for your kindness and partnership which demonstrates the commitment to helping those we serve." - Veterans Food Bank

## Bursary Update



The University of Calgary Faculty of Nursing student recipient for the Holy Cross School of Nursing Alumni Bursary for 2024 was Pritha Paul who received \$2,300.00.

Each year, the Alumni receive monetary donations from members and their families. The executive sincerely thanks all who have supported us.

We apologize if anyone has been inadvertently missed on this list.

We are not a registered charity; therefore, do not issue tax receipts.

**Donation total as of December 31, 2024: \$5960.00**

Alice Munroe (Holladay 1946)	Judith Danyschuk (Dahl 1965)
Yvonne Pullar (Lambert 1950)	Elizabeth Smith (Offen 1965)
Rita Williamson (Mcaleese 1951)	Catherine West 1965
Faye Hutcheon (Blake 1951)	Joyce Wills (Albrecht 1966)
Marian Hamilton (Sandeman 1953)	Frances Howell (Morris 1966)
Marian Scott (Bell 1953)	Annette Vasseur (Labonne 1966)
Constance Anderson (Durand 1953)	Marion Jessen (Zaborowski 1966)
Margaret Holubowich (Coady 1954)	Valerie Fritz (Nadon 1967)
Winona Isabelle Rouleau 1954	Janet Christiansen (Stevenson 1968)
Sue Clare Robinson 1954	Patsy Bateman (Mcgonigle 1969)
Genevieve Mccarthy (Velker 1954)	Dorothy Ardiel (Duckmanton 1969)
Helen Kana Fabian 1955)	Kathleen Farrell (Judge 1969)
Mary Underschultz (Hawkey 1955)	Karen Murdock (Lubbers 1969)
Marion Edwards (Stiansen 1955)	Anya Donaldson (Van Haaster 1969)
Helen Kubasek (Hugo 1956)	Sr. Mary Kathreen Kelly 1970
Shirley Hawk (Caldwell 1957)	Marie Sushelnitsky (Maloney 1970)
Morcella Schwenk (Seredynski 1957)	Suzanne Taitinger 1971
Irene Thomas (Lynch 1958)	Margaret Aasen (Wearmouth 1971)
Betty Lodermeier (Gieck 1960)	Susan Oconnor (Wilson 1972)
Marilyn Marshall (Thompson 1960)	Paula Whitman (Koppe 1972)
Marjorie Tetz (Mcewen 1961)	Joan Small (Rusler 1972)
Margaret Guta (Christenson 1961)	Debra Kolla (Baker 1973)
Beverly Wilson (Church 1961)	Barbara Olsen (Stephenson 1973)
Vera Morgan (Rumen 1961)	Terry Brook 1974
Rosemary Wilson (Porter 1962)	Catherine Viccars (Macdonald 1974)
Evelyn Young (Priestnall 1962)	Vivian Ramsden (Wegreen 1974)
Karen Atkinson (Lloyd 1962)	Sara Hames (O'connor 1975)
Margaret Enders (Fark 1963)	Jean Culligan (Mcknight 1976)
Jo Ann Kingwell (Leier 1963)	Debra Aikens 1977
Denise Charlton (Prefontaine 1963)	Katherine Greene (Ford 1977)
Edwina Madill (Shackleton 1964)	Patricia Jeffery (Jensen 1978)
Illa Drever (Arnfinson 1964)	Grace Brittain (Leskosky 1978)
Loretta Darago (Clary 1964)	Diane Moir (Ohreen 1978)
Betty Hogsett (Kunz 1964)	Lorraine Samis (Rust 1978)
Patricia Sirbaugh (Peszat 1964)	Joanne Godfrey (Sherritt 1978)
Terry Carter (Stephenson 1964)	Marilyn Hannay (Whalen 1978)
Gail Blue (Zakariasen 1964)	





#### 2024 Donations in Memory Of:

Morcella Schwenk (Seredynski 1957) donated in memory of Maureen Short (Mooney '57) and Georgia Leach (Pattison '57)

Karen Atkinson (Lloyd 1962) from her son Jason in her memory

Betty Hogsett (Kunz 1964) donated in memory of Bonnie Schmelke (Gessner 65)



## ANCESTRY PROJECT

PAT JEFFERY (JENSEN '78)

The "Ancestry Project" was originally started in 2007 by Lucille Horne (Hawkins '62). Lucille was curious as to what became of her fellow Holy Cross grads. Every nurse has a story and Lucille literally became a cold case detective as she took it upon herself to track down as much information as she could.

Upon Lucille's passing in 2016, Pat Bowers and I stepped forward to continue her dream of collecting biographies on each of our colleagues. Over the past 8 years, we have uncovered a multitude of amazing stories. It should come as no surprise that Holy grads have worked in every aspect of nursing; from bedside care, management and teaching, to travelling to the far reaches of the world to provide care to the less fortunate, to taking to the skies as flight attendants, starting their own business, or, as at least three did, bravely stepping into the political arena.

Every few months, Pat B and I met at her house over countless cups of coffee and baked goodies; we first developed a computer database containing all 2426 Holy Cross grads. Then building on Lucille Horne's initial collection of biographies, we added them and new ones as they came in.

Over the past 8 years, the Ancestry Project has been a true labour of love for Pat B and me. To date we have managed to collect 1085 biographies (45%).

Of the 963 grads still with us, 598 have not yet submitted their bios. Some have told me that because they never worked as a nurse, they have nothing other than nursing school to write about. Nothing could be further from the truth. Each biography captures a specific moment in time; of what nursing (and more importantly) life was like back in the 1920s, 30s, 40s, 50s, etc. Historians will be able to utilize this information (minus any identifying markers) for research.

Perhaps one of your New Year's resolutions could be to jot down your life's story. A single page will do. Key things to include are your date of birth and location. The rest can be summed

### **Submit your story!**

Our website [www.hxhnursing.com](http://www.hxhnursing.com) has an easy to fill out form which you can print off and mail to:

Ancestry Project  
c/o Patricia Jeffery (Jensen '78)  
131 Sunmeadows Crescent, S.E.  
Calgary, AB., T2X 3H1

Or you can simply write your story down in a letter and mail it to me.

Alternatively, you can type your history in a word document and email it to me at:  
[patjeffery@shaw.ca](mailto:patjeffery@shaw.ca)

up as simply or as detailed as you like; where you grew up, what you did after nursing school, did you work as a nurse and where, did you go back to school and obtain a degree or specialty certificate, awards, hobbies, interesting things you have done, places you have visited. Photos would be wonderful too.

Unfortunately, over the past year, the number of biographies submitted has slowed to a trickle. Of the 16 we received; most were in the form of an obituary. That's not how I want to learn about your life's journey. I would much rather hear it directly from you.

As a member of the second last class (1978), I will continue to update the Ancestry database for as long as I am able. At some point in the future, the data (electronic and hard copy) will be placed in storage at the University of Calgary to be added to other Holy Cross historical archives.

## **Help Needed!**

Without Pat B, the Ancestry Project is now a one woman show. When I was cleaning out her office, I came across a box filled with historical articles and stories; some dating back 50 to 60 years. The information in each one needs to be checked against my database before it can be filed.

It would sure be nice to have someone help me with this. Do you have 2-3 hours, every second month to help get the job done? As that old saying goes: How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

# Nurses in Profile: PAT (STARK) BOWERS ('61)

SUBMITTED BY ELAINE MCKEIL

Pat's nursing journey began on September 8, 1958, when she moved from Lethbridge to Calgary to begin her sojourn as a student at the Holy Cross Hospital School of Nursing. She joked that one reason for her move to a different city was to escape her parents' watchful eyes. However, on her first day, she along with her "big sister" Bev Larson and classmates Marg Stawart and Marg Young (all red heads) were on their way to the hospital cafeteria when they met Sister LeClerc in the tunnel. When Sister greeted them all by name, Pat realized that if she could recognize all of them after having met them for only a few minutes, she (Pat) had left the watchful eyes of her parents only to be under the watchful eyes of the Director of Nursing Education! Apparently, that set a non-wayward path for Pat because there aren't any stories of untoward escapades during her time as a nursing student; at least, none that have come to light.

Pat's professional nursing experiences spanned a wide geographical expanse starting in Surrey, B.C. where she worked as a new grad. on a medical unit for a year. From there, she went to an orthopedic unit at the University Hospital in Edmonton for two years. After that, her urge for new horizons took her to Hawaii where she commenced a lengthy career as a pediatric nurse. She described her three years there as a fun time especially when classmates visited her. One memory was taking them to the Don Ho show where they performed on stage with him. In spite of the good times there, she began to envision a broader span of practice, so she returned to Calgary to save money to enable her to go to university. In 1970, she graduated from McGill University in Montreal with a Bachelor of Nursing degree.

Back in Calgary (now time #3), she moved from bedside nursing to nursing administration. Her pediatric nursing experience held her in good stead in her new role as the pediatric coordinator at the Calgary General Hospital. It was during her eight years in that position that she met and married Douglas Bowers. They subsequently had two children, Stuart and Colleen, and in due course, four grandchildren. Although motherhood took her away from full-time nursing, it didn't limit her ever-expanding scope of practice. While her children were young, she worked part-time as a week-end coordinator at both the Alberta Children's Hospital and the Calgary General plus held several temporary positions as a Director of Nursing in pediatrics and psychiatry. She also did a year as a Pediatric Unit Supervisor when that nurse took a leave of absence to go to Scotland. It was a busy life but she didn't stop. An Infection Control Nurse vacated her position



to go to university paving the way for Pat to learn that realm of nursing. Her time in infection control set her up for clinical nursing in the Calgary Tuberculosis Services where she moved from part-time to full-time before retiring in 2004, thus completing a career that spanned 43 years. She noted that with all of those positions, it was never necessary for her to endure any job interviews; there were always positions available that aligned with her professional experience and lifestyle.

Her professional life, albeit busy, didn't reign supreme over her "other" life. She and Doug were always active in their community. They coached soccer for 13 years for which they were recognized by the Cal-Glen Soccer Club with the creation of the Bowers Cup which is given annually to a deserving club volunteer. They pursued other outdoor interests which included gardening and downhill skiing although Pat was quick to point out their differences there; Doug was the skier, and she was his "spectator spouse".

In 2001, Pat unknowingly began a new career path in nursing. That was the year that her class of '61 hosted the annual banquet for which she "lent" a helping hand which, in turn, led

her to discover that finding a class to host the event each year was an unending challenge. Being no stranger to volunteering, she took on the task of registering the attendees for the banquet. That became a 23-year commitment that mushroomed to include planning the entire event. True to form, she carried her commitment through to the end when, she unexpectedly passed away on September 7th, 2004, just one week before the banquet. Not surprisingly, she left the preparations well in hand for those of us left to complete what turned out to be her last task on our behalf.

But the banquet wasn't all that she did for the Alumni by any means. She set up and maintained the membership files. She was instrumental in getting the annual newsletter circulated, the number of which averaged about 1000. She purchased the postage, be it Canadian, US or international, arranged for newsletters to be printed at the best price, prepared and printed the labels and affixed them on the envelopes, and then organized the "stuffing of the envelopes" event. Not to stop there, she became an historian with Pat Jeffery in 2016 with the Ancestry Project; a compilation of the biographies of the 2426 Holy Cross nursing graduates which built on the collection originally generated by Lucille Horne. An intensive undertaking, it has now exceeded 100 hours of work.

For all her accomplishments, Pat was awarded a Holy Cross Hospital School of Nursing Alumni membership which she cherished. At the banquet on September 15th, 2024, Pat Jeffery paid tribute to Pat. The following is taken from Pat J's speech:

*"Patricia Ellen Bowers. Where do I begin? She was 3 weeks short of her 84th birthday and was the heart and soul of our alumni executive. While members came and went over the years,*



she was that one constant, the glue that held everything together. All in all, Pat spent 23 years as the luncheon / banquet registrar and the past 11 years pulling double duty as the membership chair as well.

Considering that Pat was in her 80s, I put her computer skills on par with mine and she put them to good use. She was the contact person when it came to renewing memberships, accepting donations, keeping addresses up-to-date, collecting ancestry biographies, and printing and mailing our newsletters. A devoted hockey fan, she would spend many an evening sticking labels onto envelopes as she watched the Flames play. She also maintained a list of grads who wanted their newsletters emailed to them.

But her true labour of love was our annual banquet. She was the point of contact for absolutely everything: registration; collecting the cheques; organizing the table sizes so that

a class could sit together; arranging for special chairs for grads with mobility issues; confirming the menu, (including) food allergy alerts; and where the cash bar, coffee bar, registration tables, display tables, and podium would be located.

Pat Bowers was a one-woman dynamo. She took on multiple roles on our executive and she wouldn't have it any other way. I often teased her that I wanted to give her a second life membership pin as she did the work of two people. Hers was a life well lived and one filled with friendship, loyalty and love."



## Nurses in Profile: NANCY GEREIN ('68)

I was born in Ottawa to parents from the West, who were marooned in Ottawa for 30 years by my father's work as a hospital administrator in the RCAF. The bits of overheard conversation on health ignited my interest in nursing from very young. Holy Cross hospital was the obvious place to start – by then we lived in Calgary and my aunt had graduated from there – and the sisters impressed me by their subtle but disciplined presence.

After a year in the operating room of a small Alberta hospital, adventure called. I volunteered in 1969 with the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) and spent a challenging two years in Holy Family Hospital in Patna, Bihar, one of the poorest states in India. I taught student nurses on the wards, classroom and on public health outreach, and learned to deal with diseases about which I had only ever read – horrifying parasites, leprosy, neonatal tetanus, tuberculosis of every part of the body, malnutrition. Mothers of the many malnourished babies were given jars of baby food and told give the 'medicine' t.i.d. to the child. Several months later, the mothers would return, complaining that their child was very naughty, running about, playing noisily... success! That experience set my life course.

Back in Canada I received a BScN from Edmonton, a master's in health planning at UBC, then joined the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Ottawa. Eight years there taught me how to manage complex health projects in collaboration with governments of low-income countries, multilateral agencies (UNICEF, WHO, WB) and



civil society organisations. I studied for a PhD at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and did research in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) into child growth monitoring, as then promoted by UNICEF. I concluded that weighing children regularly and teaching mothers to deal with lack of growth had a negligible effect on malnutrition; a broader approach is needed, for which nurses are not prepared nor supported. But a useful lesson on girls' education: in those isolated villages the confidence of mothers with only a few years of schooling to use modern services, such as growth monitoring, compared to those without schooling, was notable.

Years of consultancy and living in various African and Asian countries followed – Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia, Uganda, Ghana, Tanzania, Vietnam – which became a rich resource for dealing with the challenges in improving maternal and child health. My husband and small daughter accompanied me to Dhaka Bangladesh in 1995,

where I managed CIDA's contribution to a multi-donor effort in reproductive health. Bangladesh, the 'basket case' according to Mr Kissinger in 1971, went on to develop innovative ways to improve maternal-child health, ways that are being copied in many other countries. The then-revolutionary idea of paying young women with six years of education to motivate couples in their village and distribute contraceptives resulted in a lowered birth rate, with all its benefits to the family, as well as important side-effects: a demand for girls' education, so they can qualify for a secure government job, and their later marriage (and thus fewer children).

Then followed years at Leeds University (UK) teaching students from low-income countries in public health and researching health systems issues. One project compared the factors influencing the governments of Vietnam, China and Tanzania to adopt reproductive health policies promoted by WHO and UNFPA: safe motherhood was easily accepted, safe abortion somewhat less so, while reproductive health for adolescents was unpopular.

Finally, after doing research into health systems, I had the opportunity to effect changes in a health system in 2010, through a project of UK Aid in Nepal. A wonderful assignment, working across the Ministry of Health and Population in policy, planning, finance, HR and information systems, logistics and procurement, quality assurance and clinical services. And of course, the better-known attractions of Nepal were a bonus: hiking in the mountains to idyllic-seeming villages to see their health conditions.

Now retired in Cambridge UK, we enjoy the abundant musical and intellectual opportunities available here. We still return to Canada often, to visit family and marvel at the gorgeous landscapes and wilderness which are after all, our first home.



## Nurses in Profile: AMY BORKENT ('78)

Grad Day 1978 was a bittersweet day!! On the positive side, it was great to be done with school and to have a degree and the possibility of employment. On the downside, it was so hard to say good bye to classmates who were all going in different directions. It has been so good to re-connect with that group on a semi-regular basis!

I stayed in residence for an extra day after grad as I had an interview with the Holy Cross ICU scheduled for the next day. My car was packed and as soon as the interview was over, I planned to head home for a holiday. However, when I got to my car when I was ready to leave, I found it encased in toilet paper and festooned with various bits of medical equipment— courtesy of our instructors. It was probably good revenge for all the pranks that I had played on them over the years.

Classmate Lana Smith and I then traveled across Canada to Ontario in her father's van and returned a couple weeks later. I then started working at the Holy Cross ICU and was there for a couple of years. With the encouragement of some friends and some of the ICU docs, I then decided to try for medical school and started some pre-med courses at U of C, and worked at the Holy on some weekends and evenings to help pay my way. A couple of years later, I applied for medical school and was accepted at the U of Alberta.

It was hard at first to say goodbye to Calgary, but soon the busyness of medical school took over. I was very glad of my nurse's training when we started our clerkships and had to start IVs and deal with patients in hospital. The nurses were always kinder to me also when they found



out that I had been a nurse before going into medicine. I might have starved in my internship years when there was really no time to sit and eat a decent meal but the nurses would always give me a heads-up about which unit was having a potluck that day.

After completing medical school in 1986, I did a residency in Family Medicine at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton and started practicing as a family physician in 1988. My first job was as a locum for one of the doctors at the Family Medicine teaching clinic, and I also did some pediatric assessments with the Edmonton Board of Health. In 1989, I started work at the Boyle McCauley Health Center, an inner-city clinic in Edmonton's downtown.

After doing that work for seven years, I moved on to working in the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital in the geriatric rehab program, and also started my own part-time practice. Those were tough years for medical care in Alberta.



There were many cutbacks, and shortages and the level of acuity of care in hospitals made a sharp increase. At that time, I found it impossible to meet both the demands of my hospital work and my private practice, so elected to leave the hospital and focus on my family medicine practice. I am still doing that today and share a practice called Family MDs with three other colleagues. It is still challenging and rewarding and most days I am happy to go to work, so hopefully can still give it a few years.

Soon after starting work at Boyle McCauley Health Center, I got my first ever pet — a cockapoo named Max. Max was joined and succeeded by Cubby, a poodle. Then Squirt, a crazy border collie, joined the family. Squirt was joined by my current pet, a staffie-cross, named Chica. The dogs certainly help to keep me moving and help to bring some balance to life.

In 2016, I met and married Pete Vanderbeek. I later found out that we had shared



a crib in early infancy as our parents attended the same church and for a time Pete was under the care of my mom. Pete works as a specialized transitional minister in the Christian Reformed Church. We met when he was working at the church that I am involved with. Pete has 5 kids and 7 grandkids, so my family grew. I also have an adopted “grandson” who has 2 girls— 5 and 8, so I get to be Oma to them as well.

I have many good memories of the time that I spent at the Holy Cross. Those classmates always will be friends, and I look forward to seeing them again at the next reunion I’m able to attend.

Mary Devolin Page, Class of Feb 61

## Nurses in Profile: MARY DEVOLIN PAGE ('61)

SUBMITTED BY BRENDA PEERMAN, DAUGHTER

It is tough to know where to begin when thinking of how to describe our mother. As a daughter, I am proud beyond words of all that she has accomplished in her life as a 1961 graduate of the Holy Cross, the person she is, and the impact she has had on our family, our community, and so many others.

Celebrating her 2024 Town of Olds Senior Citizen Volunteer of the Year Award, our mom is the embodiment of strength, compassion, generosity, and selflessness. Raised with deep values

and a nurturing soul, she became the kind of mother who taught us the importance of kindness, resilience, and empathy. She always found a way to balance it all—working as a dedicated RN at the Olds Hospital and then a dedicated farmer in stride with our father, raising us with love, and building a home full of warmth and laughter, always having time for us.

One of the things I admire most about my mom is her natural ability to talk to people and make connections with them. Whether it was at home,

working on the family farm, the successful boarding kennel business she started, or her volunteer work, she has a way of making people feel seen and heard.

Always having the gift of serving others, our mom was instrumental in the development and ongoing success of both the Parkinson's Support Group and the Caregivers Support Group in Olds, Alberta now going into their 20th year. Watching her care for our father as a devoted wife and best friend to him, our mom stayed on in the groups even after he passed away because she knew and valued the importance of keeping them going.

Using her background as an RN and having gone through caring for and watching over her own mother in her time of need as well as her brothers as they aged, and then our dad; Mom wanted the opportunity for others to share their experiences, access the support they need, and feel valued. She goes above and beyond by organizing rides for those in need, making phone calls to keep everyone informed, and personally checking in with members to offer support. Whether she's leading a meeting in the absence of a facilitator or simply being there to lend an ear, Mom's compassion is an anchor for those



navigating some of the toughest times of their lives.

Also a volunteer with Alberta Health Services at the Olds Hospital Long Term Care Unit, is another example of her steadfast commitment. Whether she's leading a bingo game, organizing birthday parties, or just sitting and having a conversation with a resident, I've seen how people light up when they see her—because they know she is someone who genuinely cares. And despite all the hats she wears and all the lives she touches, our mom continues to be the heart of our family. She is the one we turn to for advice, for comfort, love, and a great laugh.

As our mom said in her acceptance speech, "There are two ways to live as we age. One is to sit down and do nothing. The other is to make a life for oneself. I have acquired a world of friends through volunteering. What could be better?"





*The newsletter was fabulous!! I think I read every word!! I still remember some of my wonderful days at the Holy and so many wonderful friends. Thank you – a great big one to all of your wonderful people who “put the newsletter together!!”*



*I really enjoy getting my newsletter each year. It certainly brings back a lot of memories, some good, some not so good! I hope this bit of money helps someone else!*

*- Mauna Minue (1950)*



*I enjoyed your newsletter ever so much. You girls never cease to amaze me. It is so well done. All the best.*

*- Mary Louise Underschultz (1955)*



*Thanks to the alumni executive for sending me the newsletter. I look forward to the news and stories of our members. I say hi to each of our alumni. God Bless you all!*

*-Anne Margaret Campbell (1956)*



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