

From the Desk of the Historian

Lifelong Learning – A Cornerstone of Nursing

Gertrude B. Hutchinson, DNS, RN, MA, MSIS

One of my first memories of getting ready to go back to school was a musical one – the jingle of an advertisement for Robert Hall clothing stores: “School bells ring and children sing. It’s back to Robert Hall again ...” September is here and schools of all levels of education in many areas of New York State are back in session. My mind is focused on the importance of nursing education and nurse educators; hence this is the focus of this issue’s column.

Donna Wilk Cardillo, RN says, “Nurses are the heart of health-care” and the late Malcolm X said, “Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.”⁶ Both of these statements are true and what our clinical instructors and professors share or have shared continue to echo in our minds from time to time. While remembering all our nurse educators could fill volumes, this column only has inches to review a few. So here we go!



**Dr. NETTIE BIRNBACH
(1926-2019)**

To those of us who knew and loved Nettie, who held her as a friend and a colleague, carry the legacy of her with us daily. Dr. Birnbach came up through the nursing educational ranks as did many of her day,

graduating initially from Brooklyn’s Kings County School of Nursing. She went on to earn 3 additional degrees: Bachelor in Nursing (Molloy College), Master in Nursing Education and Doctorate of Education (both from Teachers College, Columbia University). In her capacities as a Professor of Nursing at Molloy College and State University of New York, Brooklyn, she influenced many nurses as they embarked on their initial or expanded educational journeys. She was an innovator in education as during her tenure at SUNY Brooklyn, she worked collaboratively to develop clinically-focused Master’s Degree program.

Her educational passion didn’t stop at the classroom doors. She brought those energies to teaching nurses about their history through her membership in the American Association for the History of Nursing (AAHN) serving in many capacities including the Presidency. Her involvement in her professional organizations on the local state, and national levels - such as AAHN, NYSNA, ANA-NY and ANA - culminated in her induction into the ANA Hall of Fame, Class of 2010.



**Dr. M. ELIZABETH CARNEGIE
(1916-2008)**

Dr. Mary Elizabeth Carnegie was a trailblazer, a gentle soul, a “force of nature” within nursing, nursing education, and civil rights, an historian, an author, a mentor, and so much more. When the future Dr.

Carnegie was only 9 years old in Hampton, VA, there were “1,642 accredited nursing schools in the United States.” Of those, only “54 admitted Black students and ... of those schools, only 25 were attached to Black hospitals or hospital wards.”ⁱⁱ

She wanted to be a nurse. She applied to the Lincoln School of Nursing [Harlem, NY] and entered at 17. She graduated in 1936 at the age of 20. She went on to West Virginia State College, Syracuse University, and New York University to earn her Bachelor, Master, and Doctor of Public Administration degrees, respectively. Because of her own personal educational journeys, Dr. Carnegie knew that education, integration, and recognition of the contributions of African-American nurses were paramount to achieving equality. To those ends, she became the first Black nurse appointed to the Florida State Nurses Association [as a representative of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses] and then elected in her own right to serve on the FSNA board. With that election, she desegregated the FSNA and thereby the ANA.ⁱⁱⁱ

Wanting to create opportunities for Black women, in 1943, Dr. Carnegie founded the baccalaureate nursing program at Hampton University. Throughout her working years and beyond, she served other colleges in positions of Dean, distinguished visiting professor, consultant, and occupant of an endowed chair at Adelphi University. An important extension of education and opportunity is writing and research and both were important to her. As a trailblazer, she was the inaugural editor of *Nursing Research*, a senior editor of *Nursing Outlook*, and authored three editions of her book, *The Path We Tread: Black in Nursing Worldwide 1854-1994*. Besides delivering 400 speeches in her life, she authored myriad articles, editorials, and forewords.^{iv}

In recognition of all her efforts, Dr. Carnegie’s name will live on through: the creation of the Mary Elizabeth Carnegie Archives at Hampton University (1977); induction into the American Academy of Nursing (1976) and being named one of its Living Legends (1994); and the ANA Hall of Fame, Class of 2000.^v

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Dr. ILDAURA MURILLO-ROHDE (1920-2010)

Education was always important to Dr. Ildaura Murillo-Rohde. Many in her family were physicians; however Dr. Murillo-Rohde chose a different path – nursing – and the profession is better because of her decision.

At the age of 25, she immigrated from her birth country of Panama to San Antonio, Texas to pursue her education and earn her nursing diploma from the Medical Surgical Hospital SON. New York City became her higher educational home as she earned her baccalaureate degree in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing (Columbia University), her master's degree (New York University, NYU) and proudly blazed the trail for all Latina nurses as “in 1971, she became the first Latina nurse to earn PhD from NYU.”^{vi}

During her years in San Antonio, Dr. Murillo-Rohde noticed the lack of Latina representation in nursing or the recognition of their contributions to the profession and to patient care. She would again notice this at the Federal level in the 1970s. With her expertise as a nurse, “psychotherapist, and marriage and family therapist, she impacted many academic institutions and stu-

dents. One of her important roles was as the Dean of the College of Nursing, SUNY Downstate Medical Center.”^{vii} Another of Dr. Murillo-Rohde's roles was as the 1975 founder of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) (which was formerly named the Spanish Speaking/Spanish Surnamed Nurses' Caucus).^{viii}

In recognition of her efforts on behalf of Latina/Latino nurses and the nursing profession, Dr. Murillo-Rohde was honored with a fellowship by the American Academy of Nursing and was member of the Class of 1994 Living Legends.^{ix}

As I close, I hope you will indulge two personal memories. Dr. Nettie Birnbach was my friend and a dear mentor who is never far. She helped me in myriad ways during my own doctoral journey – and I am thankful to her for that always. I met Dr. Carnegie at the 2007 AAHN Conference and was able to have a wonderful conversation with her where she shared some of the information I noted above.

I hope you have enjoyed this column. If you would like me to include more educators in subsequent columns, please let me know through email: membership@anany.org. ■

For references online: myamericannurse.com/?p=420731

Climate Conversations

Reducing Our Holiday Footprint

By Laurie Laugeman, BSN, RN, HNB-BC, HWNC-BC and Sarah Kaplan, MSN, RN-BC



It's September – a time when we transition away from summer fun and prepare for sweater season and pumpkins spice. But before we know it, the holiday season will be upon us. This festive time presents a valuable opportunity to think about and reduce

waste in our personal and professional lives.

The EPA estimates that individuals produce 25% of additional waste during the holiday season between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Some sources of this waste include packaging, unwanted gifts,

and food waste. The New York City Department of Sanitation (2023) reported that in 2022, New York City residents disposed of 86 million pounds of food in intact packaging and a total of 1.2 billion pounds of food. The USDA (2020) estimates that the average American family wastes 1,160 pounds of food annually. It's not only the physical item that is wasted – all the energy that went into the manufacturing, packaging, transportation, and storage has also been wasted.

For this edition's Climate Conversations, we'd like to share some tips for reducing waste during the holiday season while still maintaining the magic, tradition, and joy. If you've ever thought about the amount of waste that is generated during the holiday season here are some tips on how to reduce the impact. If we all make some small changes, together we