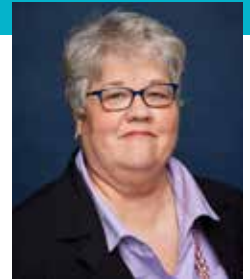


PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Create the Future

Contributing Author: Rebecca M. Patton, DNP, RN, CNOR, FAAN



Several years ago, while in my Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, we held a robust class discussion about legacy and famous nurses. This culminated in a new class assignment to write our own obituary. For a DNP-level assignment, that seemed unusual but turned out to be personally beneficial for me.

I suspect that, at the start of class, the professor did not really intend for us to write our obituary and provide a summary or highlight achievements in our lives. She already had access to information about us, including our current positions and curriculum vitae. In the end, this was **not** so much about us, but was a creative assignment that led to a spontaneous broad discussion and self-reflection on our profession and the values we held. With more than twenty thoughtful nurse leaders from across the United States, representing practice, academia, and nursing leadership, this course, as well as the assignment and discussion, changed our lives. As important as what we included in our draft obituaries, it became obvious what was not in most of them – consideration of how our accomplishments contrib-

“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant.”

—Robert Louis Stevenson (2023)

uted to our profession. And often, what happens with educational experiences is that this assignment changed us, our personal and professional careers, and perhaps future impact we could achieve as nurse leaders.

Not everyone intentionally thinks about the impact they want to have beyond the immediate opportunities they encounter. But purposeful discussions about our profession, society, and what the profession and individual nurses can do make a difference. There is a long list of famous, influential, and not-so-famous nurses who went beyond immediate needs and created lasting solutions. How many can you name? An internet search provided a plethora of nurses. For example, Margaret Sanger worked as a visiting nurse in New York City’s tenements. She advocated for women’s health and founded an organization that became Planned Parenthood (Michals, 2017).

Most nurse practitioners have heard of Loretta Ford, recipient of the Surgeon General’s Medallion (the highest U.S. Public Health Service honor awarded to a civilian); she launched the first nurse practitioner program in 1965 (Peters, 2023). The internet search also provided the names of several Ohio nurses. Betty Smith Williams, as a graduate student at Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University, was the first African American to graduate from the school and was a founding member of the National Black Nurses Association (Robinson, 2016). The first President of the American Nurses Association, Isabel Hampton Robb, played several key roles as superintendent of nursing programs, author, and faculty. Her accomplishments included the creation of nursing programs and publication of textbooks. She helped found the American Journal of Nursing. One could only imagine what she might have accomplished if her life had not been cut short by a streetcar accident in Cleveland, Ohio (American Association for the History of Nursing, 2018).

Ohio has a rich history of nurses providing strong leadership and accomplishments. This year at the September Annual Meeting, we will celebrate an individual who is known to many. Often seen and heard at previous state nursing meetings, Ella Kick, PhD, RN,

(continued on page 10)



Learn more! [Careers.OhioHealth.com](https://careers.ohiohealth.com)



ences felt that it would have better prepared them to collaborate with other healthcare professionals and to understand the demands of work-life and hours in the nursing field. An article on the success of new graduates noted that “newly hired nurses who were introduced to their work environment during their preparation stages were more confident and accustomed to the new professional world” (Baharum et al., 2023, p. 19). However, graduates felt it would have been helpful to have more experience in other specialties because the majority of clinical experiences were on medical-surgical units, leaving little opportunity to learn about different areas nurses can practice in. In line with this perspective, in an examination of clinical placements (CP), Edah Anyango et al (2024) stated that:

“Clinical exposure to a specialty improves nursing students' confidence to adapt and work in an area. In contrast, students who do not have a CP in a nursing specialty may feel that they lack the skills to practice in the area and may not be aware of the career opportunities and progression in that specialty” (p. 2).

Theme 4: Nursing is an excellent second career.

“I, at 20, was not the student I was later in life. I was more focused on social aspects of college ... older and wiser, I figured out I wanted it and pursued it, and I'm happy with it.”

While most of these accelerated nurses said they would choose nursing again, few said

they would want this to be their first career. These nurses gravitated towards nursing because they wished for more fulfilling and lucrative work. In a systematic review performed by Macdiarmid et al. (2021) investigating why people are attracted to accelerated nursing programs, the authors found similar themes, noting that the primary motivations for many to enter an accelerated nursing program are the desire to find a satisfying career, finding fulfillment through working with others, increased career options, and achieving satisfaction through helping patients. When talking with the new nurses, most expressed they felt as though they were in professional limbo before deciding to pursue nursing. The personal growth and knowledge that came from their first career were invaluable. A recurring sentiment was that having a prior career helped them develop strong interpersonal skills and effectively manage their time. Macdiarmid et al. (2021) stated similar findings, stressing that the choice to enter an accelerated nursing program correlated with the timing in a person's life and feeling a calling for nursing. During the interview, some of the nurses mentioned that having time when they were younger to focus on their social life, hobbies, and interests gave them the ability to prioritize themselves. Ultimately, these accelerated nurses are happy with their career choices and love the vast future professional possibilities that nursing will allow.

Conclusion

Accelerated nursing programs offer an excellent pathway for those looking to enter a new career field. Before starting this journey, it is crucial to have a solid plan to manage the significant time commitment involved. Adaptability is essential, as the program demands hours of study time and time spent in clinical settings. Balancing this with life expectations can be challenging. Having a strong support system is essential; being surrounded by other students who share this experience creates valuable opportunities for learning and emotional support. Seeking out opportunities to gain more healthcare experience through work or volunteering in hospitals can help build confidence and enhance patient care skills. These accelerated nursing graduates found that their diverse backgrounds and prior life experiences contribute to their effectiveness as well-rounded nurses. Despite the challenges faced, completing my accelerated nursing degree was one of the greatest career decisions I made, solidifying my belief that this was the right path for me, as nursing has truly transformed my life and brought a deep sense of fulfillment. ■

Disclaimer: The content of this article is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA), U.S. Government and Department of Veterans Affairs.

References online:
myamericannurse.com/?p=421637

(continued from page 2)

has frequently made a lasting difference. A publication titled *Ella Care: A Life of Adventure and Discovery in Nursing* (Kick, 2014), written by Ella herself, highlights many of her contributions and continuous service to the profession and patients. Her unique way of incorporating humor is joyful and uplifting.

Ella's latest contribution to nurses in Ohio is allowing ANA-Ohio to announce the creation of our organization's non-profit foundation. Her major gift fulfills part of ANA-Ohio's strategic plan and will be used to support nursing initiatives and scholarships. Perhaps Ella's most significant achievement

is this generous gift to the ANA-Ohio Foundation, which will inspire others to create a future where they, too, can make a lasting difference. ■

References

- American Association for the History of Nursing (2018). Isabel Adams Hampton Robb 1860-1910. Retrieved 9-7-25 from <https://aahn.org/robb>
- Kick, E. M. (2014). *Ella Care: A life of adventure and discovery in nursing*. Never Forget Press.
- Michals, D. (2017). Margret Sanger. National Women's History Museum. Retrieved 9-7-25 from <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/margaret-sanger>

Peters, C. J. (2023). Dr. Loretta C. Ford: A pioneer in healthcare. *Public Health Nursing*, 40(3), 466-467. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.13192>.

Robinson, D. (Fall, 2016). Uniting nurses of color: A pioneer in the field. *Think*. Case Western Reserve University.

Stevenson, R. L. (2023). Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant. Retrieved September 7, 2025 from <https://quotestoinspire.medium.com/dont-judge-each-day-by-the-harvest-you-reap-robert-louis-stevenson-7ca18583b0cd>