On November 1, 2012, the College of Nursing celebrated an important milestone in our college’s history: dedicating the very first endowed chair in nursing. Thanks to the philanthropic spirit and thoughtful vision of Dean and Professor Emerita, Dr. Virginia P. Crenshaw, this was possible. Dr. Crenshaw would applaud the unique interdisciplinary focus of the endowed chair.

Virginia Crenshaw spent 35 years in nursing education and devoted 25 more to bettering the lives of older New Mexicans. Her undergraduate years were spent at Vanderbilt University, where Professor Lulu Hassenplug became her mentor. She graduated with her bachelor’s degree in nursing in 1942.

When the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) opened a school of nursing in 1948, Lulu Hassenplug was named Dean. Dean Hassenplug later encouraged Virginia to join her at UCLA. By then, she had her Master of Public Health degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her Doctor of Education degree from Peabody College (Vanderbilt). She was dean of the UNM College of Nursing from 1961-1967 and a UNM nursing professor until 1977.

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Message from the Dean

Dear Alumni & Friends,

It seems almost impossible that it’s been four years since I became dean of the College. Most assuredly, the years have been filled with amazing people, students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, colleagues and so many new wonderful friends across this great state of New Mexico. I consider myself very fortunate to be leading such a critical academic program with an astounding support network.

Of course, there are always challenges with being dean but people are my rewards. This issue of our newsletter is my way of sharing some of my latest rewards.

Dr. Virginia Crenshaw was our second dean and a strong, intelligent, committed woman of independent thought whose generosity has provided the College with the enormous opportunity to establish its first endowed chair in nursing. Virginia never stopped caring about her students, colleagues, patients and neighbors, young and old! An endowed chair is one of the highest honors bestowed on an academic institution, reflecting its reputation and prestige.

Another name that truly resonates with all of us is Albers. Dr. Leah Albers was a UNM professor of Nurse-Midwifery for almost 20 years. Her brother, Paul, and sister-in-law, Leigh Ann, felt so strongly about her stellar career, they made a gift to endow a professorship in her honor. Leah has retired but she helped us find Dr. Amy Levi to fill her shoes - a great story with more exciting chapters to follow!

A successful banker turned UNM nursing student, Dr. Rob Rayner, is another inspirational reward that promises to leave a huge impression on you as well. Rob’s generosity in creating two endowments will continue to “pay it forward” in exceptional ways, supporting both faculty and students.

I know you will enjoy the stories about these treasured friends of nursing, and many thanks to you all as always for your continued interest and support!

Nancy Ridenour, RN, PhD, APRN, BC, FAAN
Professor and Dean

EXECUTIVE DEAN ACCEPTS DEANSHIP AT VCU

Please join us in extending special congratulations to the College of Nursing’s Executive Dean, Dr. Jean Giddens, who has accepted the position of Dean at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Nursing (SON) in Richmond, Virginia. The VCU SON is part of a large Academic Health Sciences Center that also includes a School of Medicine, School of Dentistry, School of Pharmacy, and School of Allied Health.

During her career, Dr. Giddens has spent a total of 19 years with the University of New Mexico College of Nursing - first for 9 years (from 1988-1997) and then again since 2003. Stepping away from her comfort zone of teaching, Dr. Giddens began serving the College in administrative leadership positions in January 2008. Her contributions to the College of Nursing in the areas of teaching excellence, curriculum and teaching innovation, educational research, and academic leadership will be missed!

Dr. Giddens’ last day at the College will be June 30, and she plans to begin at VCU in July.

Thank you, Jean, for all you have done for the College and for Nursing in New Mexico!

Thank YOU!

REGENT DON CHALMERS

Regent Don Chalmers retired after seven years on the UNM Board of Regents, faithfully attending 14 UNM commencements and 13 College of Nursing Convocations. Don became our second Honorary Nurse in December as we expressed our heartfelt thanks and very best wishes.

DEAN’S DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

The College has had a stunning group of volunteers who have been participants on our Dean’s Development Advisory Board under the expert leadership of Carol Moye, Class of 1972. We say thank you a million times over to these loyal friends for their steadfast support. They have helped us grow our private support to phenomenal levels! We applaud our magnificent volunteers: Dr. Sam Baty, Dr. Karen Carlson, Kathy Day, Peggy Hennessy, Debby Long, Carol Moye, Carla Muth, Dr. Cynthia Nuttall, Cynthia Rector, Sandra Seligman, Dr. Donea Shane, Dr. Geoff Shuster and Maggie Williams!
Dr. Sally S. Cohen has been named the holder of the Virginia P. Crenshaw Endowed Chair in Nursing. Dr. Cohen is Associate Professor and Director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nursing and Health Policy Collaborative at the College of Nursing.

The Collaborative prepares nurse fellows in its PhD Program to be leaders in health policy advocacy, analysis and research. Its faculty and fellows engage in policy research to address the health care needs of America’s most vulnerable populations.

Prior to coming to UNM, Dr. Cohen was on the faculty of Yale University School of Nursing, where she founded and directed the Nursing Management, Policy and Leadership master’s specialty and spearheaded the school’s health policy focus in the PhD Program.

Dr. Cohen is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and the New York Academy of Medicine. She has a PhD from Columbia University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) from Yale University and a Bachelor of Arts from Cornell University.

Congratulations to Dr. Sally S. Cohen and Dean Nancy Ridenour and special thanks to Dr. Virginia Crenshaw!
DR. AMY LEVI NAMED THE LEAH L. ALBERS PROFESSOR IN MIDWIFERY

On February 21, 2013, the College of Nursing hosted a reception honoring Dr. Amy Levi as the Leah L. Albers Professor in Midwifery. This professorship will support Dr. Levi as she researches, teaches, and advances national and international professional travel and educational advancement within the field of midwifery.

In 2006, Paul and Leigh Ann Albers recognized Paul’s sister, Dr. Leah Albers, CNM, and the importance of nurse-midwifery by establishing a professorship in midwifery at the UNM College of Nursing. When she arrived at UNM in 1991, Dr. Albers launched a master's program in midwifery and helped UNM's Nurse-Midwifery Education Program achieve a phenomenal ranking by US News and World Report as one of the top five programs in the nation for 11 consecutive years.

Dr. Levi completed her MSN and PhD in Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania and was a clinical professor at the University of California at San Francisco for seven years before coming to UNM in 2012.

Dr. Levi is a teacher and practitioner at heart. Her exposure to national and international programs has been acquired primarily through many invitations to make professional presentations. Global health has truly been an important focus throughout her nursing career, taking her to Guatemala, Pakistan and Malawi in Africa. Dr. Levi also has a secondary faculty appointment in the UNM School of Medicine’s Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Dr. Levi says that she is absolutely honored to be at the UNM College of Nursing as the Leah L. Albers Professor of Midwifery. What an amazing opportunity it is, not to mention the significant challenge it represents; filling Leah's shoes is as exciting as it is intimidating! We are extremely proud to welcome Dr. Levi to the College of Nursing!

Congratulations, Rosemary—we will miss you and wish you all the best!