

ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING

Alumnae Association Newsletter

Volume 55 Number 1 - Fall 2013

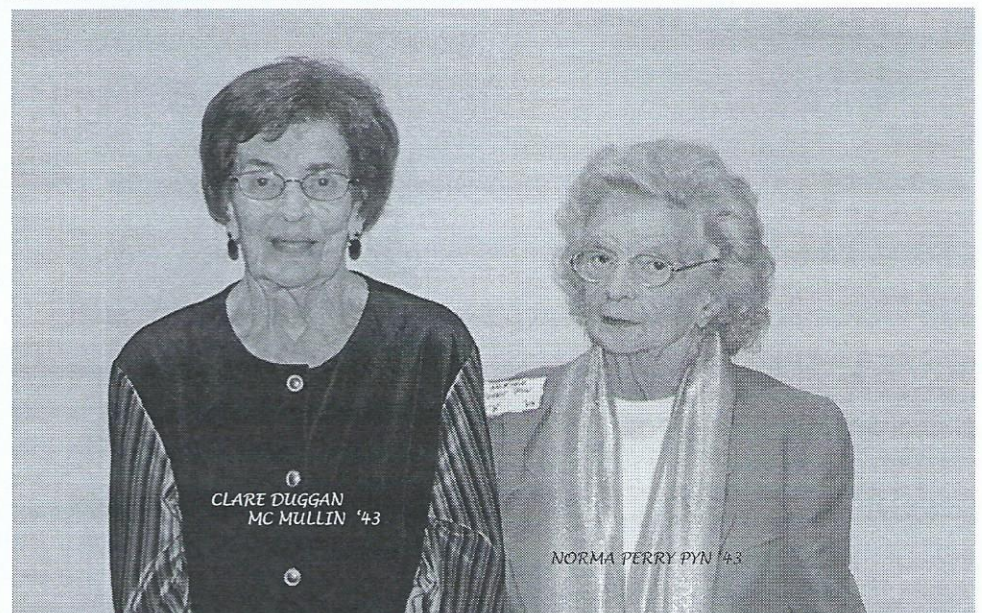
50th Anniversary

Class of 1963



25th Anniversary

Class of 1988



Patience, Fortitude, Perseverance Faith, Hope and Charity



Class of 1963 Celebrates 50th Anniversary

At the SVH Alumnae Luncheon on November 9, 2013, the Class of 1963 celebrated their 50th anniversary and the Class of 1988 celebrated their 25th anniversary. The Class of 1968 also decided to use the annual luncheon as an occasion to have a reunion with 26 of their classmates.

Mary Sartoretto Bloebaum addressed the class with memories from 50 years ago. Excerpts from her speech follow:

Thank you fellow classmates for sending me your memories and asking me to share them with the alumni. We have lost classmates over the years and even though they are not with us physically today, they are here in our hearts and minds. I would like to dedicate this trip down memory lane to them.

So many thoughts flashed through my mind when Gert asked if I would speak for the Class of '63. My first thought was of a November day in 1960 when we probies were asked to escort the Golden Jubilarians through the nurse's residence. I remember looking down the hall and seeing a group of very old women hugging and laughing as they waited for their tour. They were so excited to see each other and all through the tour they shared with us what their experience had been like when they were at St. Vincent's. They were the Class of 1910 and as they regaled us with stories of scrubbing floors not just patients, cooking patient's meals, not just serving them, and their long 12-hour shifts. Our eyes rolled! Well ladies, today we are those old women and I'm sure that for the rest of our fellow alumni, your eyes will roll as I regale you with our experiences.

In September of 1960 we swept through the golden doors of 158 West 12th Street for the first time. We

were bright-eyed and eager and had no idea of what truly lay ahead but in a matter of days we were well on our way to understanding the school motto of patience, fortitude and perseverance! We met our roommates without any Facebook and found a way to share a tiny room with old iron beds and make it "homey."

Now for some quick memories:

Mrs. Cosgrove or Cosie as we called her and her accomplice Mrs. Burn... Rupert and Skippy were our elevator operators. If we had been famous, they would have made lots of money selling our secrets to the Enquirer.. Sr. Dominic, Sr. Dolores, Miss O'Connor and Miss Murphy were our nursing foundation instructors, and "Mrs. Chase" was our trusty patient.... Mrs. Boyce and Sr. Joseph were in charge of student health.... Miss Shannon taught Anatomy & Physiology and pharmacology, Sr. Gertrude taught microbiology and pharmacology "Germs are not elephants" and "Fomites girls, think fomites!".... Sr. Mary Lewis (AKA Sr. Mary Shopping Bag) for our public health rotation....marching in the St. Patrick's day parade. Midnight supper for the night shift with the ever present green bologna....no chicken breasts on our side of the cafeteria only legs and wings.... singing Christmas carols at Penn station....the trip to Rome for Mother Seton's beatification....cheering on our basketball team...standing stock still in the halls for the Angelus.... running to our mailboxes for the latest Blue Notes edition....patient beds in the hall when we ran out of room.... beds that had to be hand cranked and lifted onto shock blocks.... turning the dreaded Stryker frame without losing the patient....the dirty room on St. Lawrence with the

potassium permanganate bucket soaks (the bucket was a medium size metal trash can that was used by all 8 patients!).....reading X-rays with Dr. Rossi....wrapping 2 X 2s and 4 X4s in brown paper for sterilization for 50 cents an hour....searching in the basement through the dirty laundry for a missing probe from a suture kit.... Senior dinner dance at the Essex House, we were the first class to have a dinner dance and they said it would never fly.

Our training had taught us the value of hard work and selfless giving. We learned that each person we cared for was precious in the eyes of God and deserved to be respected, nurtured and given the highest quality of care. Leaving the cathedral on graduation day was not the end of our story, but just the beginning for all of us. Many went on to get their Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate degrees. We became teachers, social workers, psychologists, lawyers, nurse practitioners, nurse leaders, small business owners and even a mayor. Some of us married, some remained single and some went into the religious life. We became mothers and grandmothers, some of us are widowed and some are divorced. Some of us are still working and some are retired. We have been on medical missions overseas and in our own cities. The three years we spent at St. Vincent's did not just prepare us to be the very best of nurses, it made us strong confident women who were not afraid to tackle the challenges that life handed us.

The speech in it's entirety can be viewed on the SVH web page:

stvincentschoolofnursingalums.org

Patience, Fortitude, Perseverance Faith, Hope and Charity



Class of '88 Celebrates 25 Years

Margaret Casey Pfeiffer and Wynette Bruno O'Connell from the Class of 1988 prepared several remarks for their classmates and fellow alum at the luncheon. Here are excerpts of their speech, including some lovely remarks about the Sisters of Charity. The entire presentation can be read on the SVH web page stvincentsschoolofnursingalums.org.

The Sisters had great faith in their mission, and committed themselves to the provision of kind and compassionate care to the poor. They were also committed to the highest standards of medical and nursing excellence. Our nursing pin reminds us of the attributes of a St. Vincent's nurse which are Patience, Fortitude, and Perseverance. As a graduate of St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing the basis of caring was imbedded in our genes as the color of our eyes. These traits can never be changed. Moving on in our nursing career caring with passion and pride was never ending. In all of my nursing experiences from the acute care of pediatric oncology, critical care, home care, case management, out-patient clinics and transporting acutely ill patients, the caring trait always stood out.

Although our institution has closed its doors, St Vincent's lives on throughout hospitals all over the country as we all strive to provide the best care to our patients and promote the importance of nursing presence at every bedside.

General Alumnae Meeting

Shortly after the first anniversary of Super Storm Sandy that devastated so many, it is fitting to report on the guest speaker at the June General Alumni meeting, Margot Keenan Condon '76. She discussed her experience of working in the NICU at NYU Langone Hospital on the night of October 29, 2012 when Super Storm Sandy hit our shores. Margot and the six-hour old preemie she was holding to her body were featured on the cover of the NY Post the morning after the storm and she was subsequently interviewed on Anderson Cooper Live.

Margot is a pediatric nurse who has worked at NYU for the past 30 years, 15 of those years in the NICU. She is a team leader, and one of the charge nurses responsible for the emergency preparedness program for her unit. Margot credited the teamwork of the nurses and staff in the NICU that night as the reason why all the neonates were successfully evacuated and transported safely to other institutions. Here is her incredible story:

Although the weather forecast was ominous, the day started out as an ordinary day in the NICU. Plans were in place for staff coverage of the NICU in the event the storm was as bad as predicted. Margot, who lives in the area of the hospital, would cover the evening shift. It was windy but she could get to work.

When Margot arrived at NYU, report was given and as a team, the entire staff, nursing, physicians, respiratory, security and management, checked the babies and made sure all emergency systems were in place and ready to activate if necessary. This meant that every baby had a nurse, a respiratory therapist with a back up ventilator, a flashlight, an ambu bag and back up O2. Margot was the senior nurse on the unit that evening so she made rounds, reassuring the more junior nurses who were apprehensive about what to expect.

When the power went out, all back up systems were activated and everyone was OK. They still thought this was just a storm and the power would be back on soon. However, approximately 1½ hours later, representatives from hospital administration arrived on the unit to announce that the hospital was being evacuated. This would be no ordinary night!

The most serious and fragile babies were the first to be readied for the transfer to one of the receiving hospitals. However, the transport teams still had to get from the ninth floor to the ground floor with no electricity and no elevators. Medical students lined the stairwell with flashlights, and the unit clerk called out each step as staff descended to keep them from

looking down lest they dislodge an endotracheal tube or fall. The nurses held the infants as close to their body as possible to keep them warm but also held on to the ET tubes to make sure they didn't dislodge. The neonatal fellows held the ambu bag with the O2 attached to give the babies air when needed. The parents held their babies IV as they walked down the 9 flights of stairs.

When each team reached the main lobby, a stretcher took them to an awaiting ambulance, then on to a receiving hospital. What a sigh of relief Margot breathed when she arrived at the receiving hospital, placed her baby in a warmer, and learned that the baby's temperature was 97.8°! Her patient was the smallest and sickest baby in the NICU and made it safely to another hospital!

Margot repeated the same journey four times more that night!

When all the patients had been transferred, Margot and the other staff were told to go home. By then it was 4 AM and with no coats, purses, or cellphones, Margot and three other nurses left work and hailed a CAB—only in NYC! The cab made it to within 3 blocks of Margot's home but couldn't get any closer due to all the debris in the streets from the storm. Margot walked the remainder of the distance where her anxious husband awaited her

Patience, Fortitude, Perseverance Faith, Hope and Charity



Continued from General Alumnae Meeting

arrival. It was more than a week later that Margot's 20-year old son told her she had been on the front page of the NY Post holding a baby to her body. When she was able to get her cell phone back, she realized that Anderson Cooper had reached out to her for an interview, having seen the picture in the newspaper.

It took quite a few months to get NYU back up and running and it's still being reconstructed today. The NICU staff had been disbursed to many different hospitals in the city and following the storm. Margot's job became one of cheerleader as well as coordinator of her staff. She traveled around the city checking on the staff at different locations, trying to keep the lines of communications open. She wanted to ensure that the staff knew they were still part of NYU and could return to work there, even though they were working at different hospitals.

What a wonderful story about a true professional! Margot and her story inspired all in attendance

Congratulations to Patty Caffrey!

Patricia Caffrey '79 was one of 13 women honored this year at The Second Annual Brooklyn Top Women in Business Awards and Networking event. She has been the nurse administrator for the Brooklyn Satellite of Calvary Hospital since 2006 and in 2011 spearheaded a conference celebrating Calvary's presence in Brooklyn for 10 years.

Patty is best known to SVH Alums as a Board Member and our Web Master. She has a masters degree in nursing, is a Clinical Nurse Specialist, and in this capacity, leads a team of interdisciplinary health care professionals who provide high level, compassionate care to terminally ill patients.

Patty has been a guest on the program "In the Arena," addressing end of life issues, has presented at the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association (NANDA) international conference, and has presented at various parish groups. She has published in Nursing Spectrum, the Journal of the Association of Nurses in Aids Care, and the Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care Nursing.

Congratulations Patty and thank you for all you do!

Class Notes:

Please keep in touch with us by sending us your class year and email address to SVHalum@gmail.com. Alum frequently request information about their classmates, particularly to reconnect for reunions.

WEBSITE

Have you seen the new and improved SVH Alumnae website?

Pat Caffrey has done an OUTSTANDING job with the site! Kudos Patty!!

Please visit the site for review of Class Notes, Photo Gallery, SVH Shop, and more.

stvincentsschoolofnursingalums.org

TRANSCRIPTS:

Save for future reference!

For those looking for transcripts or diplomas, you may write to:

Sr. Constance Brennan, SC
or Sr. Mary Ellen Blumlein, SC
C/O Archives: Boyle Hall
College of Mount Saint Vincent's
6301 Riverdale Avenue
Bronx, New York 10471

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editors

Joan Caruana '61 Emeritus
Susan L. Faggiani, '68
Bernadette Fleming Hemmer, '68
Maureen Garrett McElhinney, '68
Change of Address, and \$ 35.00 Dues
To Patricia Holland Costello
Attn: ST. Vincent's Alumnae
C/O St Francis DeSalles
School for the Deaf
260 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, New York, 11225
(718) 439-848

No alum shall be denied active membership because of inability to pay dues.

If you are notifying us of the death of an alum or relative please include the name and address of those to whom the Mass Card should be sent. Send this information to Pat Holland Costello or SVHalum@gmail.com

Patience, Fortitude, Perseverance Faith, Hope and Charity



Memories from School Days

Nancy Lahart Gibson '86 wrote the following article for a school assignment in 2009. Nancy worked as an oncology and ER nurse, and is now a school district nurse in Pittsfield, Maine where she lives with her husband, 3 children and niece. Nancy reports,

When I interviewed for the school district position, a nurse originally from the New York area who was the high school nurse on the interview committee, saw my resume and exclaimed during the group interview, " You're a St. Vincent's nurse?" And the rest is history..... I am so proud of the heritage of our school and have met many people over the years who know of "us"!

Here is Nancy's article:

My most memorable educational experience happened in my third year of nursing school, quite unexpectedly. It was a lesson in learning about new priorities in my life and that I don't always have control.

I had always been an "A" or high "B" student in the first 4 semesters of my education at St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing. I did not have to study as hard as many of my classmates. Things tended to come fairly easy to me.

I became pregnant, got married and moved out of the dormitory at school in that 4th semester. I then commuted to New York City from the suburbs by train, still maintaining my good grades. I had our first child in July and opted to start back to school in January giving us enough time to bond. I had also decided that I would be gone too long from such a young infant with the commute to NYC.

I went back to school in January excited and ready. The major nursing course that semester was taught by a stern nun named Sister Mary T. She didn't smile much and frightened some of my classmates. She wore the old habit covering her whole body except for her face. I

admit even I was a bit intimidated by her but was sure I would do fine in her strenuous classes. But...I didn't. I flunked the first test and was devastated! Sister Mary T. let me retake the test and I barely passed! I did not understand what was happening with my brain. This scenario of doing very poorly continued week after week. I would even have my husband quiz me on the nights before a test until I knew all of the answers and would still fail!

One day about halfway into the semester, Sister Mary T. asked me to meet with her after class and inquired about what was going on in my life. I could not think of anything that was prohibiting me from performing well and of course, I started to cry. I guess I had forgotten that I was only twenty years old, newly married, had an infant son and commuted by two trains, an hour and a half each way, every day. Sister Mary T. continued to try and help me by giving me studying advice and letting me retake some tests. I was really starting to admire and respect this woman but she certainly was not a touchy-feely type person. Towards the end of the semester, we again met after class and she told me that even though I received an "A" in my clinical rotation, I had failed the semester academically and would have to do it all over again! I just could not believe it. I had never failed at anything.

Then I realized that she knew about my personal life, though I had not spoken to her directly about this. She told me I had probably come back to school too early after having my son and that my head was obviously not in the right place. She told me that I probably was more stressed than I thought and that it was all right to fail. She told me to go home, be with my family, get my head on straight and come back to St. Vincent's when I was ready. Many of my classmates did not think I would return.

I took the summer off and did just as she advised.

That September, I felt ready to try again. I swallowed my pride a bit as I again had to take this same semester over with a new class that I didn't know and of course, with Sister Mary T. at the helm.

My subway train was delayed that first morning and I showed up late for her class. Everyone stared at me as I came through the door. I excused myself for being late and there, for the first time in my life, did I see a smile on Sister's face as she said, "Welcome, Ms. Gibson."

I went on to be a straight "A" student that year and even enjoyed a little friendly banter with Sister from time to time. I took her advice and I think she was proud of me.

I still can't explain what happened to my head that year, but I'll never forget the kindness and gentleness displayed to me. I think Sister Mary T. may have understood where my priorities needed to be more than I did. In the twenty-four years since then, there are times that I have failed at things and I remember the lesson she taught me. Evaluate your priorities, do what you need to do to succeed, and keep on going!

Student Nurse Statues
Interested in a statue of an SVH student nurse, right down to the bandage scissors carried in her apron and the crease in her cap. These 8.5" statues, colored in metallic bronze, are available for \$25.00 plus shipping and handling of \$12.00. Please order from:

Sr. Kathleen Aucoin, SC
Seton Arts Studio
67 South 5th Avenue
Mount Vernon, NY 10550
Phone: 917-697-6370
Email: setonarts@gmail.com
www.Kathleenaucoin.com



Patience, Fortitude, Perseverance Faith, Hope and Charity

St. Vincent's Razed

For anyone who has walked the streets of Greenwich Village recently, you have witnessed the razing of St. Vincent's brick-by-brick. The front surfaces of the School of Nursing and Spellman still stand but only memories reside in between these buildings where we walked the halls day and night for many years. The Martin-Payne, the west 12th Street home to student nurses and residents for many years, has been renovated into a luxury condominium.

The following article is reprinted from **The Villager**.

July 18, 2013

NEW ELITE ENCLAVE IS AT ODDS WITH SPIRIT OF VILLAGE

BY ELISSA STEIN | Reminiscent of gutted stretches of the Upper East Side making way for gleaming, luxury buildings, the soon-to-be The Greenwich Lane site is already promoting an air of exclusivity, seemingly at odds with the sense of community so inherent to the West Village.

According to its Web site, the buildings "...all come together to surround one lush central garden. ... The garden is just one of a staggering array of private amenities, all presented at a level of discretion unheard of in most West Village residences."

It sounds remarkably like a concentrated-wealth, gated community is taking shape in a neighborhood known in the not-to-distant past for inclusion of all sorts.

During the planning process, a community groundswell of complaints made sure the impending tower wasn't too tall, that the total number of apartments wasn't too large, and that potential problems of local school overcrowding were addressed. But other issues, like

affordable housing options being included in the development, didn't make the to-do list. Nor did making sure the Lower West Side would again have a fully functioning hospital.

As recently reported by The Villager, the number of apartments in The Greenwich Lane has now been reduced from 350 to 200. And while no floor plans or prices are available yet, one can register at The Greenwich Lane's Web site, which notes the condos' prices will generally range from \$2 million to \$20 million.

Some residents note that perhaps the development will bring retail back to the neighborhood, which has seen too many store closings as of late. But the other side of that coin is that new shops that would appeal to this upscale clientele could be far too expensive for many locals. While many still mourn the loss of Joe Jr. (the much-beloved diner), Jon Vie (the French bakery on Sixth Ave. that gave free cookies to kids for more than 45 years), Jefferson Market, even Food Emporium, along with many other mom- and-pop shops, it seems unlikely The Greenwich Lane, on the site of the defunct St. Vincent's Hospital, will encourage reasonable, small-scale, local commerce.

While the developers can't be blamed for the hospital's closing, they can be held responsible for other issues, like the contentious rezoning of local elementary schools. The influx of so many new apartments and fear of additional overcrowding means that soon families living a block away from P.S. 41 will no longer be able to send their kids there. And while the developer, the Rudin company, is donating money to fund public-school art programs and a nonprofit group that supports affordable housing, the exclusion of affordable housing in this massive project all but guarantees additional challenges for the middle class in continuing to call the West Village home.

For a section of the city rooted in history, landmarks and diversity, this impending elite enclave is a reflection of Manhattan's new reality as a whole. The West Village had seemed impervious to this trend, but this vast development is proving even this long-established, seemingly protected community is not immune to large-scale change. Progress and growth are vital, but this movement to exclusively upscale could undermine what makes this neighborhood so unique.

Patience, Fortitude, Perseverance Faith, Hope and Charity



OBITUARIES

The Passing of a Giant

Sister Agnes Connolly '45, formerly known as Sister Agnes Miriam, died on November 17, 2013 at the age of 95. The SVH Alumnae knew Sister Agnes for many years in several capacities. She was the Associate Director of the School of Nursing and served at St. Vincent's Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital in Yonkers, NY as a nurse, nursing supervisor, and administrator. Sister Agnes also held several leadership roles in the Sisters of Charity, including Council Member and President of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity, and was Director for Mission of the Alliance for Catholic Health Care of the Archdiocese of New York. She served on several boards, including St. Vincent's Hospital and the Archdiocese of New York.

SVH grads offered remembrances of Sr. Agnes.....

She and Sister Catherine were barely 5 feet tall, but they towered above all of us in those Charity habits.

As Associate Director of the school, she was in charge of every student rotation, the "Go To" person if you found yourself on nights on St. Therese West for 16 weeks in a row!

She was always fair and kind and wise and served the hospital and her community in a special way. No matter what role she assumed, she remained the same gentle person.

Sister Agnes was eulogized at a funeral mass on November 20, 2013 at the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. An excerpt follows:

Throughout her life, Sister Agnes inspired all with her knowledge, professionalism, and dedication in caring for the sick and those who cared for them. As a Sister in leadership, she was innovative, decisive, and inspirational. The list of those she inspired and helped is long and varied. Take your rest, Sister Agnes, with the God you served so well.

Thank you for inspiring us all, Sister Agnes. You will be missed.

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD

Millie B. Hill '29,
sister of Isabelle B. Cereghino '36

Florence B. Ferguson '32, and mother of
Rosemary Hill Perez '63

Stella Staruck Mills '30

Emma Kesselmark Flaherty '36

Sister Agnes Connolly '45

Ida Galvanoni '45

Virginia Dolan Clabby '46

Eleanor McAdams Harris '50

Alice Millin Martini '52

Dorothy Brower Cole '52

Carolyn Daria Karns Trehy '53

Ellen Cleary '54

Mary Gloisten '54

Mary Dowd Leone '55

Doris Elise Buntin '59

Barbara Carey Mergner '59

Virginia Malone Reilly '60

Dolores Seagrave Heintz '60

Eleanor Perry Hynes '60

Hannah M. McElligott Betts '60

Kathleen McNaughton McLoughlin '61

Frances Bubolo Weed '66

Virginia Redding Kirkwood '67

Barbara Bachellet-Appel '70

Donna McDermott Petra '76

Joan Marshall '89

Patrick E. Grant,
son of Winifred Sweeney Grant '53

John Lynch,
husband of Evelyn Donovan Lynch '55

Daniel Patrick O'Handley,
husband of Patricia O'Handley '57

Charles Fleming,
brother of Connie Fleming '57 and
Bernadette Fleming Hemmer '68,
and brother-in-law of Johanna Solga
Fleming '59

Arthur Kennedy,
husband of Eileen Drew Kennedy '57

James P. Waters,
husband of Shirley Teboe Waters '58

Nicholas Rodgers,
brother of Joan Rodgers '58

Bernard R. Allen,
husband of Frances Furfaro Allen '58

William Harris, husband of Barbara
McGourty Harris '58

Don Kelly,
husband of Anne Bloomfield Kelly '63

Richard G. Kadri,
husband of Maureen Maloney Kadri '63

William F. Bertke,
husband of Ellen Cook Bertke '66

Michael Czerweneski,
husband of Mary Ann Czerweneski '66

Marybeth Gathercole O'Sullivan,
'75, sister of Jeanine Souque Keary '62 and
Susan Gathercole Cummings '64

John Luskin,
father of Catherine Luskin Winters '89

Patience, Fortitude, Perseverance Faith, Hope and Charity

