

50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS TO THE CLASS OF 1972

BY BETH DUTHIE



The class of 72 was beckoned to the heart of Greenwich village in August of 1969 filled with pride at having been accepted to one of the most prestigious nursing schools with a reputation for turning out the finest nurses; and filled with trepidation about living up to those high standards. We quickly became alphabetical friends as our roommates and neighbor's last names started with adjacent letters. The tumultuous 60s challenged cultural norms and gave voice to the younger generation with the advice "don't trust anyone over 30." The 70s gave birth to several movements including civil, women's and gay's rights. It was against this backdrop that our coming of age emerged but, it was the values of St. Vincent's that truly shaped us into the individuals we are today.

Elizabeth Kubler Ross, the renowned scholar on death and dying noted that "People are like stained glass windows. They glisten and sparkle when the sun is shining, But you can only see them in the darkness when there is an inner light."

The class of 72's inner light continues to shine brightly across a span of 50 years despite the darkest of times, including the fall of the trade towers, the closing of the school of nursing, and the heartbreaking loss of the hospital. We witnessed in sadness as the heartbeat of Greenwich village went still. That inner light was sparked from the moment we entered the front doors of the dorm. Our big sisters welcomed us with a warmth and friendliness that guided us on our journey in those early days. This morning's sermon reminded me that they were rich in kindness; the hallmark of all St. Vincent's nurses.

Legendary nursing instructors, little known by the outside larger world, were heroic figures with exemplary values that nourished us through the arduous years in training and beyond. Graduation wasn't the





end of our St. Vincent's days but rather the birth of a journey to make a difference in the world. The values imbued in us became foundational to us as nurses, spouses, parents, grandparents, friends, and lovers. Being a St. Vincent's nurse transcended the boundaries of a career.

There are three values imparted in our first six weeks that have I have never forgotten. They have been a sustaining force in my life. Ms. Dibble told us that we are responsible for our actions. She said that no one could ever make you do something wrong. It would only happen if you gave our permission. We can't hide behind a doctor's order to deny our responsibility. Ms. Finnerty told us that every action we take has a rationale and that if we don't understand the rationale, we have no business performing that action. It was the foundation for guiding physicians when they were making mistakes empowering us to rely on our own knowledge and judgement... we owed that to our patients. On two occasions I stood my ground in the face of hurricane gale force abuse from physicians who were enraged that I had the audacity to challenge them. Each physician tried unsuccessfully to convince me that my only job was to follow their orders. But with Miss Finnerty's and Dibble's wisdom echoing in my heart, two fatal errors were averted. Another SVH grad told me that she is dumping her doctor as she is so done with not getting the care she deserves. It struck me that empowerment and courage are hallmarks of all St. Vincent's nurses.

This morning's sermon spoke about prayerful encounters nurses have with patients, which is akin to what Ms. Dibble expressed at our capping ceremony on April 5, 1970. She spoke of the symbolic significance of nursing as entering sacred space. It is characterized by comforting, understanding, meaning, dignity, suffering, sorrow and shared joy. For five decades the class of '72 followed in the footsteps of those who went before us, sharing that sacred space with the lives we touched; fulfilling the promise of the cap we accepted on that long ago spring day.

Someone once told me that becoming a nurse is akin to baptism. It may not be outwardly visible, but it will last a lifetime. I read a quote among the congratulatory letters posted in the reception area that said entering nursing is like joining the Mafia. Once you're in, you can never leave.... you know too much. Being a St. Vincent's nurse is even more of a profound gift. So, we gather before you today, carrying the imprimatur of St. Vincent's with the winds of time at our backs, the song of St. Vincent's coursing through our souls, the memories of fulfilled dreams warming our hearts, and the promise of unfulfilled dreams dancing in our heads. For the class of '72 is still looking forward as we recognize that sometimes the last innings are the most exciting. And yes, our inner light is still burning brightly.



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# THE 92<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL ALUMNAE LUNCHEON RECAP

By Marilyn Lynaugh Strafer, '80 Chairperson

On November 11th, 2022, the SVH School of Nursing Alumnae Association hosted its annual luncheon celebration at the Manhattan Penthouse in Greenwich Village following a Mass at St. Francis Xavier, RC Church. Our Mass was once again live streamed via the SVH YouTube Channel for those members unable to come into Manhattan that day. Under the careful guidance of Susan Faggiani '68, the beautiful Mass left us all feeling a strong sense of fellowship with memories of our days as students at SVH.

The Manhattan Penthouse staff again did not disappoint, and I received many compliments from our guests on the food, atmosphere, and service. I especially heard high praises for our signature drink of Cosmopolitans, which were mixed to perfection. The bartender gave me his recipe if anyone is interested! The Penthouse catering managers have personally told me that our annual affair is a staff favorite as they appreciate what Saint Vincent's Hospital & Medical Center meant to the Village community and they also eagerly anticipate watching (and dancing to) our video presentations.

I want to share my heartfelt thanks to this year's luncheon committee: Marie Brady, '66; Patricia Costello, '66; Susan Faggiani, '68; Harriet McGreal, '69; Mary Muehleck, '71 and the steadfast guidance of our alumnae president, Joanne Billott, '77. Congratulations goes to Geraldine Abbatiello, '72 and Audrey Sierocki Barnett, '72 as co-chairs of the Golden Anniversary Committee.

So, on a business note... This year we had far less attendees than anticipated. I don't know what the main contributing factor was exactly, but I strongly suspect the current crime wave in NYC was a driving force as well as an uptick in COVID. We had 139 guests register and 121 attend. There were 18 cancellations/no shows. This was disappointing with approximately 75-100 people less than the last couple of years. The Board will review the current guidelines for attendees to meet the contracted minimum number of guaranteed guests and adjust as prudent.

Previous contracts with The Manhattan Penthouse had a minimum guarantee of 175 guests at a

rate of \$110 per person, but this year we had to renegotiate the rate two weeks before the event due to low volume and were increased to \$130 per person. The AA had to absorb the additional cost of \$2,780, but it could have been much worse. To offset the additional expense, The Penthouse added 2 bottles of wine as well as a fruit platter to each table as a gesture of good will. With the other expenses associated with the luncheon (Mass fees, photographer, audio technician, gratuities) the Board has added \$10/per person to cover these costs, but we still need to subsidize expenditures with dues. Therefore, we give preference to active members of the Alumnae Association. If this trend continues, we may need to discuss slightly increasing the luncheon fee.

Another positive takeaway was the noise level during the speeches and video presentation was low and everyone could hear the speakers. So, our efforts to curb the chatter was successful and I thank everyone for their patience. The Golden Anniversary presentation by Beth Duthie, '72 was poignant with a very moving video presentation of student nurse life in the Nurses Residence and hospital. It was paired with a great selection of songs from the late 60's and early 70's.

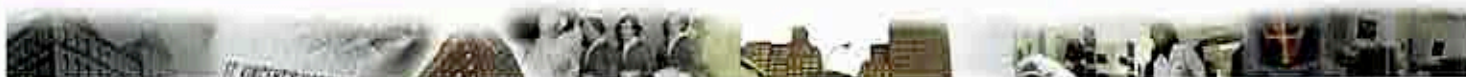
Let's all save the date for the 93rd Annual Alumnae Luncheon for Saturday, 11/11/23. Mass will once again be planned for Saint Francis Xavier and cocktail lunch at The Manhattan Penthouse. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome and can be sent to me at [marilynstrafer@gmail.com](mailto:marilynstrafer@gmail.com).

## ATTENTION ALUMNI DUES

I am writing to inform any members who have not paid their dues since 2020 or 2021 will be dropped from our mailing list. The Board decided to allow lenience during COVID but now it is time to get back to normal. At present there are 63 people from 2020 and 197 from 2021 who have not paid since that year and are still on the mailing list. There 3 people who have contacted me about special circumstances and they will remain on the list. All others members who have not paid since 2020 or 2021 will be dropped from the mailing list if their dues are not paid early this year 2023. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Pat Costello, Sec/Treas.

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## ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Once again it's that time of the year, March 17th will be here before you know it. This year St. Patrick's Day falls on a Thursday. We need all Alums to come out and show your support for our school, our beloved hospital & for ourselves. It's been a hard couple of years but we are on the other side of the Pandemic. We need to be there for those who can't.

Detail as to time and place will follow by mail & on the website.

A note about dress code. If you want to wear your cap you need to wear your uniform. Otherwise no cap with casual dress. Also, the St. Patrick's day committee does not allow inappropriate attire.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Welcome Dede Fitzpatrick Gingeras '70 & Ellen Lavelle Conant '70 as our new nominating committee. They will be the point people for those of you who want to get involved with the Alumni Association. We need you to keep going and with Zoom meetings it's easy.

Dede can be reached at [dgingeras@mac.com](mailto:dgingeras@mac.com)  
Ellen can be reached at [emconant@yahoo.com](mailto:emconant@yahoo.com)

## ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINEES

### PRESIDENT

**Marilyn Lynaugh Strafer** is running for President of the Alumnae Association after serving on the Board of Directors since 2017. She started as a general Board member, and served as the Vice President from 2019 through 2021. She has also served as Chair and Co-Chair of the annual Luncheon Committee. Marilyn has been instrumental in creating and managing the SVH Zoom account, started during the COVID pandemic, initially to facilitate Board meetings, and now expanded to include periodic general alumnae meetings.

A graduate of the Class of 1980, Marilyn is still actively practicing nursing and holds an ANCC certification in Pain Management. She has

expertise in critical care, coronary care, cardiac catheterization, electrophysiology, and radiology nursing.

Marilyn comes from a family of 8 children and has 2 sisters who also attended SVH, Theresa Lynaugh Murphy '85 and Joan Lynaugh Aberle '92. She is married to Robert Strafer (FDNY) and they have 2 daughters and 1 son, who followed his father into the FDNY, and 6 grandchildren.

As president, Marilyn hopes to connect with the younger generation of SVH graduates to garner interest in the Alumnae Association. It is her goal to keep the Alumnae Association strong and active for many years to come through sharing the legacy of Patientia, Fortitudo and Et Perseverantia.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Harriet McGreal

I graduated SVH in 1969 and received my BS from Caldwell University. My SVH career began in the Seton Building with both medicine and surgery experience. My other SVH experiences include Assistant Director of Quality Assurance and Clinical Director of Nursing in the OPD. I was a Senior Systems Analyst for Computer Sciences Corporation; Administrator of the Developmental Disabilities Clinic at Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center; Director of Audit and Appeals at The Brooklyn Hospital Center; and Vice President of Resident Services at Vista on Fifth Assisted Living Facility. I'm a member of the Professional Advisory Committee at Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Services and on the Board of Continuity Home Health Care.

#### Barbara Woods

My name is Barbara Woods, class of 1972. I spent most of my Nursing career, from graduation until we closed in 2010 at St Vincent's, Manhattan. I held various positions: Staff RN (1972-81); Smith 3 Ortho/Rehab then the Burn Unit. From 1981 until 2010 I was in management positions, first as Evening Supervisor until 1989; then as Manager of Spellman 8 Oncology, later Coleman 7 West Ortho, and then additionally Smith 6 Rehab. Along the way I obtained my BS in Nursing and then MS in Nursing Administration. After SVH closed I obtained a position as Infection Control Coordinator at St Barnabas Hospital (Bronx) from 2010 until I retired in 2017. I always loved being close to the bedside and hopefully helping staff

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and students to learn and give excellent nursing care.

This past Nov. we celebrated our 50th Anniversary and I helped in locating many classmates. It was wonderful talking to classmates I hadn't spoken to in 50 years, and I hope to keep up with my "new, old friends."

I retired in 2017 and moved to Myrtle Beach SC in late 2021. However, I am still back in NY for the summers, so I continue to have the best of both worlds.

#### **Audrey Sierocki Barnett-Class of '72-**

After graduation I worked on St. Lawrence East where under the direction of Cathy McDonald I learned "how to be a NURSE"! Upon returning home to Connecticut, I worked at the Hospital of St Raphael in the ER for over 9 years leaving only to take a position as the onsite Occupational Health Nurse & later Sr. Administrator for a local Surgical Device Manufacturing company (which is now part of Medtronic). I coordinated the development, for the 2 CT locations, an onsite Health Services Center which provided care & management of work-related injuries; provision of emergency care and preventative and wellness programs for at times over 4,000 employees!! I retired 6 years ago and have stayed active doing per diem and volunteered during the Pandemic to administer Covid vaccinations through my Town's Health Department.

I am happily married since 1990 to my husband Tom, a native New Yorker, and we enjoy golf and travel-lucky to have visited Japan before the Pandemic! I value and have kept my membership active with the Alumni Association which has allowed me to feel closer to my fellow SVH Nurses. Most recently I had the pleasure to coordinate with a group of Classmates our 50th Anniversary Reunion program and we rocked it!!!

#### **Mary Jane Blaney**

Upon graduation from St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing I worked as a urology and orthopedic nurse as well as became a Intravenous Nurse for many years at St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center. Over the years I was a Senior Healthcare executive with proven leadership experience in all areas of health care management, operations, acquisitions, business development,

turnarounds and performance improvements. Expertise in licensed and certified acute/long-term care facilities; durable medical equipment; respiratory care services; home infusion services; and laboratory service organizations. Member of several New York State DSRIP Committees as a PPS Provider member with top Hospital DSRIP applicants. New York State approved consultant for Skilled Nursing Facility, Directed plans of correction and a New York State approved Acting Skilled Nursing Facility Administrator. Excellent presenter, collaborator, and innovator. I was also made a partner after a month for a group of 13 nursing homes for 16 years until the senior owner suddenly passed away and the company was sold. I have had multiple National positions as a Registered Nurse and have been a speaker at National Health Care Organizations such as NYS Health Facilities Association and American College of Health Care Administrators Association.

I received my BSN from Molloy College, Rockville Centre.

## **CLASS NOTES**

#### **Class of 1961:**

Joan Caruana has moved to Pompano Beach, Florida. She can be reached at [joancrn@me.com](mailto:joancrn@me.com).

#### **Class of 1968:**

It was an old timers reunion this past January at Paul & Jimmy's on 18th street, NYC. Godfrey and Angela Burns & Al and Kathleen Hartman met up with Susan Faggiani & Maureen McElhinney for a afternoon filled with great food and even better stories.



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### **ATTENTION - Class of 1973:**

It may be hard to believe, but 2023 is the 50th anniversary of our graduation from SVH School of Nursing!

As many of you know, the anniversary classes are celebrated at the annual Alumnae Association luncheon in November. The date this year will be November 11, 2023, so please put that on your calendars. A group of Class of 1973 alumni is beginning to organize and plan for our reunion, we're hoping it will be our biggest turnout yet. We'd like to know who thinks that they are likely to attend (no need to make a firm commitment at this time) and if you'd be interested in helping in some way.

Some things to think about.... Classmates you can contact about coming to the luncheon, jotting down memories, popular songs of those years, anecdotes and stories of your time at SVH, gathering photos to send to the committee (but please do not send originals, make copies, label and send those to the committee). Whether you think you may attend the luncheon or not, please send us your most recent contact information. That way, we can keep you informed of our celebration plans, in between issues of the newsletter, where the latest information will be shared. In order for you to continue to receive the newsletter, please remember to mail your annual dues to Pat Costello.

If you are interested in helping with the organizing or just want more information, please contact either Chris Colligan - [cmcoll511@gmail.com](mailto:cmcoll511@gmail.com) or Mary Carmody - [mcarmody3@mac.com](mailto:mcarmody3@mac.com) or Sue McDerby - [hamptonbabe26@yahoo.com](mailto:hamptonbabe26@yahoo.com)

If you want to mail physical items (photos etc) and not send them digitally, email me (Chris) and I will send you a mailing address.

Looking forward to hearing from many of you in the coming weeks.

### **Class of 1996:**

Deborah Phelan has moved to Pompano Beach, Florida. She can be reached at [dlp415@aol.com](mailto:dlp415@aol.com).

### **CLASS NOTES:**

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

### **WEBSITE:**

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

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[stvincentschoolofnursingalums.org](http://stvincentschoolofnursingalums.org)

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### **TRANSCRIPTS:**

#### **Save for future reference!**

Please note that effective immediately, requests for transcripts and education verification must be submitted in writing and require a \$20 processing fee. Mail requests to:

Transcripts  
Sisters of Charity of New York  
6301 Riverdale Avenue  
Bronx, New York 10471-1093

#### **Please include the following information:**

Full Name at the time of graduation  
Year of Graduation

A processing fee of \$20 made payable to:  
Sisters of Charity of New York

Allow up to two weeks for the receipt of information

### **NEWSLETTER STAFF**

Joan Caruana '61 Editor Emeritus  
Bernadette Fleming Hemmer, '68  
Maureen Garrett McElhinney, '68  
[SVHalum@gmail.com](mailto:SVHalum@gmail.com)

#### **Change of Address, Correspondence and Annual Dues of \$50.00**

Forward to Mrs. Patricia Costello  
28 Cowdrey Street  
Warwick, New York 10990  
845-544-2675  
[pcostellosvh@gmail.com](mailto:pcostellosvh@gmail.com)

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# ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD

Gertrude Flanagan Byko '46  
Ellen Viscount Aloi '52  
Virginia Crandall Mamora '55  
Maureen Diehl Jordan '65  
Anne Wennerholm Flood '65  
Virginia "Ginny" Sosdian Zinna '68  
Colleen Brown '72  
Nancy Daly '72  
Patricia Ferranto Gaddis '72  
Barbara Foster McClellan '72  
Christine Gerard McKenna '72  
Jean Hemingway '72  
Debra Koutoun Fitzpatrick '72  
Elizabeth McParland Bonetti '72  
Susan Sayre '72  
Mary Ellen Tully '72  
Barbara Winsey '72  
Joan Buesing Federow '78  
Michelle Stevens '88

Thomas Dunlop, brother of Judith Dunlop '60  
Jane M. Padgett, sister of Helen Fay '64  
James Richardson, husband of Kathryn Murphy Richardson '66  
Joseph Wheatley MD., husband of Anne Foody Wheatley '69  
Constance Colligan, mother of Christine Colligan '73  
Kieran P. O'Keefe, husband of Claudia Beck '78

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