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For Immediate Release

### **COL. PATSY THOMPSON NAMED 2015 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS**

**Charlotte, NC** – Colonel Patsy Thompson was born in Troy, North Carolina. She graduated high school in 1951, then continued her schooling at Charlotte Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, graduating in 1954 and went on to earn a bachelor of science degree from Chapman College in Southern California. Colonel Thompson started her 37 and a half year military career in the United States Air Force Nurse Corps in 1956. During that time she was a ward nurse, a chief nurse, and an all-star basketball player. Colonel Thompson served on active duty in the United States Air Force Nurse Corps from 1956-1960 four years. She served in the Air Force Reserve for fourteen years. While working at McClellan Air Force Base as an Occupational Health Educator, she was chosen as Woman of the Year. She was a member of the California Army National Guard where she served as Medical Group Chief Nurse until 1976 and as Medical Brigade Chief Nurse until 1986.

During that time, she was key to the 175th Medical Group becoming a Brigade and assuming the leadership of not only the medical units of California, but all the Army National Guard medical units in the Sixth Army area.

In 1986 she was selected to be the Chief Nurse of the Army National Guard for the National Guard Bureau at the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Pat was the first Army National Guard Chief Nurse to have come from the National Guard.

Colonel Thompson returned to California in 1989 where she was on special assignment with the State Headquarters as the Quality Control Coordinator for the State Physical Examination Program. 1992 was a pivotal year for Pat both personally and professionally. She was assigned to preside over a hearing regarding a fellow army nurse's federal recognition that resulted in the dismissal of that fellow nurse for having admitted she was a lesbian. The irony being that Pat herself was concealing the same truth, that she too was a lesbian, and fought a moral battle deciding whether to fulfill her duty and preside over the hearing, or come out along with her colleague – knowing they would both be dismissed without recourse. Pat did fulfill her duty, and by doing so she was able to not only assist with reinstating her colleague, but she was also able to play a key role in the repeal of the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. Just before retiring in 1994, she spent a six month tour in the jungles of Panama where she was the Medical Team Commander.

Colonel Thompson lives with her wife, Barbara, in Roseville, California. Pat is an active Hospice volunteer, wearing her military uniform to visit Veterans who are in Hospice care to honor them for their military service. Other volunteer work includes feeding local homeless people and participating in the local PFLAG chapter which offers support, education and advocacy for all LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender).

Pat and Barbara are subjects of a documentary currently in production called “Surviving the Silence-Love and Impossible Choices” and are also writing a book about their story.

[Carolinas College of Health Sciences](http://www.CarolinasCollege.edu) ([www.CarolinasCollege.edu](http://www.CarolinasCollege.edu)), recently ranked the number one two-year college in the nation for two consecutive years, offers programs in many areas of health care. Graduates consistently exceed state and national certification testing benchmarks, demonstrating their exceptional preparedness in careers such as medical laboratory science, nursing, radiation therapy, histology, radiologic technology, and surgical technology. The College also offers individual courses in the sciences and liberal arts as well as continuing education programs in professional skills and integrative medicine. Carolinas College offers student access to the Carolinas Simulation Center, a rich collection of high fidelity human patient simulators and procedural task trainers.

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