Moving forward through CHANGE
How student Nicole Cockerham and others navigated some of life’s biggest challenges
Like me, you might watch a little television at night, relaxing and decompressing once the pace of the day slows down. I am noticing more and more that many of the commercials I see are focused on change – changing our lives, changing our careers, or simply changing a prescription medication or insurance company. The admen behind these commercials are hoping to entice us through the positives of change: the excitement, the possibilities, the empowerment. It’s a good reminder that change is opportunity – particularly since many of us are scared of it.

If you are a regular reader of this magazine, you know that Carolinas College is not immune to change – particularly as we prepare to move our campus. This issue is no exception, as our feature article is all about change, as told through the stories of a Carolinas College student, faculty and alumnus.

But change comes to us in many forms, and this is particularly true in healthcare. Continuing a conversation from the last edition about how artificial intelligence (AI) is changing treatment planning in radiation therapy, you will see how AI can impact diagnostic imaging before the treatment plan begins.

You will read about how we are changing the Associate Degree Nursing curriculum to better prepare our students for the evolving healthcare environment and to increase the size of our program to meet the continuing need for nurses. We also bid farewell to Susan Thomasson, the program chair of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, and welcome Melissa Jackson (MLS ’09) into this role. And we proudly introduce this year’s distinguished alumnus and outstanding educator.

We know that we can’t wait for change – it comes regardless of what we do to stop it. As our stories in this magazine indicate, it is our time to lead this change.

T. Hampton Hopkins, Ed.D.

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the change that we seek.”

– Barack Obama
COVER STORY
Moving Forward Through Change

Life-altering change arrived without warning in the lives of these three people. Read how Stacey, Nicole and Rodney found the fortitude and resilience to navigate unwelcomed change and discover new passions.

Page 10

ALUMNI TRAVEL
At Your Request: Our First Weekend Trip

Join us for a not-so-typical tour of Charleston, SC including a Barrier Island Eco Tour, a visit to Magnolia Plantation & Gardens for a Chinese lantern festival, a carriage ride and much more.

Page 18
A GREAT OPPORTUNITY JUST FELL INTO YOUR LAPTOP.

Getting your BSN just got easier with the launch of Carolinas College of Health Sciences new bachelor’s degree program. With all courses accessible online, working nurses can work at their own pace. And at Carolinas College, you’ll have the full support of faculty, staff and fellow students to ensure your success. Loan forgiveness and educational assistance is available for Atrium Health teammates and alumni. Classes start in August, January and May of each year.

Get your degree online.

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Getting your BSN just got easier with the launch of Carolinas College of Health Sciences new bachelor’s degree program. With all courses accessible online, working nurses can work at their own pace. And at Carolinas College, you’ll have the full support of faculty, staff and fellow students to ensure your success. Loan forgiveness and educational assistance is available for Atrium Health teammates and alumni. Classes start in August, January and May of each year.

+ No fees
+ Same tuition (in-state or out-of-state)
+ Finish in 12-18 months (depending on transfer credit)

LEARN MORE | 704-355-5051 | AtriumHealth.org/CarolinasRNtoBSN
**ADN NURSING**

**Associate Degree Nursing**
**Program Grows, Evolves**

We all know that change is inevitable, yet at times we resist change and try to keep things as they are. We like familiarity – sometimes to the point of doing things a certain way for no other reason than the fact that we have always done it that way. The Associate Degree Nursing Program is about to embark on curriculum changes that will disrupt the status quo, ultimately preparing our graduates to meet the needs of the evolving healthcare environment. As with any change, the process has had its ups and downs, but it’s been a great opportunity to think differently, learn to compromise and focus on maintaining and/or improving the educational experience for our students.

In response to the never-ending nursing shortage, curriculum revisions include admitting more students annually to the program while maintaining the quality of the educational experience. Starting in spring 2020, we will admit 36 students five times a year. Students will progress through the curriculum in cohorts, and all courses will be sequenced from simple to complex. Program completion will occur five times a year, which will create a steady flow of new graduates into the workforce. Additionally, we are threading concepts of diversity and inclusion, population health and interprofessional collaboration throughout the curriculum, while enhancing our students’ competence in medication administration and dosage calculations using the SafeMedicate Program. Finally, we are being intentional to align our ADN Program with our RN-BSN Program, enabling our graduates to seamlessly transition from one program to the other.

All of this is happening as we prepare to move to our new location in the Water Ridge Business Park. With all these changes – new curriculum, new location, new classroom technology and new testing software – you might wonder what isn’t changing. The answer to that is what makes us special and unique: the engagement, care, compassion and collegiality that exists among the students, faculty and staff, and our excellent outcomes for first-time NCLEX pass rates, graduation rates and placement rates.

We are extremely proud to report that the May 2019 graduates all passed the NCLEX on their first attempt. It doesn’t get better than a 100% pass rate!!! These will remain cornerstones of our program. As time moves on, we will adjust to the changes that are upon us and recognize the great opportunities that they bring.

By Cathy Borysewicz, MSN, RN-BC, CNE, Program Chair, Associate Degree Nursing

**RN-BSN NURSING**

**RN-BSN Program Shines with Contemporary Curriculum**

Almost a year has passed since the inaugural Carolinas College RN-BSN cohort began. This long-awaited program is one that many are eager to take advantage of, and we’re proud to report that two additional cohorts began in spring and summer semesters. We believe our program is unique from other RN-BSN programs because of the focus on Interprofessional Collaborative Practice in Healthcare.

In Spring 2019, the Interprofessional Collaboration and Problem-Solving course facilitated team immersive experiences. Case studies explored the Interprofessional Education Collaborative’s four core competencies: Values & Ethics, Roles & Responsibilities, Interprofessional Communication, and Teams & Teamwork. The course included a team project that provided students opportunities to put core interprofessional competencies into practice.

In addition to contemporary course content, the RN-BSN program maintains currency and relevance through the Nursing Advisory Committee. This committee is composed of Atrium Health nurse leaders and academic nursing liaisons, as well as students, ADN and BSN nursing chairs and faculty. This committee meets in fall and spring semesters to discuss curriculum outcomes, updates and revisions, ensuring our RN-BSN program remains both attractive to students and competitive with similar programs.

By Carolyn S. Harmon, DNP, RN, BC, Program Chair, RN-BSN Nursing
The theme for this edition, “Moving Through Change,” is the perfect motto for the School of Clinical Laboratory Sciences (CLS). Each CLS program has moved through rewarding and challenging changes in recent years – particularly the retirement of Susan Thomasson. Susan held many roles during her 43 years of healthcare service, most recently as program chair for the School of Clinical Laboratory Sciences. Susan, you are missed by all!

This is an exciting time to be starting my new role as program chair, as Carolinas College makes way for innovative ideas to extend offerings in selected areas of CLS. More news to come, as we begin navigating through exciting changes both on and off campus! An important change to share now is the addition of Phlebotomy to the School of Clinical Laboratory Sciences. Ali Winter (MLS ‘12) came on board as the new Phlebotomy education coordinator in June 2018. Ali has become a vital part of our CLS team, and we are happy to have her back “home”! The School of Clinical Laboratory Sciences is now home to four programs: Histotechnology (HTL), Medical Laboratory Science (MLS), Phlebotomy, and Specialist in Blood Bank Technology (SBBT).

All in all, we remain on the path to success, with both our Histotechnology and Medical Laboratory Science programs completing the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) re-accreditation self-study and site visit processes, with no recommendations or citations recorded. This is an amazing accomplishment for HTL and MLS faculty members. Our Phlebotomy program will submit a similar self-study in 2021.

The talk of moving through change cannot be summed up without mentioning the most important piece of our CLS programs: our students. We currently have four HTL and six MLS students graduating in August, three HTL and seven MLS students on schedule to graduate in December and eight incoming MLS students beginning their journey in August. Phlebotomy consistently maintains full cohorts of approximately 15 students three times per year, in addition to training our MLS students and students in other health science programs at Carolinas College. Finally, SBB is on track to have four students complete the program in August just as an all-time high of seven new students begin. The board scores for our HTL, MLS and Phlebotomy students remain high, along with our placement rates. We are proud of our students and graduates!

**Faculty Accomplishments**

**Carol Cook, MSN**, completed a post MSN nursing education certificate from Gardner Webb University. This was a 10 credit certificate program she completed to meet the North Carolina Board of Nursing faculty education requirement that all faculty have education in teaching and learning principles for adult education, including curriculum development, implementation and evaluation. She did her practicum this summer in NUR 151 with Janie McCloskey as her preceptor.

**Alex Sellers, MSN**, nursing clinical faculty, earned her master’s degree in nursing from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

**Campus Move Postponed**

We’ve postponed our move to the new campus at 2110 Water Ridge Parkway until January 2020.
As medical imaging technology continues to advance, radiologic technologists are able to generate images faster than ever, leaving radiologists with an ever-increasing number of exams to review. This cuts down on the amount of time radiologists can spend with patients or performing procedures – a growing concern, as patient care and communication is vital in healthcare. Fortunately, there’s a promising solution in the application of artificial intelligence (AI) to medical imaging processing and interpretation.

The high efficiency provided by AI will allow radiologists to perform more value-added tasks, becoming more visible to patients and playing a vital role in multidisciplinary healthcare teams. With increased use of AI, radiologists can spend more time on the “human” elements of care, including medical judgment, quality assurance, patient communication, education and policy making, as well as performing interventional procedures.

AI also has the potential to elevate quality of imaging and reduce radiation dose, as it can help radiologic technologists enhance the reproducibility of technical protocols. We’re able to generate images in less time, which allows for staffing improvements and optimization of scanners, both of which can reduce costs. Moreover, utilizing AI with digital imaging can help detect certain findings that radiologists may or may not be able to identify by simply studying the images.

Now in its first phase of use in CT and MRI modalities, AI is helping to differentiate malignant from benign chest nodules, diagnose neurologic and psychiatric diseases, and identify biomarkers in glioblastoma.

In a rapidly changing healthcare environment, the healthcare industry must stay ahead of the curve while continuing to meet patient needs. As a support tool, AI is one of the most promising areas of health innovation within medical imaging.

In our Spring issue, Lee Braswell, MPH, RT(R)(T), CMD, Radiation Therapy program chair, discussed the evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) and its integration into healthcare. We learned how virtual artificial intelligence (VAI) can be used in radiation oncology treatment plans “to recognize patterns, render complex decisions and perform complex procedures with limited human assistance.” For this article, Jodie Huffstetler, M.A.Ed., R.T.(R), chair of our Radiologic Technology program, offers a look at how AI can impact diagnostic imaging – before the treatment plan begins.

Artificial Intelligence, Part II:
Advantages in Diagnostic Imaging
After 43 years with Atrium Health, Susan Thomasson, program chair for Clinical Laboratory Sciences, retired on June 14, 2019. Susan is a proud alumna of the college, a graduate of the Charlotte Memorial Hospital School of Medical Technology. During her tenure with the system and the college, Susan has served in various roles, sharing her enthusiasm, creativity and innovation. An “ideas person,” she could always be counted on for out-of-the-box thinking and incredible energy. In her time working in the lab, Susan developed a 24-hour preliminary procedure for Down syndrome. While working in corporate education and staff development, she provided oversight for new employee orientation, developed a system-wide Joint Commission and safety preparation, and helped create the first online ACE modules. She also has been a champion for patient care, providing leadership in practices that can enhance both the physical and mental well-being for all. At Carolinas College, she served as the Phlebotomy program coordinator (educating over 700 phlebotomists), and then as director of continuing education. Most recently, Susan worked diligently to bring synergy to the CLS programs and led the faculty through a glowing accreditation visit. She is a previous Pinnacle nominee and received the inaugural Carolinas College Provider of the Tree award last year.

Susan and her husband, Carl, have been generous supporters of the Phlebotomy program for years, anonymously funding a scholarship for phlebotomy students each term – until Susan’s retirement, when Carl made yet another generous contribution to the endowed fund and named it the Susan & Carl Thomasson Phlebotomy Scholarship, commemorating Susan’s longtime dedication to education.

AHEC Scholar Chooses Carolinas College Rad Tech Program

By Brooke Neal, Freelance writer and editor

Lexi Morgan is the definition of a multi-tasker. She’s currently finishing her studies at UNC-Charlotte, where she’ll graduate in three years instead of four this August. She began the Charlotte AHEC Scholars program in September 2018, starting her journey to a career in healthcare before her bachelor studies were even complete. And she’ll begin the Radiological Technology (RT) program at Carolinas College this fall. All of this while working full-time as the child center supervisor at Lifetime Gym.

“I’ve always been interested in healthcare and science,” says Lexi. “I heard about AHEC through my advisor at UNCC. It sounded like a great opportunity for me to network and learn some new things.” Lexi was accepted into the Charlotte AHEC Scholars program’s first cohort. The first half of the program is fast-paced learning, held one Saturday per month; the second half consists of 40 hours of clinicals, which she completed in about two weeks. The program will wrap up in 2020.

Her decision to apply to the RT program was years in the making. “I’m an athlete and was always in and out of the hospital for CTs and MRIs for various injuries,” says Lexi. “I’ve always been interested in learning about the other side of that.” She was accepted to the two-year RT program in March, just before she completed AHEC clinicals. But she’s not finished yet. “I’d like to get my master’s in both health administration and business,” says Lexi. “It’s a dual masters, which will be tough, but I’m pretty focused and I’m looking at a few local schools already. I know that healthcare is the field for me.”

Susan Bannister Thomasson (MT ’76) Retires

After 43 years with Atrium Health, Susan Thomasson, program chair for Clinical Laboratory Sciences, retired on June 14, 2019. Susan is a proud alumna of the college, a graduate of the Charlotte Memorial Hospital School of Medical Technology. During her tenure with the system and the college, Susan has served in various roles, sharing her enthusiasm, creativity and innovation. An “ideas person,” she could always be counted on for out-of-the-box thinking and incredible energy. In her time working in the lab, Susan developed a 24-hour preliminary procedure for Down syndrome. While working in corporate education and staff development, she provided oversight for new employee orientation, developed a system-wide Joint Commission and safety preparation, and helped create the first online ACE modules. She also has been a champion for patient care, providing leadership in practices that can enhance both the physical and mental well-being for all. At Carolinas College, she served as the Phlebotomy program coordinator (educating over 700 phlebotomists), and then as director of continuing education. Most
Pet peeve:
Several questions asked without allowing a response.

Favorite sport to play:
Football!

Favorite sport to watch:
Football!

Early bird or night owl?
Night owl

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
A police officer

Who taught you the most about life?
My mother

Toughest lesson learned:
Patience

Best moment professionally:
A mentee thanking me for my guidance.

Advice to new CCHS students:
Come in with a clean-slate mindset ready to work hard, make connections and soak up all the knowledge possible.
At first thought, change renders immobility or inspires action. It brings hope, hopelessness, lasting triumphs or tragedies. Change delivers good news, bad news. It enriches lives or devastates lives. It’s inconvenient and messy. Dreams, ambitions and expectations are born from change. The best of change highlights the magnificence of the human spirit. The worst of change breaks the human spirit.

How and why people move forward through change is as unique as change itself.
PART I: WHEN CHANGE ARRIVES

Sometimes, change is given a name. The name bestowed on change reflects its place in personal or world history. The name gives stature to change’s arrival and offers clarity to people who reflect on the past.

Change Overthrows Best-Laid Plans
One name is the Great Recession. It tore through people’s lives and scattered known dreams into the unknown.

When it comes to change, Stacey Holman (NUR ’10) is the Great Recession’s canary in the coal mine. When Stacey became less fulfilled in her investment banking career, she didn’t realize those small quakes of discontentment were foretelling of big change to come. She just thought she wanted more out of life than crunching numbers.

Stacey did everything right to secure her future. By the time she was in her late 20s, she had thoughtfully laid the groundwork for a reliable, successful career. She earned her finance degree, landed a job at Wachovia bank in Charlotte and supported herself for six years in the banking field.

In July 2008, her entire banking team was let go. “It was a mess. That period of investment banking was a terrible time,” says Stacey.

Once life-altering change is experienced, it leaves an indelible stamp on hearts and minds. People tend to remember their experience with change.

“I lost my dad when I was 20. Now I was a single female in my late 20s, and I knew I was dependent on me. I didn’t have a choice. I had to figure it out and make something happen,” says Stacey.

Change Arrives Through Grief
There is that singular moment when change arrives and its name is grief. Grief rips the past’s comfort and familiarity away from the confidence of the present and future. Grief is the most difficult story of change – when change becomes incomprehensible.

Nicole Cockerham decided in middle school on a career in nursing. She kept to that plan through her sophomore year at East Carolina University. It was June 2015 and Nicole was busy with summer school when she learned her younger brother, Tyler, received a diagnosis of acute myeloid leukemia at Atrium Health’s Levine Children’s Hospital. He was 17 years old, a high school sophomore and wrestling champion.

Nicole canceled her fall semester and moved home to be with her family in Charlotte.

“When I was home I decided to apply to Carolinas College for the general studies program,” says Nicole. “I thought I could go into their nursing program and still be there for Tyler while he was going through his treatments.”

She applied to Carolinas College in early fall 2015 for the spring 2016 semester. She doesn’t recall if she was wait-listed or accepted. Before she could make a decision, Tyler passed away in December 2015.

Tyler mentioned something before he died that stays with her.

“He told me, ‘You know, the nurses are great, but do you know what gets me perked up and in a good mood even as sick as I am? It’s going over to radiology for X-rays. You need to be one of them. Radiology is where they make people feel good!’ So I completely changed my mind about nursing,” says Nicole.

Change as a Quiet Conversation
At times, change arrives disguised as a quiet conversation. Trusted loved ones see pain where there should be joy. They see clarity where there is confusion. In those moments, change offers a hope-filled new direction.

Rodney P. Duke (NUR ’99) pursued his childhood dream of teaching music and earned both an associate and bachelor’s degree. For 12 years, he made music with children in school, church and choir school.
“Teaching music was the only thing I ever wanted to do,” says Rodney. “I was one course shy from completing my master’s in choral music education, and there was a problem with that course offering. There were also financial concerns. Everything was in a jumble.”

One evening, Rodney’s husband reminded him of a friend who had gone to nursing school. “He said, ‘You know, you should go into nursing.’ And I went ‘Hmmmm, whaaat?’” says Rodney.

Rodney recalls that conversation and the days that followed when he began to look into nursing programs. “Now I look back and wonder ‘What the heck happened?’” says Rodney.

PART II: IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE

Hindsight says that change is simple. But the middle of change tells of survival and perseverance. The days, months and years beyond the arrival of change fill up with questions and answers.

**Taking Control of Change**

Stacey paid attention to the changes happening around her.

“So I asked, ‘Ok, what am I going to do? What are my options?’” says Stacey. “I saw the writing on the wall, and I started taking steps to get into school before everything hit the fan.”

Stacey got herself prepared when she saw the banking industry imploding around her. By the time her team was laid off in July 2008, she was already enrolled to take her prerequisites for the nursing program.

Stacey found the first weeks at Carolinas College nursing program challenging.

“It was a huge transition. I remember the time I sat on the sofa and cried it out. I was letting my banking career go in order to move forward,” says Stacey.

An opportunity to shadow during her first semester at Carolinas College introduced her to oncology. For the next two years, Stacey spent as much time as she could at Atrium Health’s Levine Cancer Institute.

“I fell in love with the cancer patients,” says Stacey. “It gave me an opportunity to connect with the people – to learn who they are, to see them where they are and to see their truth. It felt real. It’s a very different way of caring for people. I felt I was doing what I was supposed to be doing.”

**Determination Grows From Change**

Nicole took some time and thought about her brother Tyler’s suggestion.

“It’s crazy how in the worst of times, realizations happen. I thought I would graduate in nursing and work in a hospital. I didn’t plan to come back to Charlotte,” says Nicole.

There’s irony in Nicole’s choice to pursue radiological technology. She grew up accident-prone and spent a lot of time in X-ray rooms. “I never thought of it as a profession until Tyler said, ‘That’s what you need to go into!’ and I was like ‘Okay! Yes, sir! Whatever you tell me!’” says Nicole.
The change in Nicole’s education and career path allowed her to be herself and not worry about getting from point A to point B. Her determination empowered her to earn her associate degree in General Studies in spring 2018, as well as a spot in the radiologic technology program.

“I know I’m going to get there. I’m determined that nothing is going to stop me from getting through this,” says Nicole.

**Fortitude Transcends Change**

Rodney began looking into Carolinas College and other Charlotte-area nursing programs. He completed a year’s worth of prerequisites, and then Carolinas College offered him early admission and a full scholarship for the first year.

“Carolinas College was the only school that gave me a warm fuzzy. So I applied,” says Rodney. “At that point, I thought, ‘Maybe this is what I’m supposed to be doing.’”

His change in careers took fortitude and commitment. “It was 1997. Our world turned upside down for two years,” says Rodney. “It was an amazing experience. I liked all of my Carolinas College instructors when I was in school. And it was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life.”

“Carolinas College was the only school that gave me a warm fuzzy. So I applied,” says Rodney. “At that point, I thought, ‘Maybe this is what I’m supposed to be doing.’”

Rodney worked five part-time jobs while he studied nursing at Carolinas College. It finally came down to a singular moment in the first semester of the nursing program when he knew he was on the right career path.

“That was a spiritual moment. I realized there’s a bigger hand in this than mine,” says Rodney. “So then, I just kept going. I haven’t looked back.”

He was 39 years old when he graduated from the nursing program.

“The changes have been tricky, difficult at times, but not impossible,” says Rodney.

**PART III: ON THE OTHER SIDE OF CHANGE**

When people experience change, they learn its secret: change brings more change.

**Freedom Thrives with Change**

“Change is constant. The earlier you learn to adapt, the better off you are,” says Stacey.

Stacey thought more about her future and came up with a plan for more change. It took determination and commitment to prove to the hiring manager that she should be the first new-graduate nurse to be hired at Blumenthal Cancer Center (now the Levine Cancer Institute).

“I did it! I was the first new-graduate nurse they ever hired! Now they hire new-graduate nurses all the time,” says Stacey. “It was hard work, but I did it.”

In 2010 Stacey earned her Carolinas College associate degree of applied science in nursing. Before she graduated, she was already accepted into Duke University’s Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner with Oncology Specialty program.

After earning his master’s degree in nursing education in 2014, Rodney began his teaching career at Cabarrus College of Health Sciences. A year and a half later, he jumped at the chance to join the faculty at Carolinas College.
“I don’t listen to naysayers. I was told many times that I couldn’t work in chemotherapy and infusion therapy as a new nurse. I was told I couldn’t begin a nurse practitioner program with zero nursing experience. Well, watch me! I did both! And I finished it!” says Stacey.

Stacey worked as an oncology nurse practitioner for several years. Although oncology is her first love, she realized it was time for another change. Stacey now works as a nurse practitioner and visits people in their homes.

“The only thing I tell people who are changing careers is, ‘Don’t give up! Don’t give up! Don’t give up!’ My story sounds like I had it all together, but I wanted to quit so many times because it was so hard,” says Stacey.

“I’m really not afraid of anything in life. Not having fear is a big relief – it’s freedom,” says Stacey.

New Beginnings
Outshine Change
For the first time in her life, Nicole enjoys going to school. “At Carolinas College, they know me by name. At night, I look at the schedule for the next day and say, ‘Yes! I’m going to do this, this and this,’” says Nicole. “Every time I’m with my instructor, or a Carolinas Medical Center tech, they point out different ways to approach things, and they’re all correct! Then, I pick the approach that’s best for me. It’s a very individualistic experience.”

Nicole is in her second year as a Radiologic Technology student, and she enjoys the patient interaction. She sees between 20 and 30 people a day. “You get them, you take care of them, you do what you can and then you send them on,” says Nicole. “I hope the pictures I’ve taken help them in some way, whether it’s diagnoses or clearance. In radiology, we are the doctors’ eyes. I love it!”

“Even though it seems like nothing can come from a bad situation, there is a better outcome ahead. It’s the light at the end of the tunnel,” says Nicole.

Best of Both Worlds Created from Change
Rodney undertook more career changes. He went from nursing assistant to registered nurse to clinical supervisor to nurse manager all on the same unit, first at Atrium Health’s Carolinas Medical Center, and then at Levine Children’s Hospital. Each career move required more education and more introspection about what he wanted professionally and what was best for his pediatric unit team. Rodney stayed with the unit for almost 14 years.

“The bonds I formed over the years have made everything work,” says Rodney.

Then came a new opportunity and more change. He earned his master’s degree in nursing education in 2014 and searched for a teaching job in Charlotte.

“None of the jobs panned out. I applied at Carolinas College, but it didn’t work out at that time,” says Rodney. “I was disappointed, but I know now that it wasn’t the right timing.”

Rodney was hired at Cabarrus College. After a year and half, he received word that Carolinas College had a teaching position open.

“The day I was hired at Carolinas College was one of the happiest days of my life,” says Rodney. The first day in his office as a Carolinas College pediatric nursing faculty member was Christmas Day 2016.

Rodney still loves making music, but he knows nursing is what he’s supposed to do with his life. “I’m a nurse who loves to teach. I have the best of both worlds. I feel I have the best job ever,” says Rodney.

“I tell my students all the time, it is never too late to follow your heart.”

The Names of Change
Stacey, Nicole and Rodney moved forward through change with the grace and grit of the best of humanity. When change turned their world upside down, they charted a new life path and welcomed more change.

*By Anita Dorroh-Thomas, Freelance Writer and Editor*
Join Charlotte AHEC and Carolinas College of Health Sciences for the second annual Learning Symposium offering the greater Charlotte healthcare community access to thought leaders and best practices on delivering excellent healthcare. Bringing together healthcare practitioners, educators and consumers, The Learning Symposium seeks innovative strategies and solutions that can be employed to improve healthcare and the patient experience through dialogue and discovery.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Susan Dentzer, former president and CEO of The Network for Excellence in Health Innovation, will be presenting “Healthcare Without Walls.”

Dentzer served as editor-in-chief of the policy journal Health Affairs from 2008 to 2013, and was an award-winning on-air Health Correspondent for the PBS NewsHour for a decade. She is the editor and lead author of the book Health Care Without Walls: A Roadmap for Reinventing U.S. Health Care, a member of the National Academy of Medicine and Council on Foreign Relations, a fellow at the Hastings Center and a member of the Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice of the National Academies of Science, and serves on the Board of Directors of the International Rescue Committee, Research!America, and the Public Health Institute.

Dentzer graduated from Dartmouth, is a trustee emerita of the college, and chaired the Dartmouth Board of Trustees from 2001 to 2004. She has served as a member of the Board of Overseers of Dartmouth Medical School for more than two decades. Dentzer holds an honorary master’s degree from Dartmouth and an honorary doctorate in humane letters from Muskingum University.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Create a think tank environment for attendees to explore innovative solutions.
2. Provide a platform to present innovative solutions or enhancements.
3. Create a call to action where attendees leave with the expectation of applying learning to practice.

**CE CREDITS**

Maximum 5.75 CNE Contact Hours will be awarded

**COST**

$100.00 – Early Bird Registration on or before October 22, 2019

**MORE INFORMATION TO COME VIA MAIL OR EMAIL.**
This year’s Distinguished Alumnus is Tammy Mann, MSN, RN, NE-BC, nurse leader at Atrium Health’s flagship hospital, Carolinas Medical Center. Throughout her nursing career, she has led by example and put forth a genuine energy toward promoting nursing excellence through individual and team engagement. Her high expectations for doing what is right for each patient, nursing student and teammate, while ensuring the safety of all, has been the driving force behind how she operates each day on the job.

Mann began her career at Carolinas Institute of Rehabilitation (now Carolinas Rehabilitation) in physical medicine and rehabilitation, providing care for patients with brain and spinal cord injuries. After becoming an assistant nurse manager, she moved to Carolinas Medical Center to serve on an acute care medical/surgical unit supporting kidney/liver transplant and urology. Since 2010, Mann has served as clinical supervisor and nurse manager of the medical observation and behavioral health transitioning area at Carolinas Medical Center. In her 24 years with Atrium Health, she has been recognized as a strong leader, serving on numerous quality and process improvement committees. She is also very welcoming of faculty and students and supportive of creating strong clinical experiences for students.

Since 2010, Mann has served as clinical supervisor and nurse manager of the medical observation and behavioral health transitioning area at Carolinas Medical Center. In her 24 years with Atrium Health, she has been recognized as a strong leader, serving on numerous quality and process improvement committees.

A 1998 graduate of Carolinas College of Health Sciences nursing program, Ms. Mann has since gone on to receive her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing administration from Western Carolina University. She holds a current Nurse Executive Board Certification through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and is also the recipient of the DAISY Nurse and the DAISY Nurse Leader awards through Carolinas Medical Center. In her spare time, Mann enjoys gardening, crafts, and spending quality time with her husband John of 27 years, along with their two boys: Elliott, a pre-professional legal studies major at Appalachian State University, and Vince, a junior at Kings Mountain High School.
The 2019 Outstanding Educator is Tracy Hayes, MSN, RN, CPN, Carolinas College faculty member since 2008. Known to consistently go above and beyond in service to the nursing program and the college, Hayes is a valued faculty member and clear choice for this year’s award.

Both beloved and respected, Hayes has earned the reputation of an effective communicator, creating a positive environment where students are free to ask questions and seek clarifications. She’s encouraging and not belittling, consistently receiving positive evaluations from her students. Beyond the instructional settings, Hayes is an engaged and innovative faculty member, never satisfied with the status quo. She has utilized information gleaned from her online certification to improve the learning experience for students. She’s organized a faculty initiative to explore the consistency of test items across the nursing curriculum, and she’s been instrumental in exploring a curriculum change that will allow the program to accept and graduate more students, as well as enhance their learning experience. Hayes is currently collaborating with the Carolinas Simulation Center on a research study examining ways to improve student performance.

Hayes has established a partnership with the Allegro Foundation, a program that works with children with disabilities, that benefits both the children at Allegro and the students at Carolinas College.

In addition, she has established a partnership with the Allegro Foundation, a program that works with children with disabilities, that benefits both the children at Allegro and the students at Carolinas College. She’s also an excellent academic advisor who develops a working relationship with students, striving to know who they are as individuals and understanding their strengths and weaknesses.

Hayes continually demonstrates enthusiasm for finding ways for all teammates of the college to come together outside of work to get to know one another socially, assisting in organizing a teammate get-together at the Whitewater Center, as well as an Escape Room activity for team building.

Hayes earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing from Pennsylvania State University in 1998. In 2001, she moved to the Charlotte area and joined Carolinas HealthCare System as a pediatric nurse. She began her tenure with Carolinas College of Health Sciences in 2008 as a part-time clinical faculty member for Nursing 153 – Child and Adolescent Health. In 2013, she graduated from UNC-Charlotte with her master’s degree in nursing education before transitioning into a full-time faculty position in 2014. Hayes holds PALS certification and is a certified pediatric nurse, and she also completed an online teaching certification in 2018. When not at Carolinas College, Hayes can be found watching her sons on the ball field with her husband in Waxhaw, NC.
Join us for the first Alumni Weekend Trip! Trust us when we say this won’t be your typical weekend in Charleston. Instead, plan for a naturalist-led Barrier Island Eco Tour culminating in a beachside Low Country Boil, a visit to Magnolia Plantation & Gardens for a Chinese lantern festival, a carriage ride through historic Charleston, all accommodations including round-trip motor coach transportation from Charlotte and much more.

WE NEED A MINIMUM OF 30 REGISTERED TRAVELERS BY DECEMBER 13, 2019.

Reach out to Ruthie Mihal for more information at 704-609-1542 or Ruthie.Mihal@CarolinasCollege.edu.
“This was our opportunity to help nursing students with just a little bit of sacrifice, but big impact.”

Jim and Nancy Hill have built a powerful legacy of giving back to their alma maters. The couple has gifted annual endowed scholarships to three different colleges and universities including Carolinas College, helping young students forge their path to higher education.

In pursuit of successful healthcare careers, both Jim and Nancy earned multiple advanced degrees. Nancy was part of the last graduating class of Charlotte Memorial School of Nursing (now Carolinas College of Health Sciences) in 1967. She and Jim both attended the UNC-Charlotte School of Nursing, where as a practicing nurse Nancy was able to earn a bachelor’s degree through the “RN Pathways” program. After graduating from nursing school, Jim joined the Marine Corps and served four years on active duty as a Captain before earning his physician assistant degree from Duke University; Nancy returned to UNCC’s School of Nursing to complete her master’s degree. Years later, grateful for the strong career foundations they were able to build at Carolinas College, UNCC and Duke, the couple decided they’d like to find a way to help students accomplish the same.

Initially, the scope was much smaller. “We didn’t think we’d be able to afford anything like an endowed scholarship, but the development officer from UNCC reached out and met me for breakfast and explained how a middle-class family can come up with a five-year plan, determine a goal, and make it happen,” says Jim. So they began saving monthly until the first scholarship was a reality. “Once we saw that we could do it without a huge financial pain, we decided we could do the same at Carolinas College and Duke.”

The Hills’ endowed scholarship for the CCHS Nursing Program was established in 2007 and has been awarded annually ever since. “We decided we really didn’t want to put parameters around it,” says Nancy. “We just wanted someone who wants to be a nurse, and has a financial need to get there. It’s otherwise open.” Each year, CCHS chooses the scholarship recipient. “We always attend the annual scholarship dinner, and it’s really wonderful to meet the new recipient there and put a face on what we’re doing,” says Nancy. “Some are married and have families, some have already been to college, some bring their mothers with them to the dinner – I’m even Facebook friends with a recipient from several years ago. It’s fun to keep up and see where they go.”

By Brooke Neal, Freelance Writer and Editor

To give a gift to support the Nancy & Jim Hill Scholarship fund, or to learn more about giving opportunities, contact Ruthie Mihal at 704-609-1542 or Ruthie.Mihal@CarolinasCollege.edu.
Spring and summer is a time filled with celebrations at Carolinas College. The Commitment to Caring Ceremony, spring commencement, milestone reunions and a donor appreciation breakfast were just a few of the special events that took place.

1. The 2019 Provider of the Tree award is presented each year to one CCHS student and one CCHS teammate at the Commitment to Caring ceremony. This year’s recipients were Ruthie Mihal, director of development and alumni relations, and nursing student (now alumnus) Jennifer Rinaldo. (L-R) Rev. David Carl, Ruthie Mihal, Jennifer Rinaldo and Hampton Hopkins.

2. Spring commencement.

3. Spring commencement; Dima Kailani, Radiologic Technology graduate.

4. August graduation ceremony.

5. Commitment to Caring pinning ceremony. Graduating students invite loved ones to “pin” them in appreciation for all their support.

7. 2019 “Because of You” donor appreciation breakfast was held on May 22 at the Duke Mansion. (L-R) Cathey Miller, Rad Tech faculty; Nicole Cockerham, Rad Tech student; Jodie Huffstetler, Rad Tech program chair.


9. Milestone reunions were celebrated at the spring commencement. Front row (L-R): Joan Blossom Carr (MSON ’59), Patricia Bechtler Connor (MSON ’59), Rebecca Gleason Mitchell (MSON ’59), Peggy Hewitt Neely (CMH-SON ’59). Back row (L-R): Elizabeth Barnhill Shelly (MSON ’59), Monica Thomas (MSON ’09), Rodney Currin Duke (CCHS NUR ’09), Alice Harris (CCHS NUR ’09), Rachel brown Kinkaid (CCHS NUR ’09).

10. Sallie Cherry Thompson, (RT ’69) celebrating her 50th reunion.

By Popular Request – WEEKEND TRIPS!
Charleston, SC
March 13-15, 2020
See page 18 for more info on this trip.

2020 Alumni Trip:
Portugal & Spain – Lisbon, Seville & Madrid
April 4-14, 2020
Don’t miss the trip of a lifetime! Relive the Age of Discovery, when explorers brought treasures from around the world (see many of them on display in Portuguese palaces and Spanish cathedrals!). Uncover Roman ruins throughout the region, as well as the Moorish influences in exotic Andalusia – then feast on tapas, drink sangria and enjoy the street life of Madrid. This corner of the continent is yours to explore! View the complete itinerary and reserve your space at https://grouptoursite.com/alumnitravel, or call Go Ahead Tours at 800-438-7672 using group #64860531 as reference. For more information, contact Ruthie Mihal at 704-609-1542 or Ruthie.Mihal@AtriumHealth.org.

2021 Alumni Trip: Highlights of Scandinavia – Sweden, Norway & Denmark
Spring 2021 – Dates TBD
Travel from Nordic cities to otherworldly fjords on this 10-day Scandinavian tour! Experience the unique charms of Stockholm, Sweden before moving on to picturesque Bergen, Norway, and finishing in the modern city of Copenhagen, Denmark. More to come!
Class of 1976
Susan Banister Thomasson (MT) retired after 43 years, effective June 2019.

Class of 1978
Cyndie James Hobson (MT) and husband Clarke’s daughter Camie graduated from the University of South Carolina’s School of Nursing and is now working for Levine Children’s Hospital in Charlotte.

Class of 1979
Medical Technology alumni gathered for lunch in May 2019. (Pictured below from left: Alberta Mitchell Coit, Connie Williamson, Patt Williams Tarr, Joyce Thornburg, Pam Russell Brewer, Carol Neal Addis, Jane Miller Thompson, Earlene Bost.)

Class of 1981
Cynthia Allen Bean (MT) and husband Steve welcomed their fourth grandchild, Kyson Brooks Bean, in December 2018.

Class of 1983
Kimberly Griffin Yarborough (MT) and husband Danny welcomed their second grandson, Knox Hayes Yarborough, in July 2018.

Class of 1992
Erin Lacey (MT) now works at Carolina BioOncology Institute, Huntersville, NC.

Class of 1996
Anna Hicks (MT) married Christian Evangelista in January 2018.

Class of 2001
Hodan Sahal (MT) is the hematology lead technologist at Carolinas Medical Center’s laboratory as of August 2019.


Class of 2004
Carrie Martin Berry (NUR) and husband Jeremy welcomed baby girl Briar Jade in April.

Class of 2005
Michelle Fritz (MT) now works in the Levine Cancer Institute’s cell processing lab.
Class of 2007
Ashley Hoffman Vernatter (MT) welcomed baby boy, Gabriel Allen, in October 2018.

Class of 2008
Stacey Roper Keller (MT) and husband Eric welcomed baby girl Lexi Rose in January 2019.

Class of 2009
Ebony Porter Floyd (MT) and husband David welcomed baby girl Ryenn Elise in June 2019.

Alicia Harris (NUR) is now nurse manager for Phoenix Counseling Center’s inpatient Crisis and Detox unit.

Melissa Dunlap Jackson (MT) is the new Clinical Laboratory Sciences program chair at Carolinas College of Health Sciences, effective June 2019.

Brittany Godwin Rea (ST), husband Jeffrey and son Brantley eagerly await the arrival of a baby boy in November 2019. Brittany just started a new job with Carteret Health Care in Morehead City, NC.

Ashley Parker Stevens (MT) and husband Derek welcomed baby girl Parker Rae in June 2019.

Class of 2010
Jennifer Palmer Connor (MT) now works in the molecular lab at Atrium Health’s Core Lab.

Anna Johnson (MT) moved to Waterbury, CT, and works at Saint Mary’s Hospital laboratory.

Carlos Carre (MLS) is a medical laboratory supervisor at McLendon Laboratories Outreach Services, UNC Hospitals, where he oversees seven labs within the UNC Healthcare Systems. In addition, he recently welcomed son Carlos Anthony, who joins sister Carlida.

Karen Digh (NUR) and wife Stephanie welcomed baby girl Elliot Beasley in May 2019.

Brandon Goings (NUR) was promoted to nurse manager on 11B (orthopedic trauma unit) at Carolinas Medical Center in May 2019.

Class of 2012
Jackie Davis (NUR) was awarded the Six Sigma Green Belt at a ceremony at NC A&T.

Shauntay Matthews (MLS), husband Chris and two sons welcomed baby girl Jade in September 2018.

Class of 2013
Jessica Cain (MLS) now works as an applications specialist at Atrium Health’s IAS Lab.

Wesley Shover (MLS) has joined the general studies faculty at Carolinas College as the new biology instructor.

Nina Wiersema (MLS) moved to Asheville, NC, and works at St Luke’s Hospital.

Class of 2014
Greyson Hardin Hege (MLS) and husband Stewart welcomed baby girl Parker Elizabeth in June 2019.

Class of 2015
John Barteniski (NUR) and Jessica Robinson are engaged.

Kelly Kershner (MLS) now works at Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers in Denver, CO.

Class of 2015 (continued)
Hallie Sparrow (NUR) received her BSN from Appalachian in 2017 and works in the MICU at Carolinas Medical Center. Her son Elliott was born in December 2017.

Jordan Williams (NUR) is a travelling nurse currently working at St. Louis Children’s Hospital.

Class of 2016
Jenni Reaves Anderson (NUR) and husband Devin are expecting their first child in September 2019.

Nicky Konemany (MLS) and Happy Senesombath welcomed baby boy August in August 2018, joining brother Gabe. Nicky received a KEAP Award from Atrium Health for outstanding work with the implementation of the AU (lab analyzer) at University City in 2018.

Emily Meyers (MLS) now works in the Immunohematology Reference Lab at Hoxworth Blood Center in Cincinnati, OH.

Class of 2018
Brian Dunn (MLS) works in the hematology/chemistry lab at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance in Seattle, WA.

Jamal Roberts (MLS) works as a traveling medical laboratory scientist with Club Staffing.

IN MEMORIAM
Jeannette DeWitt Carr, NUR ’60
Barbara Cochrane, MT ’61
Daniel Dubick, RT ’15
Hilda Carpenter Elliott, NUR ’55
Lauretta Ritter Rich, NUR ’54
Murlene Shull Sellers, NUR ’59
SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

We welcome your feedback on the alumni magazine and its content. Feel free to email your thoughts on the magazine as a whole or particular articles within, and we’ll include your comments in the following edition.

Email Alumni@AtriumHealth.org

Errors and/or Omissions

From the Spring 2019 issue

Page 31: PhotoFlashback – This photo was incorrectly labeled as the Radiologic Technology Class of 1970, when it was actually the Class of 1974.

We apologize for this error.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS

MONDAY, SEPT. 16 - WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 18
2019 Alumni Phone-a-thon
See back cover for details.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1
Alumni Professional Development Event – The Acceptance of Implicit Bias
5:30 to 7:30 pm, The Broken Spoke
227 Southside Drive, A1
Charlotte, NC 28217

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10
Scholarship Dinner
6 to 8 pm, Byron’s SouthEnd
101 W Worthington Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28203

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12
Alumni Brunch – Abbott’s Home
11 am to 2 pm, 3525 Blackhorse Lane
Charlotte, NC 28210
Alumnus Lee Callicutt Abbott (NUR ’63) and husband Michael have graciously offered to host an alumni brunch in their new home. The alumni association will provide the main course and beverages; please bring your favorite dish to share. All alumni are invited to attend. Please RSVP to Pat Lewis at Pat.Lewis@CarolinasCollege.edu or 704-355-2029.

SATURDAY, OCT. 19 - THURSDAY, OCT. 24
Alumni & Friends Travel Group Trip to Iceland

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5
The Learning Symposium
9 am to 4:30 pm
Carolinas College of Health Sciences
See page 15 for details.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17
Fall Commencement & Awards Ceremony
10:30 am at Central Piedmont Community College Halton Theater at Overcash Auditorium
1206 Elizabeth Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28204
All alumni are invited to attend. Please RSVP to Pat Lewis at 704-355-2029 or Pat.Lewis@CarolinasCollege.edu.
**Lifetime Giving Levels** have been established to recognize the generous, cumulative contributions of the College’s donors. Lifetime giving levels are earned through cumulative gifts made to Carolinas College of Health Sciences.

**PRESIDENT’S CIRCLE – PLATINUM**  
($100,000+)
- Atrium Health Foundation
- Carolinas HealthCare Auxiliary
- The Cato Corporation
- Wayland H. Cato Jr. Foundation
- The Duke Endowment
- The James J. and Angelia M. Harris Foundation
- Charles H. Stone Trust

**PRESIDENT’S CIRCLE – GOLD**  
($50,000–$99,999)
- Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Foundation, Inc.

**PRESIDENT’S CIRCLE – SILVER**  
($25,000–$49,000)
- Elizabeth & Donald Anderson
- Hollandsworth Estate
- Louis & Jacqueline Pfeiffer
- Carl & Susan Banister Thomasson

**PRESIDENT’S CIRCLE – BRONZE**  
($10,000–$24,999)
- Cornelia Edwards Anderson*
- DeWitt & Ellen Black
- Katherine Harrell Bruce
- Martin Cannon Family Endowment
- CCHS Alumni Association
- James W. Crawford
- Peter S. Gilchrist, Jr. Fund
- Cecil Givens
- Estate of Laura Johnston Guffey
- James & Nancy Day Hill
- Eve B. Hoover

**PRESIDENT’S CIRCLE – BRONZE**  
CONTINUED
- Hampton & Olivia Hopkins
- Kay A. Roderick
- The Servicemaster Company
- Ellen & Bob Sheppard
- Jack & Susan Poston Stricker
- Vanguard Charitable

**LEGACY CIRCLE**  
($5,000–$9,999)
- Anonymous
- Atrium Health
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- Charlotte Area Educational Consortium
- Janet Hunt Clapp
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- GlaxoSmithKline Foundation
- Matching Gifts
- Michael R. Haake Family Fund
- Lena Nash Johnston*
- Craig J. McGregor
- Sara T. Munday
- Lorraine Smith Pelletier*

**ATRIUM HEALTH FOUNDATION’S EVERGREEN SOCIETY**
- Elizabeth & Donald Anderson
- Hampton & Olivia Hopkins
- Louis & Jacqueline Pfeiffer
- Susan and Jack Stricker
*Deceased

The College recognizes, appreciates and honors the generosity of these individuals. If your name is not listed or listed incorrectly, please contact Pat Lewis at 704-355-2029 or Pat.Lewis@CarolinasCollege.edu.
PHOTOFLASHBACK

Stroll down memory lane through photos from Carolinas College’s history dating back to the 1940’s.

Former Carolinas College nursing instructor, Brenda Vasquez with nursing students (1995)
Whether it’s been months, years, or decades since you attended Carolinas College or Charlotte Memorial Hospital – there’s no doubt your training was exceptional! The Annual Fund and Phone-a-thon Campaign supports that tradition of excellence in education. Your tax-deductible gift ensures that Carolinas College students continue to benefit from scholarships, small classes, superior faculty and a state-of-the-art simulation lab — all things that tuition alone cannot cover.

Please consider investing in our students and in the future of healthcare. The 2019 Phone-a-thon will take place September 16, 17 and 18. Our students are looking forward to calling you; but if you prefer to make a gift now, we will remove your name from the calling list. Gifts can be made online at AtriumHealthFoundation.org/CCHS or by mail:

Mailing address
Carolinas College Advancement Fund, c/o Atrium Health Foundation
PO Box 32861, Charlotte, NC 28232-2861

Alumni gifts DO make a difference at Carolinas College of Health Sciences!