

DIMENSIONS

2020 Issue 1

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Class Notes

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Alumni Appeal



Advancing Minds.
ADVANCING HEALTHCARE.



Methodist College
UnityPoint Health

7600 N. Academic Dr. | Peoria, IL 61615



Chancellor's Letter

Dear Methodist Alumni,

As I write these words, we moved into the year 2020. It's so hard to believe nearly twenty percent of the twenty-first century is behind us! It seems like just yesterday we were worrying about the Y2K bug (recent graduates may have to Google that phrase). The calendar year that ended, 2019, was a phenomenal year for the college. During the spring semester 2019, we enrolled the largest number of students ever in a spring term. The same was true for the summer semester in 2019. Then in the fall 2019, we enrolled 700 students for the first time in the history of the college! Finally, we graduated 189 students in 2019, one shy of our 2017 record.

Also in the fall 2019 semester, our four newest academic programs achieved record numbers of students. These programs are the Bachelor of Social Work, the Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Management, the Medical Assistant certificate, and the Master of Science degree in nursing. With the launch of our new prelicensure MSN program, we had more graduate students last semester than all previous semesters combined!

Other 2019 milestones include achieving accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs for our Medical Assistant certificate. We graduated ten medical assistant students in 2019. All ten passed the medical assistant certification exam with scores above the national average. Our Bachelor of Social Work program has advanced to the third and final year of candidacy for accreditation with the Council on Social Work Education.

Most colleges in the country have seen vast decreases in enrollment, mostly because there are fewer 18-year-olds in the country today than previous years and more competition to recruit them for college. The decline of the 18-year-old population is expected to continue through 2025 nationwide and 2029 in Illinois. After myriad years of rising enrollments, we saw our first decrease in the spring semester 2020. Today we have approximately 40 fewer students than a year ago. We are hopeful we can reverse this small student population fluctuation in subsequent semesters as we continue to build our newest academic programs and better market our entire offerings. Our best recruiters are you, our alumni, and we appreciate all you do to support the college.

Our faculty are still outstanding, our facilities are state of the art, and our graduates are still top notch and in high demand from UnityPoint Health and beyond. We are proud of what we do for Peoria and Central Illinois and proud to have you as our alumni!

Best Regards,

James R. Dire, Ph.D.
Chancellor

Alumni Appeal



At the end of 2019, a letter went out to all alumni for the annual appeal. Thank you to our generous alumni for donating to the appeal. We are less than \$500 away from reaching our \$5,000 goal! You can be a part of achieving the goal and make a difference for today's students.

How will your donation be used? Funds raised through the alumni appeal will help Methodist College increase scholarships and enhance the experience for students. Enhancing the college experience can include new equipment or classroom materials to assist students in receiving the best education.

From the Methodist origins in 1900 through today, the tradition of a quality education continues. Alumni donations make gifts even more special, as it comes from someone who has walked the same path. Our students appreciate knowing that alumni support their education.

Please consider using the prepaid envelope enclosed in the newsletter to contribute to the Alumni Appeal. If you prefer to make an on-line donation, please visit www.UnityPoint.org/Peoria/Donate-Now and select "Methodist College General" from the designation drop-down menu, and in the comments write "alumni appeal." For more information contact the alumni office at msmith@methodistcol.edu or call 309-672-5598.

Methodist Alumni Association Board

Abby Ault '11
President

Shelley Riney '80
Vice President of Events

Deb Eagan '13
Vice President of
Advancement

Jodi Huffman-Frazee '14, MSN '18
Vice President of Membership

At-Large Board Members:

John Cation '16

Lisa Gillespie '94

Jonathon Meyer '16

Nikita Thomas '09, MSN '19

Wilma Christiansen '57

Kayla Holtke '16

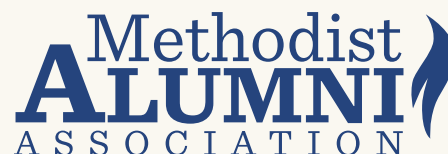
Lisa Preston '94

Stephanie Whitman '15

Angela Erickson '15

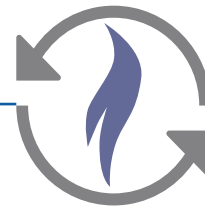
Bobby Lucia '15

Jennifer Smith '67



Alumni Reunion 2019

Class of 1969 Celebration and Alumni Awards



In September 2019, the Methodist Alumni Association hosted the annual Reunion Luncheon. The reunion is a time to reconnect with the Methodist Alumni Association and fellow alumni.

This year's reunion celebrated the Class of 1969. The Methodist Alumni Association recognized each class member in attendance with a special charm and rose. Members of the class spoke of their time at Methodist, 50 years ago. In addition to the display from the alumni archives, the 50-year class set up their own memorabilia. Members of the class made special name tags and a photo frame to take pictures! The Class of 1969 is pictured below.

The alumni awards recognition also takes place at the reunion. Alumni awards are presented to alums who are nominated and demonstrate the values of the Alumni Association.

The **Rising Star Alumnus Award** was presented to **Melissa Williams, Class of 2011**. Melissa plays an instrumental role in Methodist College's Center for Student Success by educating and assisting students daily. Melissa has been selected by students as the Staff of the Year multiple times. Her colleagues have also selected her as Staff Person of the Year. She

has assisted the Alumni Association by speaking to students at several events. Melissa has a love of learning that is evident when she works with students and in her own educational endeavors.

Andrea Parker, Class of 1984, was presented with the **Methodist Alumni Association Service Award**. From Andrea's early roles as a pediatric nurse, to public health, and now her current role as the Executive Director for the Hult Center for Healthy Living she lives the college values daily. She also serves as adjunct nursing faculty at Methodist College. Andrea served as the 2019 Spring Commencement speaker for the college. She has served on the board of directors for numerous community organizations and is recognized for her work in the community.

The **Distinguished Alumni Award** was presented to **Karen Shatar, Class of 1969**. Karen not only completed the nursing program at Methodist, she has several degrees, certifications, and additional educational accomplishments. Karen is creative, committed to personal growth, and is an innovative practitioner in non-traditional fields. She has delivered over 3,500 babies in New Mexico, 200 of which were home deliveries. She moved to Nepal to do volunteer

work with Mother Teresa Sisters of Charity. She studied with the Dalai Lama and in Buddhist monasteries in Kathmandu. She has

also offered nursing service for free cataract surgeries for the blind in some of the poorest regions in central India. In 2006, Karen was named the New Mexico Nurse of the Year in the Nurse Practitioner category.

Gertrude Parrish, Class of 1945, was presented the **Honorable Mention Service Award**. Shortly after graduation, Gertrude went west to Denver, Colorado to work in a polio unit and later in Illinois. She worked in these units years before there was a polio vaccine. From there she worked in the emergency room and home health. In her 50 years of nursing, Gertrude risked her own health to work with polio patients and was a dedicated nurse and mother. This year Gertrude will celebrate her 75th anniversary since graduating from Methodist School of Nursing!



Pictured above: Andrea Parker '84; Karen Shatar '69; and Melissa Williams '11

Pictured below: Dr. Deborah Garrison, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Gertrude Parrish '45; and Abby Ault '11, Alumni Association President



Nursing Honor Guard Seeks Volunteers



If you are in the Central Illinois region, a Nursing Honor Guard is coming together. Right now the group is looking for members to serve on the Nursing Honor Guard. Once there are volunteers to serve, the Honor Guard will begin offering services.

The Nursing Honor Guard participates in the funeral services of a nurse as a final farewell. A family can request the honor guard for any active or retired Registered Nurse or Licensed Practical Nurse services, within a certain radius. Members of the Honor Guard will attend all services wearing the traditional white uniforms and blue/red capes. Members of

the Honor Guard consider it a privilege to participate in the services of a fellow nurse. They may perform a Final Call to Duty during services or at the gravesite and as casket honor guard.

If you are interested in learning more about volunteering with the regional Nursing Honor Guard, please contact **Dani Smallberger '13** at (309) 672-4462 or Danielle.Smallberger@unitypoint.org. The group is looking for volunteers and services will be offered in the near future. Please note this is a regional group of nurses from various educational backgrounds, not affiliated with the Methodist Alumni Association.

Alumni Social

In late summer, the Methodist Alumni Association held a social event in Peoria. The social was at Suite Fire Bar & Grill located inside the Louisville Slugger Sports Complex, just down the road from Methodist College. Alumni from the 1960's to 2000's attended the event. Methodist College Chancellor Dr. James Dire welcomed alumni and provided an update about the college. The group then enjoyed appetizers of pinwheel sandwiches, barbecue chicken bites, vegetables, and delicious brownies. Each attendee left with an alumni association glass mug. Throughout the event alumni shared stories and compared healthcare past and present.



Thank you to the alumni and staff who attended this year's social event. If you are interested in hosting an alumni social in your area or future events, please contact the alumni office at msmith@methodistcol.edu or (309) 672-5598.

Pictured are **Mary Driscoll '82**, **Shelley Riney '80**, and **Beth Reynolds '80**.

2020 Alumni Reunion -Saturday, September 26

Methodist College in Peoria, Illinois
Save the Date arriving in mailboxes soon!

Class Notes - Share Your News

Find out updates from your fellow alumni and submit your own notes. Maybe you've landed your dream job, received a promotion, earned an advanced degree, married, or had a child - submit those milestones to msmith@methodistcol.edu. Please include your graduation year, major, and limit notes to less than three sentences. You may submit a photo but photos may not be printed due to space limitations and photo quality. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

Please keep all submissions to those within the past year. We'll kick off the first Class Notes section with updates from the Alumni Board.

Nikita Thomas '09 MSN '19, graduated from Methodist College with her Masters of Science in Nursing in 2019. Nikita also welcomed a baby in February 2019.

Abby Ault '11 received the 25 Women in Leadership Award from WEEK. Abby serves as the Director of Patient Services at Illinois Eye Center. She is responsible for the day-to-day operations of clinical, surgical, research, optical, and scheduling departments. She has added new providers and is instrumental in the expansion of multiple locations. Abby mentors and encourages staff, demonstrating leadership daily. Abby currently serves as President of the Methodist Alumni Association.

Debra Eagan '13 received the DAISY Award in 2019. She received the award while working in surgical at UnityPoint Health - Pekin Hospital. This was Deb's second DAISY Award!

Bobby Lucia '15 graduated from the Doctor of Nursing Practice-Family Nurse Practitioner Program at Bradley University in August 2019. Bobby is an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse at OSF Urgent Care. He is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at University of Illinois College of Medicine Peoria, Adjunct Instructor at Methodist College, and Adjunct Instructor at Bradley University.

Alumni Board Nominations

The Methodist Alumni Association is continuing to seek new board members. Do you have an interest in giving back to fellow alumni and future alumni? Consider joining the Methodist Alumni Association Board. The board is a great way to stay connected to your alma mater. The Methodist Alumni Association continues to grow in membership and offerings for alumni. The board organizes the annual alumni reunion, social gatherings, and events to benefit current Methodist College students.

The Alumni Board meets monthly, typically the second Tuesday at 5:30 p.m., at Methodist College in Peoria. For more information, please email Meghan Smith, Alumni Relations and Communications Coordinator at msmith@methodistCOL.edu.





Welcome to the Alumni Association!

Above: Methodist College celebrated graduates on May 18, 2019. The spring 2019 class included 71 Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates, four Bachelor of Science in Health Science graduates, and four Medical Assistant Certificate graduates. The commencement speaker was **Andrea Parker '84**, Executive Director of the Hult Center for Healthy Living.

Below: On December 14, 2019, commencement celebrated fall and summer graduates. The fall 2019 class included 82 Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates, one Bachelor of Science in Health Science graduate, and four Medical Assistant Certificate graduates. The summer 2019 class welcomed 10 Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates, two Bachelor of Science in Health Science graduates, three Master of Science in Nursing graduates, and three Medical Assistant Certificate graduates. The commencement speaker was Dr. Gary Knepp, retired Vice President, Chief Medical Officer/Chief Quality Officer at UnityPoint Health-Central Illinois.





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Did You Know?



Professional nurses must be prepared to respond to the ever-changing demands of today's healthcare environment. The Methodist College graduate program offers several options for individuals to earn a Master of Science in Nursing with curriculum designed to meet the student's goals, whether it is to learn and grow in their current job or to pursue doctoral studies.

Methodist College has a Graduate School

Master of Science in Nursing - Generalist

Master of Science in Nursing - Nurse Educator

Master of Science in Nursing - Nurse Leader
Executive

Master of Science in Nursing - Prelicensure

MethodistCOL.edu/graduate-school