

# DIMENSIONS

Winter 2020/2021

MethodistCOL.edu

Reunion

Celebrating  
120 Years!

Alumni Award



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# Chancellor's Letter

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Greetings!

I am Tracy Poelvoorde and I am the Interim Chancellor of Methodist College. I was appointed to this position on November 23, 2020. I am delighted to serve Methodist College in this capacity. I am a registered nurse and when practicing at the bedside I specialized in neonatal intensive care and neonatal flight nursing. Much of my bedside practice occurred in Wyoming and Idaho. I hold a PhD in Nursing Education from the University of Northern Colorado. I transitioned from direct patient care to nursing and health science education 24 years ago. I live on a hobby farm with my husband, two Border Collies, and five female (nanny) goats.

“May you live in interesting times” is an English expression that is often proclaimed to be the translation of a Chinese curse. If you have never heard this saying, it is often used with the intent of expressing irony. Whatever the origin of this phrase, it seems apropos to the year 2020. COVID-19 has certainly created interesting times. As a newcomer on the Methodist College campus I have observed the great care and the extraordinary measures taken to ensure our college students, faculty, staff, and external community are in the safest environment possible when on campus. Faculty and staff have implemented safety measures to mitigate the effects of this novel coronavirus based on science and best practices. The faculty and staff of Methodist College role model these safe practices daily and our students recognize the importance of these precautions within the clinical practice setting as well as on the college campus.

Methodist College reached an exciting milestone in 2020. The college celebrated its 120-year anniversary this year! Our College has been a part of this community since the year 1900! This rich legacy of graduating well-educated nurses and health science professionals for our community and beyond continues at Methodist College. A striking aspect of the 21st century Methodist College is the commitment faculty and staff display for addressing the health care needs of the Peoria community. Faculty and staff actively engage in the development and implementation of new and much needed degree and certificate programs based on the needs of our community. I encourage you to visit the Methodist College website, [www.methodistcol.edu](http://www.methodistcol.edu) to see all of the wonderful program offerings of the College.

I wish all alumni of Methodist College a blessed New Year.

Be Safe and Be Well,

Tracy L. Poelvoorde, PhD, RN  
Interim Chancellor

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On the cover: Top row, left to right - May Charlesworth Mowery, first graduate; early 1900's image of Methodist Hospital from a postcard; students in front of Helen House. Middle Row - Class of 1959 Senior Class Officers; Ruth Willson Bunchman '37, she passed away in late 2019 and was our oldest living alum at the time; Cadet Nurses 1945; Pinning ceremony in 1968. Bottom row - Nelda Carroll; students studying in Crestlawn library in 1953. All photos from archives.

# A Note from the Alumni Association President



Welcome to the Methodist Alumni Association. This year marks the 120th year since the founding of the first nursing program at Methodist. It was the Deaconess Hospital School of Nursing and the first graduating class was in 1902. What do you think the founders would think today if they could tour the hospital and look at the advancements of the college? We have now expanded into a full health sciences college with the recent addition of the Medical and Life Sciences degree, which will produce future providers of care.

The purpose of the Alumni Board is to support and mentor future graduates; to promote a strong relationship between alumni and Methodist College; advance the needs of alumni; achieve the college goal to support and engage our alumni; and lastly, develop an awareness of Methodist College history, accomplishments, programs, and offerings.

Each year, the Methodist Alumni Association engages with students in back to school events to kick-off a new school year. We offer students an alumni roundtable event, providing an opportunity to interview alumni about their careers. We also host a luncheon for graduating seniors and provide a small gift, usually an Alumni Association travel mug, and encourage them to become active in the Alumni Association. Last year, we hosted an Alumni Social at the Louisville Slugger Complex, where we enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and fellowship. We hope to continue these events in the future. So much more can be done with your help! As you also know with the pandemic, we had to put many events on hold this year.

Each year we graduate over 100 students between the two semesters. These are healthcare professionals ready to start their careers and I encourage them to not forget from whence they came, a springboard for great things as many of you know.

In the past year, we've had alumni create scholarships for students, and families creating memorial scholarships for beloved alumni. Recently, the Methodist College library received a grant from the Illinois State Library to digitize our history. Our librarian gathered many pieces of history of the college and worked diligently to preserve many donated items and memorabilia. In 2019, I was asked to present on the history of nursing and Methodist College as part of this project. As an alumni, I was honored to provide this information. If you have historical items to donate, reach out to the Alumni Office.

I want to leave you with one thought, this was the end of my speech to the graduating class this year and I believe we can all be a part of this revolution.

The word ALUMNI means a graduate or former student. I believe it means:

**A**chievement: Remember all that you have achieved and where you were when it all began.

**L**ifetime: This commitment is for a lifetime.

**U**timize: Use your resources within this college to assist you wherever that is needed.

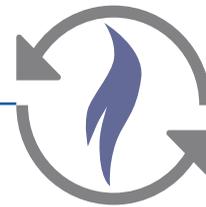
**M**entor: Take time to mentor students.

**N**ame Drop: Remember Methodist College when you are asked where you went to school, you've done great!

**I**nspire: Inspire those you meet and care for to go for their dreams as you did.

Shelley Riney '80  
Methodist Alumni Association President

# Virtual Alumni Reunion 2020



## Class of 1970 Celebration

The 2020 Methodist Alumni Reunion went virtual this year! The Methodist Alumni Association and Methodist College community would prefer to see alumni in person, but ensuring your health and safety is the top priority. If you haven't had the opportunity, please watch the 2020 Methodist Alumni Reunion Video at [www.MethodistCOL.edu/news-and-events](http://www.MethodistCOL.edu/news-and-events).

The reunion didn't happen in person but the Methodist Alumni Office and the Class of 1970 spent time planning the event. As we started the planning process, we knew an in-person reunion was not going to be a possibility due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we wanted to honor the Class of 1970 on their 50-year achievement. We switched gears and began planning a virtual event. In some ways, the planning process didn't change. We were still planning to provide the same content in a different format.



**Left to Right: Sandra Schepke '70; Meghan Smith, Alumni Relations and Communications Coordinator; Mary Hunsley '70 in her school uniform.**

The committee from the 50-year class was much smaller and did not meet as frequently this year. Thank you to Mary Hunsley and Sandra Schepke for leading the 50-year class celebration. As we celebrated their 50 years by reconnecting with classmates, we also shared in great sadness at the loss of a classmate. Barbara Boyd from the Class of 1970 was able to attend the first meeting but sadly passed away in August. We are grateful for the time spent with Barb to plan the reunion and we continue to keep her family and classmates in our thoughts. Since graduation in 1970, the class has lost five additional classmates. Please watch the video for a touching remembrance from the class.

The 50-year class also wanted to continue the tradition of creating a memory book. The memory book is comprised of favorite memories from the 50-year class and updates about their lives post-graduation. Mary and Sandy share a few of these memories, including the school uniform, in the alumni reunion video. The memory book, a commemorative charm, and a small gift was sent to those 1970 class members who responded to the communications.

In the video you will also hear an update from the then Chancellor, explaining how Methodist College went virtual during the pandemic and the college's future. The conclusion of the video features Methodist Alumni Association President Shelley Riney '80, as she shares updates from the Methodist Alumni Association. We also welcome Shelley as Alumni Board President, and thank previous president Abby Ault '11 for her many years of service to the board.

We thank all of our alumni for watching the reunion video and your continued support of the Methodist Alumni Association. Through your support, the Alumni Association provides programming for alumni and students.

**In the next edition of Dimensions we'll recap 2020 and the pandemic.  
If you have a story idea to share, please contact Meghan Smith at [msmith@methodistcol.edu](mailto:msmith@methodistcol.edu).**

# Distinguished Alumna of the Year!

Each year, the Alumni Awards are held in conjunction with the Alumni Reunion Luncheon. With the reunion cancellation, the Alumni Board still felt it important to recognize an outstanding alum, especially this year. The alumni award is presented to an alum who demonstrates the values of the Methodist Alumni Association.

The Distinguished Alumna of the Year Award was presented to Jenifer Patton, Class of 1999. Jenifer completed the nursing program at Methodist and went on to complete an Associate in Arts degree and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). She earned a 4.0 GPA while working towards her bachelor's degree. She was involved in numerous student organizations at Methodist. After graduation, she continued to stay involved in career organizations and her alma maters. In addition to the Methodist Distinguished Alumna of the Year Award, she has been recognized for her dedication and volunteerism.

During Jenifer's time at Methodist, she served as Secretary of the Yearbook Committee, Library Committee Chairperson for Student Government, Vice-President of Student Government, and Social Committee Chairperson. She was even selected to be a delegate to the National Student Nurse's Convention in Arizona. Jenifer continued her involvement while earning her BSN at Illinois State University Mennonite College of Nursing. There she served on the executive board of the Golden Key International Honor Society, Curriculum Committee Chairperson, Student Nurse Association member, Senior Student Alumni Representative for Student Nurse Association, and many other school and community organizations. She serves as a Director on the Mennonite Nurses Alumni Organization Board, previously serving six years as President.



Jenifer's hard work has earned her recognition on the National Dean's List, Red Tassel Chapter of Mortar Board, and RN/BSN sequence track class speaker for graduation in 2004 at Illinois State University. Upon graduation, she was awarded the Geriatric Nursing Excellence Award in Clinical Practice. In 2018, Jenifer received the Mennonite Nursing Alumni Organization at Illinois State University Service Award. Jenifer is also a member of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

Jenifer began her career as staff nurse on a medical/oncology unit at OSF Saint Joseph Medical Center then as an office nurse at an asthma, allergy, and immunology specialty office with Dr. Anjuli Nayak. She continued on becoming a wound clinic nurse at BroMenn Wound Healing Center, a charge nurse at Martin Health Care Center, and nurse case manager at Midwest Regional Pain Center - all in the Bloomington/Normal, Illinois area. She is currently a Gastroenterology and Infection Control Nurse at Premier Medical Group in Normal, Illinois. Jenifer has also volunteered at the Community Health Care Clinic in

Normal, Illinois.

Jenifer says, "The nursing instructors and staff at Methodist equipped me with a strong foundation that contributed to my successes as a professional nurse. As Mother Teresa once said 'I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot, together we can do great things.'"

The Methodist Alumni Association is proud of Jenifer's accomplishments throughout her career. Congratulations to Jenifer Patton, Distinguished Alumna of the Year!

Top photo: Jenifer Patton with the Distinguished Alumna of the Year Award.  
Bottom photo: Jenifer's Methodist graduation photo.

# Medical & Life Sciences Degree Launches

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Methodist College is expanding on its mission to educate healthcare professionals and is rolling out a new Bachelor of Science in Medical and Life Sciences degree. A team of administrators and faculty designed the new baccalaureate program to provide preparatory education in the areas of Biology, Pre-Medicine, Pre-Dentistry, Pre-Pharmacy, and Pre-Physician Assistant. The college designed the program to meet the needs of employers to recruit medical providers locally to stay and practice in Central Illinois.

“We know that local students leave the Peoria area to be educated in pre-professional programs and subsequently pursue careers in communities outside of the region,” said Methodist College Dean of Arts and Sciences Dr. Eileen Setti. “Our goal is that through this program, students will be introduced to the many health career opportunities in our region, and they will want to return to practice after they obtain their advanced degrees. We are creating a pathway to regional institutions like the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Peoria. We are ‘growing our own’ healthcare professionals to serve our communities right here in Central Illinois.”



Students will be able to start at Methodist College directly from high school, or be admitted with approved transfer credits from other accredited colleges and universities. Methodist College will be partnering with community colleges to develop articulation agreements that will streamline the transfer opportunities for students who choose to start their higher education at a community college.

“This new degree fits perfectly in our growing portfolio of academic programs,” added Setti. “For more than one hundred years, the college has successfully supplied the region with outstanding nursing professionals. More recently, the college has expanded degree programs to include Healthcare Management, Social Work, Medical Assistant, and Nurse Assistant. These new programs are steadily growing and provide new professionals to the healthcare and human service labor force.”

As alumni, if you know of someone interested in a Medical and Life Sciences degree tell those interested to visit the college’s website at [www.MethodistCOL.edu/medical-and-life-sciences](http://www.MethodistCOL.edu/medical-and-life-sciences).

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***Celebrating 120 Years, continued from back cover*** - Students also wore uniforms which included a white cap. The uniform went through a series of changes. What began as a white long sleeve dress, became a blue and white check pattern with an apron then to a stripe pattern wash-and-wear material. The first short-sleeve uniform was introduced in 1922 and the first pantsuit-style was allowed in 1972. Throughout the years there was the “White Cap Chorus” and “The Nightingalers” band. The “Stethoscope” served as a student newsletter and the “Premier” and “Quatrefoil” were names for yearbooks. Student Government was established in 1949.

From expansion and new buildings to student activities and moving up days, Methodist has always provided the best education to students. Our history and alumni have built a strong foundation for what is now a premier healthcare college with multiple bachelor degree programs, certificate programs, and Master in Nursing program.

# Class Notes

**Shelley Riney '80** was promoted to rank of Assistant Professor of Nursing at Methodist College. Shelley also became President of the Methodist Alumni Association.

**Lori Wagner '89** was promoted to rank of Associate Professor of Nursing at Methodist College. Lori was also named Chair of Graduate and Second-Degree Nursing programs in January of 2020. She previously served as Director of the RN to BSN program.

**Brenda Mutchler '98** was promoted to rank of Assistant Professor of Nursing at Methodist College.

**Lori David '14** graduated from OSF with her DNP - Leadership in 2019. She is a Quality Leader and Kaizen Coach in the Emergency Department at the University of North Carolina Medical Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

# In Memory

**June Carlson '41**, January 27, Peoria

**Barbara Boyd '70**, August 24, Peoria

**Barbara Bughman '55**, October 22, Streator, Ill.

**Amy Jones '80**, December 1, Springfield, Ill.

Submit your good news and achievements within the past year for Class Notes. Please include graduation year, major, and limit notes to two sentences. Submissions may be edited due to space limitations.

In Memory, remembers those who have passed away within the last year. This is the first edition, this is not a cumulative list of alumni we have lost in this past year.

If you have updates for Class Notes or In Memory, please send submissions to [msmith@methodistcol.edu](mailto:msmith@methodistcol.edu).

## Methodist Alumni Association Board

Shelley Riney '80  
President

Jonathon Meyer '16  
Vice President

Lisa Gillespie '94  
Secretary

### At-Large Board Members:

Abby Ault '11

Angela Erickson '15

Jodi Huffman-Frazeo '14, MSN '18

John Cation '16

Darren Erickson '20

Bobby Lucia '15

Nikita Thomas '09, MSN '19

Wilma Christiansen '57

Mollie Fuller '19

Lisa Preston '94

Stephanie Whitman '15

Deb Eagan '13

Kayla Holtke '16

Jennifer Smith '67





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## Did You Know?



## Methodist College is celebrating 120 years!

In 1900, the Deaconess Home and Hospital opened in Peoria, Illinois. A small hospital and nurses training school was founded by three Deaconesses of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The original property at 221 N. Glen Oak Avenue, on the bluff overlooking the Illinois River, was purchased from Mrs. Lydia Bradley. The original training was for two years and students had to be over 21 years of age. Each student received a monthly stipend of four dollars per month the first year and five dollars per month the second year. This continued for several years until tuition was charged. In 1902, the first five students graduated, May Charlesworth Mowrey became the first alum.

As the hospital and school grew, new buildings were established. By 1968, Methodist Hospital had 640 beds. In 1973, more expansion plans were announced including demolition of Heidrich Hall, home to the School of Nursing. The school was moved to another building. Throughout the years, student nurses lived in a variety of dormitories, one of the most memorable to current alumni being Helen House. Helen House was developed by an initial gift from an anonymous donor and named in honor of a family member of the donor. Helen House even had a tunnel leading to the hospital. Each dormitory had a housemother who was an important part of student life. The housemother took messages, welcomed visitors, and assisted students. They would also make sure students were studying in the evening and not getting into trouble, though we've heard stories of alumni playing practical jokes on the housemothers. Continued on page 5...