

Mercy College instructor proves that **laughter really is the best medicine ... for students**

One might be surprised to walk into a classroom at Mercy College on the day students are taking an important exam and find the entire room filled with laughter, but that is exactly the case with Professor Luanne Kaiser and her students.

Luanne Kaiser, RN, PhDc, Assistant Professor at Mercy College and Advisor for the College's RN to BSN Completion Program, started teaching in 2002, and has been in nursing for 45 years.

"I had worked in just about every area in the hospital setting, the military, etc. – in other words, I'd been around the block and back," Professor Kaiser said. "But, I had never taught in a classroom before, and I was amazed at the students' test anxiety. As their instructor, I felt like their 'professorial enemy.' As I had been a cheerleader

in my day, I wanted to do something positive and upbeat to show them I was rooting for them. I wanted to help. So I started out by asking them to stand up and then led them in stretching and breathing exercises. At the end, we'd do an Army style 'hoo-ah!' I kept doing this and added a positive affirmation at the end, having them yell at the top of their lungs, 'I will pass this exam!' and we'd repeat this again and again until I was satisfied that they meant it, and when I saw they were relaxed and laughing their heads off, we'd proceed to take the exam."

The breathing exercises Professor Kaiser introduced evolved into laughter-breathing, and when she decided to pursue her PhD, chose to do her dissertation on "Laughter-Breathing as an intervention to reduce student test anxiety."



"I'd heard of a joyologist named **Steve Wilson**, who is also a psychologist," Professor Kaiser said. "I took his certification course, 'How to Create Therapeutic Laughter' Positive Activity Interventions, and became a Certified Laughter Leader. I brought what

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Employee Spotlight: **Christopher Gibbons, MBA, RT(R)**

Christopher Gibbons, MBA, RT(R), Program Chair, BS-Medical Imaging, actually began his professional life

in finance and banking after earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from The Ohio State University, but after more than a decade he felt the need to make a significant change.

"I enjoyed what I was doing, but I wanted to do something more meaningful," he said. "So, my wife and I discussed it and agreed we'd both leave our jobs. We did volunteer work overseas for six months with Earth Watch and Wildlife Friends of Thailand. After returning home, it was time to get back to work. I wanted a career that blended my interests of technology and something meaningful on a human level. Influenced by the fact that my wife, mother and best

friend were all registered nurses, and I'd been surrounded by people in the healthcare field my whole life, I did some research and quickly found Radiologic Technology. It was a perfect fit for what I wanted. That brought me to Mercy College for an associate degree."

Chris said he really enjoyed his educational experience at Mercy, noting the College's small size and delivery on its promise of personal attention.

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Alumni Spotlight: Irene Held Brooks, RN



2012 Distinguished Graduate Award recipient Irene Held Brooks, RN, MEd, CDE

When **Irene Held Brooks, RN, MEd, CDE**, began her nursing education 53 years ago at the Mercy School of Nursing, she never imagined she would one day become a pioneer in providing diabetes education for patients in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. But that is exactly what she went on to do. For her efforts, Ms. Brooks was the recipient of one of five Healthcare Heroes awards, presented on June 29, 2011. This award recognizes the extraordinary contributions healthcare makes to the quality of life in our region. Irene was honored as a registered nurse, medical educator and Certified Diabetes Educator.

"I am in front of you all tonight to recognize a Healthcare Hero who has been instrumental in fighting diabetes and educating and improving the lives of children and adults diagnosed with this very difficult and sometimes very debilitating disease," said **Crystal Ellis** as he introduced Ms. Brooks at last summer's Healthcare Heroes awards presentation. "Irene has devoted over forty years of her life to this cause and was an integral part in what many consider to be the first organized diabetes

team in Northwest Ohio. Irene's expertise and passion for the care of those with diabetes has resulted in the establishment of numerous diabetes related programs, such as summer day camps, adult diabetes support groups and even a diabetes telephone hotline. To say that Irene Brooks has championed the cause to treat diabetes and improve the quality of life of those living with the disease would be an understatement."

Ms. Brooks noted that when she chose to pursue a career in nursing, she knew she was poised to make a dramatic change in her life.

"Most women in those days didn't even go away to school," she said. "I grew up on a little farm near Edon, Ohio. For some reason, I decided I wanted to be a nurse, and I wrote to Sr. Caroline at Mercy and asked for an interview when I was a junior in high school. I had my interview and Sr. Caroline told me to take the pre-entrance exam, and I was accepted. Today, I give a lot of credit to the Sisters of Mercy - I thank them whenever I see them and let them know what a wonderful thing they've done for all of us women who trained with them. Nursing has been a wonderful career for me."

Upon her graduation from the Mercy School of Nursing, Ms. Brooks started out working as a staff nurse on the night shift on the Men's Ward at the former Mercy Hospital.

"Then I went to the Ohio State University Hospital, where having attended Mercy School of Nursing was a feather in my cap," Ms. Brooks said. "The doctors and residents there would say, 'We can tell you are from a three-year school because you know what you're doing.' Mercy really prepared us to go out and be the best we could be.

"After two or three years there, I moved back to Toledo and became a practical nurse instructor for a few years. I started working on a bachelor of science at the University of Toledo. I went part-time to school while I continued working at Mercy. I worked with **Dr. John F. Brunner** to start the diabetes program in 1972. Mercy was very good about letting us try something that was new at the time. We just took off with it, and my whole career has been in diabetes ever since then. We had a great team to work with, and I was grateful for the opportunity to work together and achieve our goals."

Ms. Brooks notes that while she had never planned a career in diabetes, she is grateful that the opportunity found her.

"At the time I applied for a position as a nurse in the area of diabetes management, I was looking for a full-time job, and Mercy was looking for someone to dedicate themselves to the role full-time and take things to the next level - it was really a matter of being in the right place at the right time as opposed to a specific clinical interest on my part," said Ms. Brooks, who now works at the Pharmacy Counter. "But I quickly saw the opportunity to make a difference in the field. Many diabetics would be hospitalized for seven to 10 days at a time back then. There was no education, and people had no idea how to manage their disease. I now feel that God was really looking out for me because I have really enjoyed this career. I feel very blessed that I was available when Dr. Brunner and Mercy decided to redirect their diabetes program - things just fell into place for me and while I never imagined I'd be doing this, it has turned out to be the career of my dreams."

Almost one hundred forty alumni and guests attended the annual reunion on Thursday, **May 31**. Special recognition was given to those celebrating their sixtieth, fiftieth, fortieth, and twenty-fifth anniversaries of graduation from Mercy School of Nursing. **Irene Held Brooks**, class of 1962, received the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Alumni Reunion Banquet



Six members of the class of 1952 gathered to celebrate their 60th anniversary



"I know you!" Two classmates from the class of 1962 enjoy a good memory.



President Hayward presents the Distinguished Alumni Award to Irene Held Brooks, class of 1962



Class of 1962, celebrating 50 years

FRIDAY, **MAY 18**, 2012

Sounds of Spring

Pat McConnell and D. Ellen Critchley,
Toledo Symphony Orchestra



Ron and Robin Rimelspach



Bob Savage, Jeff and Kathy Bixler, and Sue Savage



Lucille Regueyra, John
and Jeanie Hayward,
with Dr. Frank Regueyra



Scholarship recipient Mallory Gilmore
with her grandmother and Auxiliary
Board Member Carol Berman



Hal and Debbie Schultz



Employee Accomplishments

Both **Cindy Lipman** and **Kim Johnston**, faculty members in the Nursing Division, have earned the CNE (Certified Nurse Educator) credential.

Professor **Luanne Kaiser** gave three presentations on "Laughter Therapy" in Youngstown to the HMHP hospitals for Nurses Week.

BSN Faculty Member **Gail Odneal** presented "Starting an Educational Project in Belize" at the Spring Leadership Awards Program of the Northwest Ohio Nurses Association. Three Mercy Nursing students were also honored with Leadership Awards: ASN - **Renee Hertzfeld**, BSN - **Anna Frey** and RN to BSN - **David Miller**.

Dr. Maria Nowicki, Associate Dean, Nursing, was appointed by the Board of Commissioners of the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) to serve on the Appeal Panels for a three year term.

Sister Sally Bohnett, SND, was chairperson of the Toledo Multifaith Council's 2012 annual MultiFaith Picnic on May 20th. Rep. Marcy Kaptur was in attendance to present Congressional appreciation certificates to the city's "Heroes of Compassion."

Jennifer Pizio, Associate Dean of Students, presented "A Division of Student Formation: A Mosaic Model" at the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) annual conference in February.

Megan Gray, former Testing Center Assistant and Interim Director of Career Services has been appointed permanent Director of Career Services.

Wendy Nathan, Director of Counseling has been elected Chair of the Northwest Ohio College Counselor's Association.

Dave Crafts, Director of Student Life, has been elected to the Board of the Toledo Uptown Association.

Dr. Shelly McCoy Grissom presented "An Examination of a Woman's Life Work: Laura Smith Haviland, the Underground Railroad and the Raisin Institute" for the Friends of the Lathrop House and Toledo Metroparks on March 6, 2012.

Short Term Education Staff **Cheri Nutter**, **Jen Skeldon** and **Leslie Erwin** attended the Ohio Continuing Higher Education Association, March 8 and 9, 2012 where they presented "Measuring Program Satisfaction Using a Mid-Semester Student Survey."

Bill Taylor, Program Lead for Polysomnographic Technology, has become a site visitor for CoA-PSG and has recently been awarded National Sleep Achievement Award honors, June 2012.

Short Term Education Staff **Cheri Nutter** and **Nancy Kovacs** have been selected to review a new phlebotomy text: *Phlebotomy: A Competency-Based Approach*, 3rd edition by Kathryn Booth and Lillian Mundt.

On June 11, 2012, **Chris Gibbons, M.B.A., R.T. (R)(CT)**, Bachelor of Science in Medical Imaging Program Chair, successfully completed the advanced certification examination in Computed Tomography (CT), administered by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT).

Science Division members **Drs. Bier, Baiz, Dalwalla, Morrison-Ritchey, Sucheck**, and **Sigmon** served as judges for Mercy College sponsored awards at the Northwest District Science Fair where they awarded two awards at the high school level and two awards at the junior high level for the 'Best Projects in Health and Biology.'

Kroger Rewards Renewal Time



Shop at Kroger and earn dollars for Mercy College at no cost to you. However, even if you are currently registered, you must re-register every April. Simply go online to www.krogercommunityrewards.com to sign up and pick Mercy College as your charity of choice. If you need assistance, please call 419-251-1794.



Laura Roether, Development Officer of the United Way of Greater Toledo, presented **John Hayward** a certificate of appreciation for Mercy College's participation in the United Way Campaign. Donations from 58 employees totaled \$14,838 and accounted for 17% of the Mercy St. Vincent Medical Center's United Way campaign. The college had both a higher average donation amount and a greater percentage of employees participate compared to the rest of Mercy.

Laughter, continued from page 1

I'd learned to campus and started doing laughter interventions, which I tied into my dissertation work. I came up with this 'ho-hee-ha' laughter-breathing method in which we'd go 'ho-ho-ho' as we inhaled up, 'hee-hee-hee' mid breath, and 'ha-ha-ha' as we exhaled, until we were all exhausted and laughing. I would split the class up into groups of ho's and hee's and ha's for competition. Then we'd finish with a positive affirmation. This evolved into doing workshops - it started with some area churches and even led to a presentation at the Critical Care Nurses Association meeting at the Seagate Center."



Professor Kaiser also has presented this spring at St. Elizabeth's in both Boardman and Youngstown, and St. Joseph Health Center in Warren (the Humility of Mary Hospitals/CHP) for the Nurse's Week celebration. She has taken the

opportunity to combine her presentation work with recruiting for Mercy College's RN to BSN program.

"So this effort is really three-fold," Professor Kaiser said. "It serves the needs of the students, the community, and it assists the College with recruiting. I tailor my presentation for each audience. The last session I did was about "How does the body, mind and spirit respond to laughter?" I present this approach as evidence-based practice that is being accepted for its merits as an alternative therapy for stress management such as yoga, healing touch, aromatherapy. Laughter-breathing therapy has been recognized by the American Association of Holistic Nursing (AAHN), which is endorsed by the American Association of College Nurses, as an alternative therapy for stress management. Spiritually, I talk about how Jesus and the prophets in the Bible display joy and laughter. I present this as an interactive workshop, so at different intervals I have everyone stand and join me in the ho-hee-ha method and what I have learned from Steve's laughter program."

Back in the classroom, where it all began, Professor Kaiser said her approach continues to be successful with her students.

"I do this for my classes as well as other classes such as the Stress Management course," Professor Kaiser said. "It is fun, joyous and helpful, and the students really respond to it. They might feel a little silly at first, but there is little, if any negative reaction to this, and I think that is because they can see I am putting my heart into it for them and that it truly helps with their anxiety."

Gibbons, continued from page 1

"Once I graduated, I continued my education and training through a Computed Tomography (CT) Internship at Mercy St. Anne Hospital and completed my Masters in Business Administration with a specialization in health care management at the University of Findlay. This was also about the same time that I was asked to assist at Mercy College in an adjunct faculty role," Chris said. "I did that for about a year, helping out with the associate degree program, then there was talk of adding a bachelor's degree completion program, and I was selected to lead that effort. I have worked on all the phases of program development, including curriculum design and the process of receiving authorization from the Ohio Board of Regents and Higher Learning Commission."

The first cohort of students in the program began in January, and another group will start in August.

"It has been very challenging at times, but interesting and exciting work that has allowed me to grow professionally," Chris said. "I have really found the work environment here to be a refreshing change. Coming from the banking, for-profit world into the academic, not-for-profit world, I was surprised by how much more democratic the process is here. I have been amazed at and really appreciate the amount of input the College allows from faculty and staff. It is also tremendously satisfying to help students develop their professional skills to foster their own development. For me, it's about offering choices - that is what education does. I have spent enough time in hospitals to know that some healthcare workers are very frustrated, and it is often because they feel there is no opportunity for them to advance in their careers. Programs like our bachelor's degree completion programs can help them achieve their professional goals and move into the positions they want. It has been very rewarding to see that actually happen."

Beyond the professional fulfillment he has found at Mercy College, Chris said he also appreciates the support he has encountered.

"My family struggles with some serious health issues," he said. "Here at Mercy, they have been extremely caring and supportive of what we are facing at home. Working in a faith-based organization like this I have seen a level of support I wouldn't see anywhere else. **Dr. Watson** and **Dr. Loochtan** have never hesitated to offer their support. **Dr. Wheatley** and my other medical imaging colleagues have always been there with a helping hand, and to have my colleagues ask on a weekly basis how my family is doing means a lot. There is something about the cultural DNA here - it's really infused here - it permeates the entire organization. There really is a Mercy difference."

In Memoriam

October 16, 2011 **Helen Michaelson Laney**, 1959

March 1, 2012 **Christina Thomsen Gentry**, 1984

May 10, 2012 **Faith Heiman Marcinek**, 1956

May 14, 2012 **Dorothy Hicks Mandell**, 1943

Alumni News

Janet Dreier Fett, 1972, writes that she graduated from the University of Illinois as a Nurse Practitioner with a specialty in Acute Care in 1998 and currently works in a cardiology practice in Phoenix, AZ.

Jan Weller Helmick Frustaglia, 1972, shares that she recently moved from Albuquerque, NM to Tempe, AZ. She has retired from nursing, but is still certified as an occupational health nurse and a case manager. Prior to moving, she worked for the State Health Department's Health Bureau in Santa Fe. In Tempe, Jan has reconnected with Deb Schwartz DeRose, also a graduate in the class of 1972, and has enjoyed catching up on "Ohio things."

Barb Restorick, 1996, completed her Bachelor's in Nursing from Lourdes College in 2000. This fall she will be attending Wayne State University in pursuit of a Master's Degree as a Nurse Practitioner with a Psychiatry specialty.

Susan J. Stubleski, 1965, retired in May 2012. She was most recently employed at Stanford University Medical Center in California and is moving back to Ottawa Lake, MI.

Barbara Martin, 1979, was appointed as the Administrator of Mercy Children's Hospital in May. She will maintain responsibility as Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer for Mercy St. Vincent Medical Center and Mercy Children's Hospital. Ms. Martin said of her new role. "The Mercy Children's staff is incredible and we have such a dedicated team of physicians. Together, we will work to be the preferred healthcare provider for children in the community."

Join the Legacy Society

Have you remembered Mercy College of Ohio Foundation in your estate plans and not told us? We invite you to join alumni and friends who have made planned gifts on our behalf and welcome you to the Mercy College Legacy Society. Discussing your estate plans with our Advancement Office staff ensures that your gift is designated according to your wishes, and allows us to recognize you for your generosity and forethought.

For additional information on the Legacy Society, please contact **Mike Whalen**, Director of Advancement, at **419-251-1824** or **michael.whelen@mercycollege.edu**.



Let us hear from you

The Mercy College Advancement Office is here to serve you. Keep your classmates and the college informed of your achievements, career changes, honors and accomplishments through the *Mercy News*.

Your full name (include maiden if appropriate)

Graduation year (earliest degree)

Street Address

City State Zip

Is this a new address? Yes No

Do you have a seasonal address? Yes No

Street Address

City State Zip

Home phone number (include area code)

Cell phone number (include area code)

Email address

Place of employment

Please submit news of any accomplishments on a separate sheet.

Mail this form to:

Sister Barbara Davis, SC
2221 Madison Ave.
Toledo, OH 43604

You may contact her by email at **barbara.davis@mercycollege.edu** or by phone at **419-251-1704**. Updates can also be submitted from the Mercy College web site at: **mercycollege.edu/alumni_friends.php**.

Homecoming 2012

Save the Date!

Friday, September 28

Fifth Annual **Scramble for Scholarships**

Saturday, September 29

**Car Show and Family Fun Day
Mercy Block Party**

Sunday, September 30

**Alumni Mass and Brunch
Scholarship Reception**

We hope you will plan now to join us for these special weekend events!