

## Alumni Board Members

### President - Open

**Ellen Nicpon** (*Vice President*) (*Seber Fund*)  
enicpon@nycap.rr.com

**Claudia Graham** (*Treasurer*) (*Seber Fund*)  
Claudia.graham@sphp.com

**Mary Rose DeMarco** (*Secretary*)  
maryrose.demarco@gmail.com

**Christine Lutringer** (*Communications*)  
lutringerc72@gmail.com

**Mary Catherine Renna** (*Courtesy*)  
rennam0627@gmail.com

**Anne Coonrad** (*Courtesy*)

**Valerie Falzo** (*Welsh Fund*)  
valeriefalzo13@gmail.com

**Barbara Holmes** (*Welsh Fund*)  
blh3312198@hotmail.com

**Jennifer Vosburg** (*Mosley Fund*)  
vosburj@amc.edu

**Felisia Rogers** (*Belknap Fund*)  
felisia.rogersfnp@gmail.com

**Erin Berghela** (*Nominating*)  
Erin.berghela@sphp.com  
erin417@hotmail.com

## Dean of Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing

**Vicki Callagan**  
vicki.callagan@sphp.com

[www.sphp.com/samaritan-hospital-school-of-nursing-alumni-association](http://www.sphp.com/samaritan-hospital-school-of-nursing-alumni-association)

Samaritan Hospital  
School of Nursing

1300 Massachusetts Avenue  
Troy, NY 12180  
518.268.5010

## *From the* Desk of the Vice President

It doesn't seem possible that we are already into fall. Hoping all our Alumni had a good summer. The nursing Gala put on by St. Peters Health Partners in July was a wonderful gathering. While it brought 3 different schools of nursing together, Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association was well represented. Celebrating milestone anniversaries of multiple classes that have been out over 30 years was exciting. While the original brick and mortar is gone, the bond between friends was ever present. Many Alumni traveled distances to celebrate with their classmates. The Alumni would like to thank the School of Nursing for holding an "open house" that allowed fellow Alumni to see and experience the learning lab and classrooms that are used today.

We have a new Dean of the Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing that we are pleased to welcome. Vicki Cinelli-Callaghan who was a Samaritan graduate from 1982 has accepted the position. Susan Birkhead will be transitioning to retirement. We are looking forward to working with the new director and we thank Susan for all her dedication and hard work.

The Alumni association is a great opportunity for networking. We meet every other month from September through June, the second Tuesday of the month. The meetings start at 5 pm at the school of nursing, St. Mary's Campus. All Alumni are welcome and encouraged to attend. If anyone has interest in becoming a board member please reach out to myself or any board member.

Remember that our fall dinner meeting will be Wednesday November 12th at Paolo Lombardi's in West Sand Lake. Plan on attending to meet with your classmates and have some fun.

If you know of an Alumnus who does not get the newsletter or any notification, please have them reach out to us so we can re-instate them on our mailing list. We are always looking for life events that our Alumni want to share in our newsletter. We love hearing tid-bits about current work scenarios or family celebrations.

Looking forward to another exciting year!

Respectfully,

**Ellen Nicpon '08**

# Bits and Pieces

## Fall/Winter 2024

**Irene Johnson Raiche '55** writes that after graduation she joined the Navy Nurse Corps with classmates June Rock and Susan Noble. After being assigned to the Dependent hospital at Camp Lejeune she saw 3 children and wanted to be a pediatric nurse. After her tour in the Navy, she married and moved to Rockville Connecticut where she started working at a small local hospital. After establishing their first pediatric unit, she moved to Tolland Connecticut, started her family (3 children) and accepted a position as Director of School HEALTH SERVICES. She became very active in establishing policies for school nurses at the local and state level for 34 years. She is now retired and lives in an Assisted living home in Ellington Connecticut with her partner William Ward, who was husband of Janet Vitarella '55 now deceased. A lovely companionship for a widow and widower. Irene and Bill have 10 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. They are both doing well in their new "home".

## Condolences to the Families of:

- Barbara Carr '61
- Elizabeth Kolker Godfried '45
- Patricia Kurywka '66
- Kathleen Kavney Nuttall '67
- Caroline Ross Price '58
- Ruth Anne VanAmburgh

## From the Dean Emeritus



Dear Alumni,

Good-bye again! It is with mixed feelings that I head into re-retirement. It has been a wonderful year working with friends and colleagues old and new, and to be in this rewarding educational environment. But it has been taxing and I am ready for some quiet mornings, sipping coffee and reading novels. I know that the school, the students, and the faculty will thrive, and I am confident leaving the enterprise in Vicki Callagan's capable hands!

**Susan Birkhead, DNS, MPH, RN, CNE**

## From the Deans Desk

Greetings Alumni! As a proud Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing graduate of 1982, I am both excited and honored to return to the School of Nursing to serve as the Dean. I have been working all summer with Dr. Susan Birkhead, who has been a wonderful mentor. I am grateful for her support and expertise.

Over the past 43 years, I have practiced nursing in a variety of roles in medical-surgical acute care, long-term care, and in nursing education. I earned my baccalaureate degree in nursing and master's degree in nursing education at the State University of New York at Utica-Rome. I earned my doctorate in education with a concentration in health professions education at the College of St. Mary in Omaha, Nebraska.

I have learned that while much has changed since 1982, some things remain tried and true. Students no longer live on campus, have a curfew, or wear nurse's caps but the culture and the reputation of the school has not changed. The curriculum and outcomes are outstanding, and the faculty are dedicated and passionate professionals who value the success of their students.

NCLEX first time pass rates for 2023-2024 are noted in the chart below. The NCLEX administered in 2023 introduced a new test plan which included the new NCLEX Next Gen test format. The new test plan and the effects of COVID-19 on education led to an expected decline in first-time pass rates. While our 2023 RN pass rate did demonstrate a decline, it is congruent with the New York State average. The good news is that our 2024 RN rate is on the rise. The 2024 PN cohort graduated in August and has not tested yet.

	Practical Nurse Graduates		Registered Nurse Graduates	
	2023	2024	2023	2024
<b>Samaritan Hospital</b>	<b>87.5%*</b>	<b>Pending</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>100%**</b>
<b>NYS Average</b>	<b>83.8%</b>		<b>83.6%</b>	
<b>National Average</b>	<b>86.6%</b>		<b>87.7%</b>	

\*The first-time pass rate for the practical nurse graduates of 2023 is 100%. The 2023 rate reflects both these students and students from prior cohorts who tested in 2023.

\*\*This rate may be subject to change. It is reflective of students who have taken the NCLEX-RN to date. We await the results of 4 additional graduates. I will provide an update soon.

August brought the return of students to campus, and I am excited to report at a time when we need nurses more than ever, our 2025 Practical Nurse cohort enrollment has doubled. This is due largely to the dedicated work of our Student Services staff under the leadership of Angela Cox, Dean of Students.

Finally, I am pleased to share that with grant funding we will be expanding our Practical Nurse program to include a remote cohort that will serve an area with limited practical nurse education opportunities. These students will attend class taught on our Samaritan campus from a remote location. Last week we received program approval from the New York State Education Department and the inaugural cohort will be seated in August 2025. There is a lot of work to be done in the coming months and I will keep you posted.

I look forward to meeting you at the Alumni dinner and sharing more updates and news about Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing.

**Vicki Callagan Edd RN '82**

# History of the Samaritan School of Nursing Cap Sabre



The Sabre has been a unique tradition with the nursing cap of Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing for many, many years. Its original purpose was twofold: 1) To hold the cap together once it was folded and 2) To keep the cap securely on the head by inserting the Sabre through the hair. Eventually, the sole function of the Sabre became to hold the cap together once folded.

Perhaps in the last twenty years, with the advancement of all the technology that has become an integral part of both medicine and nursing care, the “nurses cap” has virtually become extinct and is now (for the most part) being used only for formal ceremonies such as Capping and Graduation. As a result the Sabre is no longer used with the cap and has gone the way of the dodo, many recent graduates knowing nothing of its former existence.

In the interest of rekindling the history and tradition, the Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association has arranged for the “Sabre Pin” (which was introduced during the Centennial Celebration of Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing) to be available for purchase. Measuring 2” long, and made of solid sterling silver, it is available at the current market value price of \$35.00.

The “Original Sabre” used for the cap is in the process of being recreated for purchase and the price will be forthcoming.

If you would like to time travel and honor this traditional history, orders for the “Sabre Pin” will be taken at the November Alumni Dinner meeting or contact Valerie Falzo at the email address, [valeriefalzorn@gmail.com](mailto:valeriefalzorn@gmail.com). All orders require payment at the time of placing the order.

# Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association Fall Dinner Meeting

- When:** Tuesday, November 12th, 2024
- Where:** Paolo Lombardi’s Ristorante, 104 West Sand Lake Road, (Rt 150), Wynantskill, NY
- Time:** 5:00 PM
- Guest Speaker:** Barbara McHale RN,BS,OCN,CBCN
- Topic:** Nurse Navigator Role
- Program:** 5:00 PM gathering (Cash Bar)  
6:00 PM Dinner  
7:00 PM Aumni/Foundation Meeting
- Dinner Choices:** Pan Seared Chicken (with white button mushrooms and Marsala wine sauce)  
Tender Cubes of Veal (simmered in marina sauce with red and green peppers)  
Fillet of Haddock (with seasoned bread crumbs and finished in a lemon butter sauce)

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## Dinner Meeting Reservation

Please return reservation with \$20.00 (member) or \$25.00 (non-member) with the fee payable to Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association, Inc by Thursday, November 7, 2024.

If you are a student and have an interest in attending, there is a fee of \$10 per person.

**Mail to:**  
Claudia Graham, 1 Bridge Rd., Menands, NY 12204

All reservations must be honored. If a cancellation is required, please contact Claudia Graham at [Claudia.Graham@sphp.com](mailto:Claudia.Graham@sphp.com). If anyone has a topic they would like to see presented at an Alumni meeting, please contact Claudia Graham or another Board Member.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Chicken    \_\_\_\_\_ Veal    \_\_\_\_\_ Haddock



# Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing

Alumni Association, Inc.

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310 South Manning Blvd.  
Albany, NY 12208-1771

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## Belknap Scholarship Fund

Currently we have two applications for the Belknap Scholarship. There is still time to apply for the Belknap Scholarship while pursuing your Masters degree or Doctorate degree.

The Leora Belknap Scholarship Fund was established in 1991 as scholarship assistance for a Samaritan Graduate of the RN program of Samaritan Hospital SON who is matriculating into a Master's Level program in nursing. If you are presently an active member of the Samaritan Hospital SON Alumni Association and matriculated into a graduate level nursing program you may be eligible. This is annually disbursed in December of each year. Annual dues must be paid by January 31<sup>st</sup> of the same year to be considered for the scholarship.

Scholarship rules and applications can be found on the Samaritan Hospital SoN web site.

<https://www.sphp.com>careers>School>careers>School of Nursing>Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing>Alumni Association>.

Donations to the Belknap Fund are always welcome.

– *Felisha Rogers, Belknap Chair*

## Seber Scholarship Fund

**The William F. and Josephine H. Seber Scholarship Fund**

Fall 2023: 4 applicants, \$335.00 awards given  
Spring 2024: 5 applicants, \$250 awards given.

The William F. and Josephine H. Seber Scholarship is awarded to: Any Samaritan graduate who is a member of the Alumni in good standing. Applicant must have paid yearly dues by Jan 31<sup>st</sup> of the same year of the application OR is currently a student in the Registered Nurse Program of the Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing. Members must be matriculated into a nursing program. Applications must be received at least one month prior to the beginning of the semester. You must reapply every semester. Awards will be given out at the end of the semester. There is a lifetime total award of \$2500.

Applications may be obtained from the financial aid officer at the School of Nursing or downloaded from the Alumni/school website:

<https://www.sphp.com>careers>School of Nursing>Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing>Alumni Association>.

Donations to the Seber Fund are always welcome.

– *Claudia Graham, Treasurer and Seber Chair*