

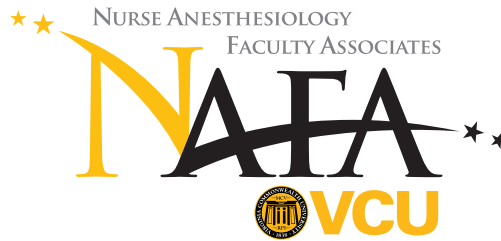


VCU

Nurse Anesthesia
College of Health Professions



FEATURING:
On the Frontlines
of COVID-19



CE FOR CRNAs 2021 MEETINGS

Locations and dates are subject to change.

Virtual options available in 2021! Learn more at www.nafa-va.org

February 3-5, 2021

Snowshoe, West Virginia

12th Annual Summit at Snowshoe

June 2-5, 2021

Hilton Head, South Carolina

35th Annual Anesthesia Seminar

March 19-21, 2021

Richmond, Virginia

Ultrasound Guided Peripheral Nerve Block Workshop

October 25-28, 2021

Williamsburg, Virginia

45th Annual Anesthesia Conference

April 3, 2021

Richmond, Virginia

Ultrasound Guided Vascular Access Workshop

November 29-December 2, 2021

Orlando, Florida

40th Annual Anesthesia Meeting



“This was definitely one of the best conferences I’ve attended in recent years. Helpful engaging staff, current topics, and pleasant accommodations all added to an overall great seminar.”

—Gerard Zappa, CRNA

VCU Alumni receive a 10% discount for NAFA conferences

Just use discount code, “VCUALUM” (not case sensitive) when registering online for a 10% alumni discount.

Register online at www.nafa-va.org



CHAIR'S UPDATE

Our Passion is Making Patient Safety Real—More Than Ever

Dear alumni and friends,

During the holiday season and always, I am reminded that peace, joy and kindness are all around us, even throughout the very difficult circumstances we, together, have endured over the past several months and beyond. The public health crisis as a result of the COVID-19 viral pandemic has challenged us in unimaginable and innumerable ways. With your support, we have been able to continue activities related to didactic instruction, clinical practice, laboratory training, research, strategic planning, and continuing education. Our success has been dependent upon an extensive amount of collaboration, resilience, flexibility, compassion, patience and understanding from graduate students, faculty, staff, administrators, clinical partners, and our alumni. Without question, COVID-19 has created distance between us, but in many ways it has brought us closer together. We have also experienced the raw emotion related to significant racial equity and social justice issues: racial justice involves our collective efforts for fair treatment, opportunities and best-possible outcomes for all people. With an honest attempt to widen our perspectives, we learn that racial equity is not just the absence of discrimination but also involves embracing the values and systems that ensure fairness and justice. We are grateful to have a strong network of support and encouragement in our alumni and friends to help us meet our challenges and enjoy our successes.

We have heard from many alumni working on the frontlines in some of the hardest hit areas across the country throughout the pandemic. In sharing their stories in our newsletter, we acknowledge all CRNAs' tireless efforts, sacrifice, and selflessness.

We remain committed to providing continuing education opportunities to our alumni, friends and NAFA customers. We held NAFAs 44th Annual Anesthesia Conference at the Williamsburg Lodge in October with over 50 CRNAs and SRNAs in attendance on site and over 30 CRNAs joining us virtually. With the recent uptick in COVID-19 cases, we are proud to offer a virtual-only format for our 39th Annual Anesthesia Meeting, regularly held at Disney's Yacht & Beach Club. We are committed to quality, value and service to CRNAs in need of continuing education credits for recertification with the NBCRNA. Visit www.nafa-va.org for more information. Revenues from your registration fees are used to enhance the nurse anesthesia workforce through education, training and scholarships.

While this year has had its challenges, it also brought a multitude of faculty and staff achievements. I am pleased to introduce Dr. Gary Hu as our new Director of Research and Global Outreach who has

hit the ground running. Dr. Nickie Damico has joined the College of Health Professions Dean's Office as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs while maintaining a significant role in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia and Amanda Alley has been promoted to Director of Admissions and Student Services. In November, Dr. Michael Fallacaro was recognized for his fundraising efforts by the MCV Foundation with the Robert Irby Award. We are fortunate to have faculty and staff honored with national appointments, grants and other notable awards. Please read more on pages 7-9.

We could not realize our goals without the generous support of our alumni and friends. Most recently, alumni Leslie Ann Jeter (MSNA, Class of 1990), and Emily (MSNA, Class of 2004) and David Lanning have made commitments for generous gifts that will be critical in our plans to meet the needs of the nurse anesthesia workforce. There are many ways to support the department in your philanthropic endeavors, including estate planning which is a wonderful way to leave your legacy. I hope you enjoy reading more about these alumni (pages 10-11), their paths to success, and why they decided to support the department in such a meaningful and tangible way.

Our relaunch of anesthesiaanonymous.org has been one of the highlights of our year. Fondly referred to as 'Ae', this web portal features a new story each month, designed to raise our awareness of the overall safety-health of the anesthesia work environment. We hope readers will learn from others to become more mindful providers. In our latest story, "Corneal Abrasion" describes a potentially painful eye injury during anesthesia. We welcome your story, submitted anonymously and void of all identifying information, to be featured on this one-of-a kind patient safety platform. Visit us online at www.anesthesiaanonymous.org to learn more!

We look forward to every opportunity to stay connected with our alumni and friends; you lay the foundation for a solid program. Every door you open for clinical education, every phone call you make to let us know about changes in the anesthesia work environment, every opportunity you give us to provide your continuing education credits, every lecture you teach, every lab you lead, and every dollar you spare to support our growth is greatly appreciated and highly valued. Thank you for your trust that we are committed to preparing competent and confident nurse anesthetists to meet our workforce needs.

Best wishes for happy holidays,

Suzanne M. Wright, Ph.D., CRNA
*Herbert T. Watson Professor and Chair
Department of Nurse Anesthesia*

Alumni Update

We miss you all! Our priority is the health and safety of each member of our community, and that includes you. Thank you for your unrelenting commitment to patient health and safety during such a challenging time and thank you for your continued dedication and support of our students. The Department of Nurse Anesthesia has been busy doing everything we can to balance student success with their safety and well-being.

A few key announcements:

- The new date for our annual Alumni event is Friday, April 16, 2021 at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. VCU has decided to cancel all in-person Spring 2021 reunion events due to COVID-19. At this time, we are unsure if we will be able to host our event (off campus) in person. Please stay tuned for updates.
- Nominations were placed on hold this spring for new Alumni Advisory Council members and are being sought now for new terms beginning January 2021.

- Please follow us on our Facebook page (facebook.com/vcunrsa) where we share timely news of alumni, students, and faculty and staff.
- Our students were on the news! Read the WTVR story at bit.ly/vcuwtvr.
- NAFA CE 2021 dates have been announced, and registration is open. Please note new virtual options to attend.
- Anesthesia eNonymous is back and better than ever! See page 9 for more information.

If you have any questions, please let us know. All our best to stay healthy and strong.

Thank you!

Heather E. Millar

Director of Development, Marketing and Communications
VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia

IN THE NEWS: Students & Alumni are COVID-19 Responders



(l. to r.) Katherine Loftus (NA-2), Rachel Barksdale (NA-2), Patrick Brown (NA-3), Patty Joyce (NA-2), and Hope Mancini (NA-2)



Katherine Hopper, DNAP, CRNA '15/'16 and Tenaja Lynch, CRNA '08



Diane L. Gardner

As shared on Channel 6 news, several of our current nurse anesthesia students accepted ICU RN positions at VCU Health to assist with the COVID surge. "These graduate students are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, a lot of them have families, and they're all critical care nurses, so they need that critical care nursing experience to even be considered to enroll," said Dr. Suzanne Wright, Chair of VCU's Nurse Anesthesia program. "I couldn't be more proud if this never happened, let alone them stepping up here."

VCU CRNA grads, Katherine Hopper, DNAP, CRNA '15/'16 and Tenaja Lynch, CRNA '08 who both work for American Anesthesiology at

Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital in Richmond, volunteered to work as NPs managing the COVID ICUs in New Jersey (30 minutes outside of NYC). Their hospital had the second highest number of cases in New Jersey.

Congratulations to VCU Nurse Anesthesia alumna Diane L. Gardner, who received the Bronze Star Medal for her extraordinary performance as a CRNA while serving as director of nursing at Kandahar Hospital in Afghanistan. Diane returned home in June 2020 from serving 10 months in Kandahar. She and her team saved the life of a Navy SEAL chief who was shot multiple times and severely injured.

Joe Biscardi's Career as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist has been a Trial by COVID-19

Joe Biscardi graduated from VCU's Nurse Anesthesia program in December 2019, took his National Certification Examination later that month (and was among the 84.3% of those who passed), got a job on Long Island in February, and was on the COVID-19 frontline just weeks later.

In mid-March, when cases began rising in the U.S., Biscardi's Nassau County hospital cancelled OR shifts and called CRNAs to the ICU (all nurse anesthesia students and CRNAs have previous critical care nursing experience). At most ICUs, the nurse-to-patient ratio is 1:2; during the first few weeks of the pandemic response, the ratio at his hospital swelled to 1:6. Biscardi was also on the rapid response team, tasked with intubating patients while in full PPE (he's remained COVID-free and tested negative for antibodies).

"Every day was total care for every patient," Biscardi recalls. Total care means patients require all bodily functions including breathing, medication, and feeding to be performed by medical professionals and equipment.

The hospital constructed two makeshift ICUs to handle the volume. After about a month of intensive ICU work, while the coronavirus is still running through New York, volume has slowed and staff — thanks to nurses and providers who have flown in from around the country — is prepared. He's returned to his normal schedule in the OR, but on occasion has to treat a COVID patient.

A Long Island native, Biscardi was originally on a business track in college. But two uncles, both physician anesthesiologists, convinced him to pursue nurse anesthesia.

"They completely changed my mind. I took one semester of business classes, then they showed me what a nurse anesthetist is, and I took it and ran with it," he says.

After college, Biscardi spent three years working as an ICU nurse before applying to

a nurse anesthesia program. He researched and applied to "the top three" programs, before selecting VCU.

"I fell in love with the faculty at VCU. I think that's why they are number 1," Biscardi says. "They just have an esteemed faculty. You could tell from walking in the door that you were going to get a good education." VCU's program has been ranked, several years going, as the top nurse anesthesia program in the nation by U.S. News & World Report.

Biscardi was part of the VCU school's first cohort for its three-year DNAP curriculum (the master's degree was phased out as of 2016). He said the program is intensely challenging and, without stress management, students can burn out quickly.

"But the faculty really do care about you," he says. "If anything is going on, personally or professionally, they work with you." He

"...VCU ... won't let you fail. They'll be there with you if you're struggling, and I felt supported there. That's ultimately what I wanted in a nurse anesthesia program."

took advantage of the program's ability to work during the first two semesters, and did online classes while working in the ICU. VCU requires students to be on-site in Richmond or one of its distance learning sites in Virginia for semesters three and four, the latter of which is the clinical training component of the program.

He points to two strong components of a VCU nurse anesthesia education.

Faculty and Clinical Rotations: "I love how they bring in faculty from all over to teach. It's not always the same person giving you information," he says. Biscardi made the most of VCU's more than 50 clinical affiliations throughout Virginia and Ohio for student rounds. "I was able to take care for pediatric patients in Ohio; went to Salem, Va. and took care of veterans; and went to U.Va. and had a great experience there," he says. "There's so much diversity in the



(l. to r.) Joe Biscardi and Kevin Pyne

communities and procedures you get to see. VCU really doesn't lack in anything."

Simulations: While Biscardi didn't get to fully experience the new College of Health Professions building in Richmond (it opened only a few months before graduation), he was able to participate in a few simulations at the department's new 3,000-square-foot Center for Research in Human Simulation.

"You really don't know how you're going to act when something goes wrong — or when a pandemic happens. But in a

simulation, you'll see how you act when you're tested by it, and in a simulation you can change it or stick with it if it works for you," he says.

As an example, he recalls department associate professor Corey Davis, Ph.D., CRNA in particular, playing the part of a hot-tempered surgeon — and making student nurse anesthetists think and react on their feet. "He really took on the role, he's a great actor," Biscardi says with a laugh. "That definitely helped out with being reactive to the environment and surroundings."

Overall, he says: "The OR can be brutal, and VCU does a good job of showing you that. VCU wants you to be excellent. They won't let you fail. They'll be there with you if you're struggling, and I felt supported there. That's ultimately what I wanted in a nurse anesthesia program."



DNAP Opens New Doors for CRNA and Entrepreneur Jean Snyder

A blog post years ago drove Jean Snyder into action. The story was about a mother whose son died during a routine surgery. "I'm going to get choked up telling you about it," Snyder recalled in a recent interview. The boy arrested on the table, the cause: the anesthesia provider used the wrong medication, and further failed to dilute it. The boy was given one-hundred times the necessary dose, had it been the proper medication in the first place.

"I can still remember my husband walking into the room while I was crying at the computer," Snyder says. "This poor mother lost a child because an anesthesia provider made an error."

She took her anger and sadness and turned it into the Error Recovery and Mitigation Aide, or ERMA. A clear box attached to the middle of a traditional needle reservoir, ERMA allows a practitioner in any high-risk area to see all the syringes and vials used during a procedure in real time through the plexiglass. They can recognize errors early, pre-disposal, and address issues faster. Once the procedure is complete, a trap door allows the waste to fall into the reservoir.

But there was a problem: Snyder had the prototype, but didn't know the next step.

Living in Williamsburg at the time, she phoned Suzanne Wright, PhD, CRNA, then a professor and now chair of the VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia. Wright encouraged Snyder to write a whitepaper on the device and get her post-master's DNAP in the process.

Snyder is a 1983 graduate of Niagara University, and earned her master's degree in nurse anesthesiology from the University at Buffalo in 1995. She graduated from VCU's post-master's DNAP program in 2016.

The DNAP, which she earned over one year of hybrid learning at VCU (meaning most

learning was done online, with three visits to the Richmond campus), has also given her more power to run her business.

After earning her licensure as a CRNA in the mid-1990s, she worked for several health systems, and in 2006 began work as an independent contractor. Realizing a business opportunity and opportunity to save clinics additional cost, the entrepreneurial bug bit, and led her to start her own practice. As co-founder of Goodwin & Snyder Anesthesia Associates PLLC, she and her business partner provide anesthesia services to

me parity. I now have a door into C-suites to talk about providing anesthesia services, or to explain the ERMA device. It's the sad truth that, in many cases, you need more than a nursing degree to get your foot in the door. The DNAP makes a difference, and gives you the credentials you need to make change happen."

She also didn't want the program to end. "I learned so much by how the VCU faculty handled themselves and how they worked with students and communicated with us," she says. "I try to mirror those

I am committed to empowering all nurses, but especially CRNAs, to be heard as subject matter experts, to be business owners, and to empower them to step into leadership positions.

three Tidewater-area ambulatory surgical centers. Their contracts supply CRNAs to the ASCs with the oversight of an on-site surgeon. (She and Howie Goodwin also own a ketamine and infusion clinic in Newport News, Ecstasy, where they treat post-traumatic stress disorder, treatment-resistant depression, and complex regional pain syndrome).

For her DNAP capstone project, Snyder further refined the ERMA and built evidence to back it up through a whitepaper that outlined the many stories of anesthesia errors that could have been prevented with such a product. The whitepaper, she said, "showed why we need ERMA."

Today, she holds a patent on the device along with her former employer. And yet, she gained much more from her DNAP experience than the evidence to back up ERMA.

"I went in thinking I would just develop ERMA and save the world," she says. "What I didn't realize is that the DNAP would give

behaviors when I work with [my peers] and employees. I have learned so much about the whole process of dealing with other people by how they dealt with other students."

In 2020, Snyder stepped into her role as president of the Virginia Association of Nurse Anesthetists, where she plans a push to build membership and member engagement and advance its legislative agenda in the General Assembly.

"Nurse anesthesia has given me so much in my life, and a career," she says. "I believe firmly in nurse anesthesia as model for the future."

Our post-master's DNAP program is designed for the working CRNA. Learn more about our hybrid learning program at VCU.

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Faculty Introductions and Accolades



Gary Hu



Harold Barnwell



Corey Davis



Bev Gay



Nicole Damico

Congratulations to our newest faculty member, **Jiale (Gary) Hu, Ph.D., RN**, Assistant Professor and Director of Research and Global Outreach in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, who was the recipient of the Sigma Omega Chapter Award of Excellence in Nursing Research this spring.

Dr. Harold Barnwell, CRNA, DNAP, Assistant Professor, and Assistant Director of Doctoral Education in the VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia, and 3rd year graduate student in the Ph.D. VCU Health Related Sciences program, was awarded a grant from the AANA Foundation for support of his dissertation research, "Perioperative Brain Health: A Quantitative Evaluation of a Novel Electroencephalogram Headset for Assessing and Tracking Neurocognition in Older Surgical Patients."

Dr. Corey Davis, Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs and **Adam Eddy**, Business Manager, worked together to receive a nurse anesthesia traineeship grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration/Department of Health and Human Services.

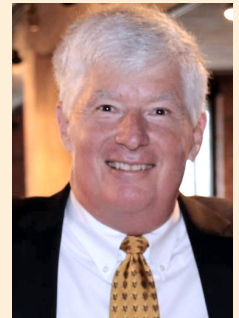
Dr. Damico, Dr. Hu and **Dr. Gay** were elected new board officers of the Gamma Omega Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International, the second-largest nursing organization in the world. Their work as new leaders along with the other well-respected committee members will help advance nursing toward a strong, growing, and vibrant future. Other board members include Secretary Bev George-Gay, Awards Committee member Jiale (Gary) Hu, and Governance Committee member Nicole Damico.

Two DNAP Faculty Receive AANA Life-Career Awards

CONGRATULATIONS to both Dr. Michael Fallacaro for receiving the AANA's Helen Lamb Award and Dr. Chuck Biddle for receiving the Agatha Hodgins Award! These special AANA awards are only given once a year and it may be the only time in the history of AANA that these two life-career awards were given to two individuals from the same program. Extremely well deserved, and we are so proud of you!

The Helen Lamb Award:

The Helen Lamb Outstanding Educator Award, established in 1980, is presented to a CRNA who has made a significant contribution to the education of nurse anesthetists. The award recognizes the individual's commitment to the profession of nurse anesthesia and to the advancement of educational standards that further the art and science of anesthesiology and result in high quality patient care. The award was established to honor of Helen Lamb (1900-1979), founder and director of Barnes School of Anesthesia in St. Louis from 1929 to 1951. She chaired the AANA Education Committee from 1931 through 1939 and established the curriculum and minimum standards for schools of nurse anesthesia. She pioneered the endotracheal technique in lung surgery and performed the anesthetic for the world's first successful pneumonectomy. Lamb served as president of the AANA from 1940 to 1942.



The Agatha Hodgins Award:

The Agatha Hodgins Award for Outstanding Accomplishment was established in 1975 to recognize individuals whose foremost dedication to excellence has furthered the art and science of nurse anesthesia.

The award was established to honor Agatha Hodgins (1877-1945), founder and first president of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists. A notable pioneer in the field of anesthesiology, Miss Hodgins was one of the first to perfect the nitrous oxide-oxygen technique of anesthesia. In 1915 she founded the influential Lakeside School of Anesthesia in Cleveland and was the visionary force in the establishment of the profession of nurse anesthetists.





International Collaboration and Research in Nurse Anesthesia

The VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia has developed and fostered the collaborations with the academic or clinical institutions in China since 2010. The faculty in the Department worked with Shanghai Ninth People's hospital to develop the first nurse anesthesia education program in China recognized by International Federation of Nurse Anesthesia (IFNA) in 2015. We supported them to renew the program for another five years in 2020. The faculty also provided consultations to Nanjing BenQ Hospital and Xuzhou University and helped them develop the IFNA recognized nurse anesthesia education programs in China. Up to now, the Department has been engaged in all the IFNA-recognized nurse anesthesia education programs in China and will continue to promote the profession of nurse anesthesia in the world.

In the fall 2019, the Department hosted four visitors from Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai University of Medicine and Health Sciences, and Shanghai Ninth People's Hospital in China. In 2020, the Department planned to accept 10 visitors from Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai Ninth People's Hospital, Xuzhou University, Tsinghua University and the Third Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou Medical University in China, two visitors from University of Ottawa in Canada, and two visitors from the University of Melbourne in Australia and the Münster School of Health University of Applied Science Münster in Germany. Due to COVID-19, these visits have been delayed. But the Department and collaborators are exploring some innovative ways to facilitate the virtual visit and enhance the exchange.

In the 2019-2020 academic year, we had, we had seven publications in peer-reviewed journals, which were produced from our

international collaborative research projects. These studies explored the best evidence of different nurse anesthesia practices, such as pre-anesthesia assessment and education, intra-anesthesia patient handover, and patient engagement. Additionally, the article introducing the Theoretical Framework of Developing International Partnerships was published in the Journal of Transcultural Nursing. The Framework was developed by the faculty in the Department and their collaborators based on general systems theory, recommendations from systematic reviews, and their ten years successful collaboration experience. The theoretical framework and real-world example provide a theoretical and empirical base that other teams can use to prepare and develop a pathway for successful international collaborations and partnership in advancing knowledge in health professions.



Yuxiao Liu, RN, MScN, PhD, Shanghai University of Medicine and Health Sciences with M. Kammerman, N. Damico and M. Fallacaro.

VCU Nurse Anesthesia Goes Global

Dr. Suzanne Wright, Dr. Michael Fallacaro, and Dr. Gary Hu presented in October to over 52,000 attendees (virtually) at the International Nurse Anesthesia Conference organized by Xuzhou Medical University (XMU) in China. XMU is the first university in China starting a degree education in nurse anesthesia. VCU Nurse Anesthesia also signed documentation with XMU during the conference for developing academic and cultural exchange “to advance the discovery of new knowledge in nurse anesthesia and nurse anesthesia education.”



Dr. Damico Leads in New Roles for CHP and VANA

Congratulations to Dr. Nicole Damico in her new role as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Health Professions! While Dr. Damico remains a valued faculty member in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia, she will join the CHP senior leadership team to provide administrative support for academic programs through collaboration with department chairs and program directors. Dr. Damico is also serving as the VANA District 5 Director this year.

Director – District 5: Nicole Damico
district5@virginiacrna.org

“As I begin my term as District 5 Director, I would like to extend a huge thank you to Tim Newell for his exceptional service over the past two years and his tireless efforts recently to ensure a smooth role transition. Over the last several weeks, Tim and I have met regularly to discuss ongoing initiatives and ideas for the near future in our district. Plans for in-person events are, of course, on hold for the time being. So, I’d say it is time for us to get creative! I’ll be reaching out soon to all District 5 CRNAs who have been involved with planning events over the past year or so to identify those we might reasonably shift to virtual offerings. I would also love to hear YOUR ideas for new virtual events to help us stay connected and keep our forward momentum going. These events can be social, business, educational, or a combination of any of the above. If you have an idea for a virtual or other offering, please share with me at district5@virginiacrna.org. I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve and hope to have the chance to see you (in-person or online) soon!”



We are excited to launch our newly rebuilt e-learning platform for anesthesia providers, featuring real patient stories from the operating room, offering lessons of how CRNAs and their teams stared down a challenge and emerged on the other side.

Check it out today! Have a story to share? You can do so — anonymously — on the site.

www.anesthesiaenonymous.org

“Thank you!”

Two Alumni Estate Gifts Will Help Future Generations

A big thank you to Emily and David Lanning, and Leslie Jeter for creating legacies in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia through estate gifts to create endowments for future generations of students.



The Lanning Family. Emily Lanning (CRNA '04/NA) created the Emily and David Lanning Scholarship for the VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia.

An interview with Emily Lanning ...

What attracted you to VCU's program, and how would you describe your time as a student?

At the time I applied, VCU's program was named the No. 1 program in the country. I enjoyed the faculty, and I liked the size of the VCU Health system and the Richmond community. I also liked the class size of the program and the opportunity to learn from Dr. Chuck Biddle. He and I had an interesting discussion during my interview about artificial blood substitutes as I assisted with the basic science research on them as a teenager in 1986 and 1987. My time in the program was great but very difficult. I had been out of college for 10 years but felt that my research experience really helped me in ways no one could have predicted. I studied or prepared for class and clinical all the time! I met my best friend and soul sister, Elizabeth Howell, the second day of the program, and we were inseparable. She made it fun, and we challenged each other to keep going through the difficult times. The faculty was always supportive and

available, and being able to participate in clinicals at most of our local hospitals really expanded our learning.

Looking back over the last 15 years, how would you describe your career as a nurse anesthetist, and would you choose that path again?

My career has been great, and I can't imagine myself doing anything else. It is perfect for my perfectionist personality in that I only have to care for one patient at a time the best I possibly can. I get to do something different every day, and I have learned so much about pathophysiology, diseases and surgical procedures. I have been with the same group at Bon Secours St. Mary's since graduation. My job has been my constant, and I've been through a lot since I've been there — birth of my daughter, deaths of my grandmother and stepfather, surgeries, divorce, a few moves, remarriage — and I've always had the support of my colleagues. I have a lot of autonomy, and there is always someone available to help if you need it, no questions asked. I can't say enough good things about our chief CRNA, Nathan Kuper. He is a class act all the way.

Why have you decided to leave the Department of Nurse Anesthesia in your estate plans?

I chose to fund a scholarship with the department because getting my master's degree and being a nurse anesthetist have really been a dream come true. I am financially stable and independent, I use my intellect every day, I've met a lot of great people and patients over the last 15 years, and I get to spend my life with the best husband and family on the planet. I would not be nearly as content and grateful as I am and be able to handle all the stresses of life, without this career. I want to be able to help other people achieve this dream and help remove a small part of the financial stress that typically accompanies graduate school.

Leslie Ann Jeter: Paying it forward

Leslie Ann Jeter, DNP, CRNA (M.S. '90/NA) knew ever since she was a little girl that she wanted to be in the medical field.

Jeter's career has spanned three decades. And she would do it all again in a heartbeat.



“I believe in giving back to the students, especially those facing financial barriers to furthering their nurse anesthesia education.”

—Leslie Ann Jeter

“I love being a CRNA! As an advanced practice registered nurse, a career in nurse anesthesia is a very fulfilling profession. This career has given me much over these past three decades, not just materially,” she said. “Professionally, I have been blessed to give back to the profession and serve as an advocate for the profession. Over the years, I’ve been quite involved in the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists as well as the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists. I am currently serving as a trustee to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Foundation. Most recently, after receiving my Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) from Emory University in 2017, I am an instructor in the nurse anesthesia program at Emory School of Nursing.”

Jeter has decided to leave the VCU Department of Nurse Anesthesia in her estate plans, creating the Leslie Ann Jeter Scholarship in Nurse Anesthesia. The scholarship will be awarded annually in memory of Leslie Ann Jeter to a second- or third-year student enrolled in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia who demonstrates a financial need and is active with his/her state nurse anesthetist association or the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee.

When Jeter decided to apply to nurse anesthesia programs over 30 years ago, there were no programs in Georgia. While a student at VCU, she was the recipient of scholarship funds to help offset some of her tuition fees.

“I believe in giving back to the students, especially those facing financial barriers to furthering their nurse anesthesia education,” she said. “This is important specifically in this career path, because the nurse anesthesia program is so rigorous, that most, if not all students are unable to work while pursuing their degree. VCU holds a special place in my heart. The education I received there has afforded me opportunities I would not have otherwise realized.”

Jeter’s support will tremendously help the department, as private support is sometimes the only support we can offer our graduate students. Students in the nurse anesthesia program are the future of the nurse anesthesia profession. Jeter says, “If you are able to make a commitment to VCU’s Nurse Anesthesia Department, please do so. CRNAs play a critical role in delivering anesthesia care to all surgical patients during the lifespan, from preemie patients to the elderly, spanning all settings in which anesthetics are delivered, from metropolitan cities to rural America.”

Full interviews can be found in the 2020 College of Health Professions magazine.

Establish a lasting legacy in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia

Planned giving donors create living legacies, forge enduring partnerships and help shape our future. Whether you memorialize a loved one, support talented students or underwrite pioneering faculty research, you choose how the Department of Nurse Anesthesia will benefit from your generosity. There are several ways to consider the Department in your estate plans:

Donate Appreciated Securities. Donating appreciated securities that you have owned for more than one year avoids capital gains tax and qualifies for a charitable income tax deduction for the full value of the securities.

Include a Bequest to the MCV Foundation in Your Will. Testamentary bequests are deductible for estate tax purposes and support our students, faculty and programs well into the future. Bequests may be structured in a number of ways: your bequest may be unrestricted, directed to a specific purpose, or establish an endowed fund in memory or in honor of you or someone else.

Make a Gift from Your IRA. Donors who meet certain requirements may make charitable transfers from their individual retirement account (IRA)—commonly referred to as the IRA Charitable Rollover.

Name the Department a Beneficiary of Retirement Accounts. Upon death, retirement assets are generally taxed as income to the named beneficiary and included as a taxable estate asset. As a result, your beneficiary may ultimately receive only a fraction of the account’s value. By naming the Department as your beneficiary, you can avoid these taxes entirely with 100% of your gift supporting your charitable intentions and thus leave more tax-efficient assets to your beneficiaries.

Establish a Charitable Gift Annuity. Establishing a charitable gift annuity with the MCV Foundation provides lifetime fixed payments to you and/or your spouse or any other beneficiary you choose. Charitable gift annuities may be funded with a minimum gift of \$25,000 in cash or securities.

For more information, please contact Heather E. Millar in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia at hemillar@vcu.edu or 804-628-3787.



VCU

College of Health
Professions
Nurse Anesthesia

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Congratulations to Class of 2019 DNAP Entry to Practice graduates!

First row: Karl Balling, Eric Fries, Andrew Greene, Gillian Wiser, Christina Wingate, Anna Lenczyk, Brenna Houser, Alex Greene, Irene Loyola*, Mary Fitzgerald* **Second row:** Nickie Damico** Gary Hahn*, Harold Barnwell**, Sarah Smith, Joe Biscardi, Jessica Burton, Kelly Gillenwater, Faminda Lake, Brenda Wands**, Corey Davis**, Mike Fallacaro**, Sue Wright*** **Third row:** Kevin Pyne, Phil Balzer, Jessica Malhotra, Julie Garces Fries, Rebekah Goff, Naomi Sloan, Katie Freeman, Laura Carter, Beverly George-Gay** **Fourth row:** Evan Whipple, Justin Harris, Eric Anderson, Z Bakhtiar, William Brant, William Pierzala, Ryan Wiatrowski, Brandy Flanagan, Mary Niederlehner, Molly Weissert, Tue Vo, Chuck Biddle**

*Clinical Affiliate Faculty **Faculty ***Chairman