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The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston | Cizik School of Nursing



Jane and Robert Cizik
School of Nursing

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON (UTHEALTH) CIZIK SCHOOL OF NURSING

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Seeking candidates

Lee and Joseph Jamail Distinguished Professorship
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Seeking candidates

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Seeking candidates

Suzie Conway Endowed Professor in Nursing

Seeking candidates

Joan and Stanford Alexander Professorship in
Neurodevelopmental Disabilities

(As of December 31, 2017)

ON THE COVER:

The namesake donors at the November 15th
announcement of a landmark gift of \$25 million by
Jane and Robert Cizik to The University of Texas
Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth).
The gift is the largest in the nursing school's history.
(Photo by J. Daniel Escareño)

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CARINGMinds

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CARINGMinds is the annual publication of the Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth that celebrates achievements in philanthropy, research, faculty excellence and other areas of interest. For additional copies, please e-mail: David.R.Bates@uth.tmc.edu or call 713.500.2111.

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was written by David R. Bates.

DESIGN:
Denning & Denning Design

PHOTOGRAPHY:
David R. Bates, Todd Taylor, J. Daniel Escareño,
Dwight C. Andrews, Maricruz Kwon, Priscilla
Dickson, Terry Vine, Holly Reed Photography,
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Greetings from Dean

LORRAINE FRAZIER

The 2017 calendar year imparted memorable moments and historic changes to our nursing school. As you will read in the following pages, we were renamed Jane and Robert Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth in recognition of the single largest philanthropic gift in our history: \$25 million to put extra energy into our vision to be sought out as a thought leader for creating health solutions.

Last August, the unexpected devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey's impact put some of our students, colleagues and coworkers – as well as our families and our neighbors – in urgent need of help. Almost immediately, UTHealth created a University Response Team and a relief fund to help students, faculty and staff navigate post-Harvey challenges of all kinds, while our university community responded with energy, generosity and humanitarianism as volunteers. This issue of our annual magazine will share some of these experiences and some lessons learned.

Oh, and our hometown Astros won the World Series for the very first time!

At the start of our 2017-18 academic year, we are serving more students than ever before in the 46-year history of the school: nearly 1,650 total students, including 1,109 at the graduate level. While educating more bachelor's-prepared nurses and also encouraging graduate education for more nurses than ever, we have faced several organizational challenges.

Significant among these is the predicament of finding adequate numbers of practice opportunities and preceptors for both our B.S.N. and nurse practitioner students. Even in the world's largest medical center, competition for clinical sites is intense.

One approach we are embracing is to expand high-quality simulation experiences in lieu of some percentage of traditional clinical hours. Renovations to our Simulation and Clinical Performance Laboratory will help bring Cizik School of Nursing to the forefront as a leader in training exceptional nurses. We anticipate that, within five years, the School will be able to provide up to 40 percent of clinical hours across the prelicensure nursing curriculum through improved use of the Sim Lab by our faculty.

In addition, this will allow us to further increase our graduate enrollment to train more specialized nurses.

The expanded Sim Lab – which will encompass seven simulation rooms, three debriefing rooms and 15 patient rooms – will be able to support 400 undergraduate students and 50 graduate students annually. The rooms will be modifiable to allow for experiences such as operations, childbirth and emergency medicine. Students will have the opportunity to become familiar with low occurrence, high acuity situations. Plus, the upgraded Sim Lab will allow for continuing education opportunities to nurses already in the field, as well as interprofessional collaboration from other healthcare providers and researchers.

Research growth is a high priority for the next five years, including recruitment of researchers who can mentor our doctoral students. The challenge of having our senior researchers continue to retire brings the opportunity to co-recruit faculty with the other five schools in UTHealth.

We are increasing faculty practice opportunities and engagements, while also competing for additional corporate clinical services contracts. Our nurse-practitioner-managed UT Health Services is seeking improved clinic accommodations and new academic practice partnerships to improve cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

The Cizik gift will help to elevate ours as one of the very top nursing schools in the United States, position us to offer more scholarships to deserving students, and provide the resources to support the novel research that drives patient care.

For everyone who experienced it, the great challenge after Hurricane Harvey is to keep constructively moving forward. The enormous opportunity following the generous gift of Jane and Robert Cizik is to move forward strategically and innovatively. And, while we are looking ahead, maybe the Houston Astros will repeat as World Series champions in 2018.

Lorraine Frazier, PhD, RN, FAAN, FAHA

John P. McGovern Distinguished Professor and Dean
Huffington Foundation Chair for Nursing Education Leadership
February 2018

“Will provide unprecedented resources”

UTHealth celebrates landmark gift from Ciziks, renaming nursing school

The Ciziks celebrate on stage with nursing students and faculty, who are showing off the new school logo on their T-shirts.



by Meredith Raine, UTHealth Public Affairs

A shower of orange-and-white confetti and the dramatic unveiling of the new name for the 45-year-old nursing school punctuated the November 15th announcement of a landmark gift of \$25 million by Jane and Robert Cizik to The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). The gift – the largest in the nursing school’s history – will provide the resources and capacity to shape the future of nursing education and healthcare delivery.

UTHealth President Giuseppe N. Colasurdo, M.D., and School of Nursing Dean Lorraine Frazier, Ph.D., R.N., made the announcement during a morning event attended by students, faculty, staff and friends outside the nursing school in the heart of the Texas Medical Center. In recognition of the Cizik family, the school will be renamed **Jane and Robert Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth**.

“We seek to instill in nursing students passion for the gift of life, tireless devotion to learning and problem solving, and distinguished service to all,” Colasurdo said. “The Cizik family name is synonymous with passion, devotion and service to the people of Houston, Texas and beyond. This transformational gift will not only serve our students and faculty, but it will have a profound impact on our patients and the entire health care delivery system.”

Since its founding in 1972, the school has been recognized as a place where exceptional faculty members help high-achieving students learn, discover and practice the art and science of nursing. The school, which has almost 11,000 alumni and more than 1,600 current students, is ranked in the top five percent of 532 graduate nursing programs nationally and is the highest ranked graduate nursing program in Texas.

“This unprecedented gift allows us to shape the future of nursing education and will powerfully enrich our long-term ability to prepare the nurses and nursing leaders who will care for our families, friends and neighbors,” Frazier said.



Jane Cizik, whose sister is a nurse, said a deep appreciation for the nursing profession, the need to address the shortage of nurses and UTHealth's stellar nursing programs motivated the family's gift.

"We have witnessed firsthand the level of caring for patients at UTHealth that goes well beyond ordinary treatment," she said. "It does not stop with diagnosis and tests, but heals with genuine concern for each patient. This extraordinary spirit of 'patient first' trickles down from the executives to the doctors and nurses and the support staff at UTHealth who make this vision of care so successful. We are truly grateful to be able to lend our name to this concept of care for the future of nursing."

The gift will establish endowed scholarships for well-qualified nursing students; endow chairs to recruit, reward and retain outstanding nursing faculty members; provide a research endowment offering a perpetual source of funding for conducting innovative research; and create a distinguished lecture series.

"These endowments bring life to our vision and will change countless lives," Frazier said. "Through this tremendous partnership with the Ciziks, we will have funds available to recruit and reward outstanding faculty to elevate our nursing school, be positioned to offer more scholarships to deserving students, and have the ability to inspire novel research that drives patient care."

Nursing education has never been more important or challenging, Frazier said. As baby boomers age and the number of people entering the health care system increases, nursing has become increasingly complex and nurses are expected to do more with fewer resources than ever before. In addition, a critical shortage of registered nurses continues.

"Texas will have a shortage of 30,000 registered nurses by 2030 if we do not increase our graduate numbers," Frazier said. "The millennial generation is stepping up to take the increasingly complex jobs of retiring nurses. Many, however, need significant scholarship assistance. We are extremely grateful to the Ciziks for help to meet the needs of these talented students who are dedicated to the profession of nursing."

Following the announcement, Phil Ferguson, chair of the UTHealth Development Board, said the Cizik family's gift creates a remarkable legacy that will benefit the community for years to come while also setting the pace for another historic year of philanthropy at UTHealth.

"I cannot think of a better way to celebrate National Philanthropy Day than to recognize what the Ciziks do from their hearts to make a difference," said Ferguson, former chair of the School of Nursing's advisory council. "Their generosity and their commitment are helping to change the world one nurse at a time."

"We produce nursing leaders," Frazier said. "I always say, if you are in Houston, you're going to be impacted by a UTHealth nurse. She may not be at your bedside, but she is most likely involved in the organization and in making decisions that impact care in the organization. That's an incredible legacy for the school, and the Ciziks' generosity will help keep that going."

The Ciziks are known for hard work, high achievement, inspirational leadership, love for their family and service to the community. Their support of UTHealth spans more than two decades. Robert Cizik chaired a successful \$10 million philanthropic campaign to build a new \$57 million home for the nursing school at 6901 Bertner Ave. The building opened in 2004 and is the first educational facility of its kind in The University of Texas System to be LEED® Gold-certified for sustainability.

Jane Cizik is a lifetime member of PARTNERS, the school's community support organization. The two were honorees at the UTHealth PARTNERS Spring Luncheon in 2010.

In addition to their support of UTHealth's nursing school, the Ciziks previously made a gift to the Hermann Eye Fund to name the Robert Cizik Eye Clinic, where UTHealth ophthalmologists practice. They have also given generously to Harvard University, the University of Connecticut, the Wortham Theater Center, The Women's Home, Citizens for Animal Protection, University of Houston and the National Audubon Society.

Of UTHealth's six schools, the School of Nursing becomes the second to bear the name of a generous couple. In 2015, a transformational gift from the John P. McGovern Foundation renamed the university's medical school John P. and Kathrine G. McGovern Medical School at UTHealth.

The Ciziks: known for philanthropy and dedication to service

To celebrate the generosity and vision of Jane and Robert Cizik and their family, UTHealth proudly renamed its nursing school in their honor: Jane and Robert Cizik School of Nursing.

Robert Cizik holds degrees from the University of Connecticut and Harvard Business School, and is a U.S. Air Force veteran. He retired in 1996 as Chairman and CEO of Cooper Industries, a manufacturer of engines, turbines and compressors for the oil and natural gas industry, after 35 years. Under his watch, the company (later acquired by Eaton) skyrocketed in value from \$60 million to \$13 billion.

While at Cooper, Robert also initiated the company's foundation and matching gifts program, allowing employees to direct its philanthropic giving. Through the program, he sought to instill in employees a desire to "give back to the community" at every level and all over the world. Cooper's matching gifts program and foundation made charitable donations of \$50 million from 1980 to 1995 with Robert's leadership.

Partners in philanthropy –

Always a team, Jane and Robert Cizik give generously of their talents and treasure to many educational institutions and charitable organizations, including UTHealth, Harvard University, University of Houston and the University of Connecticut. Jane

holds a lifetime membership with PARTNERS, the Cizik School of Nursing's community support organization. A gift to the Hermann Eye Fund named the Robert Cizik Eye Clinic, where McGovern Medical School ophthalmologists practice. The Ciziks's philanthropy also named the Jane Cizik Garden Place at the Women's Home in Houston and the Jane Cizik Center at Citizens for Animal Protection. The Association of Fundraising Professionals, Houston Chapter, honored Jane and Robert on National Philanthropy Day in 1999 with its highest honor: the Maurice Hirsch Award in Philanthropy.

Synonymous with helping –

The Cizik family name is synonymous with passion, devotion, and service to the people of Houston and the United States. Jane and Robert Cizik have spent the majority of their lives in Houston, where they raised five children. After her youngest child began high school, Jane, a lifelong reader and learner, earned her college degree in the Honors College at the University of Houston. Her non-traditional route to college inspired her idea for The Great Conversation, the long running fundraising event benefiting the UH Honors College. The Ciziks now enjoy life with their children and grandchildren, who represent the future generations who will benefit from the training and education nurses will receive at Cizik School of Nursing.

The Cizik Family gathered for a reception hosted by President Colasurdo and Dean Frazier following the announcement.



The Cizik School of Nursing building surrounded by Hurricane Harvey floodwaters at the intersection of Bertner Ave. and Holcombe Blvd.

Helping After Harvey...

Volunteers rush to serve after disaster

Numbers really don't tell the whole story of Hurricane Harvey in Houston, but they are awesome. Harvey dumped nine trillion gallons of water on Houston, Aug.28-31. The entire metro Houston area averaged between 3-4 feet of rainfall, causing a flood greater than a once-in-1,000-years event, the highest level the National Weather Service calculates.



Nearly 135,000 homes have been damaged or destroyed in the unparalleled flooding, and up to a million motor vehicles have been ruined. Seventy percent of the flood damage from Hurricane Harvey is uninsured. At least **450,000 people needed emergency assistance**.
No, the real story of Harvey is about people.

Houses, apartments and businesses located within minutes of the Texas Medical Center (TMC) were devastated by floodwaters. But the TMC institutions including the School of Nursing building, fortified by flood mitigation measures and stormwater barriers, largely remained unaffected. Except for the people.

Almost as soon as Hurricane Harvey's floodwaters began to slowly recede, faculty members, staff and students of Cizik School of Nursing looked for ways to help those most affected in the community.

Joshua Monsivais, a Pacesetter BSN student and a member of the fall 2017 Ambassador program cohort, remembered: "The experience really began for me as soon as the waters receded enough for me to leave my neighborhood. I began making trips to different neighborhoods with different organizations around the Houston area performing tasks ranging from mucking-out homes, organizing transportation for volunteers and helping with debris and garbage clean-up."

Through the Dean's Office, Joshua learned of **Patti Lairsey**, an administrative coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs, whose apartment complex was so badly flood-damaged that it was condemned.

"Within a couple of days, I gathered a few students from UTHealth and UH and drove out to Katy to help her with packing up her apartment and assisting with the process of recovering from such a catastrophic event," Joshua reported. **"I still reach out to her every once in a while to make sure she is recovering well and adjusting to post-Harvey life."**



"My daughter and I cannot say thank you enough for the many hands that helped pack us up. We finished in no time at all – and I'm glad, because the smell was horrific and the black mold seemed to grow an inch every hour! They were truly my Angels that day," said Patti Lairsey. (Photo by Maricruz Kwon)

"Rest, Rainboots, Rescue, Repeat"

Together with her husband, Assistant Professor **Allison P. Edwards**, Dr.P.H., M.S., R.N., (who also is a member of the Texas Board of Nursing) deployed a kayak and a four-person skiff to rescue flooded residents in the Bellaire and Meyerland neighborhoods. "Our final pick up was by far the scariest – night had fallen and it was difficult to see," Edwards related. "We already had a family of four, another couple and a dog on the four-person skiff, but two additional people were pleading to be picked up near Brays Bayou. The boat was at capacity on the weight load with 10 passengers, so we traveled very slowly... Then the motor stopped. We were near the bayou and the current was swift. My husband realized that construction material was tangled in the prop of the engine, so he jumped off into the water. At six-foot-two, the water was up to his neck. He untangled the debris and we safely progressed to the community church drop off point at 10 p.m."

For days afterwards, the Edwards family – like so many others across the water-soaked region – shared their home with displaced relatives and neighbors. "Each evening when we returned home, neighbors announced who would be hosting dinner and invited all to join," Edwards said. "Everyone took care of each other. We all experienced a true sense of community as we rotated houses for meals, shared stories and passed out exhausted each evening. It was: rest, rainboots, rescue, repeat."

Shelters foster a learning experience –

As they had done 12 years before in response to Hurricane Katrina, clinical teams and volunteers assembled downtown at the George R. Brown (GRB) Convention Center, which back in May had been the site of the school's 2017 commencement ceremony. At peak, more than 9,000 people were sheltered in the GRB facility, where nearly 2,000 received medical treatment. In the vast convention-center space, Houston Health Department teams coordinated with Red Cross nurses and volunteers, including Cizik School of Nursing students and educators.

Deborah McCrea, M.S.N., R.N., recalled that the GRB shelter was run according to official DMAT (Disaster Medical Assistance Team) guidelines: "We had three areas to work in – DMAT (only allowed to do non-medical care), FMS (students allowed to help with care of patients but not advanced care), and American Red Cross Pods ("dispensing easy things and OTC meds"). "The 'behavioral health' area next to the DMAT area asked our students to come help them with vitals and assessments also," she said.



“I received multiple compliments from the DMAT Triage and Shelter areas regarding our Care 2 nursing students,” said Assistant Professor **Karen G. Mellott**, Ph.D., M.S., R.N. “I think the highest praise was when a student told me they actually were paging for a nursing student to come to Hallway A – that student said she truly felt like she was a part of this wonderful disaster recovery! This has been such an amazing learning opportunity for us as faculty and our students!”

Faculty members did not fail to reach out to Cizik School of Nursing students set back by disaster conditions.



Cizik School of Nursing students volunteering with Dr. Karen Mellott (at rear in white lab coat) at the GRB shelter.

Professor of Clinical Nursing **Seema S. Aggarwal**, Ph.D., R.N. worked with Mellott and Assistant Clinical Professor **Susan Alderman**, Ph.D., R.N., on a post-Harvey needs assessment survey of B.S.N. and M.S.N. students. To students in need, they distributed \$25 Bed Bath & Beyond gift cards plus replacement lab coats, pen lights, scissors, stethoscopes, notebooks/pens and sets of new navy blue scrubs.

“A retired physician, who wished to remain anonymous, donated an Eko-brand digital stethoscope to a hearing-impaired student in our Family Nurse Practitioner program who unfortunately lost his hearing aids in the Harvey flooding,” Aggarwal said. “The student later told me that he was able to auscultate a murmur – with his new stethoscope! – in a pediatric patient that was missed by another provider.”

Assistant Clinical Professor **Julie G. Walker**, Ph.D., R.N., added: “The hearing-impaired student who received the

stethoscope lost his hearing aids because they became wet as he was assisting in a water rescue. In addition, he offered his services as a carpenter to any students who might need help.”

People returning to flooded areas and those who remained also faced health hazards related to polluted air, contaminated water, infected wounds, mold, contagious diseases, carbon monoxide and insects. All of the sodden drywall, flooring, furniture, clothing and other belongings added up to an estimated eight million cubic yards of garbage in Houston alone, enough to fill up the immense Houston Texans football stadium twice.

The Brain on Harvey –

UTHealth experts noted the subtle mental health issues associated with events like Harvey: chronic depression and anxiety, forgetfulness and befuddled reasoning, even Acute Stress Disorder lingering for weeks or months after the initial trauma. A timely article by **Deborah Mann Lake** in the university’s online wellness magazine, *HealthLEADER* (uthealthleader.org) quoted Madhavi K. Reddy, Ph.D., director of the Clinical and Translational Research Program on Traumatic Stress at UTHealth and the UT Physicians Stress, Trauma and Recovery Services Clinic, who observed: “It also matters how long the secondary stresses go on as you deal with basic needs – food, shelter and clothing. These secondary stressors can make the impact linger and that takes up space in your brain, which slows things down.”

Even as people are able to return to homes and work and school, the brain will still be working overtime behind the scenes to process the traumatic experience.

“Now you are high and dry, mostly, and you have stresses of a different sort, depending on finances and flood insurance and whether you can go home or need to depend on the grace of friends or FEMA,” Lake wrote. “You may forget your Social Security number or the name of someone you’ve known for years. One priest said he suddenly blanked and couldn’t remember words to The Lord’s Prayer, which he had said thousands and thousands of times.”

As one nursing student observed about her volunteer experience with so many vulnerable people – strangers, neighbors and future patients – “we just have to be patient with each other and our situations.”

Mary Ellen Ross, Dr.P.H., M.S.N., R.N., Associate Professor of Clinical Nursing –

“I opted to take a day out of my regular Community Health clinical for my clinical group of 10 students to assist at the George R. Brown shelter. Having volunteered at the GRB during Hurricane Katrina, I knew this would expose them to disaster nursing and a unique experience. The students not only were able to assist and care for a large, diverse, vulnerable population, but they learned so much about disaster relief/response and organizations like the American Red Cross. They had only heard and read about the Red Cross; this experience allowed them to actually work alongside of Red Cross nurses.

They were able to observe and apply what they learned about funding and allocation of resources from FEMA and other organizations. They learned about the importance of planning for when disasters strike. Perhaps, most importantly, my students learned about how to truly care for humanity when people are most vulnerable and about the human spirit. Many of these people at the shelter lost everything but the clothes on their backs, but amazingly the majority were very appreciative for the care received and possessed faith, hope and optimism. I must say I left the huge GRB tired with aching feet, but it was very worthwhile to involve my students with this rare experience that they will never forget.”

Student Voices –

– “I was inspired by the nurses who volunteer with the Red Cross, who came from all over the country to give their skills and expertise to help a population of displaced Houstonians. Seeing these nurses volunteering reminded me of why I decided to pursue a career in nursing, and have inspired me to use my own skills in the future to serve in underserved areas and provide for those in need.”

– “I was surprised by the fact that the GRB shelter let residents keep their pets with them in the living quarters... I think allowing people to be with their pets in a shelter situation helps reduce stress for both the people and the pets. I was pleasantly surprised to see that the shelter respected the importance of the residents’ pets.”

– “I learned that a listening ear could go a long way. So many people have been through so much, but you could tell that when you just asked and listened to their stories, it helped heal in its own way.”

– “[Along with some others] I volunteered to serve in the ‘isolation’ area. Most were there due to bouts of diarrhea and vomiting that was suspected to be linked to the norovirus. In the isolation area, we were honored to work with a pair of compassionate nurses. Their commitment defined holistic care. For me, it was... rewarding to see how the individuals from varying backgrounds and professions come together voluntarily for the good of all.”

– “It shocked me that the reason people came to the shelter wasn’t even for medical attention, but so many of them ended up getting it and finding out new things about themselves as far as health goes.”

– “This experience is added confirmation that being a nurse is indeed a REWARD!”



Acting U.S. Surgeon General praises, challenges nurses at commencement

– reported by Rob Cahill, UTHealth Public Affairs



Trent-Adams, RADM (center) congratulates Michael Dunbar and Laterrria Anderson – the first two graduates of the Veterans' Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (VBSN) program. Red-white-and-blue cords adorned their robes. (Photo by Dwight C. Andrews)

Describing nurses as the backbone of the healthcare industry, then-Acting U.S. Surgeon General Rear Admiral Sylvia Trent-Adams, Ph.D., R.N., challenged students from UTHealth's nursing school during its annual graduation ceremony to "take their place at the table."

Trent-Adams, who started her career as a nurse officer in the U.S. Army, delivered the commencement address at the school's spring graduation ceremony on May 9, 2017 at the George R. Brown Convention Center. This year, 287 UTHealth nursing students "walked" at Commencement to receive their degrees, including 152 new Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) graduates and another 135 scholars who collected graduate degrees (including 46 taking doctoral degrees).

Trent-Adams urged the new nurses to play active roles in the interprofessional health care teams that are tackling opioid abuse, chronic disease, suicide and the other major medical issues of the day.

"You need to take your place at the table where you are. You are the future of health care," said Trent-Adams, who earned a nursing degree from Hampton University and started her career as a nurse officer in the U.S. Army.

"I wish I could tell you that the road will be easy. There will be times when you question your competence," Trent-Adams said. "But, you would not be here if you were not made of the right stuff."

Congratulating the graduates on their hard work and achievement, she noted that some who start nursing school find out that they are not cut out for this line of work. "But, you hung in there," she said.

Trent-Adams told the nursing graduates that they were entering one of the most trusted professions in the United States as well as one of the largest in the healthcare field. "You need to be voice of the profession," she said.

Patients look to nurses for a healing touch and a listening ear, according to Trent-Adams, who added that being present for patients in a time of need is important as well.

While it is vital to teach others how to take care of themselves, Trent-Adams told the new graduates they also need to make time for themselves.

Trent-Adams concluded her remarks with a quote from the late civil rights activist Booker T. Washington – "Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way."

The enthusiastic audience gave Trent-Adams a standing ovation in the mostly-filled 3,600-seat theater.

"I appreciate how personable she is. And, I appreciate how proud she is to be a nurse," said Chivas Guillote, M.S.N., R.N., whose career goal is to work as a nurse practitioner in an emergency medicine center.

Trent-Adams was introduced by Lorraine Frazier, Ph.D., R.N., dean of Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth, who told the gathering that every nursing school in the country would be honored to have the Acting Surgeon General as its commencement speaker.

Trent-Adams and Frazier were joined on the stage by UTHealth President and Alkek-Williams Distinguished Chair Giuseppe N. Colasurdo, M.D., who conferred the degrees to the students.

The School produced 635 graduates during FY 2017, including 46 at the doctoral level. Total enrollment in fall 2017 was 1,649 students.

The Surgeon General provides Americans with the best scientific information available on how to improve their health and reduce the risk of illness and injury. The Surgeon General's duties also include overseeing the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, an elite group of more than 6,700 uniformed officer public health professionals.

Trent-Adams served in an interim capacity until the 20th Surgeon General of the United States was sworn into office Sept. 5, 2017.

Before leaving the podium, Trent-Adams wished the students, "Much success and Godspeed."



Members of the first Ambassadors cohort and new BSN grads (left-right) Emily Graham, Jasmine Green and Veronica Reed show off their special green recognition cords at Commencement. (Photo by Dwight C. Andrews)

Eighteen students were the first-ever BSN-DNP in Nurse Anesthesia graduates from a public university in Texas. UTHealth's Nurse Anesthesia graduates have scored first-attempt pass rates of 100 percent on the national certification exam each of the past six years.



2017 John P. McGovern Outstanding Teachers – Drs. Myron Arnaud (graduate programs) and Sandra Hanneman (undergraduates). Both are members of the Acute and Continuing Care Department. (Photos by Dwight C. Andrews)



Dorothy T. Nicholson: Partnering to Improve Lives

For Dorothy T. Nicholson, philanthropy is not just about giving money. She believes philanthropy is about fulfilling a responsibility to help others through donations of time or money – or sometimes both.

“I’m blessed with financial resources,” she says reflectively. “You can have a lot of people doing a lot of volunteering, but they may not have the resources to get the job done. Sometimes it takes the financial part of philanthropy to provide those resources.”

Dorothy is the founder of Nicholson Interests, LLC, a private equity investment firm specializing in the hospitality industry. She is an Endowed Lifetime Member of PARTNERS (Providing Advancement Resources To Nursing Education, Research and Students) and a past chair of the organization, which supports Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth. She also is a former member of the UTHealth Development Board.

She established the Dorothy T. Nicholson Distinguished Professorship at Cizik School of Nursing to honor past, current and future PARTNERS chairs. “They are inspiring and certainly dedicated to doing something to make it better or easier for nursing students to get their degrees,” she says.

The professorship combines education with Dorothy’s strong belief in volunteerism, particularly with the underserved population. “Because of my work with The Salvation Army, I know how they provide help for the homeless and those suffering from drug addictions and social services for people who need a little help,” Dorothy explains. “Dr. Diane Santa Maria has been involved with The Salvation Army, and the professorship fell into her area of study. It was a nice fit.”

Dorothy says education is important, but so are life experiences. “There’s no question I’ve learned a lot from my experiences since I turned my life more toward philanthropy and volunteerism,” Dorothy says.

– by John David Powell, UTHealth Office of Development



“I was completely blown away by my first PARTNERS luncheon,” Dorothy says. “I learned a lot about what nurses do to get their degrees. I am pretty confident I couldn’t do it, so I decided to support those who can and want to do it.”

Nicholson Professor is doing research on the streets

The research of Diana M. Santa Maria, Dr.P.H., M.S.N., R.N., focuses on parent-based adolescent sexual health and HIV and drug prevention in homeless youth.

In May 2015, as co-principal investigator, Santa Maria completed a study of homeless youth in the Houston community called *YouthCount 2.0!* She conducted this collaborative, community-based research study in partnership with the University of Houston.

“Her research is truly hands on, taking Diane into the streets and shelters of Houston as she reaches out to homeless youth,” said Dean Frazier. “The research will impact the care of homeless youth both on a community and national level.”

Santa Maria joined UTHealth’s nursing school in 2009 “This professorship will allow me to continue to develop and test novel ways of promoting healthy behaviors and systems that will help us reach health equity for high-risk youth,” says Santa Maria, who also is an adjunct professor at UTHealth School of Public Health.

Dr. Diane M. Santa Maria, the Dorothy T. Nicholson Distinguished Professor, presented a poster on homeless youth at the PARTNERS Fall Coffee at the Hotel Granduca on Sept. 26, 2017. (Photo by Jake Power)



“A reminder to never forget” – School-produced documentary examines corrupted Third Reich caregivers

A unique three-year project by Cizik School of Nursing brought to vivid reality the grim cautionary story of nurses who participated in the Holocaust and abandoned their professional ethics during the Nazi era. The original documentary film, *Caring Corrupted: the Killing Nurses of the Third Reich*, premiered during a January 2017 reception at the Holocaust Museum Houston.

The 56-minute film casts a harsh light on nurses who used their professional skills to murder the handicapped, mentally ill and infirm at the behest of the Third Reich and directly participated in genocide. During on-camera interviews, experts and survivors ponder the causes and meaning of such horrifying ethical violations in medical care.



“These Third Reich nurses lost their moral ‘true north’ – and, instead of easing the suffering of vulnerable individuals and defying immoral orders, their ethical compasses were diverted, and they lost their bearings of professional responsibility and compassion,” said Dean Lorraine Frazier.

Cizik School of Nursing’s former dean (1984-2015) **Patricia L. Starck**, Ph.D., R.N., was the driving force behind development of the film.

Starck and several colleagues, including the school’s Vice Dean for Academic Affairs **Cathy L Rozmus**, Ph.D., R.N., pursued a shared academic interest in nursing ethics during the Holocaust. Producers and academic experts made two overseas trips – one in 2013 to Germany and Poland, and another in 2015 to Austria and Poland – where they visited the sites of Nazi concentrations camps and gathered material for the documentary. Initial filming started in spring 2013. The final interviews were conducted in fall 2015.

Director of Educational Technology **Linda L. Crays**, M.A., took on multiple roles as production coordinator for the difficult three-year project.

The school’s current dean is convinced of the relevance of the film and the issues it raises. “Each student enrolled in the UTHealth School of Nursing will be shown the film during Orientation,” said Frazier. “We earnestly hope that none of our students are ever faced with such conscience-searing moral choices as were the nurses in the film, but this will be a reminder to each of us to never forget.”

The film has been viewed some 17,800 times from 29 countries via YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz8ge4aw8Ws&t=>

Donors who generously provided funding for the project were: the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission; the Marvin and Joan Kaplan Foundation; the Joe Levit Family Foundation.

Caring Corrupted: the Killing Nurses of the Third Reich was produced by **Sunset Productions**, Houston: James Bailey, Producer and Screenwriter; Mark Susman, Director of Photography.

Faculty Accolades



Jing Wang, Ph.D., M.P.H., R.N., Department of Nursing Systems, is now the John P. McGovern Distinguished Professor in the School of Nursing. She also was inducted in 2017 as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN).



Jennifer E. Sanner, Ph.D., R.N., was appointed as the Nancy B. Willerson Distinguished Professor in Nursing. She also received a new \$3.4-million grant from The University of Texas System that will help to make the biobank at Cizik School of Nursing the hub for a new state-wide, collaborative biobank network.



In Sept. 2017, Houston’s Good Samaritan Foundation honored Assistant Professor of Clinical Nursing Chukwudi “Chudi” Ekwemalor, Ph.D., M.B.A., R.N., as a “Silver Medalist” among its 2017 “Excellence in Nursing” award winners. His doctoral dissertation was published in 2017 in the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*.

Elda Ramirez knows the art and the heart of emergency nursing

– by Theresa Crowley, UTHealth Office of Development



What did you want to be when you grew up? Most likely your dream job was not an Emergency Room trauma nurse. But, by her pre-teen years Elda G. Ramirez, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN, professor of nursing at Cizik School of Nursing, knew her passion was emergency medicine.



Ramirez accepting her FAAN credential from Academy President Karen Cox, Ph.D., RN, FAAN. (Photo courtesy of Barry Eisenberg, AACN)

Her first experience for the satisfying thrill and occasional heartbreak of the ER was as a young hospital volunteer in Laredo, Texas. One patient caught young Elda's attention with his frequent visits to his hospitalized wife. With an amputated leg, he could not simply bound up the stairs when the elevator was slow. He had to borrow the ER's wheelchair to make the hospital accessible. Ramirez admired that, despite the extra effort required to reach his wife's room, he did not skip visiting her. However, the youthful volunteer did not see a happy ending. Unfortunately, she saw the man being rushed into ER as a patient himself,

receiving CPR from the staff. He did not make it. "I will never forget that – it was very touching and very sad – that was the first emotional connection," she recalled. Ramirez realized then that her place was in an emergency room caring for those who were experiencing the frightening uncertainty of life and death or permanent disability.

Ramirez earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from UTHealth in 1988. She was a staff nurse in an emergency room, her dream, but really wanted to be an emergency nurse practitioner – a clinical specialty that did exist at the time.

She earned her Master of Science in Nursing from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston in 1993. Soon after, **Patricia L. Starck**, Ph.D., R.N., then dean of Cizik School of Nursing, asked Ramirez to join the faculty and help start an emergency nurse practitioner program. Ramirez had cared for Starck's mother in the

emergency room, and Starck had recognized both her competence and her love for emergency nursing.

Ramirez – who received her Ph.D. in Nursing from Texas Woman's University in 2006 – was determined that, not only was she going to practice her clinical passion, she would be leading the didactic part of the very first emergency nurse practitioner program in the country.

UTHealth's emergency/trauma nurse practitioner program (ETNP), established in 1994, serves as the exemplar for similar programs nationally. Partnerships have been established in over 30 hospitals and two academic-based Level One trauma centers. To date, the program begun by Ramirez has produced more than 350 emergency nurse practitioners who provide quality care throughout Texas.

Ramirez has won over a million dollars in funding from the State of Texas since 2016 to educate nurse practitioners in the specialty of emergency care. Most recently, she received a two-year (through 2019), \$1-million grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

"This is not a research grant – it is an educational grant for the expansion of our emergency/trauma care concentration that will bring all of the didactic course content online and provide one-time stipends for up to 118 students," said Ramirez. **"Thanks go to my work partner, Debbie McCrea, for all her hard work and to the UTHealth staff that puts up with me!"**

As an active member of the Emergency Nursing Association, Ramirez helped establish the first international competencies for nurse practitioners in emergency care. In 2014, she became the founder/first president of the new American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (AAENP).

"We have developed the standards and definitions of emergency nurse practitioners, not only for the safety of patients, but for the hospital systems to know who they are hiring and the safety quality issues – and for the provider to know that they have a standard that they must meet to provide emergency medicine," explained Ramirez.

The American Association of Nurse Practitioners certifying body chose the AAENP to develop the reliable nationally-recognized certification examination for nurse practitioners in emergency medicine. The exam launched in January 2017 and has already tested over 220 emergency professionals.

“Very few nursing educators possess Elda Ramirez’s intense focus and commitment to passing on the expert knowledge and practical skills of a clinical specialty,” said Cizik School of Nursing Dean Lorraine Frazier. “In a word, Dr. Ramirez lives emergency medicine. We are so proud of her and this work!”

Ramirez is a proponent for realistic simulation drills, so that her students will know what to do if they find themselves in an actual crisis. “We want students to make mistakes here so that they learn before experiencing this in real life,” Ramirez said.

Together with Instructor of Clinical Nursing **Deborah L. McCrea**, M.S.N., R.N., and **Kevin Schulz**, M.D., assistant professor of emergency medicine at McGovern Medical School, she has expanded emergency nurse practitioner training to include hands-on mass casualty drills. Now an annually staged simulation at the Houston Fire Department’s Val Jahnke Training Facility, the training day brings together first responders and students from several of the six UTHHealth schools.

“After 9/11, most organizations started to train on multiple levels for a disaster, but not across the several disciplines of first responders,” Ramirez said. “Our program adds in interdisciplinary practice. The more we learn to work together, the more we learn that each person is a key piece in providing the care needed to save lives during any kind of disaster.”

Over the years, Ramirez has brought her clinical skills to bear by organizing volunteer efforts at medical relief centers at the



George R. Brown Convention Center for hurricanes Katrina and, most recently, Harvey (see page 6).

In a very personal emergency situation, Ramirez’s training kicked in to high gear again over 2017’s July 4th weekend when her husband, Bob Jezyk – a “model of health” who is also an emergency nurse practitioner – seemed to be favoring a temperamental hip. The symptoms were not classically indicative of a stroke, but this was in fact what they were dealing with. The healers were now in the vulnerable situation of needing care in the emergency room for what proved to be a major lacunar stroke. After a lengthy hospital stay and a challenging rehabilitation at TIRR Memorial Hermann, a tuxedoed Bob was able to escort his wife to her induction last October as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in Washington, D.C. “Stroke or no stroke, Bob is pretty awesome!” Ramirez said.

Ramirez credits Cizik School of Nursing for many of her opportunities and accolades, and recognizes it is all a team effort. “As a whole, I consider myself a vessel and someone who helps put the pieces together to make things function,” says Ramirez.

For more about Ramirez’s fast-growing program: <http://go.uth.edu/emergNP>



Maria and Christopher Pappas: Helping the Healers

Maria Pappas can explain without hesitation why she has a keen interest in the nursing profession.

“Because everybody likes their nurses when they’re in the hospital, but they forget about them until the next time they’re in the hospital,” she says. “Through the years – with my grandmother and my dad, who is 97 – I’ve seen all the different levels of nursing care. Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth gets the right people and educates them the right way so you have the comfort of knowing your nurse can help you.”

Maria is a member of the UTHealth Development Board and the Board of Directors of PARTNERS, as well as a past chair of the organization, which supports Cizik School of Nursing. She also serves on the Cizik School of Nursing Advisory Council. Her husband, Christopher, is Chief Executive Officer of Pappas Restaurants, Inc., and President/Chief Executive Officer of Luby’s, Inc.

Maria’s relationship with Cizik School of Nursing began with an invitation to participate in PARTNERS, where she gained an appreciation for the importance of scholarships. “That’s how we’re going to have good nurses,” she explains. “Especially the ones who have a passion for it but can’t afford it. They sacrifice to educate themselves so they can be better at helping others and be able to help their families. If you can help those who want to help others, that helps the healing of the patient, too.”

Maria and Christopher pledged \$1 million, matched by UTHealth’s Game Changers Initiative, to establish the Maria C. and Christopher J. Pappas Family Distinguished Chair in Nursing, which has been awarded to **Constance M. Johnson**, Ph.D., M.S., R.N., FAAN.



Longtime School of Nursing supporters Maria and Christopher Pappas

“Somebody asked me why we did it, and I thought about it and felt it would be a good legacy to help the school,” she explains. “I don’t mean my legacy. I mean the school’s legacy. I just help it along.”

“We are so grateful for the Pappas family’s long-term commitment to, and support of, Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth,” says Dean Lorraine Frazier. “Funding the school’s first distinguished chair will ensure the school remains competitive in retaining and recruiting the best and brightest scholars to lead our research efforts. It is wonderful to have the continued support of the Pappas family to help us develop tomorrow’s leaders in nursing practice, education, and research.”

Philanthropy comes from the Greek word *philanthropia*, which means love to mankind. For Maria, it means giving back without hoopla, as she puts it. “I do it hoping that other people will be inspired to give and find philanthropy as important as we do.” Maria admits it is easier for her to talk about the school than herself. “You know what? My legacy is not important. I just want to pay forward to the community. A ‘thank you’ is all I need.” That ‘thank you’ will come not only from future nurses – the healers – but also from those the healers help.

– by John David Powell, UTHealth Office of Development

Researching human-computer interactions in health care



Tenured faculty member and health informatician Dr. Constance Johnson also holds the Lee and Joseph Jamail Distinguished Professorship. With interdisciplinary training in nursing and health informatics, Johnson has over 25 years of research experience in the area of health promotion and disease prevention. As Associate Dean, she leads Cizik School of Nursing’s research enterprise and encourages high-quality, innovative faculty and student scholarship.

Johnson joined UTHealth’s nursing school in October 2016 from Duke University School of Nursing. She already was an adjunct associate professor at UTHealth’s School of Biomedical Informatics (SBMI), where she earned her PhD in 2003 and her MS in 2001.

In summer 2017, she produced two new journal articles on chronic disease self-management and how the representation and visualization of information affects healthcare decisions.

Associate Dean for Research Constance M. Johnson, PhD, MS, RN, FAAN, holds the new Maria C. and Christopher J. Pappas Family Distinguished Chair in Nursing. (Photo by Terry Vine)

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo honored –

Woodruff credits nursing with “injection of hope” at 2017 PARTNERS Luncheon



Bestselling author Lee Woodruff told the Luncheon audience that nurses’ “injection of hope is such terrific medicine” for the family of a critically ill patient.” (Photo by Priscilla Dickson)



Marine Corps veteran and Houston police sergeant Brian Brady is one of two VBSN students benefitting from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo’s grant of \$120,000 to provide scholarships and stipends. (Photo by Terry Vine)



Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo’s Jack Lyons (center, with Trish Greaser, left, and Dean Frazier) said he is “extremely proud of the things we have been able to do as a result of the support of this community.” (Photo by Priscilla Dickson)

The annual PARTNERS Spring Luncheon benefiting Cizik School of Nursing at UTHHealth featured the *New York Times* bestselling author Lee Woodruff as keynote speaker. About 300 guests attended the April 26 event at the River Oaks Country Club, which grossed more than \$223,000 to support nursing scholarships, faculty research grants and endowed professorships.

“I’m proud to be associated with PARTNERS and the amazing work they do to ensure that the school of nursing continues to advance the health and well-being of our community,” said Dean Lorraine Frazier. “Often I travel and meet people on behalf of the school of nursing, and I’m asked about the wonderful work that PARTNERS does on our behalf and on the behalf of our students, faculty and staff. I tell them that having PARTNERS on our side is the dream of every dean of nursing in this country.”

The PARTNERS scholarship endowment had a market value of \$2,233,286 at the end of FY 2017.

The 2017 luncheon honored the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo for its philanthropic efforts and charitable donations to supporting educational programs in the community. **Jack Lyons**, chairman of the board of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, accepted the honor on behalf of the organization.

Since 2013, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo has generously granted \$570,000 of support to Cizik School of Nursing educational programs, including contributions to the Accelerated Ph.D. program and the Veterans’ Bachelor of Science in Nursing (VBSN) program, which provides Armed Forces veterans with the knowledge, skills, and support needed to successfully complete their nursing degree.

Guest speaker **Lee Woodruff** described her family’s experiences after her husband, television journalist Bob Woodruff, sustained a traumatic brain injury in a roadside bomb explosion in Iraq in January 2006. During Bob’s long recovery, Woodruff said “Nurses were where I could find *hope*, and nurses were always *there*.”

Doctors minimize expectations, but nurses deal in *hope*, she told a rapt audience. “Nurses do so much beyond medicine, they try to heal not just the body, but reach for the heart, the mind and the spirit,” she said. “Our experience has really shown us that nursing is a calling completely doing God’s work.”

Trish Millard and Kate McNair co-chaired the 2017 PARTNERS luncheon. PARTNERS chair was Trish Greaser.

Major underwriters of the event were Katherine G. McGovern/The John P. McGovern Foundation and the Robert and Janice McNair Foundation.




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Professor Melanie M. McEwen, PhD, RN, accepting the prestigious Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award on Aug. 23, 2017 (from left to right): Steve Leslie, PhD, UT System executive vice chancellor for academic affairs; William McRaven, UT System Chancellor; Paul Foster, UT System Board of Regents Vice Chairman; and Ray Greenberg, MD, PhD, UT System executive vice chancellor for health affairs. (By Holly Reed Photography)

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