

## PEOPLE & EVENTS

Jane M. Fall-Dickson, RN, PhD, AOCN®  
Associate Editor

### University of Arizona Establishes Memorial Fund to Honor Victims of Recent Tragedy

In response to the shooting spree that killed three nursing professors on October 28, 2002, at the University of Arizona (UA) in Tucson, the university has established a memorial fund for the slain faculty members: Dr. Cheryl McGaffic, Barbara Monroe, and Robin Rogers. Robert Stewart Flores, Jr., was the nursing student who shot the faculty members and then took his own life.

The victims dedicated their lives to their patients and their students. "The tragedy in Arizona has once again reminded us of the fragility of life; Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims, families, and friends, and we must stand together and support each other as we try to make sense of this tragedy," said Tom Quinn, president of the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) and a retired law enforcement officer. Students described the instructors as compassionate teachers who took interest in the welfare of their students.

"Our hearts are heavy with the loss of our nursing colleagues," said NSNA Executive Director Diane J. Mancino, EdD, RN, CAE. "The nursing community is very intimate, and when tragedy strikes, it is felt far and wide. We send our heartfelt sympathy to the family, friends, students, and colleagues of the victims."

UA has established a memorial fund to honor the victims of the College of Nursing tragedy and is requesting that contributions be directed to the "Nursing Faculty Memorial Fund" at the UA Foundation. Checks should be made payable to Nursing Faculty Memorial Fund/UAF and sent to Office of Development, P.O. Box 245018, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85750-5018. For more information, visit [www.arizona.edu](http://www.arizona.edu).

### Ropka Receives Outstanding Alumnae Award for Nursing Research



Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) member Mary E. Ropka, PhD, RN, FAAN, has received the Marlene Kramer Outstanding Alumnae Award for Research in Nursing from the School of Nursing at the University of Connecticut (UConn) in Hartford. Ropka, an associate professor in the Department of Health Evaluation Sciences in the

Schools of Medicine and Nursing at the University of Virginia, received the award at UConn's School of Nursing Alumni Banquet held at the Hartford Club on October 18, 2002.

The award honors alumni who help to attract more students to the varied and plentiful career opportunities in nursing. Ropka, one of four recent outstanding alumni awardees, continues to work toward enhancing nursing care amidst growing demands for health care and increased acuity of patient illness.

After initiating and serving as the first director of the intramural research program at the National Institute of Nursing Research/National Institutes of Health, Ropka worked on a series of exceptional and well-funded research programs. Laura Dzurec, PhD, RN, CS, dean and professor of UConn's School of Nursing, said, "Dr. Ropka's impressive record of research is enviable, and the students and colleagues at the University of Virginia are lucky to have such a motivated and well-respected researcher at their university." Ropka is currently the principal investigator for Supporting Decisions in Inherited Cancer Susceptibility, a grant funded by a Cancer Prevention, Control and Population Sciences Career Development Award through 2006.

Ropka received her baccalaureate degree in nursing from Syracuse University in New York and completed her master's degree at UConn, with a focus in medical-surgical nursing and a minor in teaching. Ropka received her PhD from the University of Virginia in research (epidemiology), with minors in nursing and evaluation. Ropka's interdisciplinary career has been a mix of clinical, teaching, research, and administration, with a particular focus on cancer.

### Lyons Named Associate Director at James P. Wilmot Cancer Center



ONS member Catherine A. Lyons, RN, MS, CNAA, recently was named associate director for Strong Health cancer services and the James P. Wilmot Cancer Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York. She will oversee the coordination of care and services to patients with cancer at all locations and institute patient satisfaction programs.

"She is an outstanding clinician and administrator who has demonstrated her expertise in streamlining care and management to

provide easy access for our patients to outstanding cancer care," said Richard I. Fisher, MD, director of the Wilmot Cancer Center and Strong Health cancer services.

Lyons joined the Wilmot Cancer Center from the National Cancer Institute, where she was chief of clinical trials support and research nursing. She previously held positions as executive director for cancer services at Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury, MD, and vice president for clinical operations at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, NY, where she worked for 25 years.

The Buffalo native is a graduate of Niagara University and State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, where she earned a master's degree in nursing. She served in the U.S. Army Reserves Nurse Corps from 1979-1988, and she was an adjunct clinical faculty member in the School of Nursing at SUNY Buffalo from 1988-2000. She is a graduate of the Leadership Buffalo program.

In addition to being an ONS member, Lyons is active in the American Organization of Nurse Executives, American Association of Cancer Education, and Sigma Theta Tau International. Her healthcare leadership was recognized in 2000, when she received the Niagara University Caritas Medal. She also received the Distinguished Alumnae Award from Holy Angels Academy in 2001. Lyons has published numerous articles and conducted presentations on a variety of oncology nursing matters.

### Sellers Named North Carolina Nurse of the Year



ONS member Jean B. Sellers, RN, MSN, OCN®, was named the Harriet Flint Oncology Nurse of the Year at the North Carolina Nurses Association's annual convention in Raleigh last October.

This award is given to an individual who demonstrates commitment to quality patient care, professionalism in his or her role, and commitment to advancing the discipline of oncology nursing at the local, state, and national levels.

Sellers has been the oncology patient care coordinator at High Point Regional Health System for six years. She is also an on-call RN for Hospice of the Piedmont and is active with the

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/03.ONF.17-18