

# SIUE School of Nursing Celebrates Record Donor Support, Dramatic Growth

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Nursing (SON) had much to celebrate at its 12th Annual Scholarship Luncheon, including dramatic growth in enrollment and program development, thriving global initiatives and national recognition for its high-quality programs and value

SON Dean Laura Bernaix, PhD, RN, highlighted those accolades and more during the event held Thursday, April 18 in honor of donor generosity and student excellence. Nearly 45 SON students received scholarships, valued at nearly \$44,000, an increase of approximately \$13,000 over last year.

“The donors in this room, along with our students, faculty and staff, are shining examples of why the School of Nursing continues to thrive and receive national attention for its first-rate offerings,” Bernaix said. “Thank you, donors, for contributing to our students’ success and removing some of their financial stress. Annual gifts and endowed scholarships are monumental in helping students achieve their educational and professional goals.”

“This event offers a wonderful opportunity for scholarship recipients to personally thank donors for their meaningful support,” added SON Senior Director of Development Patti McDonald. “We are proud to recognize our best and brightest students, and excited for the impact they’ll make as nursing professionals.”

Student speaker Hannah Greenwalt, a senior nursing student from Hoffman Estates, emphasized the significance of completing a nursing degree at SIUE and expressed her gratitude for donor support.

“Looking back on every opportunity during the past four years, I can’t help but be grateful for the institution and individuals who supported my learning and extracurricular involvement along the way,” Greenwalt said. “Your support and generosity give us more time to volunteer with student organizations and activities, more resources to invest in our education, and more confidence in our ability to excel. We admire you for being a part of the nursing profession and actively supporting its continued growth by investing in us.”

Upon graduation in May, Greenwalt will start her “dream job” as a neonatal intensive care unit nurse at SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital in St. Louis. Bernaix noted approximately 95 percent of SON graduates have a job lined up prior to graduation, with the remaining five percent securing a nursing position soon thereafter.

Four newly established scholarships in the SON were presented, including the SIUE School of Nursing Alumni Legacy Scholarship, the James M. and Corinne Comrie Scholarship, the Stahlschmidt Family Legacy Scholarship, and the Rita E. Boyd Scholarship in Nursing.

“Most of my life I have been associated with the SIU System,” explained Rita Boyd, who established her scholarship with her husband Roger. “As a first-generation college student and recipient of a scholarship as an undergraduate, it’s only fitting and proper that I give back and offer someone else support that will make it a bit easier for them to finish school by removing some of their financial stress. It’s an important part of returning some of the good that has been done for me.”

Boyd earned both a bachelor’s and master’s from the SIUE SON in 1978 and 1991, respectively. After working at the SIU School of Medicine for more than a decade, she enjoyed a long career as a faculty member in the SIUE SON. While teaching, she completed her doctoral degree from SIU Carbondale.

“After meeting our inaugural scholarship recipient (Michelle Voudrie) at this luncheon, I feel wonderfully inspired that she was an excellent choice,” Boyd said. “She plans to continue her work in oncology as a nurse practitioner. Roger and I both believe in, and have experienced the importance of good clinical care and compassionate and competent nursing.”

Sharing that pay it forward mentality were the late David Lee Jenkins’ daughter Renee Van Dyke, son David Jenkins and grandson Ben Jenkins. They attended the luncheon on behalf of Jenkins who is honored through the Airman David Lee Jenkins Scholarship.

“It’s humbling to be here today,” Van Dyke said. “Our brother-in-law, who is a nurse anesthetist, started this scholarship in honor of our father. I know that education meant a lot to our father, who served our country and pursued college later in life. The fact that this scholarship goes to someone who has served their country makes it even more special.”

“I’m truly grateful, and appreciative of the time this family took to read my application and select me as their recipient,” noted Jenkins Scholarship recipient Ethan Field, of Marine. “It is an amazing feeling to receive a scholarship for the first time. I’ve been in the Army National Guard for six and a half years and am with a medical unit that’s in charge of making sure all soldiers are medically fit to deploy.”

For more information on giving to the SIUE SON, visit [siue.edu/nursing/alumni/giving](http://siue.edu/nursing/alumni/giving).

The SIUE School of Nursing's programs are committed to creating excellence in nursing leadership through innovative teaching, evidence-based practice, quality research, patient advocacy and community service. Enrolling nearly 1,400 students in its baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs, the School develops leaders in pursuit of shaping the nursing profession and impacting the health care environment. SIUE's undergraduate nursing programs on the Edwardsville campus and the regional campus in Carbondale help to solve the region's shortage of baccalaureate-prepared nurses and enhance the quality of nursing practice within all patient service venues. The School's graduate programs prepare nurses for advanced roles in clinical practice, administration and education.