

Marcia Lyn Bradley Dale Distinguished Alumna

By Julianne Couch
Alumnews Editor

FAST FACTS:

EDUCATION: B.S.N., Nursing, UW '60
M.N., Medical/Surgical Nursing
Education, University of Washington,
'61

Ed.D., Leadership in Nursing
Education, University of Northern
Colorado, '81.

OCCUPATION: Dean of the Fay W.
Whitney School of Nursing, retired.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
Distinguished Alumna award, UW
School of Nursing, 1985.

Induction into American Academy of
Nursing, 1993

BEST KNOWN FOR: Driving to work
over the summit from her home in
Cheyenne through all weather.

FAMILY: Husband, Bill, daughter Dori
and son Devin.

HOBBIES: Following UW Cowboys and
Denver Broncos, all spectator sports,
flower gardening, reading, enjoying her
five grandchildren.



Marcia Lyn Bradley Dale, Distinguished Alumna

No doubt anyone involved with nursing in Wyoming has heard the name Marcia Dale. She started as an instructor at the UW nursing school in 1961 and rose through the ranks to retire as its dean in 2003. Through her interest in students and innovations in delivering nursing education, more people are now able to complete a nursing bachelor's degree to serve Wyoming and beyond.

Dale describes some of her major accomplishments while at UW. She implemented ideas that set the ground work for the RN/BSN completion project offered online to students around the country. This program was for people who were already nurses and wanted to earn a BSN. Also, she oversaw the senior residency program for basic nursing students. "This was a preceptorship I developed as my dissertation; then I was able to implement it," she explained. Further, there was the accelerated nursing program for people with a bachelor's degree who wanted to enter nursing. "I put that program forward but it wasn't approved until after I left," she said. Dale was very interested in helping people earn BSN degrees without having to come to Laramie from other locations in Wyoming. She explained that these nurses don't already have a BSN because they usually had attended

a Wyoming community college for an associate's degree in nursing. Although these nurses must take and pass the same national tests as those who earn a BSN, getting the four-year degree can strengthen their knowledge in nursing. "Associate degree nurses are highly skilled at tasks and care of patients but don't have education for critical thinking and judgment. Studies show that baccalaureate programs prepare the students in critical thinking and judgment."

Dale implemented various assessment systems in the School of Nursing and oversaw three accreditation cycles, with the school always receiving reaccreditation. These tasks are met with dread by many university administrators. But Dale explained that the School of Nursing "did very well on all of them and got very few recommendations" for things the accreditation team thought should be changed. One reason things went smoothly, Dale explained, was due to her "expertise in curriculum." She said that her master's degree from the University of Washington included

coursework on program evaluation. "I knew how our program had to flow from philosophy and objectives through each course. Maintaining it through the curriculum was a task that I could do because I had the education to do it."

Dale had a distinguished career as both a nurse and a nurse-educator. She served in a leadership capacity for numerous statewide organizations. She was appointed to the Wyoming State Board of Nursing and served as president for three of the seven years she was on the board.

As an administrator, another challenge for Dale was overcoming the belief that individuals in a female-dominated profession could not communicate with each other. "I don't know if that is true or not, as the longer I was there I realized there are communication problems everywhere. But, that was a constant theme, so approaches were taken to solve communication problems." Those approaches included bringing in counselors to help people talk about their feelings. There was a

communication culture developed by Chart House known as the "FISH" philosophy, which she implemented. The basic idea was that people could "have a good time while working but still get the job done." Possibly that philosophy was what prompted her colleagues to compose and perform a retirement "rap" that sang her praises as a leader, an advocate for students, and a fan of the brown and gold.

Many of her former students cite Dale as a primary force behind their success. One such student, Karen Ouzts, went on to be hired by Dale to run a program in the nursing school. She said, "I really appreciate Marcia's dedication to serving the students of Wyoming. As a great dean of the school, she put the students and Wyoming partners first. As an expert nurse, she served the Wyoming State Board of Nursing as a key witness. As a professional nurse she consistently contributed to the work of the Wyoming Nurses Association. As a great role model, she taught us all about ethical and moral behavior in our professional lives. As a great person, she has many friends who know they can count on her to be of assistance whenever called upon."

Her colleague and long time friend professor emeritus Elizabeth Wiest speaks of Dale's skills as a teacher. "She was a remarkable classroom and clinical teacher in her specialty of medical-surgical nursing. Students blossomed while under clinic supervision. She demanded excellent practice because she cared for the students and for the patients."

Of all her accomplishments, Dale says she is proudest of helping to mentor students through the notoriously difficult nursing program. In particular, she enjoyed advising the student athletes who majored in nursing. "All of them were so capable, even those who couldn't continue the curriculum while they were involved in their sports. They were very good time managers." Dale enjoyed advising students so much that she continued that role even after becoming an administrator.

Dale says that each stage of her career, she missed that stage that she gave up before. "I did many years of clinical teaching with students. When I left I missed working with patients. That's why we get in to nursing - we want to be able to help people. When I began in administration I missed the teaching, so I kept that up. Now that I'm retired, I miss being involved with nursing." To help fill that void Dale stays in contact with her friends and former colleagues in the field. Since retirement she's worked for Public Health in Wyoming on contract projects

Continued on page 10

Marcia Lyn Bradley Dale Distinguished Alumna

Continued from page 6

and is editor of a nursing journal.

With all Dale's professional accomplishments it is easy to overlook her days at UW as a student. She was involved with SPURS and Big Sisters. She was district president of the Wyoming Association for Student Nurses in 1957 and was chosen for Associated Women Students Board campus leaders conference in 1958. Also in 1958 she received the Honor Book for "superior work in nursing." In 1960 she received the Laramie Medical Group Nursing Prize of \$100 at Exercises for Presentation of Nursing Pins.

"Even though attending UW was not my first choice of a university at the time, receiving several scholarships forced the issue with my parents," Dale recalls. Amelia Leino, the dean of the School of Nursing at that time, convinced us that earning a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing would prepare of us for the future better than having a diploma in nursing from a hospital school. Few universities were offering degrees in nursing but Amelia Leino and the University of Wyoming were one of the schools leading the way.

In retrospect, I know that the university gave me the start of a fulfilled career in nursing."

Dale said being nominated for Distinguished Alumna was "flattering, but I didn't think I'd have a chance." But being nominated was "lovely," she said, "especially because it was initiated by a person outside the field of nursing." ❀