

LUNENBURG HEALTH SERVICE NURSES 1948 - 2016

The Lunenburg Health Service, Inc. has been blessed with seven wonderful nurses who have contributed their time and talents in service to the citizens of Lunenburg County. Their combined service spans nearly 70 years, and their names are truly engraved on the hearts of the patients and families of those they have served. The Health Service is deeply grateful for their hard work and dedication. They are truly the heart of the Health Service.

Willie Elizabeth Guthrie Nelson came to Lunenburg County in 1948 to help the newly-established Health Service begin its work. She had an extensive background in public health nursing and used her knowledge, expertise, and experience to provide visionary guidance in establishing our nursing policies and procedures. She remained with the health service until 1958, when her husband's job necessitated a move to Roanoke. Elizabeth Nelson was a trailblazer for community and public health nursing for over half a century. She died May 6, 2009. (See Elizabeth Nelson Tribute in Event Photos.)



Katherine "Dink" Kirby Armstrong served as Nursing Director from 1958 to 1961. She grew up in Victoria and returned to her home town following employment at the Medical College of Virginia. In 1960, she made 1,727 patient visits. Included in her usual nursing duties were trips to Richmond and Charlottesville to drive/accompany patients to hospitals. She also assisted the Lunenburg County Health Department with preschool clinics. She is the sister of former Victoria Mayor Richard Kirby. She now resides in Colonial Heights, Virginia, with her husband, Ed. They have two sons, Charlie and Kirby.



The Kirby Siblings: Charles, Mary, "Shorty", Richard, and "Dink"

Ardella Valencourt Chumney served from 1961 to 1963. In 1963, she made 1,840 patient visits. Included in her duties were administering IV fluids, providing therapeutic exercises for stroke patients, instruction in the use of insulin, and assisting patients in obtaining glasses through the Lions Club. She resigned from the health service when her husband, Virginia State Trooper Bernard Chumney, was reassigned to another division. She currently lives in Lynchburg, Virginia.



Barbara Moore served as Nursing Director from 1964 to 1968. During this time she assisted with preschool clinics and the Red Cross Bloodmobile and showed films and gave health education lectures to the schools. In 1967, she made 1,227 patient visits and helped set up an infirmary room at Kenbridge Elementary School. In 1968, she resigned to accept the position of Director of Nursing at Community Memorial Hospital, South Hill, Virginia. She lived in Dundas until her death in 2012.



Hazel Daniel Coleman served as Nursing Director from 1967 to 1989, the longest tenure of any of our nurses. She received her training at Petersburg General Hospital and came to us with 23 years of hospital experience. Included in her duties were caring for new mothers and teaching newborn care, administering IV fluids, and giving medicine by injection. She worked with the Red Cross Bloodmobile and helped with school programs. She died May 21, 2009. In a resolution dated July 20, 2009, the Lunenburg Health Service acknowledged its indebtedness to her and honored her as “an outstanding nurse and humanitarian and a woman of great spirit and love for the people she served.”



Gaynelle Hood was Nursing Director from 1989 to 2000. She came to us with 34 years of experience in hospital and public health nursing. Included in her duties were nutrition and diabetic counseling, giving medication by injection, and working with the Community Memorial Hospital Wellness Center to design a fitness/exercise program co-sponsored by the hospital and the health service and held in the Victoria-Lunenburg Community Centre. (See LHS/CMH Wellness Program folder for pictures.) She also established a monthly blood pressure screening clinic at a local apartment facility for the disabled. She lives in Crewe and volunteers at a local nursing home. She has been kind enough to serve as a substitute nurse for us on a number of occasions.



Deborah Loury Craven In January of 2000, the Board of Directors of the Lunenburg Health Service chose Deborah Craven to serve as their Director of Nursing Services. Deborah graduated from Central High School. She received her nurse's training at Community Memorial Hospital and was on the staff of the hospital and annex for a year. She subsequently spent almost 20 years working for Dr. Dan Baugh and later for Drs. Graham and David Powers. In a year, Deborah makes over 4,000 home visits to patients, sees an average of 1,200 patients in the office clinic, and travels approximately 23,000 miles on the Health Service car. Her patients consider Deborah not only their nurse who provides medical assistance, but also a friend – someone to talk to who really listens, a shoulder to cry on, someone who truly cares about their well-being.

Deborah has served in her chosen profession for 37 years. She is truly an asset to her patients, their families, and her colleagues. Janet Watson, Lunenburg Health Service secretary, commented: "Deborah Loury Craven's call to nursing came at a very young age. I know this as a fact because we grew up in the same neighborhood during the 1960s and 1970s. When the rest of the 5th Street gang, which included 32 children and 28 dogs, were outside playing, Deborah would oftentimes be absent from our group.

She would be sitting with one of our elderly neighbors helping them with daily activities. Her calling to serve was evident even then."

