

Leading by Example: Gloria Henderson's Bold Career and Generous Choice

Gloria Henderson (MS '70) has never been one to sit back and watch life pass her by. As Henderson likes to say, "I tried to retire in 1994, and then I flunked 'Retirement 101'!"

Henderson has been an energy dynamo across a nursing career that has spanned several decades as a teacher, mentor, and college administrator.

Henderson's innate optimism and focus came amazingly early: in high school. "My first love was that I would teach nursing," she explains. "Back then, women were nurses or teachers or secretaries. When people said I should become a teacher, I responded that I would teach nursing."

So, that's what she did, first receiving a bachelor's degree in nursing, and then working in clinical practice. After taking a break to raise three

children, Henderson was ready to go back into nursing. She obtained her master's degree from the UIC College of Nursing in 1970, then immediately joined the faculty upon graduation.

Henderson spent 24 years at the College until her first "retirement" in 1994; but she continues as emerita faculty, teaching a wholistic health course for graduate and senior-level undergraduate students. "I'm just not one to sit down for long," she explains. Over the years, she has taught every level of coursework and remains as excited as she was nearly four decades ago about teaching nursing students. She is especially thrilled by the diversity of backgrounds that the profession now attracts.

Indeed, she emphasizes, nursing has given her enormous opportunities not only professionally, but also personally. She still remembers the two months she spent in Iran in the late 1970s, working with College of Nursing colleagues to help Iranian nursing educators establish a bachelor's-level nursing program in Tabriz. "It was a life-changing experience," recalls Henderson, who adds, "I had never traveled in a foreign country before that." It gave her a desire for international travel that has taken her and her husband of 56 years, Dale, all over the world since then, from Europe to China, to Turkey, to Mexico, and Peru, among other places.



Gloria Henderson

Not surprisingly, for Henderson, investing in the future of the College is the natural consequence of a near-lifetime spent in nursing and nursing education. "There are fabulous opportunities in nursing and in the healthcare professions," she emphasizes. "I would like others to have those opportunities."

To help nursing students in the College—now and forever—Henderson and her husband have included a bequest to the College in their will. In addition, she has funded an endowed scholarship that is given annually to an undergraduate nursing student. In that way, she explains, she gets the pleasure of "seeing her gifts in action."

"The Gloria A. Henderson Scholarship really allows students to focus on their educational work rather than financial issues," she explains. "And anything we can do in that regard is a very positive thing."

— Mark Hagland

For more information about creating an endowed scholarship fund or including a bequest to the College in your will, please contact Nancy Herman, director of advancement at 312.996.1736 or nherman@uic.edu.