

### CLASS OF 1974 LUNCHEON ADDRESS

By Mary Luongo, '74



I would like to take this moment to welcome all of the alumni of St. Vincent's School of Nursing and it is with great pride that I stand here on behalf of its one hundred twenty first graduating class - the Class of 1974. I thank you for this honor.

Preparing for today required a great deal of introspection, it does not elude me how quickly 50 years have passed and how much has happened in our lifetime. Reflection is important particularly in these times and I thought what better time than this to revisit the wonderful history of our great hospital and school.

As a nurse I was frequently asked where I worked. And those who know me well will tell you I have had many jobs! I worked my jobs around my life rather than my life around my jobs. This is the beauty of our profession. When asked, I would always respond to this question in the same way. I'd mention my current employer but then add, my formative years were at St. Vincent's. As so many of us here today, I was introduced to St. Vincent's as a 14 year old high school student, a Vincenteen. It would be decades before I left.

The hospital and our school are indelibly part of our DNA. They had their own personality, difficult to explain but inescapable. It was not just a placebo a spirited in every way it helped define us.

From the time Mother Elizabeth Seton and her four Sisters of Charity responded to the Cholera epidemic in a small rented house on East 13th Street in 1849 until its closing in 2010 St. Vincent's left its mark. It would become the second largest Catholic Hospital in the United States, renowned for its global influence.

The hospital would be recognized for its commitment to excellence while providing kind, compassionate care.





In it's lifetime, as the footprint of the hospital expanded and the vision for the hospital materialized, a school of nursing became part of that vision.

Eight young candidates were chosen for clinical training in order to meet the growing advancements in medicine in October, 1892. Over 5,000 nurses would graduate before the school closed it's doors decades later. Every one of us here today stand upon their shoulders.

Who can forget the moment we entered the school building doors, a brass crown adorning it's mantel. We were both anxious and excited. We knew these hall would change our lives.

Welcomed by surrogate family, Mrs Feci, Manny, Mary, Ms. Bantel, Ms. Boyce and of course, our beloved Vincent. Our very own gentle giant with a blustering voice. We teased him unmercifully but hidden behind his complaints and scowl there was a smile and loving heart. I cannot venture a guess as to how many times he had to transport life size statues of the saints back to their respective homes within the residence. I am sure he has a special place in heaven surrounded by each one of them. Can he ever forgive us?

Our class had so much in common, first and foremost, the name Mary! We are children of the novena. If you were raised in a large Catholic family, without question, as the oldest girl, you would be named after Holy Mother Mary or one of her cousins Mary Ellen, Mary Beth, Liz, Margaret, That's just how it was back then. For that reason, we would spend the next 2 years, 9 months being called by our last names. It kept things both clear and neat.

When we look back on the years we were in school, I don't think that we dwell on what was stressful, the fear of being knee'd by Ms. Caruana while administering our first injection, or fear while presenting patient care plans to Ms. McGonicle, Ms Barker or Sr. Mary T on rounds. Will you ever forget your first trip to the delivery room with Ms. Metcalfe? Throughout our student experience, there was one critical mandate: THERE WILL BE NO CRYING IN CLINICAL!

And yet there are so many happy memories. I lose count...



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Early on we realized we were part of something special. I am sure everyone of us remembers how proud we were to wear our school's uniform, new by design. We understood that we were now part a team and had an important role to play. We walked through the building named for cardinals to our respective units named for saints. We supported each other and gave each other confidence.

The neighborhoods we served were diverse. A microcosm of our city. The working poor and middle class, the elite, artist, writers, musicians and activists. St. Vincent's dedication and philosophy never wavered. The basic dignity of the human person guided every interaction no matter who we served.

The residence was our safe space. This was where we could refuel. Here we shared meals, laughter and occasional tears, commiserating over the day's events and dinning over some very bad home cooked meals or a pint of Baskin Robbins generously provided by our classmates employed there. We would relax in the T.V. room and watch Madame X on Million Dollar movie for 5 days in a row or follow Erica Kane's many relationships and marriages in All My Children.

New York City was our campus and Greenwich Village was our backyard. The city that never slept was an addendum to our education and influenced us as much as our school. We were introduced to cultures and the arts. Free tickets to Broadway theater when the house had empty seats, countless museums only a few train stops away. We could find dining 24/7, enjoy chow in Chinatown on Mott Street after playing tic tac toe with a very bright chicken, enjoying late night snacks at the Starlight Diner in Hell's Kitchen or midnight runs to Nathan's on 8th Street for a hotdog and orangeade. And of course , there is a special place in our hearts for Ray's Pizza.

We celebrated the Feast of San Genaro and proudly marched up Fifth Avenue on St. Patrick's Day. One memory in particular stands out, some of us returned to school by bus after the parade in 1972 and some chose to ride horseback.

Back then we had our share of watering holes, Brother's, McGowans and Your Father's Mustache where beers were 25 cents and we could dance the night away. I could go on and on...

Because I am a theater geek I would like to end with some lyrics from a song "For Good" from my favorite musical *Wicked*.

*"I've heard it said  
that people come into our lives  
for a reason  
bringing something we must learn  
and we are led to those  
who help us most to grow  
if we let them  
and we help them in return  
Well, I don't know if I believe that it's true  
But I know I'm who I am today  
because I knew you"*

To my forever friends and chosen family, I thank you for this honor and I would like you congratulate all of us for our continuing the legacy of our great hospital and school.

God Bless.

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT THE 94TH ANNUAL ALUMNAE LUNCHEON

by Marilyn Lynaugh Strafer, '80



On November 9th, 2024, alumnae celebrated each other and the golden anniversary class of 1974 with a gathering at The Manhattan Penthouse. One hundred eighty-eight graduates registered and everyone who was interested was able to be accommodated this year. Even last-minute requests were granted as several persons had cancelled in advance, freeing room for additional attendees.

As the luncheon is the designated annual business meeting required by our by-laws, we provided

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a power point presentation on the state of our Alumnae Association. Introductions were made of the current Board and committee members, a short financial report, committee updates, the proposed slate of officers for the next Board of Directors, and the 2025 goals were discussed.

During the financial portion of the meeting, alumnae members were informed that the Association subsidizes over \$15,000 for costs related to the annual mass and luncheon, including church service fees, administrative expenses for supplies, A/V tech and support, photography and venue fees and gratuities. As a result, association members are given priority for attendance at the luncheon.

At the conclusion of the business meeting, a video interview with Sister Kevin was shared with all. Sister looked very well and talked about her life growing up in Greenwich Village before becoming a nurse at St. Vincent's and then entering the Sisters of Charity. What a special treat! This interview, as well as pictures and videos from the luncheon, are now available on our website.

The highlights of the day included the Class of 1974's video presentation prepared by Marybeth Forcina, which was shown during the cocktail hour. Later in the program, the recitation of their commencement address, offered by Dr. Arthur Kaufman at St. Patrick's Cathedral on 5/31/74, was read by Catherine McWeeney Crimmins.

Mary Gilmartin Luongo gave the class address, accompanied by a second picture slide presentation. The afternoon festivities concluded with a showing of a parody of the Billy Joel song "Always a Woman" with words changed to "Always a Nurse."

In planning the luncheon for next year, we will enforce a policy that refunds will not be automatically applied if the notification of cancellation is given after the headcount is finalized with the venue. This is a problem every year when people are unable to attend at the last minute and request a refund. Since the final head count is given to the luncheon venue 7-10 days ahead of the event, we are required to pay

for that number of guests at that time.

Mark your calendars for the 95th annual mass and luncheon on November 8, 2025.

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>President</b>	Marilyn Lynaugh Strafer '80
<b>Vice President</b>	Marie Brady '66
<b>Secretary/ Treasurer</b>	Patricia Holland Costello '66
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Susan Faggiani '68
<b>Directors:</b>	Margaret Reilly Breig '86
	Mary Carmody '73
	Kathie Shea Costello '74
	Barbara Woods '72

The following candidates are running unopposed for a position on the Board. Thank you for your commitment to the Alumnae Association.

### **Marilyn Lynaugh Strafer, '80**

### **President**

I am seeking your approval to serve as the SVH Alumnae Association president for a second two-year term in an uncontested reelection.

In my first term, I successfully updated the association by-laws, added dynamic co-chairs to both the program and nominating committees, and recruited new members to the Board of Directors. I have also added several hundred new association members via word of mouth, Facebook and the website.

I was able to recruit Lisa Wilbert, '87 as our new webmaster, making significant upgrades to our website. It has now become more interactive, adding the option of making electronic payments for dues and the luncheon. There are also many more pictures and videos of past gatherings to enjoy as well as a QR code for easier access.

This is a small sampling of my accomplishments for our association and going forward I would like to keep the momentum going by making some fiscal changes in the way we do our banking by adding high interest CDs and a money market account.

Also, on my agenda is to update the way we communicate more effectively by utilizing a listserv for timely announcements. I am also looking for your suggestions on educational programs to

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offer during our Spring and Fall general meetings with the goal of associating with The College of Mount St. Vincent's and offering our members nursing CEUs where appropriate.

This past August I celebrated my 65th birthday and retired after 44 years of nursing in the fields of critical care, cardiac catheterization, interventional radiology, hospice, endoscopy and interventional pain management. It has been a fulfilling and well-rounded career anchored by solid nursing theory acquired through our beloved school.

It has been my great honor to serve our membership, and I look forward to continuing to bring our association increased financial strength and improved communication.

### **Barbara Woods, '72**

#### **Director**

My name is Barbara Woods, and I am a proud member of the class of 1972. I dedicated most of my nursing career to St. Vincent's in Manhattan, where I worked from graduation until its closure in 2010. During my time there, I held various positions, starting as a Staff RN from 1972 to 1981 on Smith 3 Ortho/Rehab and later in the Burn Unit. From 1981 until 2010, I transitioned into management roles, first as Evening Supervisor until 1989, then as Manager of Spellman 8 Oncology, later Coleman 7 West Ortho, and additionally Smith 6 Rehab. Along the way, I earned my BS in Nursing and my MS in Nursing Administration.

After St. Vincent's closed, I took on the role of Infection Control Coordinator at St. Barnabas Hospital in the Bronx, where I worked from 2010 until my retirement in 2017. Throughout my career, I always cherished being close to the bedside and helping staff and students learn and provide excellent nursing care.

In November 2022, we celebrated our 50th Anniversary, and I played a part in reconnecting with many classmates. It was wonderful to speak with friends I hadn't talked to in 50 years, and I hope to maintain these renewed connections. This past Spring and Summer, I also assisted in locating members of the Class of 1974.

I always look forward to attending the luncheon

and seeing colleagues I haven't seen in years. It's always a joy to reconnect with former staff, head nurses, and others who have significantly influenced my nursing career. I am forever grateful for all I learned from them.

I retired in 2017 and moved to Myrtle Beach, SC, in late 2021. However, I still spend my summers in New York, so I continue to have the best of both worlds.

### **Kathie Shea Contello-Class of '74**

#### **Director**

After graduation, I worked for 2 years in Pediatrics at St Vincent's. I had an opportunity to go to Colorado as a camp nurse and then stayed and worked in Colorado Springs in Pediatrics for a year. When I returned to Brooklyn, I worked at SUNY Downstate in Pediatric Surgery. Initially I was a staff nurse, became head nurse and then Nurse Educator in Pediatrics and NICU. During this time I earned my BSN from Long Island University and my MSN from SUNY Downstate.

While I was completing my MSN, I was offered the position of coordinator for Clinical trials in Pediatric HIV. This was a challenging and rewarding experience.

In 1992, I moved to Syracuse where I continued as the coordinator of clinical trials for Pediatric HIV at SUNY Upstate. I earned my Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Certificate at Syracuse University. I continued working in SUNY Upstate in Pediatric Infectious Disease and worked on clinical trials for influenza vaccines and RSV vaccines in children.

I retired in 2019 and have enjoyed time with my husband and family.

This past year I was the chairperson for the for the class of 1974's golden anniversary. It was a rewarding experience to work with my classmates and rekindle old friendships. I look forward to being part of St Vincent's Alumnae Board.

## **CLASS NOTES**

### **CLASS OF 1972**

#### **CELEBRATES ONE OF THEIR OWN!**

We are delighted to announce that Dr. Elizabeth Duthie, '72 was one of five individuals nationally to be honored for her work in advancing

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Compassionate care and making a positive impact on healthcare policy through advocacy for patient well-being. This prestigious award was conferred by the HealthImpact and The DAISY Foundation™ who honor nurses working to improve the health of populations.



Elizabeth Duthie, PhD, RN, CPPS, FAAN, is the Director of Patient Safety and Assistant Professor at Montefiore Medical Center. Her leadership led to the recognition of a significant barrier for nurses in New York to provide timely compassionate care to their patients. Dr. Duthie

responded to unintended consequences that emerged from a policy that prohibited standing orders within the New York state practice act. She worked tirelessly through stakeholder issues for 5 years to have standing orders reauthorized through new legislation to ensure delays in patient care are minimized.

Five individuals and one team were selected by a national panel of healthcare policy experts as the 2024 recipients. On June 4, 2024, Dr. Duthie was one of the awardees. Beth is pictured receiving her award with Dr. Garrett Chan, President and CEO of HealthImpact and Dr. Deb Zimmerman the CEO of the Daisy Foundation.

Congratulations Beth! We are so proud of you and all of your accomplishments!

### ATTENTION ALUMNI

It has been confirmed with Kay's Caps that our school caps are still available for purchase if you plan on marching in the St. Patrick's Day parade in full dress uniform. The caps (model # 5404B) are available for purchase for \$28. Orders can be placed by their website at: [info@kayscaps.com](mailto:info@kayscaps.com) or phone (516) 791 8500. Please allow several weeks for delivery.

Jeweler Wayne Silversmiths has several of our beautiful pins available for sale, with 3 different

models on hand: the traditional detailed embossed pin in 10K gold as well as 2 versions of the less expensive pin with a single layer process. Prices vary according to the gold market, so call directly for a quote: (914) 963 6962. No company website is available.

Inquiries were made at the luncheon if the gold or silver charm of our cap would be available to purchase. Wayne Silversmiths did not create the original charm, but they can replicate it if we have an order of at least 25 interested persons. Please contact the alumni association at [svhalum@gmail.com](mailto:svhalum@gmail.com) if you would like to get on a list for potential orders.

And lastly, Pat Costello has a very limited number of navy-blue school capes. If you would like to request one, please contact Pat directly at [pcostellosvh@gmail.com](mailto:pcostellosvh@gmail.com). If you have a cape or even a pin you would like to donate, it can be mailed to Pat at:

28 Cowdrey Street  
Warwick, Y 10990

### ST. PATRICK'S AWARD

The American Irish Historical Society recently hosted a press conference introducing the 2025 parade Grand Marshal, Michael Benn. I had the opportunity to attend the event and gained some insight and appreciation for the preparation and organization it takes to pull off the world's largest St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The parade is a fun event to be part of and many Alumni have made it a yearly tradition to march with their former classmates. In recent years we have had an increase in participation and this past year we had over 65 member's march. We



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looked great coming up Fifth Avenue and it turns out we weren't the only ones who thought so. At the October parade delegate meeting Marilyn Strafer and I, on behalf of the Alumni Association, accepted the award for 2nd place in the Specials category for recognition of our outstanding performance and participation in the 2024 NYC St Patrick's Day Parade.

We are looking forward to a repeat performance with an even bigger turn out in 2025. We won 3rd place in 2023, 2nd in 2024, let's strive for 1st in 2025. We encourage you to reach out to former classmates and join our line of march in the upcoming 264th parade celebration on St. Patrick's Day, Monday March 17, 2025. Please be mindful of the business attire dress code, and if you must wear sneakers, only black sneakers will be permitted. Sashes will be available to purchase for \$10. A limited number of capes are still available on a first come first serve basis for anyone choosing to march in full uniform (white gloves, shoes, skirt/slacks, cap and cape). Please contact Pat Costello if you are interested in a cape and Kay's Caps for a cap. Also keep an eye out for our postcard mailing with the line-up details as it gets closer.

## HOME BASED PALLIATIVE CARE PLANS FOR 2025

*Kathleen Maldini Hartmann '68*

The Home-Based Palliative Care Team at Good Shepherd Hospital (GSH) in Eswatini (Swaziland) continues to work hard caring for a dramatically expanded case load. The ravages of late diagnosed cancer continues, while the availability of resources, like morphine, has diminished. The team has taken on these added challenges providing the best care possible with deep compassion.

We will be returning to Eswatini in January to help the team provide patient care, while at the same time, working to ensure the sustainability of this critical program through advanced education opportunities. We are very excited to share with you that End of Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) will be sending 4 faculty members to conduct a Core Curriculum Course in February.



This will impact our program at GSH but we will be inviting other health care professionals in the country to attend the course in hopes of advancing palliative care for all Swazi people.

Expanding the nursing education program in Eswatini through this collaboration with ELNEC and the Medical University of South Carolina School of Nursing will lay the groundwork for a new generation of palliative care nurses.

Continuity of care for patients suffering from life threatening illness is our goal. Advanced education is our vehicle to reach this goal!

All your support over the years has been vital in helping us reach this goal. Patient care is and always will be our primary focus. Because of your generosity, Home Based Palliative Care continues to make a difference in the lives of the Swazi people.

Siyabonga Kakhulu, Thank you very much.

***"We Cannot Always Change the Outcome, but We Can Affect the Journey."***

**Ann Richardson**



To Donate: <https://cmmb.org/hartmann>

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## FALL GENERAL ZOOM MEETING: LEGACY WRITING FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN THE AGE OF COVID

Presented by Rachael Freed

### About the presenter:

Rachael Freed is the founder of Life-Legacies. She is a Senior Fellow at the University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality and Healing as well as a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and emeritus Marriage and Family Therapist.

Her writing about Legacy has appeared on Dr. Weil.com, where she served as a legacy expert, The Huffington Post, LegacyConnect.com and in the University of Minnesota Alumni Magazine.

She is a prolific author and is presently working on a new book titled Legacy Writing in the Age of Covid.

Of interest as well, Rachael has trained cardiac professionals internationally to support cardiac families. Her book and journal, Heartmates: A Guide for the Spouse and Family of the Heart Patient, and The Heartmates Journal: are unique resources empowering and supporting the emotional and spiritual recovery of families coping with heart disease.

Rachael opened by clarifying that legacy letters are not about finances or legal documents but rather about leaving a legacy of your values to the ones you love.

Rachael spoke of the history of Legacy Writing. She first became aware of the concept of the Ethical Will in 1995. Ethical Wills were originally mentioned in the book of Genesis. The patriarch, Jacob spoke to his sons with specific directions to share their values with their sons. Women were not included.

After a spiritual experience of hearing an inner voice, Rachael revolutionized this concept. Over time, she reimagined the Ethical Will and placed women at the heart of this process. She prioritized

encouraging women to access their voices for love and activism. She made this process modern and accessible. Legacy letters have now become healing tools for women.

Rachael shared the therapeutic benefits of writing legacy letters. She spoke of a chaplain who was able to calm a dying young man by encouraging him to write a legacy letter to someone dear to him. In another example, an older man was motivated to stay alive for the birth of his grandson so that he could complete a legacy letter to a child that he might never meet. Rachel emphasized the importance of writing letters to loved ones, particularly children and grandchildren as a way of sharing personal stories, values and hopes for the future.

Rachael emphasized that the letters are a gift to the writer as well. She outlined the following human needs that all women share. They include, the need to be known, to be connected, to belong, to make a difference, to express gratitude, to bless and be blessed, to put our lives in order and to be remembered.

### Writing a legacy letter:

Rachael explained, "You can write about almost anything, a letter of appreciation, a family secret, a value, your story, etc. The possibilities are endless."

### How to structure your letter:

Include these four components:

**Context:** what is going on in the world as you write.

**Content:** the story, the value, idea, memory, history that you want to share.

**What you learned:** it is important to include your perspective on the experience over time, your insights and how they impacted you.

**Blessing:** "I offer you this blessing...", "May you, your family, our country and the world be blessed with safety, strength, compassion and love."

When writing to young people, Rachael encouraged the writer not to be afraid of sharing what you see as their strengths and weaknesses.

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Remind them that no one is perfect. We are all born with a soul purpose that is unique to each individual. The writer can share their view of traits that can be nurtured and offer encouragement to work with limitations to turn them into strengths.

The legacy letter is a wonderful opportunity to share pearls of wisdom and guidance on how to live a good life.

Rachael also shared a story of a young woman who wrote a letter to her deceased father, illustrating the power of legacy writing in healing relationships even after the death of a significant person in one's life.

Rachael spoke to anyone who might feel intimidated or unsure of how to approach writing a letter. She reminded us that anyone who can write a personal letter or an email can compose a legacy letter.

Overall, Rachael's message was one the the importance of personal growth and self reflection. Women have important gifts to share about their values, their stories, their life's work and their careers with loved ones and future generations.

You can view Rachael's presentation at [stvincentschoolofnursingalums.org](http://stvincentschoolofnursingalums.org)

Rachael would love to hear from you especially if you have an experience working during Covid to share.

Rachael's email is [rachaelfreed@icloud.com](mailto:rachaelfreed@icloud.com)

#### **Recommended books:**

*Your Legacy Matters, Harvesting the Love and Lessons of Your Life* by Rachael Freed

*Women's Lives, Women's Legacies, Passing Your Beliefs and Blessings to Future Generation* by Rachael Freed

*The Women's Legacies Workbook for the Busy Woman* by Rachael Freed

*My Financial Legacy* by Rachael Freed

*The Myth of Closure* by Pauline Boss

<https://www.life-legacies.com/resources>

<https://www.life-legacies.com/index.html>

## **CLASS NOTES:**

Please keep in touch with us by sending us your class year and email address to [SVHalum@gmail.com](mailto:SVHalum@gmail.com).

Alum frequently request information about their classmates, particularly to reconnect for reunions.

## **WEBSITE:**

Please visit the site for review of Class Notes, Photo Gallery, SVH Shop, and more.

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[stvincentschoolofnursingalums.org](http://stvincentschoolofnursingalums.org)

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# ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD

Lorraine Geiser Seherin '55

Elizabeth Hanrahan Biehl '58

Anne McCardle Peterson '60, mother of Kristen Peterson Giacalone '95

Frances Kilgus '62

Eileen O'Halloran Holmes '64

Mary Ann McNamara Kiley '66

Barbara Frein Carroll '66

Agnes Mulry '66, sister of Eileen Mulry Rossiter '62 and Ann Mulry Conaty '64

Regina Gallagher McGowan '68

Cathleen Rothberg Gray '68

Noreen Leddy Bishar '72

Kathleen Haran '76

Brian Griffin, son of Rosemary Gale Linstroth '69

Stephen Duhamel, brother of Dorothy Duhamel O'Neill '69

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