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# College of Health Sciences Newsletter, September 2015

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*Old Dominion University*

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# The Depth of Dedication



Connie opens gifts during her sendoff celebration at the College of Health Sciences in August.

Connie Davis Croker, who worked with every COHS dean since the college was founded, retires after 33 years at ODU

**Story on Pages 4-5**



Connie and Dean Shelley Mishoe share a happy moment.

**Dean's Message: Associate Dean Richardean Benjamin****College prides itself on its service to the community**

"We Do Service Well" could be the mantra of the College of Health Sciences. Reflections of service are captured in this issue of our newsletter as we shine a spotlight on one of our stars. There are numerous quotes that exemplify what we represent in the College of Health Sciences. Our members serve the College, the University, the community and our respective professions.

For example, the epitome of service was represented by our faithful staff who are just as committed to service as others who represent the COHS family. It's also a real component of the faculty role, which is exemplified by the more than 20 percent of faculty and staff in the college who have been employed more than 25 years.

Students and faculty are actively involved in service to the community by the countless hours they provide. It's in our mission statement: "Improve individual and community health by advanced professional education, influential research, and responsive service."

**This Is How We Do Service Well**

- Monarch Physical Therapy Clinic completed more than 2092 patient visits during the 2014-2015 period.
- About 6,145 individuals received oral health education/screenings/clinical services free of charge from the service-learning community activities the senior dental hygiene students completed.
- An estimated \$77,302 was donated in professional dental hygiene oral healthcare services.
- The Center for Global Health Center, through its "Let's Move" initiative, partnered with the Virginia Beach Public Health Department.
- The President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll application included recognition of the service conducted by the students and faculty of the Nursing and Physical Therapy programs.



Richardean Benjamin,  
Associate Dean

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**From the Editor****Thanks for memories, dedication and guidance**

When I arrived at the College of Health Sciences in October 2014, it was a very unfamiliar terrain for me. Here I was, a career newspaper journalist in a foreign, yet exciting land. Things would be different to be sure.

Dean Shelley Mishoe did everything in her power to get me situated and make me feel at home, including introducing me to the one person who would be my guiding light when I needed anything: Connie Davis Croker.

Connie, who simply went by "Connie," was all smiles and all knowledgeable. If I had a question, she had an answer; if I had a problem, she had a solution; if I needed anything, she could provide it. And more importantly, if I just wanted someone to talk with about my day, she was right there.

Connie proved the ultimate resource for me at the college, and in a short span of time, we became friends. She was patient, kind and a real team player, epitomizing a lot of the characteristics of others around her. Connie was attentive to detail and insightful, but above all she cared. Given the enormous amount of energy that she brought to the job, you would have never known she had been at the post for about 30 years!

There is no wonder that Connie will be missed at the College of Health Sciences. I'm sure her job was not an easy one. So many situations, so many fires to put out, so many meetings to schedule, so many changes over the years. But she apparently had the right touch – and finished her service with style, grace, and many friends.

I call myself lucky to have met her and even luckier to call her my friend. As we parted ways following my interview with her, she had an extra twinkle in her eye – perhaps a sign of greener pastures ahead to spend with family and her new husband as well as a fulfilling career on which to reflect.



Irvin B. Harrell,  
Coordinator of  
Strategy & Marketing



## IPE Corner

### Event will teach shedding of healthcare silos

On Nov. 7, 2015, the College of Health Sciences will host an IPE student learning event. This awareness raising activity will be grounded in the principles inherent in **IPEC Competency #2**: using the knowledge of one's own role and those of other professions to appropriately assess and address the healthcare needs of the patients and populations served. The planned activities will create a forum where knowledge is shared, devoid of the traditional educational silos that inhibit interaction and collaboration across health professions. This learning activity will be one of many others offered in the future to educate students regarding the importance of interprofessional collaborative practice and how collaborative practice contributes to achieving the "Triple AIM" for optimizing the health system performance:

- Improving the patient experience of care (including quality and satisfaction);
- Improving the health of populations;
- And Reducing the per capita cost of health care.

Faculty and students from each College of Health Sciences school are expected to participate. Programming will consist of a three-hour morning session, followed by a student mixer from noon to 1 p.m., with a repeat session in the afternoon. Students can choose to participate in either the morning or afternoon session. Students who attend in the either morning or afternoon can also participate in the mixer. Registration for the morning session will start at 8 a.m. with programming starting at 9 a.m. Registration for the afternoon session will start at 11:30 a.m. and with programming beginning at 1pm.

Please contact Dr. Kimberly Adams Tufts, Assistant Dean for IPE, at [ktufts@odu.edu](mailto:ktufts@odu.edu) for further information. Please RVSP to Tammie Smith in the College of Health Sciences Dean's office at [tsmith@odu.edu](mailto:tsmith@odu.edu). Please indicate if you will be attending the morning or afternoon session.

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## A Warm Welcome Back

The College of Health Sciences hosted its Welcome Back Picnic on Sept. 15 for faculty, staff and students. There was food, prizes, music, dance, smiles and fun galore, under sunny September skies.





From left, Charlotte Alexander, Richardean Benjamin, Betsy Thomas, Connie Davis Croker, Dean Shelley Mishoe, Janice Bunting (behind the Dean), Debbie Bauman and Tammie Smith of the Dean's Office.

## Connie departs College of Health Sciences after legacy of service

**By Irvin B. Harrell**

**I**n 1982, Michael Jackson released “Thriller,” the biggest selling album of all time. Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, was born. And the blockbuster movie “E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial” hit the big screen.

But another important event occurred – on the campus of Old Dominion University. Connie Davis Croker began her illustrious career here, where she would spend that next 33 years serving up smiles and expertise to administrators, staff, students and so many others. Croker, who retired in August, holds the distinction of being the only executive assistant to the dean that the College of Health Sciences has ever had.

“I ended up at ODU after completing my Associates Degree at Tidewater Community College,” she said. “I saw the job in the newspaper and when I got here I was

surprised at how nice things were.”

Croker took a temporary position under the wing of Dr. Barbara Wallace, Director of Continuing Education within the School of Sciences & Health Professions, and started work in July 1982. After receiving a contract extension for a few years, Croker was approached in 1986 by Dr. Lindsay Rettie, the founding dean of the College of Health Sciences.

“She asked if I would be interested in transitioning into the position of Executive Secretary to the Dean,” Croker said. “Of course, I accepted the honor. In those days the recruiting process did not require as many steps as today, so a little paperwork and the job was mine.”

The rest, of course, is history. Over the next 29 years, ODU would grow leaps and bounds, expanding beyond its Norfolk campus to create satellite campuses in Hampton,

**See Connie Next page**

# CONNIE

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Virginia Beach and Portsmouth. The university also would build several important buildings, among them the Ted Constant Convocation Center, which hosts many big events and serves as home to ODU men's and women's basketball teams.

"Originally, the COHS Dean's Office along with the Schools of Medical Technology, Physical Therapy and Community & Environmental Health were located in Spong Hall and the two remaining schools, Nursing and Dental Hygiene were in the then Technology Building," Croker said. "Later, all schools including the Dean's Office were finally housed within the Health Sciences Building."

Croker's tenure was marked by many changes of the guard. There have been five ODU presidents since she arrived on campus as well as five deans for the College of Health Sciences.

"I've had the pleasure to work with Deans Lindsay Rettie, Cheryl Samuels, Andrew Balas, Deanne Shuman and Shelley Mishoe," she said. "I learned something different from each of them that I will carry along with me in the days ahead – from beginning under the deanship of the graceful Dean Rettie to ending with the very special team relationship with Dean Mishoe."

The parting of Croker is a bittersweet one, Dean Mishoe said.

"Connie's retirement reception was a culmination of her many years of outstanding service to every dean since the college was formed," she said. "It was a real joy to interact with Connie's family and friends during the reception and to witness the outpouring of fond remembrances, appreciation and best wishes to someone who has been so vital to this college."

Croker has seen the university evolve from typewriters to computers and high-tech printers. She still expresses her relief at working on projects without having to use correction tape and erasers.

One of the lessons that has served Croker well during her years at ODU is "Listen and you will learn," she says. Doing so has allowed her to explore and ask questions and build on her knowledge.



Carlton and Connie Croker celebrate her retirement.

The youngest of 10 children, Croker was born and raised in Suffolk. She recently remarried and still lives in Suffolk. During her time at ODU, she says she has always enjoyed the university environment and that it is one of the things she will miss the most.

"It's interesting to occasionally take a lunch break and walk through and tour the newly designed/renovated buildings and meet the staff and faculty and learn their purpose," she said.

As for her retirement plans, "reaching out and enjoying whatever makes me happy" is the first thing on Croker's list, she says.

"I'm embracing the blessing of retirement at the age of 54 and looking forward to the opportunity to spend time with my kids, grandkids, my new husband and of course some traveling," she said. "I'm leaving the door open for greater things to be added to this list."

To the end, Croker says, she still holds a strong commitment to the success and mission of the College of Health Sciences.

"The college is still in need of a new building because of its drastic growth," she said. "I look forward to visiting the new building one day."



## Climate Change and Global Health

The Pan American Health Organization and World Health Organization sponsored a three-day workshop in Montreal on Sept. 9 through Sept. 11 at McGill University. The workshop brought together PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centers from North America, South America and the Caribbean, U.S. and Canada based governmental organizations, United Nation and World bank to identify and discuss a national mitigation and adaptation plan on climate change impact on health in the region. Host organizations of the meeting were Institute National de Santé Publique du Québec (Canada) and National Institute of Environmental Health Science (NIEHS-USA).

Dr. Muge Akpinar-Elci, the director of the Center for Global Health, was invited to the event. She gave a presentation on “The Impact of Climate Change on Public Health in The Caribbean.”

She presented four of her studies that focused on various vulnerable groups to demonstrate the impact of climate change in the Caribbean. Her presentation highlighted the impact of climate change among small island communities and discussed their vulnerabilities. She also participated the panel discussion in which she shared her previous climate change and health-related research from the Caribbean.

On the final day of the workshop, all parties discussed the future plan for regional mitigation and adaptation strategies for climate change. The meeting welcomed about 100 participants from around 20 countries.

Part of the regional role of PAHO/WHO is to provide technical assistance to the governments in strengthening the management and prevention of health issues.



## Rite of passage



On Sept. 18, the College of Health Sciences School of Physical Therapy and Athletic Training presented its 2015 White Coat Ceremony in Physical Therapy at the University Theatre. Dr. George Maihafer served as the master of ceremonies for the special event.

## School of Nursing to study dementia caregiver challenges

Across the country, a vast number of people struggle with a situation that goes unnoticed by many around them: juggling work with providing care for a family member suffering from some form of dementia.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 47.5 million people worldwide live with dementia and that number is expected to increase to 75.6 million by 2030. WHO goes further to say that cases of dementia are estimated to more than triple by 2050.

Such caregiving is necessary and critical, but taking care of a family member at home can be an overwhelming task at times - beset with physical, emotional and economic pressures. Old Dominion University's School of Nursing recently received grant funding to explore how caregivers balance individual work commitments with family obligations and examine workplace practices related to those who face the challenges of being a working caregiver.

The \$25,500 grant was awarded through the 2015-2016 Commonwealth of Virginia Alzheimer's and Related Diseases Research Fund. The purpose of the fund, which was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1982, is "to stimulate innovative investigations into Alzheimer's disease and related disorders along a variety of avenues, such as the causes, epidemiology, diagnosis and treatment of the disorder; public policy and financing of care, and the social and psychological impacts of the disease upon the individual, family, and community."

Karen Karlowicz, chair of the School of Nursing, said she works with many faculty and staff members who are dealing with caregiver responsibilities related to family members who may or may not have memory problems.

"My leadership role requires that I create the space for employees to meet their family commitments, while also assuring that the business of the school goes uninterrupted," she said. "However, I am aware that for many unpaid caregivers who also hold a job, an understanding supervisor and flexible workplace policy are not a given."

Dean of the College of Health Sciences Shelley Mishoe said the study will address an issue that desperately needs attention.

"This research will inform policy for employers to incorporate best practices and provide supportive environments," she said. "I commend Dr. Karlowicz, not only for obtaining the grant to conduct this important research, but for being a role model to support faculty who are also dementia caregivers."

Karlowicz and her team plan to conduct their study at ODU and in businesses across Hampton Roads. It's unclear how many employers are aware of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) policies, recommendations from the Alzheimer's Workplace Alliance (AWA), or the American Association of Retired Persons Respect a Caregiver's Time (ReAct) program.

Karlowicz and her crew plan to identify:

- Factors that affect work-life balance for dementia caregivers; and
- Gaps, barriers, and facilitators in the applications of EEOC policy, as well as the AWA and ReACT guidelines.

In doing so, the school will be able to determine how existing dementia caregiver support policy is implemented in the workplace as well as identify the educational needs of dementia caregivers and workplace managers about these policies.

September Sanderlin, the vice president of human resources at ODU, signed a letter of support for Karlowicz's proposal.

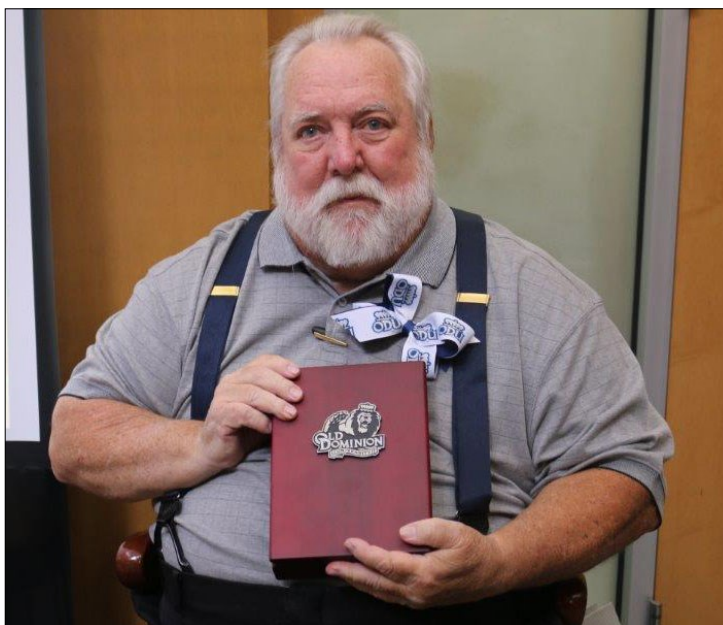
"This is an important issue that can have a significant impact on an employee's need for work-life balance," she said. "The outcome of this study will be interesting. I am pleased that the grant was awarded."

Currently, the study team is recruiting working caregivers to take part in focus group discussions. Questions regarding this research project may be directed to Karen Karlowicz, at (757) 683-5262 or kkarlowi@odu.edu.



## A Fond Farewell

The College of Health Sciences and its School of Community and Environmental Health held a retirement celebration for Dr. A. James English on Sept. 11 in the Health Sciences Atrium. English joined Old Dominion as an Assistant Professor in Environmental Health in 1988 and achieved the rank of Associate Professor in 2000. He served as the director of the B.S. in Environmental Health Program from 2006-2015. The program celebrated its 41st anniversary this year.



## Upcoming Events:

### October

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 10-13   | Fall Student Break   |
| 21 & 24 | CE Course: Dental Radiation Safety   |
| 15      | COHS Advisory Board Meetin, 8:30 –10:30 am<br>Location: President’s Dining Room, Webb Center<br>(Members Only) |
| 20      | Dean’s Student Advisory Committee Luncheon<br>12-1pm<br>Location: 2114 Health Sciences Bldg.                   |

### November

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 3     | Alpha Eta Induction Ceremony, 12:30-1:30 pm<br>Location: James Lynn Room, Webb Ctr. |
| 25    | University Closes 12:00 pm-Thanksgiving Holiday                                     |
| 26-27 | Thanksgiving Holiday-University Closed  |

### December

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 1        | COHS Holiday Luncheon Celebration, 11:30 am-1:30 pm<br>Location: Ted Convocation Center, Multipurpose Room |
| TBD      | Upsilon Phi Delta Induction Ceremony (Health Care Management Students)                                     |
| 4        | Classes End  |
| 5-11     | Final Exams  |
| 12       | Fall Commencement<br>Location: Ted Convocation Center  |
| 24-Jan 1 | University Closed for the Holiday  |