



# University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Program

ONE YEAR UPDATE

JULY 2011

## Pitt Nurse Anesthesia Program Moves Up To #3 in the 2011-2012 Rankings!

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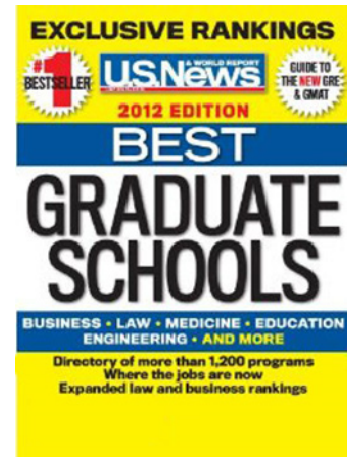
All Program Newsletters  
are on the website:  
[www.pitt.edu/~napcrna](http://www.pitt.edu/~napcrna)

The University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Program was once again ranked highly by US News and World Report.

The top five schools were:

1. United States Army Graduate Program in Anesthesiology
1. Virginia Commonwealth University
- 3. University of Pittsburgh**
3. Rush University (IL)
5. Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
5. Baylor University College of Medicine (TX)

A total of 101 (out of 110) Nurse Anesthesia Programs were ranked in the survey which reports responses from program faculty and administration. The Pitt Nurse Anesthesia Program was last ranked in 2008 (5th) and is one of only three US nurse anesthesia programs to remain in the top ten since rankings began in 1998.



### Program Faculty

**John O'Donnell CRNA, DrPH**  
Program Director

- Full time faculty since 1993
- Associate Professor
- Associate Director, WISER

**Richard Henker PhD, CRNA**  
Interim Chair, ATC Department,  
School of Nursing

- Full time NAP faculty since 2004
- Professor
- FAAN (Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing)

**Laura Palmer CRNA, MNEd**  
Assistant Director,  
Evaluation Coordinator

- Full time faculty since 1994
- DNP Student
- Website Design

**Michael Neft CRNA, DNP, MSN**  
Assistant Director,

- Clinical Site Coordinator  
DNP Program Coordinator
- Full time faculty since 2008
  - Assistant Professor

**Joseph Goode CRNA, MSN**  
Instructor and

- Admission Coordinator
- Faculty since October 2006
  - Staff CRNA, UPMC Presbyterian
  - PhD Student

**Bettina Dixon CRNA, MSN**  
Instructor

- Faculty since 1995
- Staff CRNA, UPMC Presbyterian

**Aaron Ostrowski CRNA, MSN**  
Instructor

- Faculty since December 2006
- Staff CRNA, UPMC Presbyterian and
- Specialty Student Coordinator

**Judith Mermigas CRNA, MSN**  
Instructor

- Full time faculty since January 2011
- DNP student  
(see new faculty profile page 9)

### STAFF

**Cynthia McClellan, BS**  
Administrative Assistant  
**Valerie Sabo**  
Part time Secretary

IN 2010 THE PROGRAM RECEIVED THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE 10 YEAR AANA  
COA ACCREDITATION WITHOUT ANY CITATIONS OR WEAKNESSES.



## John O'Donnell Honored with Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award 2011

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 John O'Donnell was selected from among more than 5000 faculty to receive the top teaching award conferred at the University of Pittsburgh. A selection committee, chaired by Juan J. Manfredi, vice provost for undergraduate studies, recommended the teaching award winners after reviewing supporting materials. Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg sent congratulatory letters to the winners, citing some of their accomplishments. "The very existence of this award underscores the high institutional priority that we assign to our teaching responsibilities, and your individual efforts stand as an inspiring example of excellence in the role of University teacher," Nordenberg wrote to the teaching award winners.

John O'Donnell of the School of Nursing was

honored for his contributions to the school and the nurse anesthesia program in particular. "Your dedication to teaching is clear as you have sought new opportunities for teaching students at all levels — from baccalaureate students to Pitt faculty — and in your development of workshops using innovative technologies to teach regional, national and international educators at the School of Nursing's instructional series," Nordenberg wrote. The chancellor further noted of O'Donnell, "your instruction is clear and concise and your passion for your subject is palpable. Your efforts do honor to the title of *teacher*." O'Donnell told the University Times he was surprised but deeply honored to learn he had won the award. "I know how competitive this award is."

*(excerpts taken from the March 3<sup>rd</sup> University Times vol. 43, No. 13).*



*Pictured from left to right:  
Chancellor Mark Nordenberg, John O'Donnell, Provost Patricia Beeson*

## Admissions Update

The Fall 2010/Spring 2011 interview and admissions cycle gives strong evidence of the continued national recognition of the quality of the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing, Nurse Anesthesia Program. We once again received applicants from across the country, and actually increased the number of states our applicants represented to 34, up from the last cycles number of 27. Of note, we now are beginning to receive significant numbers of inquiries from international applicants.

During the Fall 2010/Spring 2011 cycle, we received a total of 198 applicants. 120 applicants were offered interviews, 60 in the December interview session and 60 in the March interview session. We ultimately accepted 48 applicants for full-time admissions (24 for Fall of 2011 and 24 for Spring of 2012). These two admissions classes are comprised of students from 15 different states. We also provisionally accepted 10 other applicants for the next admissions cycle.

As demonstrated by the statistics noted, we have no shortage of applicants. However, if you are a University of Pittsburgh graduate, you are well aware of the commitment that it takes to be successful in our program and have a unique perspective on the qualities that are needed in achieving this goal. Additionally, our alumni are now working in a wide variety of settings around the country. With this in mind, we believe that all of these factors put you in an excellent position to help us in identifying nurses who would be great Pitt Nurse Anesthesia Program students. If you know of someone in your work setting who has the qualities necessary to become a nurse anesthetist, the kind of qualities you know we are looking for in our students, please encourage them to consider applying. You may direct prospective applicants to the program website for information or contact us via the program email address: [napcrna@pitt.edu](mailto:napcrna@pitt.edu)

Information about the program and the application process can be found on-line at [www.pitt.edu/~napcrna](http://www.pitt.edu/~napcrna) or [www.nursing.pitt.edu/academics/masters/anesthesia/index.jsp](http://www.nursing.pitt.edu/academics/masters/anesthesia/index.jsp)

## On-Line MSN to DNP Completion Program Approved!

In June of this year we received official notification from the Council on Accreditation and the Provost's Office at the University of Pittsburgh that the Nurse Anesthesia Program's On-Line MSN to DNP completion program has been approved. Dr. Michael Neft is the DNP Coordinator for the Nurse Anesthesia Program. Mike is intimately involved in assuring the success of the program and is working hard with the other faculty to get the on-line iteration running smoothly. This is an exciting, new phase in our program's history and the profession's evolution. Currently we plan to start a cohort of DNP completion students once annually with a Fall target. Admissions criteria and procedures can be found on-line at [www.nursing.pitt.edu/academics/dnp.jsp](http://www.nursing.pitt.edu/academics/dnp.jsp). Before starting the program it is important to have a few ideas about what one wants to do for a capstone project. Possible topics include projects encompassing the practice arena, educational innovation, healthcare policy or professional development. Our goal is to have the entire curriculum move into a doctoral framework (DNP) prior to the established AANA deadlines.

## Alumni Event at AANA Annual Meeting a Success

A student and alumni reception was held at the AANA National Meeting in Seattle, Washington in August 2010. More than 75 students, faculty and alumni participated in this inaugural event. Mr. Bunrum Ly, a nurse anesthetist from Angkor Children's Hospital in Siem Reap, Cambodia was in attendance and received a \$1000 check from Rachel Goettler (Class of 2011 Spring) to support their anesthesia department. The funds for this gift were raised through our 'Hoops for Hope' annual fundraiser.

We hope to continue the tradition of an annual 'Pitt Get-Together' in Boston, MA on Saturday August 6<sup>th</sup> 2011 with an informal gathering of students and alumni at Coogan's Pub. We plan to meet at 7:30 pm and there will be live musical entertainment and a cash bar. Coogan's Pub is located at 171 Milk Street, Boston, MA 02109. (617) 451-7415. [www.coogansboston.com](http://www.coogansboston.com)



What alumni are saying.....

*"I would like to commend Dr. O'Donnell and the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing on organizing this event in Seattle at the AANA meeting. I was very impressed with the turnout of Faculty, alumni, and students to this event. It was a great time had by all. I am hoping that this will become an annual event at the national meeting so that alumni and students can get together and be proud of where we came from. It is also a great way to catch up with your classmates and this is also a perfect opportunity to network with alumni that are scattered throughout the country if you are looking for a new job. This is truly one of the best nurse anesthesia programs in the country."*

Hail to Pitt!

Calvin B. Mah, MSN, CRNA  
Class of 2008



Alumni Reception  
AANA Meeting - Seattle Washington - August 2010



## Assistant Professor Michael Neft: Chair of the AANA Practice Committee

Dr. Michael Neft has recently been named as Chair of the AANA Practice Committee. Mike has served on the Practice Committee since September 2009. His role involves working closely with Lisa Thiemann, CRNA, MNA, the Senior Director of Professional Practice and his committee is to review Nurse Anesthesia Practice, review best practice papers and evidence and to make recommendations which are eventually incorporated into the AANA's practice documents. Each practice document is evaluated according to the AANA board-approved policy that specifies the schedule of when a certain type of document (i.e., a position statement) needs to be reassessed. The committee also looks at existing practice documents for relevancy (i.e. does the document still need to exist, or should it be absorbed into another, or can it be archived) and revision of those documents. In this way, the committee makes recommendations to the AANA Board of Directors about proposed changes in the organization's position in various areas. Additionally, if the Association's opinion on a practice-related issue is sought by another group, for example the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Practice Committee members are consulted and develop comments that may be used in drafting an Association response.



**AANA Practice Committee FY 2011**

*Sitting, left to right: Ewa Greenier (AANA Practice Staff), Garry Brydges, Michael Neft (Chair), Madeleine Duniho, Wesley Anderson (Student Representative).  
Standing, left-to-right: Monique Bowersox, Kymika Okechukwu (AANA Practice Staff), Laura Bonnano, Kathleen Farrell,  
Lisa Thiemann (AANA Senior Director of Professional Practice)*

Source: [www.aana.com](http://www.aana.com)

The committee's opinions in these situations are typically shared via the Professional Practice staff to other divisions of the Association, or directly to the AANA Board of Directors, as appropriate. If a practice crisis occurs, such as the re-use of needles situation in Nevada of a few years ago, the Practice Committee immediately becomes involved. In a circumstance such as this, its members reviewed the issue and made recommendations to the board about the position it felt the AANA should take, contributing to its published position statement (number 2.13 titled, "Safe Practices for Needle and Syringe Use") available at <http://www.aana.com/Resources.aspx?id=24804>

The members of the Practice Committee are selected by the President-elect of the AANA and vetted through the Board of Directors at its June meeting. A call for committee members is published in the AANA NewsBulletin in January of every year. It is from the applications received from this call that the President-elect selects committee members. All committee appointments are for one year. A cross section of committee members that are representative of the AANA membership is selected: clinicians, educators, administrators and researchers.

## Hoops for Hope Update

On May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011, the Nurse Anesthesia Program sponsored the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Hoops for Hope Basketball and Volleyball Tournament at Squaw Valley Park in Fox Chapel. Hoops for Hope is a fundraiser that benefits Angkor Hospital for Children in Seim Reap, Cambodia. This hospital is an independently operated non-government organization that is financed by Friends Without A Border, a not-for-profit organization. All direct patient care, clinical services, and education is made possible by donations. All the money raised by Hoops for Hope is directly donated to purchase anesthesia supplies for Angkor Hospital for Children. This year, more than 60 student nurse anesthetists, CRNAs, nurse anesthesia faculty, and their friends and family played in the tournament, creating 5 basketball and 6 volleyball teams. Five gift baskets made from donations from many generous businesses were also raffled off. The event was a success and raised a little over \$1,300 for Angkor Hospital for Children and a great time was had by all who attended.

## Pitt Nurse Anesthesia Students Attend PANA Lobby Day and AANA Mid-Year Assembly

University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Students Ashleigh Sullivan (Spring 2012), Jessica Ketchum (Spring 2012) attended PANA lobby day in January 2011. Ashleigh and Jessica are the University of Pittsburgh Student Representatives to PANA and have done work throughout the past year to keep students in Pennsylvania informed regarding key legislative and professional issues. Ms. Allison Lewis (Spring 2012) attended the AANA Midyear Assembly in April 2011. Allie has done work with the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association in the past and had the opportunity to meet with AANA leadership as well as federal legislators and staffers. All three students were then asked to report back to their classmates regarding key issues affecting PA CRNAs on the federal and state levels.

**WEBSITE**  
[www.pitt.edu/~napcrna](http://www.pitt.edu/~napcrna)

## Graduation Celebrations.....



April 30, 2011  
Amici's — 20 Graduates



December 18, 2010  
Omni William Penn — 23 Graduates

## Community Initiatives.....South Fayette Visit Update



On Friday, May 13, 2011, 65 junior and senior anatomy and physiology students travelled from South Fayette High School and Pine Richland to participate in a field trip to the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing and UPMC Presbyterian to learn about the professions of nursing and nurse anesthesia. This was the ninth annual visit for the South Fayette group as they followed a busy schedule that included OR observation and anesthesia simulation, focusing on endotracheal intubation of mannequins, epidural insertion, mock induction, and the use of the automatic external defibrillator.

The event required the coordinated efforts of numerous assistants, many of whom were students from the Nurse Anesthesia Program. They instructed, demonstrated and assisted the high school students through their planned activities. Other volunteers included the UPMC Presbyterian CRNAs who were excited to have the students shadow them in the OR during their observation experience. The day concluded with a pizza lunch sponsored by the CRNAs of UPMC Presbyterian and a presentation on how to become a nurse anesthetist. This event has been coordinated since its inception in 2003 by Aaron Ostrowski, CRNA, MSN. Karen Florian, CRNA provided oversight for the students that attended from Pine Richland High School this year.

## Mentoring Program Continues into 8th Year

The UPP/Pitt CRNA-Student Mentoring Partnership started by Krista Bragg CRNA, DNP in 2004 continues into the 8th year for this award winning program. Now under the direction of Marc and Kristen Wicker and Suellen Gallegos (graduates of the Class of 2008) with faculty oversight by Aaron Ostrowski, the incoming students are paired with a volunteer CRNA mentor at a networking event during their first month of the program, now held twice yearly because of the dual entry process. This event offers a forum for CRNAs to discuss issues related to mentoring and education and gain perspective of the life and needs of current students in this very demanding program. This mentoring partnership begins the process of socialization for the students into the professional role of a Nurse Anesthetist, led by the exemplary UPP CRNAs involved with this program. Response from both CRNA and student participants has been outstanding and several have established relationships that extend well beyond their time in the program.



Mentoring Event in February 2011 at the University Club in Oakland



## Simulation Update 2011.....SimWar

The 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu is said to have stated, "The battle is won or lost before it is ever fought." Many interpret the essential meaning of this phrase to be that the "battle" is "won" in the planning and preparation phase: the more attention that is paid to planning, preparing and practicing for projected events, the better the outcome will be. In a sense, the simulation curriculum at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing, Nurse Anesthesia Program utilizes this broad concept as its core philosophy. The deliberate practice that simulation exercises offer help to prepare our students for managing both routine and rare events in their future real-world practice. An exciting new example of how we are learning to leverage simulation exercises to meet multiple goals across our curriculum is one of our newest simulation offerings: SimWar

We have always offered a 'simulation' course related to the trauma content covered in our Advanced Principles III course. At times, this has been run as a high fidelity simulation course or alternatively as a problem based learning discussion. In the Spring of 2010, as a part of our commitment to continually review, revise and update our simulation offerings, we began to consider ways to improve this simulation experience. Intersecting with this review was the need to incorporate a simulation component into our new Team Training in Patient Safety course. The goals of the Team Training course are improving teamwork, safety skills and communication. This was an obvious natural fit with the core concepts of trauma management that are taught in Advanced Principles III, as well as the goal of gaining tough to acquire experience with trauma patients. The result is course that we feel meets

all of these vital curricular goals while engaging both students and faculty in an exciting and interactive process.

The overall course flow has 8 teams of 5 or 6 students competing against each other to see who can better manage a trauma simulation scenario. Groups of two teams take turns managing the same trauma simulation scenario. For example, Team-1 manages Scenario #1 while Team-2 waits in a holding area. Team-2 is unable to see Team-1's performance and vice-versa, but the rest of the class is observing the performance of both Team-1 and Team-2 via live video feed. After both teams have gone through the scenario, everyone returns to the classroom where faculty then lead a structured debriefing following the GAS model (Gather – Analyze – Summarize). The students who observed have the opportunity to ask the participating teams questions about their choices and actions. At the end of the debriefing, the observers score the teams based on a structured scoring rubric that incorporates principles of trauma management, planning and crew resource management, judgment, safety and

communication. Scoring for each category is on a 1 to 7 scale, with 1 indicating novice level performance and 7 indicating expert level performance. Four scenarios, with two teams per scenario, are run in the exact same manner. The two teams with the highest scores advance to a 'championship round', and compete in the management of another trauma simulation scenario for the SimWar championship.

This simulation exercise utilizes a broad range of interactive techniques, including live video feed of teams managing a trauma scenario, structured and supported debriefing processes and audience response systems for scoring. Students are engaged and interactive throughout, either by actually participating in the simulation scenario or by the debriefing, discussion and scoring processes. The use of audience response encourages peer analysis of each teams' performance. To enhance the competitive atmosphere, the winning and second place teams receive bonus points on their final examination in Advanced Principles. This is the second year that we have run SimWar and based on our scores and course



*SimWar mannequin with moulage: 30-year-old Pittsburgh firefighter battling blaze at high-rise. While searching for additional occupants overcome with smoke and fell out a 3rd story window into an area on the ground engulfed in flames- rescued by his fellow firefighters.*

feedback, student acceptance and interest continue to improve. They clearly take the competition aspect seriously as the difference between the first and second place scores have been extremely close both years. In the past, we have received feedback from our alumni that simulation courses such as Difficult Airway Management and Anesthesia Crisis Leadership Training (ACLT) have had a significant and positive impact on their ability to manage a crisis situation. We believe that SimWar will be equally successful in this regard, and look forward to hearing alumni feedback.



**University of Pittsburgh**  
Class of 2010 Fall and Class of 2011 Spring—43 Graduates  
97.7% First Time Pass Rate  
100% Retake Pass Rate

### Certification Examination Pass Rates (NCE)

**AANA National Pass Rate**  
2010—2294 Graduates  
88.9% First Time Pass Rate  
58.4% Retake Pass Rate (all attempts: N=394)  
Source: [www.nbcrna.com](http://www.nbcrna.com)



## International Initiatives: Update

### Cambodia

Laura Barnes and Jillian Klunk were selected as students for the Angkor Hospital for Children rotation in Siem Reap Cambodia that is available through the Pitt Nurse Anesthesia Program. They spent 2 weeks in October 2010 at Angkor Hospital for Children which is a non-government organization (NGO) that provides free care for children of families that are unable to pay. The hospital is staffed by a mix of expatriates from countries around the world and Cambodian staff. The hospital sees 300 to 500 outpatients per day and typically has an operating theatre schedule of 8-9 patients/day with 10-15 patients requiring anesthesia care in a procedure room. Three nurse anesthetists provide anesthesia services and also cover the patients in the recovery room. During this 2 week clinical rotation students are precepted by the 3 Cambodian nurse anesthetists. In addition, a Pitt faculty is present to supervise the teaching and provide continuing education and clinical consultation to the nurse anesthetists. Lessons learned from the Cambodia rotation include, providing care in a different culture, careful use of resources, and exposure to disease processes in a developing country.



Laura Barnes (left) and Jillian Klunk (right) at the floating village on Tonle Sape in Cambodia

### Program Alumni Volunteers in Bhutan

In May 2011, Ms. Heather Sabourin CRNA, MSN (Nurse Anesthesia Program Class of 2007) and her husband traveled to the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan for a one month volunteer position at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Refugee Hospital in the capital city of Thimphu. Some of the experiences in this unique country included an introduction to Royalty and governmental dignitaries on their first day followed by an offer to lecture at an International Anesthesia Health conference attended by a number of medical officials from several nations. In the hospital Heather participated in a wide range of cases including ortho, pediatric, GI, neuro, OB, burns and general cases. The staff was incredibly talented and demonstrated the ability to care for complex problems with relatively limited resources. The cultural and ethnic differences related to anesthesia and surgical care were an important learning area. In her advisory role, Heather stressed the importance of postop pain control but was impressed that many patients would frequently awaken without the slightest complaint. Heather continued to observe this phenomena noting that many Bhutanese are incredibly pain tolerant. Another difference noted was in resuscitative care as oxygen was not routinely used during CPR. Heather was able to emphasize the importance of compression and oxygenation and summarized her time in Bhutan as a "mutual exchange of teaching and learning between two very distinct cultures". Heather is a staff CRNA at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) in Lebanon, New Hampshire and also serves as the clinical coordinator for the University of New England Nurse Anesthesia Program.



## Faculty Appointed as Visiting Professor at a Chinese University

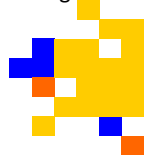
Richard Henker, PhD, RN, CRNA, FAAN was appointed as a Visiting Professor at Harbin Medical University by University President Dr. Baofeng Yang in November of 2010. Ties to Harbin Medical University started with Rick hosting Ms. Dongmei Lu as a Visiting Scholar from the School of Nursing at Harbin Medical University. Ms. Lu was in Pittsburgh from February to August of 2009 to gain expertise in curriculum development and teaching methods using simulation. Rick was invited by the School of Nursing at Harbin Medical University to provide lectures in November of 2010 on simulation and evidence based practice. Subsequently he was asked to return and provide additional lectures on Doctoral Education in Nursing and his research evaluating the association of genotypes with postoperative responses to opioids. During this second trip Rick was the Guest of Honor at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for the School of Nursing at Harbin Medical University. Dr. Li Meng, anesthesiologist at UPMC Presbyterian, has provided much of the support for this collaborative effort. Prior to practicing in the US, Dr. Meng practiced in Harbin, located in the north-eastern corner of China.



10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration for the School of Nursing at Harbin Medical University. Dr. Henker (third from right) is sitting next to the President Yang of the Harbin Medical University (second from right). Far right is the Dean of the School of Nursing, Dr. Young



Dr. Henker (center) with faculty from a School of Nursing in Japan and faculty from the School of Nursing at Harbin Medical University





## Three Program Graduates Receive Cameos of Caring Awards

Robert Dukic, Tim Lyons and John O'Donnell have a lot in common. They are all family men, CRNAs, products of our Nurse Anesthesia Program and can now claim to be Cameos of Caring winners as well. Bob graduated from the University Health Center of Pittsburgh (UHCP) School of Anesthesia and was a clinical instructor for both O'Donnell and Lyons. O'Donnell graduated from the first class of the Pitt program which arose from the UHCP program in 1991 and Lyons followed in their footsteps one decade later. These three program graduates received the awards at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing's 12th Annual Cameos of Caring Awards Gala at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center on November 6, 2010. The Cameos of Caring award was created in 1998 to honor exceptional nurses who work at acute care hospitals.

**Robert Dukic, CRNA**, was the 2010 UPP Anesthesiology recipient of the Cameos of Caring Award. He was honored for his excellence as a clinical nurse anesthetist. Bob, a trauma/transplant CRNA at UPMC Presbyterian, has been working as a nurse anesthetist for 22 years. As one family member stated, "My whole family is much relieved to know that our son at that time was in good hands - like they say in All State commercials." UPMC is indeed very lucky to have such a professional as Bob working amongst us. As a clinical instructor, his teaching skills have helped foster confidence and independent thinking in his students.

**Tim Lyons, CRNA, MSN**, received the 2010 Cameos of Caring Advanced Practice Nurse Award. A committee of University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing faculty reviewed and selected eight individuals to receive this prestigious Cameos of Caring Advanced Practice Award. Tim, also a trauma/transplant CRNA has been working as a nurse anesthetist for nine years at UPMC Presbyterian. He has been very active in the CVP and Difficult Airway workshop at the WISER Center and the educational endeavors for the CRNAs. In addition, the anesthesia students have consistently given him excellent rankings for his evidenced based management and compassion.

**John O'Donnell CRNA, DrPH** who is the Director of the CRNA program at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Nursing was the recipient of the 2010 Cameos of Caring Educators award. John has been the Program Director of the CRNA program for 15 years and is also Associate Director for Nursing Education at The University of Pittsburgh WISER Institute for Simulation, Education and Research. In addition, he has been the recipient of numerous awards including the AANA National Program Director of the year award in 2007 presented at the 75th Annual meeting in Cleveland and the Ake Grenvick Award for Excellence in Education and Assessment in Stimulation, WISER, University of Pittsburgh in 2009. He has authored and co-authored many publications and book chapters in his career and has received numerous educational grants and funding. He is recognized on a national and international level for his accomplishments.

*Adapted with permission from the UPMC Department of Anesthesiology Website  
[http://www.anes.upmc.edu/News/2010/1012\\_CRNAs\\_Cameos\\_of\\_Caring.aspx](http://www.anes.upmc.edu/News/2010/1012_CRNAs_Cameos_of_Caring.aspx) accessed June 30, 2011*



*Left to right: John O'Donnell, Robert Dukic, Tim Lyons*

## Scholarships

University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing  
Cameos of Caring Scholarship  
Awarded November 6, 2010  
Spirit of Pittsburgh Ballroom at the David L.  
Lawrence Convention Center

*Five Nurse Anesthesia Students Received  
one of the 24 Scholarships*

Louise Cortinovis, Class of 2012 - Fall  
Candace Hipple, Class of 2012 - Fall  
Susan Miller, Class of 2012 - Fall  
Julie Muckle, Class of 2011 - Fall  
Lacy Scalise Dailey, Class of 2010 - Fall



*Candace Hipple, Elizabeth Dailey, Julie Muckle, Louise Cortinovis*



## Meet the Newest Faculty.....

In January of 2011 Judith A. Mermigas, CRNA, MSN joined the faculty at the University of Pittsburgh School of Anesthesia Program. A graduate of the West Penn Hospital School of Nursing in 1984, Judy worked as a staff RN in the Operating Room at Presbyterian Hospital in Pittsburgh. Ms. Mermigas obtained her BSN in the Accelerated RN to BSN program in April 1989 at Carlow College. Ms. Mermigas entered the University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia program in September of 1989. As a student in the first Masters prepared Nurse Anesthesia Program at the University, Ms. Mermigas was the recipient of the Agatha Hodgins Award, for student nurse anesthetist clinical and academic excellence.



Judith Mermigas, CRNA, MSN

Ms. Mermigas worked as a graduate Nurse Anesthetist at Montifiore Hospital, before taking a staff CRNA position at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh in August of 1993. As a staff CRNA at Children's Hospital, Ms. Mermigas participated in the clinical education of SRNAs. In addition, she assisted in the training, precepting and evaluation of intubation skills for RNs on the Children's Hospital Transport Team.

Since accepting the non-tenured faculty position at the University, Ms. Mermigas has been accepted to the DNP program at the Francis Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University. Her scholarly work will focus on Simulation based learning, with an emphasis on Pediatric Anesthesia.



**John O'Donnell** was appointed to the **Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation Board of Directors** by the AANA in 2003 and is entering his 8<sup>th</sup> year serving in this capacity. John is one of only two CRNAs on this prestigious 40 member board. In June 2011 he was a team leader for the APSF medication safety conference held in Phoenix, Arizona.

## ALUMNI FACTS

There are **541 graduates** since the first MSN Program class in 1991.

We have graduates in **38 States.**

Did you know that the CRNA Faculty combined have more than **140 years** of clinical experience!

## Publications: Faculty, Alumni and Students

### JOURNAL ARTICLES:

**O'Donnell JM (Faculty), Goode JS Jr (Faculty), Henker R (Faculty),** Kelsey S, Bircher, NG, Peele P, Bradle J, Close J, Engberg R, Sutton-Tyrrell K. *Effect of a Simulation Educational Intervention on Knowledge, Attitude, and Patient Transfer Skills: From the Simulation Laboratory to the Clinical Setting.* [Simulation in Healthcare](#). 6(2):84-93. 2011 April.

Fero L, **O'Donnell JM (Faculty),** Zullo T, et al. *Critical thinking skills in nursing students: comparison of simulation-based performance with metrics.* [Journal of Advanced Nursing](#). 66(10):2182-2193. 2010 October.

Burns, HK, **O'Donnell JM (Faculty), Artman JA. (Class of 2005).** *High-fidelity Simulation in Teaching Problem Solving to 1st-Year Nursing Students: A Novel Use of the Nursing Process.* [Clinical Simulation in Nursing](#). 6(3): e87-e95. 2010 September.

**Soliday FK (Class of 2008),** Conley YP, **Henker R (Faculty).** *Pseudocholinesterase Deficiency: A Comprehensive Review of Genetic, Acquired, and Drug Influences.* [AANA Journal](#). 78(4):313-320. 2010 August.

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Jenna Lashley J, Wesmiller S, **Scalise E (Class of 2010 Fall), Henker R (Faculty),** Dai F, Sereika S, Lariviere W, Meng L, Gruen G, Tarkin I, Siska P, Conley Y. *The Association of Postoperative Pain and Opioids with Genotypes for Cytochrome 4502D6 (CYP2D6) in Orthopedic Trauma Patients.* Poster Presentation at the AANA National Meeting - Seattle, WA August 2010. [AANA Journal](#) State of the Science Oral and Poster Presentations, 78(5), 424, 2010 October.

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**Barnes L (Class of 2010 Fall).** *A Randomized, Prospective, Placebo-Controlled, Double Blind Trial to Evaluate the Efficacy of Pre-operative Aprepitant plus Ondansetron vs Ondansetron plus placebo in Patients at High Risk for Post Operative Nausea and Vomiting (PONV) undergoing Ambulatory Plastic Surgery.* Poster Presentation at the AANA National Meeting - Seattle, WA August 2010. [AANA Journal](#) State of the Science Oral and Poster Presentations, 78(5), 421, 2010 October.

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# Awards and Scholarships: Faculty, Alumni and Students



## American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)

### AANA Student Researcher of the Year Award

One of 10 students nationally recognized yearly

Laura Barnes, Class of 2010 Fall    Awarded December 2010



### AANA Education Committee - Sponsor a Student Award

One of 15-20 students selected from national competition for funding to attend the February Assembly of School Faculty.

Paul McMullen, Class of 2011 Spring (2011 Orlando)



## Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists (PANA)

Awarded April 30, 2011 at the Spring Symposium in Hershey PA



Aaron Ostrowski (left) Tim Lyons (right)

### PANA Didactic Instructor of the Year

Aaron Ostrowski, (Faculty) CRNA, MSN

Instructor, University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Program  
Specialty Clinical Coordinator, UPMC Presbyterian  
Alumni, University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Program

### PANA Clinician of the Year

Tim Lyons, CRNA, MSN

Alumni, University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Program  
Clinical Instructor, UPMC Presbyterian

## PANA OFFICERS

Alumni and Faculty

### 2010-2011

#### PRESIDENT

Kelly Wiltse Nicely, MSN, CRNA, PhD (Class of 2005)

#### SECRETARY

Michael Neft, DNP, CRNA (Faculty)

#### TRUSTEES

2009-2011

Jason Bauer, MSN, CRNA (Class of 2004)

Brian Keller, MSN, CRNA (Class of 2006)



## Nightingale Awards of Pennsylvania

2010 Advanced Degree Scholarship  
Awarded October 22, 2010 in Camp Hill, PA

Only one advanced degree student is selected from all of the nursing programs in Pennsylvania

Julie Muckle, Class of 2011 Fall

University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing  
Graduate Nursing Student Organization  
2011 Officers

President: **Janelle Henkle**, Class of 2012 Fall  
Secretary: **Meredith Kim**, Class of 2012 Spring  
Treasurer: **Tawni Fuller**, Class of 2012 Spring

**University of Pittsburgh 90<sup>th</sup> LANTERN NIGHT Ceremony**  
Sunday, August 29, 2010 — Heinz Memorial Chapel  
A tradition honoring freshman women

**Keynote Speaker**

**Loren Pulliam, CRNA, MSN (Class of 1992)**  
Loren addressed the standing-room only audience of over 400 and attended a reception in the Commons Room of the Cathedral of Learning following the ceremony.

[READ MORE in Pitt Nurse - Fall 2010 page 33](#)



## University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing Honors and Scholarships

Awarded at Convocation - September 2010  
Dorothy Drake Brooks Endowment  
Kelley Smith, Class of 2011 Fall

Patricia P. Lynch Scholarship  
Melissa Aretz, Class of 2010 Fall

W. Edward and Jeannette L. Wolfe Memorial Fund  
Laura Barnes, Class of 2010 Fall



Demand is Running High for Nurse Anesthesia Grads

## University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing

### [Pitt Nurse Magazine](#)

Feature Story  
Fall 2010 — page 10-11

Brent Dunworth, CRNA, MSN  
Class of 1999  
and Kelly Wiltse, PhD, CRNA, MSN  
Class of 2005



These awards are given to deserving students in each graduating class

## University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Program Awards

### Agatha Hodgins Award for Academic and Clinical Excellence

John Szymanski, Class of 2011 Spring  
 Jessica Burns, Class of 2010 Fall

### Helen Lamb CRNA Educator Award

*In Recognition of Dedication and Valuable Contributions to Instructional Excellence as a Nurse Anesthesia Student*  
 Rachel Goettler and Paul McMullen, Class of 2011 Spring  
 Laura Pakula, Class of 2010 Fall

### Academic Achievement Award

Jenna Rickert, Kim Wysocki, John Szymanski, Jordan Thompson,  
 Jessica Novak, Class of 2011 Spring  
 Laura Barnes, Jessica Burns, Sarah Harber, Jillian Klunk,  
 Class of 2010 Fall

### "Above and Beyond" Service Award

Michael Cellurale and Rachel Goettler, Class of 2011 Spring  
 Elizabeth Dailey and Keith Wieland, Class of 2010 Fall

## Nurse Anesthesia Program Endowment Awards

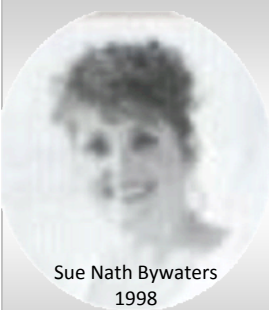
### Susan Nath Bywaters Endowment Award

John Szymanski, Class of 2011 Spring  
 Kirsten Radaker and Keith Wieland, Class of 2010 Fall

### Sandra Sell SPIRIT Award

Michael Cellurale, Class of 2011 Spring  
 Melissa Aretz, Class of 2010 Fall

#### About the endowments.....



Sue Nath Bywaters  
1998

The Sue Nath Bywaters Endowment was established in 1999 to acknowledge individuals who face professional and personal challenges. Sue overcame numerous obstacles in her life and was committed to counseling others in need. The Sandra Sell SPIRIT Award Fund began in 2009 and recognizes those that embrace the qualities of this dynamic and respected colleague. Donations can be made through the University directed to either of these funds allowing future students to benefit.

For more information please contact:

Janice Devine  
 Director of Development  
 (412) 624-7541 or toll free (866) 217-1124  
 E-mail: [jad154@pitt.edu](mailto:jad154@pitt.edu)

University of Pittsburgh  
 School of Nursing  
 218 Victoria Building  
 3500 Victoria Street  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15261



Sandra Sell  
2009

### Nurse Anesthesia Program Student Clinical Honors

*Nominated by the Clinical Coordinator for exemplary performance*

- Kim Wysocki — Class of 2011 Spring
- Holli Hoffman — Class of 2011 Fall
- Brett Fadgen — Class of 2011 Fall
- Nicole Appel — Class of 2012 Fall

### Mary DePaolis Lutzo, CRNA Clinical Instructor Award

The recipient of this award is selected annually by the graduating students from the many CRNA clinical instructors throughout our clinical sites. Dr. Lutzo was the former Program Director whose vision and leadership in nurse anesthesia education transitioned the UHCP School of Anesthesia for Nurses into the current graduate program housed at the School of Nursing. Mary always valued the contributions of the clinical faculty as the backbone of nurse anesthesia education and this award recognizes their commitment and dedication to our students.

Jennifer Kundick CRNA, MSN — April 2011  
 Nadine Kelly CRNA, BSN — December 2010

### Stephen C. Finestone, MD Clinical Instructor Award

The recipient of this award is selected annually by the graduating students from the many physician clinical instructors throughout our clinical sites. This award was established in 1994 to honor the contributions of Dr. Stephen Finestone to the education of Nurse Anesthetists and recognize the support of our physician faculty to clinical education. Dr. Finestone was the Medical Director of the UHCP School of Nurse Anesthesia from its early beginnings throughout the transition to the current program.

Dr. Manuel Vallejo — April 2011  
 Dr. Robert Boretsky — December 2010

Photos of award winners are on the Program Website. Please visit!

## Alumni Profiles

### Krista Bragg CRNA, BSN, MSN (Pitt 2000), DNP (Pitt 2010)

Dr. Krista Bragg came to the University of Pittsburgh as a highly accomplished undergraduate student at the University of Alabama, Birmingham where she graduated summa cum laude. During the Pitt program, Krista was equally successful winning numerous awards and scholarships and being named the top student anesthetist in Pennsylvania (2000). After graduation Krista served as adjunct faculty for the University of Pittsburgh graduate school of nursing in addition to a full time role as staff nurse anesthetist with UPP.

Krista conceived and administered (with input from UPMC CRNAs and University of Pittsburgh faculty) the national award winning UPMC/University of Pittsburgh Mentoring Partnership which pairs more than 80 graduate students with established UPMC nurse anesthetists annually.

After several years in progressive leadership with UPP Anesthesiology, Dr. Bragg served in advanced leadership roles with the UPMC executive management team including the development of new services at Magee Women's Hospital and as clinical director, surgical oncology services UPMC Shadyside hospital. Krista has published multiple clinical articles on patient safety topics in addition to a book chapter on pediatric Perianesthesia care as well as a textbook titled *Questions and Answers in Perianesthesia Care: Pediatrics* (Specialty Health Education 2005). During this time frame, Dr. Bragg presented a variety of clinical and patient safety topics on the local and national level.

Krista is currently working as a staff CRNA with Sarasota Anesthesiologists in Florida while long distance training for half and full marathons. Her DNP Capstone project on Barriers to the Surgical Time Out (a national snapshot on provider perceptions) was accepted for publication in *Nursing Management Magazine* and she has several other publications on patient safety as well as health/fitness pending.

In the future, Krista plans to continue seeking opportunities to publish and provide consultative services on perioperative patient safety topics as well as issues pertaining to healthcare provider wellness and fitness. In addition to continuing local and state presentations, several national societies have invited her to speak at conferences in the next year on patient safety and health care provider health/wellness topics. A second book proposal is in the works. An avid runner, Krista plans to 'represent' by finishing her first full marathon this year as well as many more half-marathons and possibly an ultra-marathon next year.

"Go Pitt Panthers!"

### Carla Linsenbigler CRNA, MSN (Pitt 2003)

Carla started her nurse anesthesia career at Mercy Hospital then transferred to West Penn Hospital in 2006. Carla's clinical experience is extensive and includes management of anesthesia for diverse populations, obstetric, neonatal, critically ill, trauma and burn patients. She became one of the nurse anesthesia student coordinators for Excelsior and Allegheny Valley in 2006. It is obvious that she strives to advance our profession with her superior clinical skills and dedication in teaching nurse anesthesia students to deliver excellent and safe anesthesia. Her qualifications and dedication to West Penn Hospital earned her the Assistant Chief position in 2009.

Carla extended her educational commitment to fellow anesthesia professionals as the Program Director of the 2010 & 2011 West Penn Allegheny Health System Anesthesia Conference held at Nemacolin Woodlands. This endeavor has been quite successful and Carla plans to continue being a part of the planning committee this year. Carla is a leader in our profession, holding several positions on the PANA District V Board. She was a trustee in 2008, President Elect in 2009 and President in 2010. Her contributions have been vital in keeping the district alive and active.

In addition to her full time responsibilities at West Penn, Carla works on a casual basis for Drs. Datillo, Hall and Cillo (oral maxillofacial surgeons). Her success in this practice has been recognized as she has been asked to teach a series of classes on office-based anesthesia to their surgical residents. Carla also presented at the West Penn Anesthesia Tech conference for the past two years. These activities confirm Carla's commitments to educating others about nurse anesthesia practice, working cooperatively and professionally. Carla goes above and beyond and makes an outstanding CRNA role model. Her participation and efforts in education and numerous professional activities are commendable. We are pleased to highlight Carla's career in this year's alumni profile.

### Major Chuck Giordano CRNA, BSN (Pitt 1999), MSN (Pitt 2006)

Major Chuck Giordano is a second generation CRNA having followed in his father's footsteps. Chuck began his pursuit of becoming an anesthetist by completing undergraduate training at the University of Pittsburgh in 1999. After this he was stationed at Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, the U S Air Force's premier medical facility. Upon some good advice from friends in the nurse anesthesia program at Pitt, he decided to come back to the University for graduate school. He has been very busy since graduation. In the last five years he has worked for UPMC, Anesthesia Associates of York, as well as starting a small business working as a locum tenens when available. He has maintained his career in the USAF by joining the Reserves.

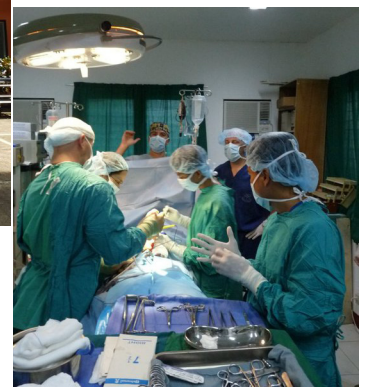
During the Summer of 2010 Major Giordano was deployed to the Philippines as a part of Operation Enduring Freedom. There he was the sole American anesthesia provider for Joint Special Operations Task Force - Philippines, on the Island of Jolo. He along with his Forward Surgical Team members were responsible for the care of over 200 American forces and assisted in the care of several Philippine casualties.

In the near future, Chuck has taken an opportunity to join his father in a small OB Practice in Utica, New York where he hopes to teach the old man a few tricks he learned at his venerable Alma Mater.



*Captain Giordano (far right) and his surgical team colleagues at the JOLO Trauma Center*

*Captain Giordano directing activity in the OR at Jolo trauma center... notice he doesn't go anywhere without his Pitt OR hat!*



**Alumni — Keep in Touch**  
Let us know what you are up to!