NEW DIRECTOR, NEW PROGRAM

1946 - 67
Student in Operating Room, 1948
NEW DIRECTOR, NEW PROGRAM

In April, 1946, Miss Burgess had introduced the new Director of the School to the faculty. "Miss Kyle wore a royal blue wool dress which emphasized her cheerful expression. We were all happy to welcome her and this was, naturally, mingled with curiosity toward the future."

Irma M. Kyle, like her predecessor, started her career as a school teacher. The youngest of four children, she was raised in a small Iowa town. She had followed her brother and two sisters into the education field by earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from Parsons College in Fairfield, Iowa, in 1932. She was not happy with her career as a rural teacher, and breaking with family tradition, she entered the Evanston Hospital School of Nursing in Evanston, Illinois. After earning her baccalaureate degree she then earned a Master’s degree in nursing education from the University of Chicago in 1940. She had held the position of Nursing Arts instructor at Cook County Hospital School of Nursing from 1940 to 1946. Her career at the University of Nebraska School of Nursing officially began on April 1, 1946.

Miss Kyle was undoubtedly qualified to direct the School. She intensified the "curiosity" of the faculty and hospital staff, however, when she announced that she would live in an apartment rather than in the nurses' home. Miss Burgess had always lived with her students and graduate nurses; would this new Director break other traditions as well?
A change which came quickly was Miss Kyle’s decision to admit only one class each year, rather than two or three, as had been the practice. Beginning in 1946, all students started their course of study in August or September. This greatly facilitated planning of courses and eliminated the need to teach courses several times a year.

The three-year professional curriculum totaled 62 academic credit hours; nursing practice totaled 1095 days. Students who wanted to earn the Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree completed an additional 68 credit hours of general education courses. The curriculum described in the 1946-1947 Bulletin included a pre-clinical term, a freshman term, and junior and senior terms:?

### SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL COURSES

#### First Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preclinical Term</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
<th>Classes and Lect.</th>
<th>Laboratory &amp; Demon.</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<td>Nutrition, Foods and Cookery</td>
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<td>15</td>
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#### Freshman Term

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<td>Physical Therapy</td>
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<td>Public Health</td>
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<td>Diet Therapy</td>
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<td>Pharmacology II</td>
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24
Social Problems
in Nursing .................. 18 18 1
Medical Nursing I .................. 54 3
General Medicine .................. 18
Principles Nursing
in Medicine .................. 36 4
Surgical Nursing I .................. 72
General Surgery .................. 21
Principles of Nursing
in Surgery .................. 24
Urology .................. 6
Neurosurgery .................. 6
Operating Room
Technic .................. 15
Nursing Arts II .................. 36 36 2
Sociology .................. 36 36 2
Total .................. 16.8

Junior Year

First Semester
Medical Nursing II .................. 69 3.8
Dermatology and
Syphilology,
and Tuberculosis .................. 22
Communicable Disease .................. 14
Communicable Disease
Nursing .................. 15
Neurology .................. 9
Neurological Nursing .................. 9
Surgical Nursing II .................. 60 3
Eye, Ear, Nose
and Throat .................. 18
Gynecology .................. 18
Orthopedics .................. 24
Principles of Pediatrics .................. 30 30 1.6
Principles of Nursing
in Pediatrics .................. 36 36 2
Principles of Obstetrics .................. 18 18
Principles of Nursing
in Obstetrics .................. 36 36 2
Total .................. 13.4

25
Second Semester
Sanitation and Community
Hygiene .......................... 18 18 1
Emergency Nursing and First Aid .............. 20 20 1
Professional
Adjustments II .................. 24 24 1.3
History of Nursing ............... 36 36 2
Total ......................... 5.3

Senior Year
Psychiatry and Neurology ............... 24 24 1.3
Principles of Nursing in Psychiatry and Neurology ............... 36 36 2
Total ......................... 3.3
GRAND TOTAL CREDIT HOURS 62.8

SUMMARY OF NURSING PRACTICE

Courses of theory are given coordinately, as far as possible, with practice.

APPROXIMATE ASSIGNMENTS

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<td>Diet Kitchen .............. 42</td>
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<td>Medical Practice .......... 98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surgical Nursing</td>
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<td>Operating Room .............. 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Surgery ............ 56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surgical Specialties .......... 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gynecology, E.E.N.T., Orthopedics and Fractures, Urology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pediatrics including Milk Laboratory .......... 84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obstetrics including New-Born Nursery and Delivery Room .......... 112</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admitting Department ......... 14</td>
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</table>
Psychiatric Nursing ......................................... 84
Communicable Disease Nursing ......................... 42
Dispensary .................................................. 28
Public Health ............................................... 35
Senior Electives .......................................... 164
Vacation .................................................... 70

Total ....................................................... 1,095

Applicants for admission to the School were required to meet entrance requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences and preference was given to applicants who ranked in the upper fourth of their high school class and who had one year of acceptable college work. Admission was still restricted to unmarried women between the ages of 18 and 30; students who married before completing the program were asked to withdraw from the school. In 1947 students could marry within three months of graduation with written consent from parents and the Director of the School.

A few brave students were known to flout the marriage restriction and were married secretly; classmates often knew of the marriage, but protected the bride from dismissal by keeping the secret from the
Faculty, 1947: (l to r) Maxine Jacks, Mercedes Breen, Irma Kyle, Vera Warner, Hilda Helmke, Lola Williams

First annual meeting of the Nebraska State Student Nurses’ Association, October 18, 1949
School administration. The married student continued to live in the dormitory and the Director either was unaware of, or chose to ignore, the infraction.

While the marriage rule seemed unreasonable to some, most nursing students of that period would have agreed that life as a student left precious little time for any kind of social life. Students were still providing most of the nursing care to patients at University Hospital. Registered nurses (all of whom were University graduates in 1948) held the Head Nurse positions in the hospital and served as Assistant Instructors of Nursing in their clinical specialties. The day, evening, and night supervisors were also graduate nurses. Very few graduate nurses held positions as staff nurses; nursing care was provided by student nurses in return for their board and room. Students paid only $96.00 per year for tuition, $20.00 per year for books, and $50.00 for their uniforms.

A typical week for a student included 8 to 10 hours of classroom instruction and 40 or more hours of clinical work. In principle, the classroom hours were to be included in the 40 hour work week, but in reality this rarely occurred since many students were assigned to evening and night duty; classes were held during the day hours, and class attendance was mandatory regardless of the shift worked. When study time was accounted for, a student could easily put in a 70 to 80 hour week.

Despite the grueling schedule of the students, Miss Kyle was successful in helping them form a Student Council in 1949; this was the first attempt at self-governance by the student body, and the Council remained active throughout the 1950’s and 1960’s. All social ac-

Elizabeth Kentopp, Clinical Instructor in Obstetrics, 1948
tivities were centered around the School and the hospital; the teas, dances, Christmas parties, and picnics of the Burgess era continued.

Miss Kyle recognized the need for graduate nurses and appealed to alumnae to work at University Hospital, especially on the evening shift, week-ends, and in the summer to relieve students, head nurses, and supervisors for vacations. Her appeal in 1948 offered graduates $180.00 per month for full-time employment and $6.50 per day for part-time work. A $10.00 bonus was offered for each three-week tour of evening or night duty. Her appeal apparently went unheeded, as she repeated her plea many times in the next few years.

Despite the lack of general duty staff nurses, Miss Kyle did have a small group of dedicated women to assist her in running the hospital and the School. The distinction between faculty and hospital staff was nebulous; most had responsibility for nursing service as well as nursing education. Maxine White Jacks '28, Vera Warner '29, Lola Williams '34, and Clare Fleming '36 were faculty members at this time. Mercedes Breen held her faculty position until her retirement in 1953; she had served the School for 26 years. These women held faculty status and were responsible for the theory or lecture portion of the nursing curriculum.

Ivy Day, 1950
Nurses who were primarily service oriented, but had instructor or associate status with the School included Edna Braun, Adeline Cornelius, Mathilda Brock ’23, Velma Sexsmith Mason ’31, Kathryn Grace Koons, and Elizabeth Kentopp ’48. The clinical or ward teaching was done by those with associate or instructor status.

In 1948 a Psychiatric Unit was opened at Douglas County Hospital under the control of the College of Medicine and Miss Kyle was required to provide nursing personnel for this unit as well as University Hospital.’ This presumably created another hardship for her and her staff; students, were, of course, expected to provide this additional nursing service.

As the 50’s drew near, the School was given a vote of confidence by the “Classification Study” of the National Committee for the Im-

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Night duty, 1950

Faculty, 1951: (back, l to r) Mary Wolanin, Avis Scholder, Helen Danielson, Vera Warner, Helen Erikson, Marion Vuylstek, Lola Williams; (front) K. Grace Koons, Carol Bornemeier, Minnie Schaefer, Irma Kyle, Velma Mason, Mercedes Breen, Mathilda Brock
provement of Nursing Services. Following a questionnaire survey of the 1,190 state-accredited nursing schools in the nation, the 1155 schools which responded were classified into three groups based on their ability to provide a sound nursing education program. Group I schools were the upper 25 percent and included 301 schools; Group II were the middle 50 percent and included 567 schools; Group III schools were the lower 25 percent — these schools were deemed undesirable and were encouraged to discontinue their programs. The University of Nebraska school was placed in the Group I classification,9 a tribute to Miss Burgess and her high ideals and to Miss Kyle for her first few years as Director.

In 1949 the National Nursing Accrediting Service (NNAS) was established to unify the accrediting activities for several nursing organizations. The NNAS published a list of programs and schools previously accredited or recognized by the National Organization of Public Health Nursing, the Association of Collegiate Schools of Nursing, the National League of Nursing Education, and the Conference of Catholic Schools of Nursing. Accreditation was voluntary and the first published list included only 146 schools, or 12 percent of the 1,195 basic nursing programs in the United States. No nursing schools in Nebraska were on this list. The goal of NNAS was to assist nursing education programs to meet the criteria for accreditation. The list of accredited programs could be used by prospective students, their parents, and educational counselors to select a school of nursing.9

Miss Kyle's priorities for the School were reflected in her address to the Alumnae Association in May of 1950. She said: "The standards of the School must be raised if we are to meet accreditation." She stressed the need for a larger graduate nurse staff to relieve students of evening and night duty, the need for more qualified applicants for admission, and more participation of alumnae in School and state nursing activities to stimulate interest in the School.10 Some alumnae responded by participating actively in recruitment activities, by providing nursing care to critically ill patients, and by working 6 to 11 PM as staff nurses. While these efforts were greatly appreciated, it would be a long time before the School would meet the standards for accreditation.

Miss Kyle's efforts related to accreditation did result in "temporary" accreditation by the NNAS of the three-year diploma program in 1952. Of the 1,108 nursing programs in the U.S., 18 percent were fully accredited (Union College in Lincoln was the only Nebraska program with full accreditation), 57 percent were temporarily accredited, and 25 percent were denied temporary accredita-
tion in 1952. The program of temporary accreditation was to cover a five-year period (1952-57) and was implemented in lieu of a second classification of schools. The accrediting process was transferred to the newly formed National League for Nursing (NLN) in 1952; a primary goal of the NLN was to assist schools to achieve full accreditation. The School’s diploma program was listed as temporarily accredited until 1956 when it no longer appeared on the accreditation list published by the NLN.

The BSN Program

The diploma program had actually been replaced by a four-year program leading to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. Miss Kyle was well aware of the need for baccalaureate education for nurses. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Nursing had stressed that classroom and clinical instruction for collegiate and non-collegiate students should be separated. The University could not afford to offer both the diploma and the five-year programs as it had for many years. Miss Kyle asked the College of Medicine and the Board of Regents for permission to start the four-year BSN program; this approval came in 1950 and students entered the freshman year in 1952.

The four-year curriculum required four calendar years. A five-year program was still offered for those students wanting their degree from the College of Arts and Sciences rather than from the College of Medicine. The four-year program was described for the first time in the 1952-1953 Bulletin of the School:

Four-Year Degree Program

The four-year program leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing requires four calendar years. During the two semesters and summer of the first year, the student will enroll in the University of Nebraska or other accredited college and enroll in the pre-nursing curriculum as follows:

- **Freshman English** ............................. 6 hours
- **General Chemistry** ........................... 5 hours
  (Chemistry 1 at University of Nebraska)
- **Biology or Zoology** ........................... 6 hours
  (Biology 1 and 2 or Zoology 1 and 2 at University of Nebraska)
- **Normal Nutrition** ............................ 3-6 hours
  (Nutrition 41 and 42 at University of Nebraska)
Principles of Sociology .......................... 3 hours  
(Sociology 53 at University of Nebraska)

History ........................................... 6 hours  
(History 2, European History Since 1500, and  
History 153, American Political Thought, or  
European History 1 and 2 at University of Nebraska)

Public Speaking ................................... 3 hours

Physical Education ............................... 2 hours

Electives ......................................... 3 hours

**TOTAL** ........................................ 39 hours

At the beginning of the second calendar year the student will begin  
her professional curriculum on the College of Medicine Campus in  
Omaha. The student nurse will then have sophomore standing pro-  
vided she has completed at least thirty (30) hours of required courses  
outlined above. During the three years in the School of Nursing the  
following curriculum will be given.

**SOPHOMORE YEAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Lecture Hours</th>
<th>Laboratory Hours</th>
<th>Total Clock Hours</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>Physiology</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Microbiology</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<td>Medical and Surgical</td>
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JUNIOR YEAR

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SENIOR YEAR

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<td>Including Ward Management</td>
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<td>Senior Electives</td>
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Miss Kyle’s goal was full accreditation of this new program. A major task was the recruitment of faculty with graduate preparation. In 1955 she appealed to alumnae to become prepared by attending graduate programs. She quoted Rena Boyle on the qualifications of a good teacher/ supervisor. Little did she know that Dr. Boyle would become Director of the School twelve years later!

Frequent references to applying for accreditation appeared in the minutes of the Faculty Organization in the early 1950’s. Miss Kyle cautioned the nursing faculty and the administrators of the College of Medicine and the University that the lack of accreditation was seriously affecting student and faculty recruitment and the future of the School. Several consultants from the NLN were invited to assist faculty in meeting the standards. A request for temporary accredita-
Students preparing for Fall Festival Bazaar, 1958

Faculty member Norma Johnson and student prepare for Fall Festival, 1958

Class of 1954

Instructor Maxine Cook supervises injection technique, 1957
tion of the BSN program was denied in May, 1956. One can imagine the disappointment and frustration of the faculty who continued to revise the curriculum and effect changes to meet the criteria. The next application for accreditation would not be made until 1960.

Despite the emphasis on accreditation, everyday life at the School and hospital went on. Faculty and nursing staff came and went (turnover was extremely high), students were admitted and graduated, and patient care continued.

**Student Life**

Nursing classes were small, perhaps because of the lack of NLN accreditation. It seems unlikely, however, that students worried about accreditation to the degree that faculty did; in fact, few students knew what this meant. Students chose the School because it offered a degree program and because of its reputation. Miss Burgess' statement that "University nurses have no equals" was well known and students knew that graduation from the School assured them of jobs anywhere in the country. A 1952 graduate recalls that she phoned an Omaha hospital inquiring about a staff nurse position in obstetrics. She was told that she need not come for an interview and was hired on the telephone. "We know the capabilities of University nurses," she was told.¹⁵

Student life had changed little from the earlier years. Classes, studying, and working 40 or more hours on all three shifts left little time for other activities. Social activities were those planned by the students and faculty — holiday parties, picnics, teas, dances, the Junior-Senior Banquet, and the Senior-Parent banquet. Many students were active in the Nebraska State Student Nurses' Association (NSSNA) and some served as officers.
Modern Florence Nightingales Keep Busy Schedule

Four Omaha Student Nurses Await Capping Ceremony

Although Omaha is challenged daily in many fields, our city is holding for national recognition in the areas of medical and health sciences. The 1963 Nebraska Legislature dreamed of a medical school for the state. Today, Omaha has two medical schools and five school of nursing plus an expanding medical center that is making the Rockerun a center of excellence and resources.

Nebraska Medical Education week, April 26-28, is set aside to pay tribute to medical education in America. In observance of this week, the auxiliary of the Douglas County Medical society has planned an event to emphasize the role that we must give to our medical profession. We sometimes take for granted the doctors and nurses who are the foundation of the health and medical structure of our country. But, to the men and women who qualify for these roles in medical health personally and professionally, their profession are an enviable responsibility.

Every year approximately 200 women are graduated from the nursing schools in Omaha. To the first-year student nurse who will help in the hospital floor the first principles of her career. Thirty-three students graduated from the University of Nebraska School of Nursing on Sunday, April 28, at the Rockerun church.

Four Omaha girls will be among them. The girls are: Kettya Bernard, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bernard, 4633 Center; Marilyn Laugh, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Laugh, 2723 Ran; Mary Schaffner, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Schaffner, 6222 Pierce; and Nancy Warren, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred W. Warren, 34, 20th Ave.

In Rockerun church.

These girls prepare for their profession. "Tropical sections" include classroom, laboratory and patient contact. Follow the girls through a daily routine—how they care for their patients in the hospital. They spend many hours in preparation, undergoing the necessary training to become efficient nurses. Below are a few pictures of the girls:

Upper left. Getting ready for a busy day, left to right, Betty, Kettya, Nancy and Marilyn prepare to assist doctors in the nursing arts laboratory.

Center left. Associate in Nursing, Miss Marion Cook uses a detailed anatomical model for classroom instruction.

Lower left. Left to right: Mary, Betty, Kettya and Nancy adjust a bed for a patient, while left, Mary, Marjorie, Terri and Mary, at the center, Mary, and Mary, at the center, white cap.

Lower right. Nancy (center); and Betty look in the mirror. "It's really them in the center white cap.

Center left. Even with their busy schedules students manage time for relaxation. sweater of personal design and colour were added to. Mary, Kettya'sbolts are flanked by Betty and Kettya (showing).
Students paid blanket fees ranging from $150 to $180 per year — this fee included matriculation fees, registration, medical care, laboratory, library, and course fees. Book costs for three years were estimated at $75 to $125; uniforms cost $90 ($50 of the uniform cost was subsidized by the Board of Regents). No charge was made for board, room, and uniform laundry. The cost of the freshman year was dependent on the college chosen to meet the pre-nursing requirements.

A New School of Nursing

Conkling Hall, which had served as the Nurses’ Residence since 1923, was showing its age by the mid-fifties. Student rooms were dark and cramped, and office and classroom space was lacking. Miss Kyle convinced the administration that a new building was needed and on June 15, 1957, the School of Nursing on the southwest edge of the campus was dedicated.

The building could house 100 to 150 students in bright, tastefully decorated rooms; most rooms were designed for two students and each had its own dressing and closet area. Levels 3, 4, and 5 were reserved for students. Each level had a small kitchen where students could prepare snacks and simple meals. Level 2 provided office space for faculty, a Nursing Arts lab, the Myra Tucker Library, and classrooms. Level 1 provided classrooms, a game room and a lounge. The north wall of the lounge was partitioned into small rooms, called "date rooms". Each room contained comfortable chairs; a folding door could be closed to provide privacy for the occupants. The door had been carefully designed, however, so that it would not close completely!
Carol Wilson, 1955

Tunnel connecting School and Hospital, 1958

Clare Fleming, 1955

Clinical instructors, 1955: (l to r) Judith Johansen, Loretta Asche, Maxine Cook, Verna Eucker, Carol Wilson
The tradition of requiring all students to live in the nurses’ residence continued through the fifties. Admission was still restricted to unmarried women; no age limitations were imposed, but the vast majority of students were in the 19 to 22 age range. Students were allowed to marry within six months of graduation with the consent of their parents and the Director of the School. These married seniors were allowed to live off-campus.

Other Campus Construction

The fifties were a period of great expansion for the medical campus and surrounding area. In addition to the School of Nursing, new construction included the Nebraska Psychiatric Institute (1955), the Hattie B. Monroe Home (1956), the J.P. Lord School (1957), the Memorial Research Laboratory (1957), and the Meyer Therapy Center (1959). With the exception of the Research Laboratory, each of these facilities eventually would be used for clinical nursing experience.

A Graduate Program

The minutes of the Faculty Organization contained frequent discussions of the need to start graduate programs in nursing; the wisdom of this might be questioned in view of the difficulty in recruiting faculty qualified to teach undergraduate students. A program leading to the degree of Master in Psychiatric Nursing was begun in 1954, however. This program was funded by the National Institutes of Health and was directed by Theresa Muller. The program was offered by the Department of Psychiatry and Neurology of the College of Medicine, rather than by the School of Nursing since few nursing faculty were eligible for graduate faculty status.

Marjorie Hook, RN, Ed.D ’40 (later Mrs. John Gedgoud) was recruited to teach in this program in 1955. Dr. Gedgoud recalls that it was always the intention that this program would eventually become part of the School of Nursing when enough qualified faculty could be recruited.

Reorganization

A reorganization of the School in 1957 was a beginning attempt, at least in principle, to separate the teaching and nursing service functions. A distinction was made between faculty and nursing service personnel through the development of bylaws for each group. Each group had representation from the other, and the need for close
cooperation was stressed. Although Miss Kyle was still responsible for both education and service, this reorganization was the forerunner to the complete separation of education and service mandated by the NLN. Miss Kyle had two able assistants: Clare Fleming, RN, MA '36 served as Assistant Director of Nursing Education, and Carol Wilson, RN, MA '51 served as Assistant Director of Nursing Service. The distinction between faculty and nursing service staff was still nebulous, however. Many nursing service personnel were listed in the bulletin as Assistant Instructors or Instructors in the clinical division; they were, in fact, still responsible for much of the clinical instruction and supervision of students.

Two nurses who joined the staff in the 1950's were Gwendlyn Macklem Finn and Freddie Powell Johnson, both members of the class of 1952. Both had attended post-graduate courses in obstetrical nursing and both would later earn advanced degrees and spend the major part of their professional careers at the University. It should be mentioned that Freddie Powell Johnson was the first black graduate of the School of Nursing. Many years later (1976) she would be the first nurse to receive a doctorate through an American Nurses' Association Fellowship for ethnic minorities.

Another faculty member who came in the fifties would also enjoy long tenure at the School. Sybil Sawinsky (later Mrs. Wesley Sedivy) was appointed Assistant Professor of Physical Education, Counselor, and Student Affairs Advisor in 1959. She had graduated from Northern State Teachers College in Aberdeen, South Dakota, with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education and music, and later earned a Master's degree in education from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.
Miss Sawinsky was given the responsibility of bringing together student extra-curricular activities as well as services such as student health, guidance and counseling, financial aid, and recruitment. She taught physical education classes and organized social/recreational activities for the students; many alumnae will remember bridge, tennis, and ping-pong lessons under her tutelage. She also directed the student choir, a required activity for sophomore students. The choir performed at many campus events, at the University of Nebraska Ivy Day celebration in Lincoln, and in the annual community presentation of the “Messiah.”

Accreditation Denied

The School’s first attempt at full NLN accreditation came in 1960. In a letter dated June 3, 1960, Miss Kyle was informed that the Collegiate Board of Review of the NLN “did not find it possible to grant accreditation for your baccalaureate program in nursing at this time.” Reasons given by the Board were:
1. Lack of prepared faculty to provide direct instruction and supervision in all clinical settings.
2. Need for a nurse educator qualified to assist the director by giving leadership in the development and implementation of a collegiate program.
3. Many aspects of the curriculum resemble technical non-professional preparation for nursing; courses are disease centered, fragmented, and repetitious; many hours of lecture are given by physicians.
4. Students should have personnel practices comparable to those for other undergraduate students at the University; the Board noted the quarterly rotation pattern in which students had fragmented clinical experiences, including evening and night assignments, and attended classes during the day.\textsuperscript{19}

In a letter to the NLN, Miss Kyle stated that the Board’s action “was not entirely unexpected,” and that she fully recognized “that much still needs to be done to improve our program.”\textsuperscript{20} Miss Kyle also shared her concern about the trend to limit clinical experience. She supported the philosophy that student nurses should not be used to meet nursing service needs, but stated emphatically that the profession and patients would suffer if nurses became RNs without knowing the basic skills. She believed that these skills were best learned through repeated and intensive clinical experiences. She suggested that if present trends continued, an intensive training period after college and before licensure might be needed.\textsuperscript{21}

It seems that Miss Kyle knew the accreditation would not be granted; it is likely that this formal refusal was needed to convince the administration of the seriousness of the situation. The better schools had been accredited since the early 1950’s; the message was clear — the School must become accredited, revert to a diploma program, or close. While Dr. J.P. Tollman, Dean of the College of Medicine, had been supportive of the School, he became more so after top University administration support waned. Miss Kyle frequently talked of the need for the administration in Lincoln to recognize and support the School as an integral part of the University; she felt the administration was not very interested in nursing education.

**Curricular and Student Policy Changes**

Many changes occurred in the next five years. The faculty agreed to admit male students and, in 1961, voted to admit married students. Students who wished to marry after admission still needed permission from their parents and the Director of the School.

Clinical hours for students were reduced to 24 hours per week. Additional faculty with Master’s degrees and experience in their area of preparation were hired. Faculty began to provide instruction and direct supervision of students in all clinical areas. The emphasis of clinical experience shifted from meeting service needs to meeting the learning needs of students. Students were, however, still assigned to the evening and night shifts, reflecting Miss Kyle’s philosophy that these experiences were essential to prepare nurses who could function as skilled practitioners when they graduated.
Public Health Nursing was added to the curriculum for all students in 1962. Frances McDonald was the faculty member; clinical experiences were provided by the Visiting Nurses' Association of the Douglas County Health Department. In 1963 Helen Hested, Director of the Omaha VNA, recognized the inclusion of Public Health Nursing with a gift to the School. A copy of *Notes on Nursing* by Florence Nightingale and a letter from Miss Nightingale to a minister regarding a wreath and cross to be placed on her father's grave were presented to the faculty.²²

**A New Associate Director**

In 1962 Miss Kyle found the nurse educator who could develop and implement a collegiate program as suggested by the NLN. Regina Tangney, RN, MS (later Mrs. M.P. Barentson) was named Associate Director and Associate Professor. Mrs. Barentson recalls that Miss Kyle's charge to her was clear — "Your job is to get this School accredited!"²³

Mrs. Barentson was a diploma graduate of St. Joseph Hospital School of Nursing in Kansas City. She earned a Bachelor's degree

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*Regina Tangney Barentson, R.N., M.S., Associate Director/Associate Dean, 1962-1970; Acting Director, 1966-1967*

*Faculty member Carmen Horn with students, 1963*
Student delegates depart for NSNA Convention in Detroit, 1962

Fall Festival preparations, 1963

University Hospital nurses Barbara Winfield and Josephine Pinckley and ward clerk trim the tree on Wards A-B, 1965

Student Health nurse Laurine Jacobsen Burke welcomes new students, 1964
from the University of Minnesota and a Master’s degree from the University of Indiana. She was prepared both educationally and through experience to direct the changes needed for accreditation.

One of Mrs. Barentson’s first suggestions was the complete separation of nursing education and nursing service. Miss Kyle was initially opposed to this idea; she had held the dual responsibility since 1946, and Miss Burgess had held it before her; it was hard to break tradition. The separation came, however, on June 1, 1963. Miss Kyle was now Director of the School of Nursing with no responsibility for nursing service; Carol Wilson, RN, MA ’51 was named Director of Nursing Service, a position which she still holds today.

Further changes were made in student personnel practices. In 1963 students began paying fees for board and room, since they could no longer earn board and room in return for hospital work assignments. Courses were put on a semester basis to conform to the University calendar, and students were given vacations and holidays consistent with other undergraduate students.

Curriculum changes placed greater emphasis on the basic sciences and liberal arts; nursing courses were restructured to eliminate repetition and the emphasis was shifted from diseases to the nursing needs of patients. With the emphasis on nursing intervention, fewer physicians lectured in nursing courses. This caused controversy; some physicians asked why they were no longer allowed to lecture. It was explained that education for professional nursing had to be focused on nursing intervention rather than medical knowledge, and that nursing faculty were the most qualified to teach nursing practice. Again, long-standing traditions were hard to break.
The School was certainly indebted to medical college faculty for their past contributions; the nursing program could not have survived the early years without the physician lectures. It was time for change, however, and it was believed that nursing courses should be taught by qualified nurse faculty members.

Recruitment of qualified faculty was an ongoing problem. There were few nurses throughout the country who were prepared for teaching and/or administrative positions, and attracting prepared faculty to a non-accredited program in the Midwest was difficult. Miss Kyle and Mrs. Barentson persisted, and by 1965 fifteen of the twenty-two faculty members teaching undergraduate students held master’s degrees; seven held bachelor’s degrees; none held the doctoral degree.24

Accreditation, At Last

In 1965, the faculty was confident that the BSN program would meet the NLN accreditation standards and they again submitted the application and self-study report. This time they would not be disappointed; on May 22, 1965, Miss Kyle was notified that the baccalaureate program was granted full accreditation. Mrs. Barentson
deserved much of the credit for this achievement; she had directed the faculty toward this goal with determination and confidence.

The year 1965 saw other "firsts". Charlotte Steiner Abbing and Jane Adkisson were awarded BSN degrees with distinction, an honor not previously bestowed on nursing graduates. Jane Adkisson McMahill recalls that "the 'cum laude' was written on my diploma by hand...it looks like a forgery!"

Matthew Faier and David Mattson entered the generic baccalaureate program on June 14, 1965, as the first male students. Mr. Faier would claim in 1968 to be the first male graduate — "'F' comes before 'M', doesn't it?" Actually, the honor of being the first male graduate belonged to Walt Hemelstrand, RN, who earned the BSN degree in 1967.

**Summary**

Miss Kyle had accomplished much in her 20 years as Director. A four year BSN program had been established, a new School of Nursing had been built, student services and activities had been expanded, and additional qualified faculty were recruited. Nursing education and nursing service had been re-organized. Her ultimate achievement was NLN accreditation.

Sensing that the School needed new leadership to strengthen the BSN program and begin a Master's program, she announced early in 1966 that she would leave the position as Director of the School on August 31, 1966. Sandra Brodie '58, President of the Alumnae Association, expressed the feelings of many at the Annual Reunion on June 18, 1966:

Each of us present tonight on this occasion have our own individual and very special memories of our past and present associations with Miss Kyle. We shall remember her wisdom and composure when failure seemed imminent, her warm smile and personality, her patience when our behavior was immature, and her hand upon our shoulder when disappointments in our personal or professional lives seemed impossible to face. These are all attributes of Miss Kyle which we will never forget. There is no final way to judge the worth of a teacher except in terms of the lives of those he has taught. What we have learned from Miss Kyle has not been by lecture or demonstration alone, but by personal example. Miss Kyle's approach to each of us as human beings must certainly influence our approaches to patients, students, colleagues, and all people
with whom we come in contact in our personal and professional lives.

Miss Kyle has had the ability to inspire in us confidence in our own innate ability. It has been said that "A good leader inspires other men with confidence in him; a great leader inspires them with confidence in themselves." In her position as Director of the School, Miss Kyle has exemplified this example, that progress is made only through one's ability to tackle the job with confidence in ourselves and in the hope of success in the future.

A wise man once said, "Decision making is a lonely business, and the greater the degree of responsibility, the more intense the loneliness." Progress and growth for our school has at times, I am sure, meant loneliness for Miss Kyle.

Material tokens of our gratitude could never begin to fulfill what we owe Miss Kyle, either as professional nurses or as human beings....We cannot wish you success, Miss Kyle; for you that has been achieved in great measure. But from our hearts, may our hopes be that this association will support the objectives of our school. By your example may we foster even more progress for the school in the future... 

Miss Kyle had been granted a sabbatical leave for one year, and she immediately enrolled at the University of Chicago to prepare herself for a new career. She returned to the School in 1967 as the Director of the newly created Continuing Education for Nursing program, a position she held until her retirement in 1972. She had married a long time friend, Bernard Kramer, in 1968 and was looking forward to a pleasant retirement with her husband. It was not to be; she has suffered from a chronic illness for many years.

Regina Tangney Barentson was named Acting Director of the School in 1966 and the search for a new Director was begun.