Some dreams certainly take longer than others to materialize, but the reality is that the College of Nursing at The University of Southern Mississippi will move into a spacious, new home in the not-so-distant future.

Southern Miss faculty, staff, students and administrators were joined by state dignitaries and University supporters on Wednesday, Sept. 17 for the official groundbreaking of Asbury Hall – future home of the College of Nursing.

Flanked by the motto: “Breaking new ground, transforming health care,” Dr. Katherine Nugent, dean of the College of Nursing at Southern Miss, reflected on the winding path that led to Wednesday’s momentous occasion.

“This has been an eight-year journey,” said Nugent. “I remember being told a new building for the College of Nursing was not going to happen. People who know me also know that I’m not the most patient person. Well, here we are.”

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“The College of Nursing is a signature program at The University of Southern Mississippi that has a legacy of providing quality nursing education and is poised to respond to the demands of an evolving health system,” added Nugent.

The $31-million, state-of-the-art facility -- to be located on the western edge of the Hattiesburg campus -- will increase the square footage dedicated to the College of Nursing by 135 percent, providing much-needed space for faculty and students and replacing a facility that can no longer meet the requirements of nursing education. The new building is expected to be completed in 2016.

“We are so very thankful to everyone who helped us get where we are today with this important groundbreaking of Asbury Hall,” said University President Rodney D. Bennett. “How exciting it is to offer students an opportunity to learn and thrive in a customized facility that promises such a bright future in nursing education.”

The nursing program’s new building will allow for an increase in nursing enrollment from the current 550 students to more than 800 and expand new programs in the College of Nursing through student interactive areas, an enlarged and enhanced clinical simulation lab, computer labs, and classrooms that will promote the acquisition of knowledge in a positive and interactive learning environment.

“What a great, great day for The University of Southern Mississippi, the City of Hattiesburg and the entire state of Mississippi,” said Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves. “What I see here with this groundbreaking is a public and private partnership that will serve as a model for future opportunities of this kind. More importantly, we are investing in a facility in which we know what will happen to the students who graduate from here. Every single person who gets a degree from this program will be able to find a j-o-b.”

Reeves, along with state legislators John Polk and Joey Fillingane were instrumental in helping the University secure $20 million in state appropriations through bond funding for the project. Federal grants totaling approximately $4 million have also been acquired for construction costs.

In January, 2012 the USM Foundation announced an $8 million fundraising campaign to help construct a new facility for the nursing program. The College of Nursing Building Campaign got off to a strong start with a $4 million commitment from the Asbury Foundation of Hattiesburg, a gift that led to the naming of Asbury Hall. To date, the campaign has raised more than $6 million toward the original goal.

For more information about the College of Nursing Building Campaign call 601.266.5210. To learn more about the Nursing Building Campaign at Southern Miss, contact the USM Foundation at 601.266.5210 or visit: www.usmfoundation.com/nursingbuilding.

Written by: Van Arnold

2014 AANA Annual Congress in Orlando

Dr. Vickie Stuart, Dr. Rayborn, several students attended the AANA’s 2014 Annual Congress. Also, Dr. Stuart’s term as the President of the Mississippi Association of Nurse Anesthetists (MANA) began in July 2014. She is also a member of the public relations committee of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetist (AANA). During the congress, SRNA Class President, Sam Self, was chosen to judge the AANA Foundation’s talent contest. He was dressed as “Woody” from “Toy Story to keep the Disney theme of the congress.

The Endowed Asbury Foundation Distinguished Professorship in Nursing Announces the 2014-2015 Recipient

Dr. Kathy Pendergrass has been named the 2014-2015 Asbury Foundation Distinguished Endowed Professor. The competitive endowment of $250,000 was established in 2002 by the Asbury Foundation of Hattiesburg, Inc. to provide scholarly support for nursing faculty collaborating with the Institute of Disabilities Studies (IDS) in areas of research and support services. Dr. Pendergrass will receive approximately $14,000 this year with a possibility to renew a second year to support her project exploring the perceptions of barriers and facilitators among nurse practitioners providing healthcare for people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing. This project could impact healthcare access and quality for people with decreased or no hearing ability. Dr. Pendergrass has been a family nurse practitioner for more than 9 years and is a tenure-track, Assistant Professor in the Department of Advanced Practice.
It is time for the Annual American Heart Association Heart Walk, which will be held on Pride Field on Saturday, October 11th. We need your help to raise money and recruit walkers to join us in the battle against Heart Disease. Last year the College of Nursing team raised over $2,000 and I know that we can do it again. Our goal for the College of Nursing is to raise $3000 this year. We will be having a friendly competition between the students (undergraduate and graduate), the College of Nursing departments, as well as staff so please encourage everyone to donate and sign up to walk with us. The team with the least amount of money raised will get a pie in the face from the team that raises the most. Don’t worry we will make sure you are protected when the pie comes your way!

Here is additional information concerning prizes, etc.

Heart walk is scheduled for Saturday, October 11th at 9:00 am on Pride field (registration and activities will begin at 8:00am)

Primary student fundraising event will be the Living in Color 5K scheduled for Friday, 9/27/14 at 6:00pm –register at the Payne center or online at http://www.usm.edu/rec-sports/living-color-5k

2014 recruitment goal is 1000 walkers.

Team fundraising efforts: each team raising $300 will have their name placed in a giveaway drawing. Each additional $300 will give that team an additional giveaway ticket in the drawing. All giveaway drawings will be held on 10/15/14 at the wrap up celebration at 3:30 pm in RC’s Lounge in the Union.

Incentive awards to date: 2-free parking passes for school year 2014-15, 2-12 month Payne center memberships, Barnes and Nobles gift cards, autographed football and basketball, $250 dining credit.

Donate to the College of Nursing Heart Walk Team: HEART THROBBERS