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One Hundred Years and Still Counting

The Story of NEF—Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

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Nurses Educational Funds, Inc (NEF) is the oldest and largest professionally endorsed source of funds for advanced study in nursing, which celebrated its Centennial in 2012. This philanthropic nonprofit organization is notable for its roots; NEF was organized by nurses specifically for nurses. Its history dates back to 1912, when it began in memory of Isabel Hampton Robb at Teacher's College, where the first graduate nursing education programs began. The initial Robb Memorial Fund was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1941 and officially became Nursing Educational Funds, Inc, in 1954. The NEF's sole mission is to raise money and give it for graduate-level scholarships in nursing education, service, practice, and research. Since its origin, more than 1000 doctoral and master's students from a broad array of schools across the nation have been recipients of awards. The NEF Board is a totally volunteer, highly dedicated group of nursing, business, and other professional leaders, who are steadfastly committed to this critical effort. Scholarships for graduate nursing education are imperative to meet the need to grow the pipeline of faculty. As charged by the 2010 Institute of Medicine report, the goal to increase the number of baccalaureate nurses to 80% of the workforce and to double the number of nurses with doctoral degrees both by 2020 speak to the heart of NEF. Funds raised currently are largely from Board members, individual donors, modest foundational support, and a number of bequests. As the nursing population grows older, the potential for bequests or planned giving becomes a realistic goal. Former NEF scholars have not unfortunately been a financial source, although pay back is an expectation. Nurses are the best ones to tell this compelling story to corporations and foundations as NEF continues to persist in the commitment to support graduate nursing education. **Key words:** *graduate nursing, IOM Report 2010, Nursing Educational Funds, Inc, scholarships*

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NURSES EDUCATIONAL FUNDS, INC (NEF) is the oldest philanthropy in the nation organized by nurses specifically for nurses. Its long history began in 1910 when 51-year-old Isabel Adams Hampton Robb died from injuries sustained in an accident. Robb, a nurse, had engendered such respect and admiration as a result of her leadership that her colleagues raised funds to establish a memorial scholarship in her honor. Four years later, another great nursing leader, Isabel McIssac, also died after a short but stellar career. Memorial gifts in her honor formed the foundation

for annual fundraising campaigns and scholarship awards. Although corporate and other external gifts have been developed and raised over time, NEF has depended upon nurses themselves, and nurse educators, in particular, to provide resources to educate the next generation of leaders.

Isabel Robb was a Canadian school teacher, who came to Bellevue Hospital in New York City to become a nurse. As a young woman, she served at St Paul's Hospice in Rome. There, she became convinced of the importance of education in the liberal arts and sciences for everyone, including nurses. She went on to become the first Superintendent of the Johns Hopkins Hospital and its School of Nursing and authored a classic textbook titled "Nursing Principles and Practices and Nursing Ethics." After her marriage to Dr Hunter Robb, she left clinical practice and nursing education and became a community and organizational leader, who encouraged nonnurse philanthropists to invest in nursing. As a community leader, she told our story and engendered the interest of those who could help. Her Hopkins association with Dr John Billings made possible the establishment of a Nursing Section at the International Congress of Charities, Corrections, and Philanthropy held in Chicago in 1893. What emerged was the Society of Superintendents of Training Schools, the basis of which was the idea that quality in nursing practice could best be achieved through the actions of superintendents of nursing education programs. This organization was the forerunner of the National League of Nursing Education, the NLN, as we know it today.

Isabel McIssac was a graduate of the Illinois Training School. During her career, she served as President of the Superintendents of Training Schools. She was also Superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps and acting President of the American Nurses Association. In addition, she was President and editor of the American Journal of Nursing Company.

Nurses Education Funds has a diverse history of assistance for nurses. In the 1920s, NEF gave loans of \$200, which were repaid

upon graduation. Even during the Depression of the 1930s, nurses continued to donate for the good of the profession, although the average contribution was less than \$10. By the 1940s, some awards were as high as \$400.

Early overhead costs for the fund were minimal because NEF relied on the generosity of nursing organizations and Teachers College, Columbia University, for a desk and a pencil! Even during these humble beginning days, the objective was support for nurses at an advanced level. Today, masters and doctoral degree candidates continue to benefit from NEF scholarships. Our overhead remains extraordinarily low because of the generosity of so many volunteers.

Moreover, we continue to honor our own through the naming of scholarships.

SAMPLING OF RECENT NEF SCHOLARS

The quality, breadth, and career development of applicants has increased in number over the years. The following are samples of recent awardees:

2013-2014 doctoral scholar

Winner of the Eleanor Lambertsen Scholarship, Deborah Croy, works with the underserved in rural Appalachia, where she hopes her research studies in the doctorate in nursing practice (DNP) program will result in the ability to apply advanced evidence-based practice to improve the health of the patients she serves. Currently employed as an adult nurse practitioner at the Bland County Medical Center Clinic in Bastian, Virginia, she is working toward her DNP at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in Baltimore, MD. Previously, she earned a master's degree in nursing from Duke University School of Nursing. She has been active with the American College of Cardiology and serves on the Council for Academia in Cardiology. She was among the first to receive the designation of Associate of the American College of Cardiology in 2010. Ms Croy is passionate about advancing the cardiovascular health care of the rural underserved populations.

2013-2014 doctoral scholar

The Barbara Tate Scholarship was awarded to Cheryl Petersen, who is pursuing her doctoral degree at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, while working as an oncology research nurse at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. With 20 years of nursing experience in pediatrics at the Children's Hospital, she has been recognized for her clinical expertise and skill as a patient and staff educator. Her research focuses on nurses' spiritual care of children with cancer at the end of their lives. She feels strongly that spiritual care, not only of the child but also of the family, fosters growth and peace in the midst of tragedy. Cheryl sits on the Marquette University College of Nursing's End of Life Advisory Board. Seven times she was awarded the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin highest nursing honor for exceptional contributions to patient and family care.

2013-2014 doctoral scholar

The National Student Nursing Association Scholarship winner, Joseph Halvorson, is pursuing his DNP in the adult-geriatric nurse practitioner specialty at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He has 2 goals: to expand his scope of practice as a health care provider and affect positive change in the health and well-being of elderly individuals in his community, and then to work as a faculty member in a school of nursing, promoting awareness of geriatric care throughout nursing education. Mr Halvorson has worked with Essential Health in Fargo, ND, initially as an intensive care staff-nurse, and then as care coordinator of the hospital-based palliative care program. Currently he is working with the elder care team on pragmatic and strategic patient care initiatives. As a nursing faculty member, he plans to share his passion for holistic nursing practice with his students.

2013-2014 master's scholar

Anina Terry, recipient of the Edith Pritchard Scholarship is pursuing her master's in nursing at the Johns Hopkins University Primary Care Family Nurse Practitioner Program. She completed her undergraduate stud-

ies at New York University and worked in acute care at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco, California, before returning to academia. She has worked as a volunteer nurse at Shepherd's Clinic in Baltimore, providing health care for those without insurance who do not qualify for government aid. As a future primary care provider, she wants to focus on the prevention and management of chronic diseases before they present as secondary complications in a hospital setting.

2013-2014 master's scholar

A student at Frontier Nursing University, in Hyden, Kentucky, Donna Westmoreland, was awarded the Lucy Perry Scholarship. Ms Westmoreland's goal is to become a family nurse practitioner. She began her nursing career in critical care but moved on to home care for a more family friendly schedule to accommodate the needs of her 2 lively boys. She found she loved the independent practice setting of home care, where she could monitor patients' improvements over time and provide patient and family education. Her long-term goal is to teach undergraduate and graduate level nursing.

2014-2015 doctoral scholar

Nancy Wise, a doctoral student at Villanova, is the first winner of the Cynthia Davis Sculco Scholarship for nursing education. Nancy's primary area of interest is the number of pregnant adolescents who present risk factors (eg, preterm and low-birth-weight babies) related to poor nutrition. During her time as an obstetrics/anesthesia nurse educator, she conducted 2 studies in adolescent pregnancy that resulted in her dissertation: "Nutrition Knowledge, Healthy Eating Behaviors and Personal Self-Efficacy in Pregnant Adolescents". Ms Wise would like to collaborate with other health care professionals to conduct more research to prevent adolescent pregnancy risk factors. Beginning this fall, she will be teaching 2 courses—"Nursing Research" and "Nurses As Adult Learners," in the Eastern Mennonite University RN to BSN Program.¹

From its beginnings to today, NEF sends a clear message to all of us: it is our responsibility to invest in our future and to persuade people who believe in what we do, and share our values, to join in supporting advanced education in nursing through scholarship support. We do it because we are capable of doing it and because we tell our story best.

Over the years, thousands of nurses have gained entrance to leadership, teaching, or research positions through the gift of federal grants and/or scholarships. Having access to financial support for graduate education in nursing is vital to the growth of the profession. While scholarship support is often available through individual schools or universities, financial assistance, which is possible for *any school of choice*, is less well known. The cost of graduate education is growing incrementally and nurses generally cannot support both school and work. Some organizations employing baccalaureate nurses support generous tuition reimbursement for continued advancement. However, the financial climate for such funding is clearly at risk, while the need for advanced preparation in nursing is escalating.

"The IOM Report of 2010: The Future of Nursing, Advancing the Profession" charged nursing with goals directly applicable to NEF's mission.² These are to double the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2020 with attention to diversity and increase the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree from 50% to 80% by 2020. This latter goal requires an infusion of master's prepared (at a minimum) nurses into the pipeline for future faculty.

The nursing faculty shortage was recognized in 2005 by the National League for Nursing, and in 2006 by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.³ This issue stimulated NEF to begin the Capital Campaign, which ultimately raised \$500 000.

FACTS ABOUT NEF

The NEF, Inc:

- is a not-for-profit organization, which seeks and distributes funds to baccalau-

reate prepared registered nurses who are in need of nursing scholarship assistance for graduate study.

- is administered by a Board composed of prominent leaders in nursing, business, and other professions. (Nurses comprise the majority of board members.)
- includes past and present notable leaders in nursing, such as Thelma Schorr, Laura Simms, Harriet Feldman, Diane McGovern, Janice Nelson, Neville Strumpf, and Mildred Montag.

NEF has consistently and steadily demonstrated ongoing commitment to support nursing professionals motivated to seek graduate degrees as nursing educators, nursing leaders, advanced nurse clinicians, and nurse researchers.

THE BOARD

The NEF Board is a totally volunteer group of prominent nurses, educators, representatives of finance, investment, accounting, health care administrators, and others, supported by a solo dedicated Administrator/Scholarship Coordinator.

BUSINESS HISTORY

In 1941, NEF was incorporated as a 501c nonprofit organization in the State of New York. The funds from the Isabel Hampton Robb Memorial Fund were transferred to the newly named Nurses Educational Funds, Inc, in 1954. The monies raised are primarily through individual contributions, which are invested in a portfolio managed by an investment expert on the Board, who has not only sustained the fund but has grown it modestly since the 2008 financial downturn. As a nonprofit organization, NEF distributes approximately 5% of the total account to scholarships each year. Any donations to NEF, Inc, are tax-deductible. The dedication and generosity of each of the Board is the underlying fiber of this notable organization.

SOURCES OF FUNDS

Individual contributions and financial commitments of Board members continue to be the primary source of funding. Campaigns raise monies, and gifts from corporations compose part of the endowment. Bequests have funded some of the primary endowed funds. The Thelma Schorr Society, recently initiated by a Board member (now Emeritus) is growing steadily as an organization of donors. The NEF scholars are asked to repay their scholarship,

but these repayments are a small percentage of our 3-million dollar fund (See Figure 1 and Table 1).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Recruitment of applicants is conducted through contacts with graduate programs. An active outreach by our Administrative/Scholarship Coordinator to schools directly, and links to our Website from the school's Websites have greatly increased the number

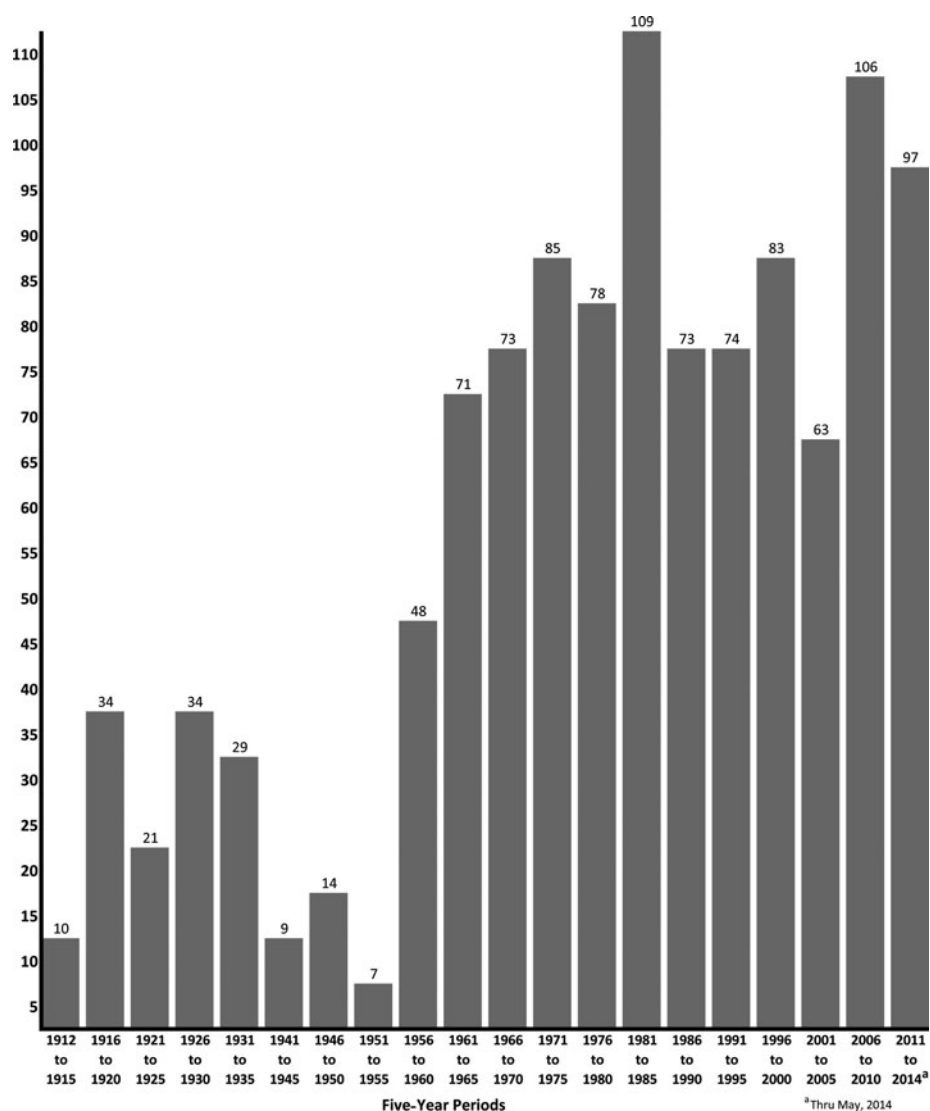


Figure 1. Number of Scholarships Awarded by NEF in 5-Year Periods.

Table 1. Named Scholarships, Designations, and Dates Initiated

<i>Isabel Hampton Robb Memorial Award</i> (1912) usually given to the top doctoral applicant
<i>National Student Nurses Association Award</i> (1963) given to an applicant who has been a member of NSNA in their undergraduate program
<i>American Journal of Nursing Scholarship</i> (1965)
<i>Isabel McIsaac Award</i> (1969) given to the top Master's degree applicant
<i>Edith M. Pritchard Award</i> (1976) given to an applicant interested in nursing education/ public health
<i>Lucy Perry Fund</i> (1978) preferably given to an applicant studying at Indiana University and interested in public health
<i>M. Elizabeth Carnegie African American Memorial Award</i> (1982) explicitly to be used for black nurses enrolled in doctoral programs
<i>Margaret Gould Tyson Memorial Fund</i> (1982) given to a doctoral applicant in nursing education
<i>Estelle Massey Osborne Memorial Award</i> (1983) from donations of the Freedman's Hospital School of Nursing; given to an African American master's degree applicant
<i>Liesel M. Heimenz Fund</i> (1987) given to applicants interested in public health
<i>Evelyn Barclay Fund</i> (1992) given to a doctoral applicant in nursing education or research
<i>Judith G. Whitaker Fund</i> (1995) a former NEF scholar, awarded to a doctoral applicant in nursing research or organizational study
<i>Eleanor Lambertsen Memorial Fund</i> (1998) given to a doctoral applicant in nursing education or administration
<i>Miriam Powell Fellowship Fund</i> (2004) from a graduate of Cornell University School of Nursing
<i>Barbara Tate Scholarship Fund</i> (2011); served as President of NEF and other board Positions; established by fellow board member Henry Spencer upon her death
<i>Columbia University-Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association, Inc</i> /J.
<i>Margaret Ada Mutch Award</i> (2012) preferably given to an alumnae of either program
<i>Cynthia Davis Sculco Scholarship Fund</i> (2012). Dr Sculco is a dedicated, long term board member who has served NEF in many capacities (President, Vice-President, Chair of Long-Term Development) given for doctoral study in nursing education
<i>Mathy Mezey Scholarship Fund</i> (2013) provided by the John A. Hartford Foundation in honor of Dr Mezey's commitment to developing geriatric nursing expertise; given to either a master's or doctoral student studying geriatric nursing
<i>Planned Giving/Bequests</i>
<i>Thelma Schorr Society</i> , established by Rita Reis Wiczorek, Board member Emeritus

of completed applications. Faculty and previous scholars share the information with others. The online application requires an essay of professional career intent and 3 letters of recommendation. For further application information, see the Website www.n-e-f.org.

SOURCE OF APPLICANTS

The applicants reflect students attending a national group of colleges and universities, private and public. Once a school's candidate is awarded a scholarship, repeat applications from the same individual and/or others

from that school are frequently received. See Table 2 depicting Sources of Scholar Award winners from the past 5 years.

NEF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS

- Conducted Capital Campaign (concluding in 2011), which raised \$500 000
- Improved the Website to be a continuing source of information
- Featured each annual NEF scholar on the Website, with photo and brief biosketch

Table 2. Schools of Scholar Origin (Past 5 Years)

Adelphi University	Pace University
Arizona State University	St Louis University
Arkansas State University	State University of New York (Upstate)
Barnes Jewish College	Thomas Jefferson University
Binghamton University	University of Connecticut
Boston College	University of Delaware
Capella University	University of Kansas
Case Western Reserve University	University of Maryland
Chamberlain University	University of Massachusetts
Columbia University	University of Minnesota
Drexel University	University of Phoenix
East Carolina University	University of San Diego
Emery University	University of San Francisco
Frontier University	University of South Carolina
Grambling State University	University of South Florida
Johns Hopkins University	University of Texas
Harvard School of Public Health	University of Virginia
Madonna University, Livonia, Michigan	University of Wisconsin
Marquette University	Southern Illinois University
Molloy College, New York	Texas Women's University
Medical University of South Carolina	Villanova University
New York University	Virginia Commonwealth University
Northeastern University	Wayne State University
Norwich University	Widner University
Ohio State University	Wright State University
Oregon Health and Science University	

- Implemented social media networking, including FaceBook and LinkedIn
- Developed and implemented an online application process
- Held the 100th Anniversary Celebration in October 2012. (This raised almost \$100 000)
- Gained 3 new endowed Scholarship Funds
 - Columbia University, Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association, honoring J. Margaret Ada Mutch
 - Cynthia Davis Sculco Scholarship Fund for doctoral nursing education
 - Mathy Mezey Scholarship Fund for geriatric nursing education, practice, or research
- Enriched board with new members, bringing additional nursing service, business, financial organization and health care administrative expertise

CURRENT TRENDS

Flexibility and adaptability in nursing education, health care delivery, and an evidence-generating research environment pose challenges for scholarship eligibility. Nurse practitioner programs are multiplying to address changing delivery model needs. The doctorate of nursing practice programs generate expert clinicians who lead and manage populations as well as groups of nurse practitioners. Interprofessional models of care delivery drive the need for new models of education. Online course work is virtually everywhere as are online total degree programs. Consideration for master's program applicants require such programs be nationally accredited by either NLN or CCNE. There are no existing criteria for doctoral programs, so evaluation of those school's applicants require a greater degree of thought to intuitive potential for success

and histories of innovation. The need for faculty and researchers drives BSN to PhD programs, which has merited new thinking about eligibility criteria. For example, consideration is given to how many credits must be earned by a student before reaching a point where success potential for earning the PhD can be evaluated (45 credits is the recent parameter for BSN-PhD applicants). The Board remains knowledgeable, critically constructive, and open to ideas on how to best award scholarships to the future generation.

Current goals of NEF are to complete the approval process for the Mission, Vision, and Values; add an NEF scholar to the Board and update the Bylaws. The Development Committee is hosting a Reception in October of 2014 to fete the most recent 3 honorees of named Scholarships (Sculco, CUPH-SNAA, and Mezey, funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation).

THE FUTURE OF NEF, Inc

The challenges of any philanthropic organization are significant, but it seems that the profession of nursing has a steeper hill to climb than many. It is not generally part of professional socialization to develop a philanthropic or “give-back” mentality. Nursing salaries have

risen sufficiently to provide for modest giving by any graduate of a degree program. Nurses are a giving, service-oriented group, but, we have not translated this generosity into our financial planning as it relates to the needs of the profession.

The growth and expansion of this historical organization will only continue if we can mobilize a give-back spirit among our colleagues. Individual nurses can give as part of their legacy. Corporations and foundations must also be successfully solicited, through the telling of the nursing story. We are essential to our communities and health care but need to help others understand this. It is imperative that NEF continue to expand the number of graduate nursing scholarships if we are to increase the pipeline for faculty and to foster an ever-expanding body of new knowledge of nursing practice through research. As professionals, we can also be philanthropists, while helping others understand the need for philanthropy, so that nurses can continue to care for and improve the health care of the world.

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