

# The Alumni Newsletter

Columbia University-Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association, Inc.

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*The Newsletter is published to bring together members of the Columbia University-Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing Alumni*

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*www.cuphsonaa.org*

- membership
- pensions
- sick benefits
- scholarships
- research awards
- news
- reunion

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Three proverbs come to mind, a German, a Dutch and one by George Santayana – “Too soon old, too late smart,” “The old forget and the young don’t know,” and Santayana’s: “Those who cannot remember the past are bound to repeat it.”

Somewhere in between birth and older age, life gets in the way. Questions that we didn’t know we wanted to ask our elders before they leave us are unasked and then it is too late to learn the wonderful contexts of the lives they lived and the work they did. So it is with any portion of society – family, country or profession. We attend to the present and tend to ignore the past as we look toward the future.

The past, however, can teach us valuable lessons and supply a wealth of information about the world that we, as individuals, have inherited and inhabit. Thus it is what our Alumni Association continually attempts to collect - artifacts of past and present day memorabilia in the lives of our alumni to preserve these valuable items for future generations. When interest dawns in such matters, there is no one to ask directly. Wanting to know later “what was it like” or “how did that happen” may then be found in the treasures that are preserved.

For example, did you ever think about what it would be like to work without disposables, air conditioning or the opportunity to move around the country and practice? And, how do you think nurses dealt with the cholera and influenza epidemics before modern medicines or watching people die in their 50s because of poor environmental conditions or lack of knowledge of how to stay healthy?

Our *Alumnae Quarterly* and *Alumni Magazine* are replete with first-hand accounts in the early 1900s of graduates dealing with families living in tenements with TB and infecting all that resided within, working six and a half days a week and seeing children die of childhood diseases because immunizations were not available.

This is not information that can be found in textbooks, research or novels. It comes from the practitioners themselves and adds imagery and appreciation to the role that nurses have played for many decades.

How can you help? Think about what you, yourselves, have experienced and write it down. Send photographs (but be sure you identify the people in them); articles that you have written or co-authored; listings of research articles and books that you wrote or helped to write. Better yet, have someone do an oral history of your days at the School of Nursing and in your chosen practice fields. Let us know the honors you have received or your volunteering efforts. While we can comb through 110 years of class notes in our publications, you can expedite and expand the process by sending your items directly to us. (Use the address on the masthead on the left).

We have come from a special school with outstanding graduates. Our goal is to insure that future generations know that we have been here and what our contributions were. We will preserve your stories as well as those already in text form. Everyone has a story to tell.

## REUNION 2015

On May 1, 2015 we will again be gathering in Bard Hall to meet classmates, colleagues and faculty to make new connections with the School and learn more about the current programs and students. Our Alumni Association will probably not be mentioned by name during the day as there is some restriction existing with the School and the University to do so. However, we will be present in goodly numbers as always. In addition, our Annual Meeting is scheduled right after the luncheon, where we will be convening our 111th consecutive gathering to do the business of this Association. All are welcome to attend to learn how the Association operates, how it is faring as well as to air your concerns.

The day will begin with coffee and a light breakfast then proceed to the welcomes by both Alumni Association Presidents and the Dean who will discuss the state of the School. The remainder of the morning will be devoted to student/alumni and faculty commentaries as well the time-honored Distinguished Alumni and Scholarship awards.

Luncheon will be on the lower level of Bard Hall followed by our Annual Meeting as well as the meeting of the School's Board of Directors. This year, to allow for opportunity to attend the meetings, there will be two tours scheduled. The Planning Committee has tried to free up as much time as possible for you to be with your friends and classmates and to participate in activities of interest to you.

The day will draw to a close with Jazz at the Georgian, music in the lobby with wine and cheese stations throughout the School building. There will be opportunity to see the Skills Laboratory, Student Lounge, a collection of nursing history and the 50th Class video.

Please join us and bring your friends.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Recent School of Nursing emails have informed students and alumni of the availability of scholarships from our Association for graduate nursing degrees in any accredited institution. If you have missed that and are a CUSON graduate, you can go to our website for an application: [www.cuphsonaa.org](http://www.cuphsonaa.org). The Nurses Educational Fund (NEF) also gives scholarships for graduate study to nurses. Go to [www.n-e-f.org](http://www.n-e-f.org) for their application. You will also be able to see a short clip about a recent awardee who received our J. Ada Mutch Scholarship at the same web address. Thank you NEF for helping our alumni.

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Our School of Nursing has always produced excellent clinicians and in 1977, as society was emerging into a more egalitarian mode with regard to women's roles, the Board of this Association decided to inaugurate a tradition that continues to this day. By recognizing graduates for their contributions to the health and welfare of society, we not only highlighted alumni contributions but also learned a great deal about our colleagues. Margaret Conrad '20 was our first Distinguished Alumni. Margaret served as an assistant director under Helen Young who assumed leadership of the School upon the death of Anna Maxwell. Margaret also was the Director of Nursing for the new Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center as it moved uptown. She also played a significant role in the training of the Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II.

Each year a committee selects from a pool of applicants nominated by friends or associates and highlights their work, be they missionaries, educators, administrators, researchers, innovators or clinicians. You can find qualifications for an award at [www.cuphsonaa.org](http://www.cuphsonaa.org).

If you know of an alumnus who you think should be recognized, please notify Denise Ewing at our office: 914-481-5787 or [admin@cuphsonaa.org](mailto:admin@cuphsonaa.org) or Mairead Moore at the School 212-305-5999 or [mm4513@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:mm4513@cumc.columbia.edu).

## BIG RESEARCH GRANT NEWS

Do you know how hard it is to find seed money for a large project or complete one? Are you looking for funding in an area of interest that has not been studied before? Our Association has offered research grants to our alumni for many years but there have been few takers.

Now, with a streamlined application process (simpler than NIH) you can apply for funding for your project. Our Research Committee, chaired by Susan Krienke Chase '72, Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs, College of Nursing, University of Central Florida, has a committee of outstanding researchers to review your application. Why not email Denise Ewing, our administrator at [admin@cuphsonaa.org](mailto:admin@cuphsonaa.org) for the new application since the revised version is not yet available on our website. The grants are given once a year and completed applications should be submitted by February 1.

## IS IT ‘SLOW’ MEDICINE OR NURSING?

Recent medical blogs, articles and the latest PBS documentary taken from Atul Gawande’s *Being Mortal* have brought to the fore the changing and challenging scene for physicians in the United States. The backstory for current unrest among physicians has come from a number of sources – increased control by insurers, the rise of mega-medical units/hospitals, malpractice considerations, outpatient facilities, large hospital related physician groups plus the surrendering of inpatient care to hospitalists and reduced remuneration for provider services. Most important has been the rise of patients’ rights starting in the 1970s with an even louder voice and influence in 2014. Dr. Google and the Internet have also changed the landscape of doctor-patient relationships.

As a result we now have 10 minute consultations, cursory examinations and little time to learn patient history, to get to know the patient or for the patient to have the time to tell his/her story, despite research that claims if a good history is taken, the diagnosis will be made clear in most cases. Instead we have the rush of testing to expedite the visit and to find the outcome of the particular test to guide the diagnosis. Another consequence of all of this rushing is an increasing number of physicians that are ‘burning out.’

Nursing has historically taken into consideration the whole patient and his/her state of wellness or illness, including family history. This consideration takes time and interest, not necessarily to ‘fix it’ but to understand it. Call it what you will – nurse, patient advocate, friend, guide– the nurse has been doing ‘slow’ nursing from the inception of the profession.

We can now more clearly visualize the invaluable role of the nurse practitioner. That is not to say that an outpatient role is more important than inpatient for practitioners but one of many that nurses are called upon to perform. One blog commented that pediatricians get to do the ‘well baby’ visits while the nurse practitioner gets to see the sick kids and their parents. This is backwards! Does this current division of labor serve the patients well and tap into the strengths of both types of providers?

Given the high level of specialization today, there has to be a team approach to help patients to wellness and the quality of life that they desire. There needs to be an arena for diagnosticians to do what they do best. Similarly there needs to be the time for nurses to give TLC and high level nursing care. Moreover, and most importantly, there needs to be a way to help patients - ill people - to navigate this confusing scene when they are most vulnerable.

We, as nurses, young and old, practitioners or not, can continue to be patient advocates for ‘slow’ patient care not medical care. In your neighborhood, your social circle, graduates of our School can have a voice in helping our “Neighbors” as their advocates. Don’t let your education and experience be neglected. There is an important contribution you can make – in whatever fashion and circumstance it presents.

## WHAT IS THIS NEW INITIATIVE?

A few months ago, the Board of Directors approved a project that could strengthen the activities of various committees and increase the participation of our alumni. In the past, projects were sometimes limited and carried out by a small number of dedicated and hard-working people. It is time to renew and refresh the efforts of this Association with the help of additional people. We run the Association with mostly volunteers.

As you remember, active members (dues payers) received a letter regarding this new initiative to lighten the load currently borne by far fewer shoulders. Many responses were favorable and supportive. Those who offered their services were asked to select committees on which they would like to serve. Although there are nine committees, Scholarship and Research were selected most often. We must balance out membership to allow for a workable number in each. Notices went out to all of those who wanted to participate. Those people received invitations to join a particular committee. Some alumni agreed to join more than one committee. A few others agreed to stand for election to the Board of Directors.

We are still accepting responses of those who want to serve. However, there are some committees where enrollment is now complete but there are vacancies in the following committees: Historical, Membership, Publishing and Nominating. If interested an e-mail can be sent to Denise Ewing, our Administrator ([admin@cuphsonaa.org](mailto:admin@cuphsonaa.org)). Please state your preferences along with your name, address, phone and email address. If have not paid your dues, you can reactivate your membership participation by including your \$25 dues check.

Where do we go from here? The newly configured committees will begin to meet via conference calls to discuss future efforts. We hope to: increase the number of dues paying members, increase communication among alumni, increase attendance at reunions, and have more participation on specialized projects. We want to be more vibrant and responsive to all members, young and old.

Be a volunteer and join in the efforts of CUPHSONAA.Org.

### HELPFUL HINT

*Vintage 1907, Alumnae Quarterly Vol. 4*

When feeding a patient who is lying in bed, if liquids are placed under the tongue instead of upon it, the patient is not as liable to choke.

## COLLEGE GRADUATES CHOOSE A NURSING CAREER

Since its inception in 1892, the nursing school at Presbyterian Hospital accepted students already holding a baccalaureate degree prior to beginning their nursing studies. Why did Anna Maxwell target that group of well-educated women? How did she hope to entice them to do what was considered menial work? She must have had something in mind.

It wasn't until the 1960s that Dorothy E. Reilly, the first School faculty member to hold an earned doctoral degree, did a study of these graduates to find out more about who they were. She believed that their previous collegiate preparation made them a distinct group with their increased maturity and broader general education. She suggested that this group would continue to grow in numbers, making data collected from this study valuable for future planning of nurse education programs.

She elicited responses from classes 1919-1960 and had a 75% return – half of the living graduates at the time; 61% were married. Homemakers or retirees were 49% of the total and most were recruited from the teaching field. Upon graduation alumna took administrative positions (32%), 27% were in first level positions in hospitals/health care, for a total of 64% in leadership positions in education, administration and research. Of the unmarried graduates 84% have practiced continually or a greater part of their working years.

Learners they were and continued to be with 51% going beyond their baccalaureate and 43% studying for higher degrees or certifications. In the metropolitan area only Teachers College and NYU had graduate nursing programs at that time.

The study continues with a breakdown of their activities in the community, politics and organizations. While few in number for the time, they did make a significant contribution to the profession and health care.

Unfortunately, the study did not do a comparison of Group A students (with a college degree) and Group B (those with two years of college or high school graduates). It would have been an interesting dataset to cross compare Group A and B students in these same aspects that the study covered for college graduates only.

Dr. Reilly did make suggestions for further research in which she suggested this kind of comparison. In addition she suggested that a comparison be made with women in other professions.

Elizabeth Gill, Dean, made this comment in the introduction:

*...the faculty believe that the data have significance in this respect: the information identified according to decades during the forty-one years covered by this study reflects the changing concept of nursing role and the preparation necessary for those roles, as well as the changing roles of women in our society. An over-all impression gained by this study would suggest that these women have made and are making a distinctive contribution to the nursing profession and that they are fulfilling many leadership responsibilities.*

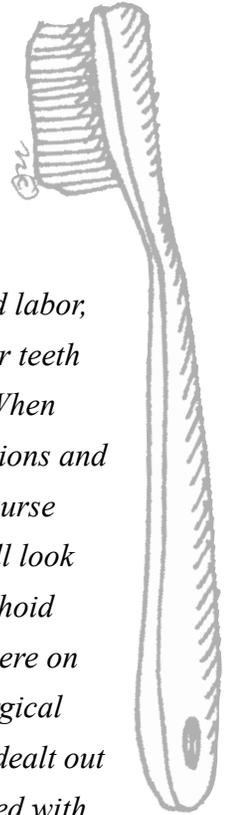
Little did Dorothy Reilly know how prescient was her thinking when she began her research. Today all students must have a bachelor's degree before beginning their nursing studies at Columbia.

## MOUTH CARE 1910

What goes around, comes around. How many patients today get this kind of mouth care?

*They come into our wards with typhoid fever, and we scrub their tongues and gums with swabs and hard labor, and all the time their teeth are culture media. When they have complications and reinfections, is the nurse to blame? We can all look back upon those typhoid mouths! When we were on night duty in the surgical wards methinks we dealt out mouthwipes saturated with listerine sometime towards morning. The patients wiped their mouths with these, and their consciences and ours were clear. Some few had toothbrushes, others had left the family toothbrush at home. Never did I realize how inadequate the mouthwipe system was until I tried it myself. Have you ever known the day after an operation when your teeth feel like pieces of red flannel? Or the soaring of a fever when your mouth tastes as if all your teeth were bad because of one tooth you meant to have filled and didn't?*

Have we made progress 100 years later?



## *In Memoriam*

1943	Marjorie FITZGERALD McKenzie	October 12, 2014
1948	Catherine LEAVITT Guerci	December 30, 2005
1948	Hera SAVIDIS Kwiatkowski	September 8, 2013
1950	Doreen WORTHLEY Brown	December 5, 2014
1952	Betty FOSTER Gentsch	September 11, 2014
1959	Thora Joan ELLEFSEN Rusch	November 11, 2014
1972	Judith "Judy" Mary MURRAY	January, 2014
2001	Patricia A. BROWN	June 29, 2014

lived life to the fullest enjoying running (she won nearly every local race in her age group for years), biking, swimming, waterskiing, snow skiing, windsurfing, kayaking, sailing and jet skiing. After teaching herself to windsurf, she taught her children and grandchildren. She could often be seen flying across Barnegat Bay on her windsurfer or sunfish or paddling kayaks. Most incredibly, she was doing these sports into her 80s.

### 1950

**Doreen WORTHLEY Brown** of Chula Vista, California, a member of that "Greatest Generation," was born in Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, Canada. In 1943, Doreen enlisted in the WAAC, and trained as a surgical technician. She was then assigned to the Army Air Corps, and served

### 1943

**Marjorie FITZGERALD McKenzie**, 92, of Winchester VA died Oct., 12, 2014 at her home following a short illness. Marjorie served in the U.S. Army as a nurse in World War II in China and India where she met her husband, Vernon McKenzie. She was active in the American Red Cross Association, and enjoyed traveling, reading and collecting. She is survived by her two daughters, two sons, and a grandson. She was predeceased by her husband, and all her brothers.



### 1948

**Hera SAVIDIS Kwiatkowski** died on September 8, 2013. She is survived by her husband of 64 years, three children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She graduated from New Jersey College for Women (now Douglas) prior to nursing school. Hera worked in the maternity ward of Middlesex Hospital (NJ) and then as a school nurse in East Brunswick for 23 years. She

in air base hospitals. When the war ended she enrolled in the School of Nursing and then worked in New York, Seattle and San Francisco. In 1955, Doreen accepted a position at the Pu'unene Hospital, Maui, HI where she met and married Jim Brown, a CAA air traffic controller. In 1962, they moved to California where she worked in several hospitals and joined the nursing staff of Kaiser Permanente, becoming "the Nurse" of the Nurse's Clinic when the Kaiser Bonita facility opened. In 1986, she retired from Kaiser and then worked as a community representative with Eastlake Development Company. Doreen loved classical music; she played violin and sang in various community orchestras, church choirs and the Seattle Chorale. She carried this love into retirement, becoming an education docent with the San Diego Symphony and several other related organizations. Doreen is survived by her husband, four children, two grandchildren, four brothers and two sisters.



## 1952

**Betty FOSTER Gentsch** passed away on September 11, 2015. She attended St. Lawrence University for two years as an English major before transferring to Columbia University to fulfill her life's dream of becoming a nurse. One week after graduation, Betty married her childhood sweetheart, Thomas Gentsch. She served as a certified public health nurse for the New Haven Visiting Nurse Service for two years and then joined the faculty at Yale University School of Nursing for a year, teaching contagious disease nursing. Betty retired from professional nursing in 1955, when her first son was born. By 1960, there were four sons, and she had a full-time job as mother and "domestic engineer."



Betty and Tom moved to Miami, Florida, in 1961. Beyond the challenges of raising four boys, Betty was involved with the PTA and Boy Scouts, the church choir as well as other voluntary involvements centered on her love of nursing; she ran and staffed a school health room, worked in the recovery room of a major Miami hospital for 10 years, volunteered at the American Heart Association, and was a board member and chairman of health services at a life-care retirement facility.

Beginning in 1981, Betty and Tom embarked on new adventures doing medical mission work in Africa. They spent several six-to eight-week stints providing surgical and nursing care in Cameroon, Madagascar, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In 1988, Betty and Tom relocated to Boone, North Carolina, to enjoy their retirement in the country and with family already living in the Seattle area, Betty and Tom relocated to Issaquah WA. Betty is preceded in death by less than two months by her husband of 61 years, and her father and mother Ben and Helen Foster. She is survived by her four sons and her six grandchildren.

## 1959

**Thora Joan ELLEFSEN Rusch** died on November 11, 2014 after a number of years of declining health. She was a student at Gettysburg College prior to graduating from the School of Nursing. She was employed by the Department of Public Health of the City of New York for a number of years, working in some of the city's poorest areas.

In 1967 she married William G. Rusch, a Lutheran pastor, at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in New York City. She was a faithful and caring partner and her support was crucial to her husband's ministry. In 2013 Thora, with her husband, was honored by an academic chair in her name at the Lutheran Theological Seminar in Philadelphia. She is survived by her husband, a sister and brother-in-law and three nieces.

## 1972

**Judith "Judy" Mary MURRAY** died on January 14, 2014. Judy worked as a nurse practitioner at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and Blue Cross Blue Shield in Quincy for many years. She was educated at Mt. St. Joseph Academy in Brighton, Regis College, the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University. She leaves four sisters, a brother and several nieces and nephews.

## 2001

**Patricia A. BROWN** passed away June 29, 2014, at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York. She graduated from Newport High School, Seattle University and Columbia University and started her career at Memorial Sloan-Kettering in 1970, working as a rehab nutrition nurse and worked with Maurice E. Shils, MD, a pioneer in parenteral nutrition at MSKCC. She continued in this line of work until very recently, helping consumers meet the challenges of living with home parenteral and enteral nutrition, and the effects of cancer therapy and malabsorption. A constant advocate for patients, she always went above and beyond to help families and her fellow coworkers. Pat was an active volunteer in the Oley Foundation as an advisor, treasurer, conference chair, speaker and board member. She was a peer reviewer for many articles in the Oley Newsletter. In 2002, she received an external award from the Oley Foundation for "Ultimate Volunteerism," in support of the Foundation. Pat was able to mix her passion of traveling and helping others through various medical mission trips, mostly to South America. She could easily be found at a play, a concert or with a book in hand. Pat is survived by her sister and two nieces.

# CLASS NEWS

1974

**Deborah MITCHELL Devine** writes: "Thirty years ago I left NYC and hospital nursing to move to MA and raise our family. For the past 17 years I have worked in Springfield in a high school of 1500 students as a nurse, fulfilling a life long dream. School Nursing has great rewards and many challenges, and I love it! I received my NCSN 5 years ago. I have been championing the certification among our district's 45 RN's as a part of my role as Nurse Specialist. It is my hope to retire in a couple of years so I can spend more time with my two (soon to be three) grandchildren and travel here and abroad."

## NIGHTINGALE COLLECTION BEING DIGITIZED

The Florence Nightingale Museum, Boston University Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, the Royal College of Nursing and the Wellcome Library are collaborating in this project as well as Columbia University's Augustus Long Health Sciences Library. Nightingale was a prolific writer and these institutions believe her work should be available to the general population. Our own Stephen E. Novak, Head of the Archives and Special Collections has sent the Auchincloss Collection to Boston to support this effort.

Should you wish to learn more about the project and see the letters that have been digitized to date, go to: <http://hgar-srv3.bu.edu/web/florence-nightingale/search-the-collaborative-database>.

To view the Nursing Archives webpages go to: <http://hgar-srv3.bu.edu/collections/nursing>.

# OUR NEW EDITOR

**Eileen McLaughlin Styles '58** has been appointed the new editor for our publications.

She will be assisted by our editorial staff:

Vi Gommer, Pam Heydon, and Pat

Jones. Maintaining communication

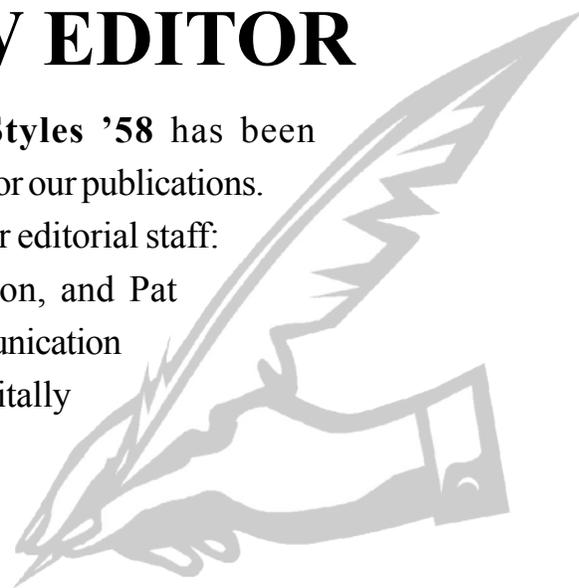
with our membership is vitally

important.

*Thank you  
Eileen!!*

If you have news, send it to our administrator,

Denise Ewing at: [admin@cuphsonaa.org](mailto:admin@cuphsonaa.org).



## EDITORS FAREWELL

All good things come to an end and my departure from the editorship of our publications is overdue. It has been a joy to connect with alumni, and publish their accomplishments and family stories. Even obituaries of those departed who honored our profession has been a task I undertook while spreading the word about our wonderful alum.

Since 2002 your alumni news has come to you from the same source.

That is going to change with the next issue. Rest assured we have secured an able editor, Eileen (Doc) McLoughlin Stiles to continue this worthwhile connection and a publication free from any outside oversight or influence. Eileen has had experience in newsletters and if the 1958 Memory Book for her 50th year class is an indication, you will enjoy her leadership. **Welcome Eileen.**

My thanks to all of you, our loyal members and interested readers. Ours is an Association to be most proud. With warm regards to you all,

*Suzanne Law Hawes '59*



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## WE'D LIKE TO KNOW

We would appreciate information concerning your professional and/or personal life for our files and for publication in the Alumni Magazine. Please mail or e-mail a current photograph. Our e-mail address is: [info@cuphsonaa.org](mailto:info@cuphsonaa.org)

Current Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name at Graduation \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Husband's/Wife's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Indicate whether Dr./Mr./Rev., etc.)

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Number) (Street)

(City) (State) (Zip) Check here if new [  ]

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Current Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
(Position) (Institution) (City) (State) (Zip)

We invite you to become a member of the Alumni Association: \_\_\_\_\_ \$25.00 Enclosed.

**PERSONAL NEWS: Weddings, births, adoptions, community activities, news of your family**

**PROFESSIONAL NEWS: Promotions, appointments, papers published or delivered, new ideas implemented**

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