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Longtime nursing educator to receive Friends of Health Sciences Award

A sudden change of mind led Dr. Joyce D’Andrea to nursing but it proved to be a wise decision that set the course for a lengthy and rewarding career in nursing education. For her dedication to preparing students for work as professional nurses, the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Lethbridge is pleased to present her with the Friend of Health Sciences Award.

“Joyce has dedicated her career to nursing education,” says Dr. Chris Hosgood, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. “At Lethbridge College and the University of Lethbridge, she has supported and mentored generations of students over a nursing career of five decades.”



“I was shocked—caught completely off guard,” says D’Andrea, recalling her reaction when she learned about the award. “There are so many people doing phenomenal work who I think are more deserving of the award. It is such an honour—very humbling.”

Her work over the decades has involved teaching thousands of nursing students in a career that has blended her twin passions of teaching and nursing.

In her nomination, she is described as passionate, confident, warm, committed, positive, encouraging, and an inspirational role model, an icon of nursing leaders and a wonderful mentor.

The Lethbridge born-and-raised D’Andrea, as a high school senior, wasn’t sure what career direction to take. She’d been thinking about becoming a teacher, possibly of French, as one of her own teachers had suggested.

She remembers clearly how that all changed one day when a few girls from her classroom were called to the principal’s office. In discussion with the girls, D’Andrea learned they had been accepted into nursing school and that the call to the office was to begin the required series of inoculations. The girls’ excitement about their career choice, and the fact they would be moving

into the nursing residence, prompted D'Andrea to make some inquiries. Sister Beatrice, head of the nursing program at St. Michael's School of Nursing, responded immediately with an invitation to come for an interview. The interview culminated with an offer of admission and the seeding of an idea.

"Sister Beatrice said, 'If you still want to be a teacher, you can teach nursing,'" says D'Andrea. "I was happy with my decision right from the start. I loved the learning and being on the nursing units."

In her third year, D'Andrea had the opportunity to experience the role of clinical instructor during her final practicum. She was assigned, under the supervision and mentorship of a senior nursing instructor, to supervise a group of first-year students on a medical rotation.

"What an amazing experience; I was hooked—I wanted to be an instructor," she says.

To teach, D'Andrea needed a baccalaureate degree. At that time, the closest option for a nursing degree was the University of Alberta, where she began her studies for a two-year post basic degree. After a year, D'Andrea returned to Lethbridge and, through a university transfer agreement, took the remaining courses for her degree at the U of L. That decision allowed her to teach at St. Michael's School of Nursing during the summer and work part-time at the hospital during the school year.

"I had the best of both worlds, to teach and to nurse," she says.

Toward the end of the 1960s, the province began to gradually transition nursing programs from hospitals to educational settings. Lethbridge Community College received approval to offer a two-year nursing diploma, with the first class admitted in 1969. In 1970 and upon completing her degree, D'Andrea was hired by the college as a full-time faculty member.

D'Andrea was also passionate about learning. After five years at the College, she took a sabbatical to begin working on a master's degree at the University of Colorado. After completing the degree and more than 20 years later, with her children grown and attending university, D'Andrea decided to pursue a PhD. She started working on a doctorate in Higher Education through Nova Southeastern University in Florida.

"I think I'm your ultimate lifelong learner. I finished the doctorate in 2009, just as I was retiring from full-time work," says D'Andrea.

She's pursued part-time opportunities since then and now divides her time between teaching online courses in the Master of Nursing program at Athabasca University and being a sessional instructor at the U of L, where she oversees students in their final preceptorship.

"I don't think I could have had a better career. I found my passion in nursing and teaching students. For any new student, that's what I would wish for them. There are so many

opportunities in nursing where they can develop their passion and shape their own career,” says D’Andrea.

The Friends of Health Sciences Award will be celebrated on Thursday, Oct. 26 at a dinner in the Students’ Union Ballroom. Tickets are \$50 each or \$400 for a table of eight. Tickets are available [online](#).

This news release can be found online: [Friends of Health Sciences Award](#).

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