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## **Diane Shanks to receive Friend of Health Sciences Award for 2016**

The Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Lethbridge has chosen Diane Shanks (BN '84) as the recipient of this year's Friend of Health Sciences Award.

Shanks is described as someone with remarkable and inspirational commitment to registered nursing and nursing leadership and education. Dr. Shannon Spenceley, a U of L nursing professor, immediate past-president of the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta and a member of the award selection committee, says Shanks is a leader of unflinching integrity who isn't afraid to put provocative ideas on the table.

"Diane has left her mark on emergency nursing practice in Alberta, not only as a clinician, but as a manager, a senior leader and finally as a remarkable role model for many of our NESAs (Nursing Education in Southwestern Alberta) students. She is richly deserving of this honour," says Spenceley.

"I was completely floored," says Shanks, recalling her reaction when she learned the news. "I was surprised but very honoured that they would consider me for this award and recognition. I was born and raised in Lethbridge and received all of my education in Lethbridge so it's very meaningful to be recognized by my local community. Also, because it's the centennial year for nursing in Alberta, it is especially exciting to be a registered nurse and recognized this year."

Shanks graduated from Lethbridge College in 1981, the bearer of a nursing diploma. She spent a year working at the University of Alberta hospital in Edmonton before returning to Lethbridge to work on a bachelor of nursing degree at the U of L. Thinking a degree would enhance her nursing skills and possibly provide opportunities for her nursing career in the future, she enrolled and completed the degree in 1984. After nursing in emergency for five years, she became manager of the department.

"My true love is the emergency health system; that was my area of interest very early on in my career as a registered nurse. In fact, on retirement, that would be an area that would easily draw me back to do some frontline clinical work," she says.

After a few years, as the system grew and regionalization occurred, Shanks took on responsibility for emergency programs across the Chinook Health Region, from Taber to Crowsnest Pass. ICU was added to her portfolio. When the health regions were dissolved in favour of a provincial health authority, programs became site-based and additional portfolios were added to Shanks' responsibilities.

"When I look back on all we have done through the years and where we are today, I'd like to think that we have improved our health system and health care and that I have played some part in that. I'm certainly not the type of person who shies away from challenges or from change and I believe we need to continually reflect on what we are doing, and change and evolve appropriately to improve," she says.

Shanks will be honoured at a reception and dinner scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 20 in the U of L Students' Union Ballrooms. [Tickets](#) can be purchased online.

A [feature story](#) on Shanks can be found on the UNews website.

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