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NURSING EDUCATION AT ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY: 1923 to 1976.

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The year, 1923, was critical to the growth of University based nursing education in the United States. Prior to this time, the accepted educational program for nurses was service oriented hospital schools where nursing students provided care to the ill and infirmed with little compensation and limited formal teaching. The emphasis of nursing education was clearly on the "nurses ability to carry out doctor's orders in the care of the sick," with no concern for health promotion or the general health of the public.¹

In 1923, however, the results of a major study on nursing education, the Goldmark Report, were published. Sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Report called for many changes in the education of nurses. Issues and recommendations included: the correlation and planning of instruction and experience; the need for additional training in order to be public health nurses, superintendents, supervisors, and instructors; the need for schools to be organized for educational experience; and the need for the development and strengthening of university based schools of nursing.² This report led to the Rockefeller Foundation funding the formation of a School of Nursing at Yale University. Two other universities, Vanderbilt and Case Western, started nursing programs within their institutions as a result of this research.

At the same time of this landmark study, Illinois Wesleyan University was independently engaged in an effort to provide a University based program of nursing

¹Rawnsley, Marilyn M. "The Goldmark Report: Midpoint in Nursing History," Nursing Outlook 21 (June 1973): 383.

education in conjunction with Brokaw Hospital in Normal, Il. It is documented secondarily, that an actual affiliation began between Brokaw Hospital School for Nurses and Illinois Wesleyan University in 1923, the same year the Goldmark report was released. This affiliation became the basis of the School of Nursing as it is today.

The purpose of this research has been to document the history of Illinois Wesleyan University's School of Nursing from the earliest affiliations with Brokaw Hospital's School for Nurses to the formation of the baccalaureate program as it stands today. Two research questions were formulated: 1) How did Brokaw Hospital School for Nurses and Illinois Wesleyan come together? and 2) What were the critical factors which contributed to the development of Illinois Wesleyan School of Nursing?

To address the questions historical research methods were utilized. First, archival research was conducted at Illinois Wesleyan's Sheean Library, at the Library of BroMenn Regional Medical Center, Bloomington, Il., and at the Midwest Nursing History Resource Center at the University of Illinois, Chicago campus. Oral interviews were subsequently conducted with three past administrators and one past faculty member from the School of Nursing.

Information gathered from investigation of archival materials and from interviews revealed three distinct timeframes or periods important to the development of the program. Each period was marked by the determination of University administrators and nursing leaders who were committed to the growth of University based nursing education. The importance of accrediting standards set by the Department of Registration and Education of the State of Illinois and the National League for Nursing Education, also became evident while reviewing the archival materials. Obstacles to change, such as concern from the local physicians, were also revealed.

The three timeframes were as follows:

- 1). 1923 to 1956: Nursing Education at Brokaw Hospital Training School and Illinois Wesleyan University
- 2). 1956 to 1959: Brokaw Hospital School for Nursing of Illinois Wesleyan University
- 3). 1959 to present: Brokaw Collegiate School of Nursing of Illinois Wesleyan University.

However, I will limit my remarks of the present program to the earliest period through the mid 1960's.

Turning to the First timeframe: 1923 to 1956

Although a review of two decades of formal Board of Trustees minutes did not uncover the formal documents citing the affiliation, a review of the Illinois Wesleyan University Catalogues and the Brokaw Hospital School of Nursing Announcements revealed the program came into existence with the entering class of 1924. The first Illinois Wesleyan Catalogue to mention the program was from the year 1924 and stated the reasoning behind the formation of the program was simply "To meet the demand that has been felt for some time".¹

This program was a "five year combined collegiate and professional course" which led to a Bachelor of Science Degree from Illinois Wesleyan and a Graduate Nurse Diploma from Brokaw Hospital.² The main purpose of this program, as stated in the Brokaw Hospital School of Nursing Announcement from 1926 to 1927, was to "meet the need for scientifically trained women to fill

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administrative and teaching positions in Schools of Nursing and to go out into the many branches of Public Health Nursing.”¹ In order to fulfill this purpose the students completed 6 semester hours of English, 22 semester hours of zoology, physiology, and bacteriology, 10 semester hours of chemistry, 16 hours of modern language, 6 hours of psychology/education, and 6 hours of sociology at Illinois Wesleyan, as well as two and one half years of nursing courses at Brokaw Hospital School for Nurses.²

During the period of 1923 to 1956 Maude Essig displayed the leadership needed to cultivate the beginning stages of change. Maude Essig was a dynamic woman with high expectations. She became the director of Brokaw’s training school in 1924, and by 1925 had already begun to make important changes. For example, she raised the entrance requirements to correspond with those of Illinois Wesleyan.³ She worked to provide better educational resources and equipment for the students. Through the efforts made to increase the levels of nursing education Miss Essig led the school to receive accreditation from the National League for Nursing Education.⁴

The first plans for the formation of a fully collegiate School of Nursing began in 1956. This transformation took place in two steps. During the first phase the School was titled Brokaw Hospital School for Nursing of Illinois Wesleyan University; this program was in existence from 1956 to the spring of 1962 when the last class was graduated.

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³Vern L. Bullough, Lilli Sentz, and Alice P. Stein, ed., American Nursing: A Biographical Dictionary Volume 2 (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1992), pp. 103-104.

⁴Ibid.

The second timeframe follows with:1956 to 1959

In 1956 the plans made were made to initiate the Brokaw Hospital School of Nursing of Illinois Wesleyan University. In danger of losing its accreditation from the Department of Registration and Education of the State of Illinois, Margaret Griffin, superintendent of the School of Nursing during this period, along with Illinois Wesleyan's Dean William Beadles and President Merrill Holmes, instituted changes to incorporate the training school into an integral part of Illinois Wesleyan. In May of 1956 the proposal for the intended integration was presented to each of the boards of the two institutions. Dean Beadles in his formal presentation to the Illinois Wesleyan University Board of Trustees stated:

For the last few years, we have been working toward a closer affiliation of the University with the School of Nursing, trying to move in the direction of the establishment of a true collegiate school of nursing. It now appears that it is possible for this to be achieved before the end of this academic year.¹

During the early planning stages in the year of 1956 many issues of concern were brought before the Joint Committee of Control of the Brokaw School of Nursing of Illinois Wesleyan University. The Medical Staff of Brokaw Hospital presented opposition in regards to issues relating to the hospital. Documentation of some of the issues can

¹"School of Nursing" (May 19, 1956) p. 1--presentation to Board of Trustees by Dean William Beadles. Found in the Archives of IWU Sheean Library in the School of Nursing Files.

be found in the minutes from A Special Conference on the Proposed School of Nursing Of Illinois Wesleyan University. The minutes expressed some of the concerns to be:

...the hospital's physicians showed some anxiety as to whether or not the hospital could profitably give up the hospital school.¹

and

...Will this school service the hospital well?²

At this same meeting Miss Freda Treptow, a consultant from the Department of Registration and Education of the State of Illinois, and Miss Griffin presented reasoning for the need for a collegiate program to the group. Miss Treptow emphasized the need for baccalaureate education from an accredited school in order for nurses to pursue graduate study.³ Miss Griffin addressed the doctor's issue of the service the students provide to the hospital by stating:

...the present service needs of the hospital, urgent and important as they are constitute a consideration quite apart from the educational needs of the student and the program best suited to the preparation of good nurses for the future.⁴

¹"A special Conference on the Proposed School of Nursing Of Illinois Wesleyan University Held by the Executive Group of the University in Collaboration With.." (November 17, 1958) p. 2--Statement made by Dr. Holmes. Found in the Archives of IWU Sheean Library in the School of Nursing Files.

²Ibid., p. 5--Statment made by Dr. Livingston.

³Ibid., p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 6.

The school proposed at this time was under the control of both administrations under a joint Committee of Control. However, due to a continuing need for the School to become truly collegiate, in 1958 the Administration of Illinois Wesleyan proposed to take over control of the School with continuing use of Brokaw as a main clinical facility. The first class to enter the School solely under the administration of Illinois Wesleyan did so in the fall of 1959.

Now addressing the issues of the third timeframe: 1959 to the mid 1960's

In 1963 tension once again was found in the documentation of letters between the Administration and faculty of Illinois Wesleyan on one hand and the Administration of Brokaw Hospital on the other. The tension arose between the medical staff, including the Brokaw Hospital Administrators, and the School. The underlying reasoning was found in a letter to Illinois Wesleyan's President Bertholf from Jerry Poole, an administrator at Brokaw Hospital, dated June 22, 1964. In the letter it was written:

..they (the medical staff) are enthusiastic about, interested in and believe themselves capable of participating in the teaching of student nurses in the School of Nursing of Illinois Wesleyan University...If Illinois Wesleyan University cannot adopt these minimal requests and suggestions to cooperate with the offer of assistance by the hospital, the Nursing School of Illinois Wesleyan University will be requested to withdraw from the Brokaw Hospital facilities and make such

arrangements as would be necessary to carry on the Collegiate School of Nursing.¹

In that same letter, it is mentioned that the wishes of the medical staff are for the junior and senior nursing students to have eight week summer sessions.² In other earlier letters the tension was described, only, as being a communication problem that needed to be addressed. Clearly, however, the medical staff's desire to have nursing students continue in service of the hospital--a pervasive obstacle throughout the early history of nursing--was a major factor in the early tension between the hospital and Illinois Wesleyan.

In some of the letters reviewed the administration and nursing school faculty of Illinois Wesleyan stated a desire to remain on good terms with Brokaw Hospital's administration and Medical Staff. One administrator from Illinois Wesleyan wrote:

We desire very much to maintain our good relations with Brokaw, if this is possible, realizing that we need both the suggestions and the good will of the medical people here in Bloomington-Normal, and having the conviction at the same time that our School of Nursing is making a contribution to nursing service and the profession of nursing.³

¹ "Letter to IWU President Bertholf from Jerry E. Poole, Administrator at Brokaw Hospital" (June 22, 1964) p. 1--Found in IWU School of Nursing in the red binder in the cabinet in the conference room.

² Ibid., p. 2.

³ "Letter to Jerry E. Poole, Administrator at Brokaw Hospital from IWU President Lloyd Bertholf" (June 12, 1963) p. 1--Found in IWU School of Nursing in the red binder in the cabinet in the conference room.

Another area the Administrations of Illinois Wesleyan University and Brokaw Hospital discussed was the importance of accreditation from the National League for Nursing. President Bertholf in a letter to Mr. Monroe Dodge, President of Brokaw Hospital Board of Trustees in 1964, wrote of the importance of accreditation to the protection of the public. President Bertholf correlated the objective of health care provided by doctors and nurses to the objective of the accreditation, with the focus of both on the patient.¹

In the same letter as mentioned prior, the accreditation of the School was shown to be consistent with the ideals held by the administration in relation to the School. In the letter President Bertholf wrote:

As educators, we believe, thus far, that the philosophy of nursing education held by the League is sound, and we are trying to set up the finest nursing school in the midwest by League standards.²

At the same time, Dr. Mary D. Shanks, the director of the School of Nursing from 1960 to 1976, was diligent in obtaining support for the school during this time. Dr. Shanks sought support for the School from important women in the community and the faculty of Illinois Wesleyan. During an oral interview with President Bertholf, he made reference to Dr. Shanks as being the "push" behind this program.³ Also stated during the interview he also cited Dr. Shanks for her determination and inability to

¹"Letter to Monroe Dodge, President of Brokaw Hospital Board of Trustees from IWU President Lloyd Bertholf" (June 12, 1964) p. 1--Found in IWU School of Nursing in the red binder in the cabinet in the conference room.

²Ibid., p. 2.

give-in on issues related to nursing education. In a letter in support of Dr. Shanks and her determination, Annabelle Hartranft, an instructor with the School of Nursing, wrote in a letter to Paul Allison, President of Illinois Wesleyan Board of Trustees,:

...I believe Illinois Wesleyan University and Brokaw Hospital will look far and wide to find a more capable, dedicated person to direct a program for the preparation of professional nurses in the community.¹

Also, she wrote about Mary Shanks' contributions to the School and the motives behind her actions. The main motivation behind Mary Shanks and the rest of the faculty of the School of Nursing, as stated by Miss Hartranft, was the NLN accreditation.²

The findings of the documents and interviews from the period of 1923 to the mid-sixties reveal a few central characteristics present in all three important phases of program development. At each stage, the leadership of the three directors of the School of Nursing and the influence of accrediting bodies was evident. The standards of the State of Illinois and the National League for Nursing clearly were motivators for key decision-making by the administrators of the two programs. Additionally, the resistance of the medical community to deemphasize university learning for nurses and to argue for the continued service of students to ensure the financial viability of a hospital was also apparent.

¹"Letter to Paul Allison, President of IWU Board of Trustees, from Annabelle Hartranft, IWU School of Nursing faculty" (June 26, 1964) p. 3--Found in IWU School of Nursing in the red binder in the cabinet in the conference room.

²Ibid.

Although the findings of this research provide a glimpse of events and words at critical points in the formation of the present School of Nursing at the University, what is still not known is the impetus for the earliest dialogue between the Brokaw Hospital School of Nursing and Illinois Wesleyan. Whatever the reason, the seventy-year history of nursing at Illinois Wesleyan suggests that dynamic leaders in the School of Nursing and University Administration were committed to fulfill the recommendation of the 1923 Goldmark Report for University based education for nurses.