



CNHP To Honor Distinguished Alumni During Homecoming

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JONESBORO – Seven graduates from Arkansas State University's College of Nursing and Health Professions will be recognized as the 2019 distinguished alumni during Homecoming festivities Saturday, Oct. 26.

Christie Wyatt of Rosie, Barbara Brown of Jonesboro, Angie Smith of Lake City, Carla Sumner of Searcy, Shawna Spurling of Manhattan, Kan., April Ryan of Jonesboro and Randall Murray of Jonesboro will be honored at a special ceremony at 3 p.m. in Room 222 of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Health Sciences.

Clinical Laboratory Sciences:

Christie Wyatt, MBA, MT (ASCP) started working at White River Medical Center as a weekend phlebotomist in 1996 while attending the A-State medical technology program (now known as the Clinical Laboratory Sciences Department). She graduated in 1997 with a Bachelor of Science degree in medical technology and continued her employment at the WRMC lab as a generalist bench technologist.

Wyatt has since served in the roles of phlebotomy supervisor, laboratory operations supervisor, and currently Director of Laboratory Services. She also recently assumed oversight of two pulmonology clinics within the WRMC health system. White River Medical Center is a clinical affiliate to the CLS Department, and Wyatt and her staff have educated dozens of A-State students throughout the years.

She was a board member of the Arkansas Chapter of the Clinical Laboratory Management Association from 2009 to 2017, serving as chapter president from 2013-15. She earned her Master of Business Administration degree in healthcare management and leadership in 2016.

Wyatt is married and has three grown children. In her spare time, she enjoys playing the piano and cooking, and recently started baking and decorating cakes.

Nursing:

Barbara Brown, Nursing: RN, graduated from the associate nursing program in 1983. She has been a registered nurse for 36 years. She is a resident of Jonesboro. Brown is employed by St. Bernards Medical Center as a case manager for home hospice. She has been in that position for 10 years. Prior to that, she was the RN-AHRQ (Agency Healthcare Research and Quality) coordinator for three years at St. Bernards. She worked for 16 years at Health South as a nurse liaison, and also worked in surgery and intensive care at St. Bernards for five years after graduation.

Brown is an outstanding role model for students. She respects all of her patients and families and goes the extra mile for those patients who need items such as sheets, towels and hygiene products. She works with her chaplain at hospice closely and has a special place for animals.

She is married to Gerald Brown, also a nursing alumnus from the same class. They have two daughters, one of who is an A-State alum.

Brown is being recognized as having a remarkable career, a dedicated nurse and helpful mentor for both patients and A-State students.

Angie Smith, Nursing: DNP, APRN, ACNS-BC, CNE received her BS in nursing degree in 1994 from the University of Central Arkansas. She received her MS in nursing with an emphasis in adult health in 2005 and her Doctor of Nursing practice in 2017, both from Arkansas State. She currently serves as Vice President of Nursing and Nurse Executive at St. Bernards Medical Center.

In her role, she directs all nursing activities including inpatient acute care, education, recruitment and clinical research. Smith is board certified by the American Nursing Credentialing Center as an adult clinical nurse specialist and as a certified nurse educator through the National League for Nursing.

Smith has an extensive background as a registered nurse in critical care, management, education and recruitment. She is a member of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, American College of Healthcare Executives and American Organization for Nursing Leadership.

She resides in Lake City with her husband, Greg and two children, Lauren and Grant.

Communication Disorders:

Carla Tipton Sumner, SLP graduated from Arkansas State in 1994 with a Master in Communication Disorders degree. She received her BA in Communication Disorders from Harding University in 1993. While at A-State, she participated in a research project on scripted play and its effects on language, which was later published in the "Journal of Early Childhood Education."

She has practiced as an SLP for 24 years in a variety of settings including schools, hospitals, private practice, outpatient clinics, home health and skilled nursing facilities in Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee.

Sumner has given back to the profession by supervising multiple speech pathologists in their clinical fellowship year and many student clinicians throughout the years. She serves on the advisory council for the graduate communication sciences disorders program at Harding University and has supervised graduate clinicians at the Harding International program in Zambia for three summers.

Sumner has been a speaker at the A-State Jane H. LeBlanc conference in communication disorders. She is married to Ryan Sumner and they have three children.

Dietetics

Shawna Spurling graduated cum laude in 2014 from the inaugural class of the Coordinated Program in Dietetics. She took the national licensing exam to become a registered dietitian nutritionist and passed on the first attempt.

Shortly after graduation, Spurling began the Interservice Physician Assistant Program through the military to become a physician assistant. She currently works at Manhattan Medical Group in Manhattan, Kan., as a physician assistant. For the past four years, Spurling has also served in the 875th Engineer Battalion "Essayons" in Jonesboro. She currently has state orders for captain, pending federal recognition.

Social Work

Randall Murray is the Department of Social Work's recipient of the 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award. He earned his Bachelor and Master of Social Work degrees at Arkansas State in 2014 and 2016, respectively, which prepared him for a pathway toward helping address people's needs.

He went on to work as the BSW pre-professional advisor at A-State from 2016 to 2018. Since January 2017, Murray works as a LMSW/case manager employed by NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital. Activities include the opportunity for Murray to interact with patients and families to address discharge planning into the least restrictive environment.

Special interest in daily practice at NEA Baptist Hospital is to address the homeless, veterans and providing mental health services in the emergency room or providing referrals to assist the patients' families in need. Building the human relationship with a patient while addressing needs is one of the most rewarding goals in daily practice.

Additionally, Murray is currently employed by A-State's social work department as an adjunct instructor providing students instruction into the realm of substance use/misuse and treatment protocols used to provide members of society a pathway toward recovery.

He also provides licensure training to MSW students seeking to pass their LMSW. Future knowledge and growth await Murray while pursuing his licensed clinical social worker credential.

Physical Therapy

April Ryan is a 2001 graduate of the A-State physical therapist assistant program. She lives in Jonesboro with her husband and two children.

Ryan began working at Encompass Health (formerly known as Healthsouth) after graduation. She began working in the inpatient section for 10 years and then transferred to outpatient where she has worked for the past eight years. She specializes in treating patients that have had a stroke, brain injury or have Parkinson's disease. She has specialized certifications in Neuro-IFRAH (Neuro-Integrative Functional Rehabilitation and Habilitation), PWR (Parkinson Wellness Recovery), and LSVT BIG. She has given back to the PTA program by volunteering as a clinical instructor to students on clinical rotations.

Ryan is the Stroke Champion at the local Encompass Health facility with duties of representing the therapy department in the monthly committee meetings. She also provides transfer training to all newly-hired employees.

She presents training sessions to help therapists improve handling and facilitation skills with patients after a stroke. She works alongside an occupational therapist to provide and co-leads a monthly Parkinson's community exercise class on the first Saturday of the month. Ryan also volunteers for many opportunities in her church, Forest Home Church of the Nazarene.

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