

Prof. Dalena van Rooyen



Prof. Rachel Magdalena (Dalena) van Rooyen was born on 18 October 1963 in Uptington, South Africa, to parents Gerhardus and Wilhelmiena Wiense. She attended Outeniqua High School in George and then went on to study Nursing at the University of Port Elizabeth. Prof. van Rooyen is married to Johan and they have one son, Niel, who is currently completing his studies towards a Bachelor of Arts at the NMMU.

Prof. van Rooyen's first degree was a BCur in 1986 at UPE. She went on to obtain a diploma with distinction in ICU nursing through SANC. In 1990-1991, she returned to UPE to do her diploma in nursing education for which she obtained a distinction. She then obtained her BA Cur Honours in Advanced General Nursing Science from UNISA. She returned to UPE to complete her Magister Curatoris which she obtained with distinction. Thereafter, in 2002, she reached her highest academic achievement, namely, completing her PhD at UPE.

Prof. van Rooyen started off as a professional nurse working in the Emergency Department at George Hospital in 1986. She then moved to PE, working in the ICU at the Provincial Hospital. In 1995, she began her academic career as a junior lecturer in the Department of Nursing Science at UPE. Nine years later she became a professor and a year later in 2005 she became the HoD of the department. She left the department in 2012 to move into her current position as Director of the School of Clinical Care Sciences at the NMMU. She is a professional editor for the journal Health SA Gesondheid and the President of the Academy of Nursing for South Africa as well as the vice-Chairperson for the South African Nursing Education Association. Prof. van Rooyen has also authored many publications and has promoted numerous PhD and Master's students.

Regarding her future, Prof. van Rooyen fully supports the NMMU's goal of building a medical school by the year 2020. She is currently highly involved in the planning and preparation of this very challenging task.

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YEARS
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NURSES

Prof. Portia Jordan

Prof. Portia Janine Jordan was born in Port Elizabeth (PE), completed her school career and joined the University of Port Elizabeth in 1990 as a student nurse. On completion of her nursing qualification as a professional nurse, she worked primarily in ICU for a period of ten years before joining the academic world. Prof. Jordan is an associate professor at the Department of Nursing Science, NMMU, where she teaches in the under- and postgraduate programmes. Her speciality fields are Critical Care Nursing and Nephrology Nursing Science. She is married and has two beautiful children.

Prof. Jordan achieved her BCur degree at the University of Port Elizabeth. She later returned to complete her MCur, which she obtained with distinction. Five years later she obtained her diploma in nursing education at the NMMU also with distinction followed by a diploma in nephrology nursing also at the NMMU. Prof. Jordan then went on to achieve her PhD in Nursing Science which she obtained in 2011. She is currently in the process of completing her MBA also through the NMMU.

Prof. Jordan started out her career as a student nurse in 1990 and upon qualifying went to work at the Renal Unit at the Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town for almost a year. She then returned to PE working at the Critical Care Unit at the Provincial Hospital for over eight years. She joined the teaching staff at the NMMU Department of Nursing Science in 2004 rising rapidly from lecturer, to senior lecturer and finally to her present position as associate professor in 2014.

Her future plans are related to her academic career pertaining to her research programme which focuses on her niche research area, namely: Improving nursing capacity care practise in high acuity units. Furthermore, she is also working towards becoming an NRF rated researcher which involves a very rigorous selection process.



P13 & 16

Prof. Emeritus Silvia Pera



Professor Emeritus Silvia Pera, only daughter of Giuseppe and Esther Pera, was born in Pretoria in 1937, and schooled at Iona Convent in Pretoria, before embarking on a career in nursing.

She became a registered general nurse in 1959 and a registered midwife in 1959, before obtaining a Diploma in Orthopaedic Nursing (1961) and completing a course in Spinal Injury Nursing at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Buckinghamshire, England in 1966.

She went on to obtain a Diploma in Nursing education (1971) at the University of Pretoria, followed by a BCur (I et al) (1976) and MCur (cum laude) (1981). She obtained her DCur from the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) in 1985.

Her career achievements include presenting a post basic course in Orthopaedic Nursing and developing the curriculum for the Spinal Injury Nursing Certificate. She also initiated and played a pivotal role in establishing the Spinal Injuries Unit in Pretoria. She published a number of articles and co-authored publications in Nursing History, Ethics and Ethics. In her career as a professional nurse, she rose in the ranks from Staff Nurse to Nurse Educator.

In 1976, she was appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Nursing Science at UNISA, and in 1981, promoted to Senior Lecturer. She became an Associate Professor in 1984 and a Professor in Nursing Science in 1988. She is currently Professor Emeritus.

She is enjoying her retirement and remains available to the profession as a Nursing Consultant.

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NURSES

Prof. Rautenbach



Prof. FIRSTNAME? Rautenbach was the first male nurse to obtain a Doctorate in Nursing in South Africa.

Growing up, his father was a travelling man, which led to his attending some 13 schools, before matriculating at Hottentots Holland High in Somerset West. He went on to train as a nurse at Karl Bremer Hospital in Cape Town, and married a fellow trainee.

After training as a general nurse, he completed diplomas in Nursing Education and Nursing Administration. He then obtained his BCur (I et al) at the University of Pretoria, and then his MCur in Education at the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), where he also completed his DCur, becoming South Africa's first male nurse to obtain such a degree.

He has also completed a course of studies on breast cancer, with Breast International, conducting extensive research into the cause of breast cancer, concentrating on the contribution of bras to breast cancer. He has presented papers on his research at a number of international congresses.

He was awarded the Florence Nightingale Bursary to study nursing in Europe.

In terms of his nursing career, after qualifying as a male nurse, he joined the Department of Prisons and was responsible for the implementation of nurse training (for prison personnel) and the upgrading of prison hospitals.

He then joined the staff of the Department of Nursing at UPE. His next appointment was to start a Department of Nursing at the University of Fort Hare, followed by a similar appointment at Venda University, where he was tasked with starting that university's Department of Nursing.

He then went on pension, and became CEO of the Helderberg Sports Academy in Somerset West. After going on pension for the second time, he accepted a position as a researcher for Breast International, which he currently holds.

His future plans are to continue with his research into the cause of breast cancer - and to enjoy his retirement.

Prof. Rautenbach and his wife were blessed with four children. Sadly, they lost their eldest daughter in a home - riding accident. The other three married - and have presented their parents with seven grandchildren.

Prof. Rautenbach's hobby is to breed Koi fish.

P14 & 15

Prof. Sally van Tonder



Professor Emeritus Sally van Tonder, daughter of Mr and Mrs GJ van Tonder, and her twin sister were born in Pretoria in 1937. She has two other sisters. She completed her schooling at Langenhoven High School in Pretoria, before becoming a nurse, a vocation she had picked at a young age, and a profession which she strove to advance throughout her career. She became a registered general nurse in 1958, and a registered midwife in 1960, before obtaining diplomas in Orthopaedic Nursing (1963) and Intensive Care Nursing in 1972.

She obtained a Diploma in Nursing Administration (1973) at the University of Pretoria, followed by her BCur (I et al) in 1978. She completed her BA Cur (Hons) (1982) and MA Cur (1984) through UNISA, and her DCur through the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE).

She has published many articles, both in English and Afrikaans, in various nursing publications. She has also co-authored various nursing books.

In her career, she occupied various roles from Staff Nurse to Senior Matron.

In 1977, she became a lecturer in the Department of Nursing Science at UNISA, and then was promoted to Senior Lecturer (1984) and Associate Professor (1988).

She is currently a Professor Emeritus. She plans to enjoy her retirement further and also find time to practice her hobbies.

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NURSES

Dr. Norushe



East London-born Dr. FirsiNAME? Norushe obtained a BA Cur degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA), and then a Master's degree in Health and Welfare and a Cur at the former University of Port Elizabeth (UPE). She also has several diplomas, including a Postgraduate Diploma: Advanced Nursing Science (Nursing Administration) from UNISA, a Diploma in Psychiatry from Frere Hospital and diplomas in Midwifery and General Nursing, both obtained at Tshepong Hospital, Klerksdorp.

Dr. Norushe began her career as a Professional Nurse at Katuru Hospital (Windhoek, Namibia). She was then a Preceptor (Cecilia Makwane Hospital), before fulfilling roles as a Professional Nurse, Senior Professional Nurse and Chief Professional Nurse for the then East London Municipality (now Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality).

What followed was a career highlight, when she established the Research and Policy Unit at Buffalo City Municipality in 2005, having been appointed as Manager of Research and Policy, with the additional function of Knowledge Management added to her mandate. Her current role is Head: Information and Knowledge Management, Research and Policy.

Thanks to her efforts, Buffalo City became the first municipality in the country to undertake basic Knowledge Management Training for Councilors of the institution. This training was identified by the South African Cities Network (SACN), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the National Department of Cooperative Governance (COGTA) and member cities of SACN, as a best practice initiative, with COGTA eager to replicate such training for all Councilors in South Africa.

Among her many functions at the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, she is also responsible for the facilitation of access to the municipality by Honours and Master's Research Students and PhD Candidates, from a range of tertiary educational institutions across the country, including NMMU, for the purposes of collecting data for their research studies.

Looking ahead to the future, Dr. Norushe is looking forward to undertaking consultative work after retirement.

She has two children, a daughter, who is a BTech Chemical Engineering graduate from the University of the Western Cape (UWC), and a son, who is a BSc IT Hons graduate from CTI in the United Kingdom. She also has a granddaughter, who is in Grade 2.

She is an avid reader, who likes to keep up with current affairs and politics, and enjoys travelling.

DS Panel u4 & u10

Ms Candice Bowers



Ms Candice Bowers was born in 1978 in Port Elizabeth, to parents, Dolores and Preston Bowers. She completed her BCur (2000) at the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) and her MCur (2013) at NMMU. Her other qualifications include a Certificate in Elementary Critical Care through Netcare Education, Greenacres Hospital, which she passed with honours in 2008.

She also has a Diploma in Nursing Education (2014) from Stellenbosch University, which she also passed with honours. Her awards while studying included the South African Nursing Association Henrietta Stockdale Floating Trophy, which she received from UPE in 2000, for the highest level of professional maturity during the programme for the BCur degree. She also received a floating trophy in 2008 from Netcare, Greenacres Hospital for attaining the highest marks in the Elementary Critical Care Course.

She started her nursing career in Amsterdam, Holland in 2000, working as a professional nurse in the Thoracic Ward at the Free University Academic Hospital. From 2001 to 2003, she worked at Flora Clinic, Florida, Johannesburg as a shift leader in the Cardiothoracic Ward. She then spent three years in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia at King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre, where she worked as a professional nurse in the Medical Ward and then at the VIP Float Pool, where her work included caring for an elderly Sheikh. From 2006 to 2007, she worked in Greenacres Hospital's Cardiothoracic Ward, before shifting to the hospital's ICU department from 2007 to 2012.

Her future plans include completing her PhD in Nursing Science.

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YEARS
NURSES

Mariana Spagadoros

Born and raised in Port Elizabeth, Ms Mariana Spagadoros completed her schooling at Collegiate and Victoria Park High.

She has firm ties with Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), having completed her undergraduate nursing degree there, and later her master's degree in advanced medical and surgical nursing science, along with her Diploma in Nursing Education. She has a passion for people and the nursing profession as a whole, as well as educating the next generation of nurses.

After graduating with her undergraduate degree in 2005, Ms Spagadoros worked at Life St Georges Hospital. Later that year, she left for the United Kingdom, taking on various home care job opportunities through the Nightingale Nursing Agency.

Between 2006 and 2007, having returned to South Africa, she worked at various private and public institutions in Nelson Mandela Bay. Between 2007 and 2009, she was employed as a mentor and was engaged in the clinical accompaniment of nursing students at NMMU. Since January 2008, she has worked as a lecturer in NMMU's Nursing Science Department.

Her future plans include pursuing a PhD, writing journal articles for peer-reviewed journals and continuing to add to the knowledge base of the nursing profession.



DS Panel u13 & u14

Ms Nadine Rall



Ms Nadine Rall was born in Kroonstad in the Free State, where she lived until the age of 10, when her family relocated to Port Elizabeth.

Raised in a strong Christian environment, she was motivated from an early age to work hard to achieve a sound educational foundation.

After completing her schooling at DF Malherbe High School, she registered for her BCur degree in nursing at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. During her basic degree, she delivered her first neonate and fell drawn to midwifery, becoming very passionate about it. Thus, after completing her BCur degree in 2008, she went on to complete her MCur degree, specialising in the field of Advanced Midwifery and Neonatology. She has since registered for her PhD degree, with a focus on the training of midwifery students in South Africa. She also completed a Health

Science Education Diploma through North-West University, Potchefstroom in 2014.

Ms Rall began her career as a professional nurse in 2008, working at Dora Ngizwa Hospital, first completing her community service then working in maternity as a midwife. From 2010 to September 2011, she worked at the Port Elizabeth Central Maternity Obstetrical Unit, after which she began her current work as a lecturer.

Becoming an educator has allowed Ms Rall to share her ideas and experiences with her students, and to teach them about morals, ethics and community responsibility.

In addition to completing her PhD degree, Ms Rall's future plans include continuing to develop her academic career by registering for a post-doctoral degree and continuing research in the field of midwifery training.

She is married to Rudolf Rall and has a daughter, Haylee.

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YEARS
NURSES

Israel Sonti

Mr Israel Sonti was born in Lesotho, where his parents, the late Rev Canon Garlic and Selina Sonti, sought refuge during the apartheid era. He was raised in a staunch Christian home that loved and believed in education.

After completing the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) Examinations at Lesotho High School, he enrolled for an A-level Diploma at Machabeng College to enable him entry to a degree qualification overseas and in South Africa. He had always wanted to become a medical doctor, but a lack of funds prevented this dream from coming true.

In 2003, he was admitted for the BCur degree at the former UPE. His passion for Midwifery and Neonatal Sciences led to his specialising in Advanced Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science, and he became the first male to obtain this degree at NMMU. He is currently completing his nursing education qualification through North-West University.

Mr Sonti started his career at Allwal North Hospital in 2009, working in the medical, surgical and maternity wards. In 2010, he worked at Mercurius Hospital, before moving to Life Isivuvana Hospital in Humansdorp in 2011, working in the medical and maternity wards.

Thereafter, he worked at Dora Ngizwa Hospital in maternity high care, and in the labour ward, as a shift leader. While still employed there, he began working as a mentor and contract lecturer at NMMU. This led to his appointment as a full-time lecturer in midwifery in 2014.

Mr Sonti plans to complete his PhD in nursing science, and aims to conduct additional research and engage in the publication of research articles in the field of midwifery.

He is married to Nobesuthu and has two children, Chuma and Israel Jr. He enjoys spending quality time with his family, watching soccer and reading anything on maternal and neonatal well-being.



DS Panel u1& u2

Ms Marina Barnard



Port Elizabeth-born Ms Marina Barnard completed her schooling at Framley High in 1985 and went on to study towards a BCur degree at the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE). After completing her degree in 1990, she got married and relocated to Klerksdorp, where she worked at the Ancon Hospital as a professional nurse.

In 1992, she returned to Port Elizabeth, and worked for the Department of Health (DoH) as a Community Psychiatric Nurse. For 20 years, she acted as an advocate for vulnerable psychiatric clients and grew in her professional abilities. Since 2010, she has been the Director of the Non-Communicable Diseases Clinical Programme in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipal Health District.

In addition to her BCur degree, Ms Barnard achieved a Higher Certificate in Management through the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) in 2014, graduating as the top student with an average of 92%. She is considering further studies in health management, as well as short courses in her programme field.

Her future plans include addressing the challenges surrounding chronic condition management - up-skilling nursing staff, improving the management of conditions as well as acting as an advocate for the community and the service provider at community level. Building relationships of co-responsibility will be her main focus on the road ahead.

She has two daughters, one studying Pharmacy at NMMU and the other completing Grade 12. She has a special interest in community projects and is involved with the ATKV and Uitenhage Concentration Camp Trust.

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Ms Hester Venter

Ms Hester Elizabeth Venter was born and raised in Port Elizabeth, where she attended Cotswold Preparatory and Primary School and matriculated from Andrew Rabie High School in 1977.

She obtained her BCur degree in 1982 from the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE). She later returned to UPE to complete her MCur in Advanced Psychiatry in 1990.

After the completion of her studies, she was employed for several years at Elizabeth Donkin Hospital and then Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, until her family relocated to Durban. There, she assisted Prof Leana Uys at the University of Natal, on a part-time basis with the accompaniment of nursing students doing their practical work in psychiatry.

In 1999, the family relocated to Cradock, where Ms Venter worked for several years as a professional nurse at a local clinic. In 2005, she joined the Department of Health as a dedicated psychiatric nurse serving the community of Inxuba Yethemba Sub-District. Currently, she is coordinating the non-communicable disease (NCD) programme.

Her future endeavours include taking nursing care to an optimal level in her current role, serving the community of Inxuba Yethemba Sub-District.

Ms Venter is married to an attorney, who is practising in Cradock. She has two children, a son, who is an optometrist in Port Elizabeth, and a daughter, who is a fourth-year nursing student at the University of the Free State. As a result of her busy schedule, she struggles to pursue her interest in sewing.



DS Panel u6 & u7

Ms Michelle Elfick



Ms Michelle Elfick was born in Colesberg in the Karoo, and schooled in Bloemfontein, where she attended St Michael's School for Girls (where nursing pioneer Henrietta Stockdale once taught).

Ms Elfick completed her BCur degree at Stellenbosch University in 1994, followed by her MCur in Advanced Medical and Surgical Nursing at the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) in 1999, under the tutelage of Prof Dalena van Rooyen. She obtained her Diploma in Nursing Education in 2012 at NMMU.

After graduating with her BCur degree, she worked in East London, before moving to Port Elizabeth in 1997. She spent four years working in ICU at Greenacres Hospital, before moving overseas with her husband. She is currently on contract at NMMU as a clinical facilitator.

She has two children, Hannah and Daniel, and says if nursing shifts were flexible enough to accommodate mothers, nursing in ICU would be her first choice.

In her current role of clinical facilitation, she is able to spend time in the wards with patients and students and in this way, transfer her knowledge and experience to the students and develop in them a passion and a love for the profession.

She tries to live a very healthy and active lifestyle and hopes that by her example, she can encourage others to do the same, especially the nursing students she accompanies each day in hospitals throughout Nelson Mandela Bay.

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NURSES

Dr Willem Fourie

Pretoria born and raised Dr Willem Fourie, youngest son of Willem and Joan Fourie, matriculated from Pretoria North High School in 1974.

In 1978, following three years' work in the Prison Services, he was accepted to study towards a BCur degree at the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), where he met his wife Louanne (nee Boyes), a fellow BCur student. Together, they received the Mary Mellish trophy for academic achievement in 1982.

After obtaining his BCur (1982), he went on to achieve his MCur degree from the University of Fort Hare (1987). He then obtained his Diploma in Nursing Education from UPE (1989) and his Diploma in Nursing Administration from UNISA (1990). He obtained his PhD from the University of the Free State in 1995.

Dr Fourie worked as an Occupational Health Nurse at Nissan (Pty LTD), after which he joined the University of Fort Hare, where he was lecturer, senior lecturer and then HOD.

In 2000, he relocated with his family to Auckland, New Zealand, where he works at the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT). He has occupied successive roles as Programme Leader for the Bachelor of Nursing degree, Research Leader, Deputy HOD and is currently Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Allied Health Studies.

His immediate plans are to expand the faculty's programme portfolio in Allied Health. Future plans include developing entrepreneurial income streams with a strong business focus, through consultancy work, industry training programmes and governmental tenders.

He believes his leadership role is to facilitate, enable and encourage people to grow in confidence and to develop their leadership potential.



DS Panel u9 & u11

Ms Antoinette Goosen



Cape Town born Ms Antoinette Goosen moved to Port Elizabeth as a child, completing her schooling at Framesby High in 1978. She believed she was born to be a nurse and followed this calling without ever giving it a second thought.

She obtained her BCur degree (1983) from UPE, later completing her Diploma in Community Health Nursing and Nursing Education (1991). Ten years later, she graduated with an MCur in Advanced Primary Health Care. While working as a Health Care Manager, she completed an Advanced Health Care Management Diploma through the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) and Yale University. In 2010, she was selected by her current employer (NMMU) to be part of the first NMMU Future Leaders Programme, and she completed with distinction a Management Development Diploma through NMMU's Business School.

Ms Goosen began her nursing career as a general nurse at St Joseph's Hospital. When she moved to the Caledon area, she worked in theatre, midwifery, primary health care and general nursing, as the rural areas of health care required nurses to be very versatile. This assisted her later when she lectured and accompanied midwifery students at Sharkey Cribb Nursing College.

In 1994, she received the opportunity to start a Primary Health Care Clinic at UPE. It was the start of a 20-year career working with young people in higher education. This position grew from a one-woman, one-office clinic service to five clinics with 23 staff members.

She plans to serve the youth of the country within the higher education sector, until she retires. She would like to assist higher education institutions further by ensuring they continue to provide quality health care to all their student patients.

She has been married for 32 years, and has two sons. She loves the outdoors, camping, fabric painting and art classes.

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NURSES

Ms Lungile Phakathi

Ms Lungile Maureen Phakathi was born in Volksrust, to parents Richard and Nomma Phakathi. After completing her schooling at Siyamukela High School, Newcastle in 1990, having been selected to attend the school through the KwaZulu-Natal Education Enhancement Project (KEEP), she went on to complete her tertiary education at NMMU.

She loves nursing and had always wanted to be a nurse. She completed her BCur degree (1996), also receiving the Merit Award for Exceptional Growth in Professional Nursing, and her MCur degree (2005) at NMMU.

Ms Phakathi began her professional nursing career as a registered midwife at Margate Private Hospital in 1996. A year later, she returned to Port Elizabeth to work at Life St George's Hospital. She then spent six years as a psychiatric nurse at Life Hantersburg, before returning to Life St George's Hospital in 2008 as Acting Process Manager. Not long after taking up this role, she was appointed as Nurse Manager at Life St Mary's Hospital in Mthatha. In 2012, she began work as Nurse Manager at Life Roseacres Clinic in Johannesburg, until her promotion to her current position of Nursing Services and Quality Specialist at Life Esidimeni, Head Office, Johannesburg.

Ms Phakathi is passionate about empowering and mentoring young women and men in their careers. In her current position, she is able to positively influence and lead nurses to uphold professionalism and caring attitudes at all times when serving the community.

Her future plans include completing her PhD. She also aims to register her organisation, Destination Injongo-Purpose, as a non-profit company, dealing with equipping young women and men of high school age, with social skills and career guidance. She also plans to become more involved in professional organisations like the Forum for Professional Nurse Leaders.

She enjoys advancing her career by making use of all available opportunities.



DS Panel p4 & p5

Dr. Sharron Frood



Dr Sharron Frood hails from Plymouth, England. From 2002 to 2009, she lived in Port Elizabeth, completing several degrees and developing several ongoing projects in the township communities.

Dr Frood completed her training as a Qualified Paediatric Nurse (RCN/RSCN qualification) at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London. At NMMU, she obtained her BCur Honours (Advanced Primary Health Care) (cum laude), MCur (cum laude) and then her PhD, titled: "Strategies to provide care and support to children who are AIDS orphans living in township communities."

She began her nursing career in Paediatric Neurology at Great Ormond Street Hospital (1992-1993). After attending bible school in Horsham, England (1993-1994), she worked in Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Senegal and Lesotho. In 1998 and 2000, she worked as a volunteer at the House of Resurrection Haven in Port Elizabeth.

Dr Frood worked as a Paediatric Sister for physically disabled and terminally ill children in Sussex, UK, before spending a year as a Christian worker for Kingdom Faith Church. She then worked in Brighton, England (1996-2001), as a Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing Sister and then a Nursing Sister: Paediatric Ward with Oncology Speciality.

After coming to Port Elizabeth in 2002, she founded the Gogo Trust (www.gogotrust.org), an NGO supporting widows and orphans in township communities.

Her future plans include working for a Christian organisation in the development of social policy, influencing the care, support, protection and development of orphans and vulnerable children; and being involved in project development (and continuing existing research projects), which could improve the lives of widows, orphans and vulnerable children. She aims "to be a voice for the voiceless with words and deeds".

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Dr. Colleen O'Brien

Dr Colleen O'Brien was born in East London to parents Keith and Eileen Kayton. She completed her high school education at Sacred Heart Convent in King William's Town, and her nursing training at Frere College of Nursing in East London.

She obtained diplomas in General Nursing Science (1974) and Midwifery (1975). She then commenced a BA degree through UNISA (1980), majoring in English and History, followed by a BA (Hons) degree in History (1988), and then a BPhil degree (1995). She later completed her MCur (2005) at UPE and her PhD (2011) at NMMU. By then, she had developed a strong interest in research dealing with diabetes mellitus type 2, with both her Master's treatise and PhD thesis dealing with aspects of the management of this condition.

Dr O'Brien started work as a registered nurse at Provincial Hospital in 1975, followed by a period at Victoria Memorial Home. She then moved to what was St Joseph's Hospital, where she gained experience in surgical nursing. After spending time as a housewife after her elder son was born, she worked in the nurseries at Sandford, the maternity unit of Provincial Hospital. She later moved to the Gastric Clinic at Provincial Hospital, where she spent 10 years as a gastroenterology nurse.

She then worked in the Medical Library at Provincial Hospital, where she was able to assist with the research and training needs of students. On her return to nursing, she obtained a post at the Day Clinic/Gastroenterology Unit at Greenacres Hospital, where she is currently a Clinical Nurse Specialist.

Her future plans include continuing to train staff in gastroenterology nursing. She also hopes to spend more time on research projects, as her retirement approaches.

Dr O'Brien has two sons, Sean and Neil. Her interests include genealogy, quilting, cross stitch embroidery, knitting, reading and travelling.



DS Panel p1& p2

Dr. Anna Marie Bruwer



Dr Anna-Marie Bruwer was born in Potgietersrus (now Mokopane). She began her nursing career in 1967 after undertaking a Diploma in Nursing, which she followed up with diplomas in midwifery and psychiatry. She then completed her BCur (I et A) at the University of Pretoria. She later completed her MCur and DCur degrees at the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE).

She kicked off her career as a student nurse with the then Cape Provincial Administration, then moved to the former Transvaal Provincial Administration, after which she worked as a sister at Weskoppies Hospital in Pretoria. She then took up an appointment at the Department of National Health, where she was promoted several times, firstly to Head Office to direct the Psychiatric Nursing Education at colleges, then to Deputy Chief Nursing Officer, initiating psychiatric community service, and then to Chief Nursing Officer in 1982. In 1988, she was transferred to Tygerberg Hospital as Chief Matron, a position she held until 1994.

During this period, she also served on the South African Nursing Council (SANC), and was elected President of the then SA Nursing Association. She was also a part-time lecturer and examiner at various universities.

From 1994 to 1998, she was Public Service Commissioner: Western Cape. She then worked overseas for 10 years, as a Quality Management Director for the Saudi Military Service. She also worked in several other countries, specialising in upgrading hospitals to accreditation level, and participating in university programmes.

Since returning to South Africa, she has worked as a consultant, teacher, examiner and moderator. For the past two years, she has been auditing facilities for Older Persons in the Western Cape. Dr Bruwer, who will be retiring soon, lives with her sister and two dogs on a wine estate in Riebeeck Kasteel in the Western Cape.

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Dr. Hettie De Mendonca

Dr Hettie de Mendonca was born in 1958 in Bethal, Mpumalanga. She completed her basic nursing degree as well as her Master's degree in Nursing Science at the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE), now North-West University. She also completed several diplomas and certificates at PU for CHE and at UNISA. She obtained her diploma in nursing education with honours, and then went on to complete her doctorate in nursing science at NMMU.

Dr Mendonca began her nursing career at Potchefstroom and Mierksdorp Provincial Hospitals, working as a registered nurse. After she qualified as a nurse educator, she worked at Witrand Rehabilitation Centre (Potchefstroom), and at Gold Fields Nursing College (West Rand). She also managed her own occupational nursing care practice, called HetMen Health Care, which provided occupational health care to gold mines all over South Africa. She also completed contract lecturing work at NMMU and, for the past five years, has been employed by Lillitha College of Nursing, Port Elizabeth Campus.

She is 56 years old, has had varied and interesting work and life experiences, and says she is happy with what she is doing at the moment, which is teaching nursing students. However, she does apply for managerial positions where possible, because she feels she has a lot of knowledge and expertise still to share.

She married Joao (John) in 1981 and has two sons, aged 32 and 30, and two granddaughters. Her elder son is a civil engineer, working in Nigeria. Her younger son is an architect in Cape Town.

Dr De Mendonca loves cooking, reading and watching rugby and football with her husband.



DS Hanging Panel

Ms Karen Gerber



Pretoria-born Ms Karin Gerber moved to Port Elizabeth at the age of eight, completing her schooling at DF Malherbe High in 1986. She then began a BSc in Microbiology at the University of Pretoria, which she was not enjoying, when a chance opportunity to be a "pink lady" at Pretoria's Eugene Marais Hospital saw her falling in love with nursing.

She completed her BCur degree (1991) at UPE and her Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing Education at NMMU (2010). She also obtained certificates in health and safety, and management, through Life Healthcare.

Ms Gerber began her nursing career at Provincial Hospital. In December 1993, she took up an appointment at St George's Hospital, where she spent the next 17 years of her career, working in neuro, surgical and medical wards, and involved in testing the viability of projects, such as having oncology and paediatric nursing units.

In 1998, she was promoted to unit manager of the surgical unit for GIT and vascular surgery. In 2008, she joined the hospital's new teaching department, where she initiated, established and managed the wound care clinic. In 2010, she was offered a contract position as a clinical lecturer in NMMU's Department of Nursing Science. She was permanently employed the following year, and promoted to full lecturer in 2014.

She is currently completing her Master's degree in nursing, and plans to complete her PhD by her 50th birthday. She has a passion for her profession and says teaching will be her focus for the next decade. She truly hopes to make an impact to better the nursing profession in South Africa.

Ms Gerber is married to Johan Gerber. They have two sons, Rynhardt and Tiaan. As a Christian, she believes in sharing her blessings, by helping out with community events, organising fundraising teas and assisting the youth.

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YEARS
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NURSES

Dr. Sihaam Baboo

Dr Sihaam Jardien-Baboo was born in Uitenhage, to parents Jameel and Aminah Jardien.

Her nursing qualifications include a BCur degree (1992), a Diploma in Nursing Education (2010) and a PhD in Nursing (2014). She also completed a BA (Psychology) degree (2003) and an MA (Sociology) degree (2006).

Dr Jardien-Baboo worked as a registered nurse at a private hospital for nine years, in the surgical, high-care and gastro-intestinal units. She then worked as a voluntary counsellor at a Counselling Centre, where she facilitated Personal Growth Courses and co-established an NPO to empower women and youth.

She then lectured in Sociology and Group Dynamics in the Department of Sociology at the former UPE, and is currently a lecturer in General Nursing Science and coordinator of the BCur Extended programme at NMMU.

Looking ahead, her vision is to form part of a team that aims to improve the quality of health care rendered, not only in health care institutions, but by health care professionals per se. The team's first objective would be to develop and offer training on patient-centred care, for health care professionals. The second objective would be to incorporate the principles of patient-centred and compassionate care in the education and training of undergraduate students.

She is married to Shaheed Baboo. They have two sons, Jameel, 19, and Adeb, 13, and a daughter Haanin, 17. Her personal values of integrity, honesty, trust and sincerity form an integral part of her life. She strives to: "Continue to seek knowledge, practise it and use it, to contribute to society and serve humanity."

"It is with gratitude that I reflect on the past, am mindful of the present and proceed with hope for the future, for it is in dreaming the greatest dreams and in seeking the highest goals that we build the brightest tomorrows."



DS p6 & p7

Prof. Esmerelda Ricks



Prof Esmeralda Ricks was born in Cape Town, to parents Lambert and Madge Alexander, and moved to Port Elizabeth as a toddler.

She started her nursing career at 17 at the then Livingstone Hospital Nursing School, where she was among the last intake of student nurses with a Junior Certificate (Standard 8). She completed matric through night school at Gelvandale High School.

Prof Ricks obtained diplomas in General Nursing Science (1974), Midwifery (cum laude) (1975), Community Nursing Science (1979) and Nursing Administration (1984). She later completed her BCur (I et A) (1989), BCur Hons (1993) and MCur (2000) degrees through the former UPE, and her DCur degree at NMMU (2008).

She commenced working as a registered nurse at Livingstone Hospital in 1975, where she gained experience in the medical wards, casualty and out-patients department.

Her passion lies in primary health care and the community and this is where she gained most of her experience as a nurse. She was a school health nurse for 13 years before moving to Sharley Cribb Nursing College, where she taught Community Nursing Science for four years. She then moved onto Port Elizabeth Technikon, where she was appointed to start the campus health care service for students and staff, a career highlight.

She resigned after eight years to pursue an academic career at UPE/NMMU and is currently HoD in NMMU's Department of Nursing Science. In 2013, she received the Faculty of Health Sciences' Emerging Researcher award.

Prof Ricks has a keen interest in research supervision, and conducting research in her niche area: "Using mobile technology to enhance clinical decision making and the health of the community".

She is married to Wallace and has two children, Cuan and Carmen, a stepson, Karl, and four

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YEARS
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NURSES

Prof. Nita Strumpher

Prof Nita Strumpher, one of six children, grew up in a family rich in love but poor in worldly goods, yet her parents persevered and helped each child prepare for a fulfilling adult life, in which they could also contribute to society.

On matriculating from Rustenburg High, she chose to study nursing on a whim, following friends who were planning to go this route. However, she ended up being the only one enrolling for first-year Nursing Science at the University of Pretoria. By then, however, she knew she wanted to nurse.

In her first degree, she learned how to care for people in physical or psychological discomfort. In her second degree, she learned how to manage, help communities, and teach. Some years later, in 1991, she obtained her doctorate from the then UPE, which saw her combining her interests in community nursing with caring for the mentally ill and the elderly - by seeing how they could be helped in the community.

Prof Strumpher started her nursing career as a professional nurse in the Orthopaedic Hospital in Pretoria for four years. She then joined the staff of UPE as a lecturer, specialising in both community and psychiatric nursing. The move to teaching was ironic - as she had previously "really hated nursing education". Nearly 37 years after joining UPE, she is still teaching - and is now a Professor of Nursing, with a deep passion for research.

She has taught a number of subjects, but mental health/psychiatric nursing is still the topic she loves most. "I find it very fulfilling to help the mentally-ill or intellectually-disabled individual find comfort or a bit of meaning in life."

She is now preparing for her retirement, during which time she plans to spend quality time with her dogs - and also continue her existing research projects.



DS 10 & 12

Dr. Jil von der Marwitz



Dr Jil von der Marwitz was born in Kirkwood, and schooled at Outeniqua High School in George and then Knysna High but, with no set career plans, left before matriculating.

A subsequent desire to be a nurse saw her enrolling at Sharley Cribb Nursing College, where she spent a year as a Cadet Nurse before being able to register for the professional nurse education diploma.

During this time, she married her first husband and had a son, Stephen. When her husband was transferred to Pietermaritzburg, she had to give up her training, and worked temporarily at Frere Hospital.

She later re-enrolled in the formal nurse education training, but had to redo her last two years. She then registered for her Diploma in Midwifery at Sandford Provincial Hospital, and then her Diploma in Intensive Care Nursing.

Wanting to become a degree graduate, she matriculated through UNISA, and then set about working part-time to fund her studies at UPE. She also remarried at this time, gaining three stepdaughters, and had two more sons, Karl and Dieter.

She enrolled for the BCur (I et A) programme and, after completing her first year, successfully applied for a teaching position at Sharley Cribb Nursing College. While on two years' study leave, she completed her Nurse Education diploma and her degree (cum laude), graduating while pregnant with her fourth son, Reiner. She went on to complete her BCur Hons, MCur (cum laude) and DCur.

She was later employed by NMMU's Nursing Department, where she established the HIV/AIDS Research Unit. She also successfully applied for European Union funding to establish South Africa's first on-campus Anti-retroviral Clinic.

She is now married to a Frenchman residing in France. She aims to continue her work as a research associate at NMMU, and also see more of the world with her husband.

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NURSES

Prof. Sindiwe James

Cradock-born Prof Sindiwe James, the second youngest of 11 children, was brought up by parents who believed in strict discipline and the importance of education. Though they have both passed away, they continue to play a huge role in her family's spiritual support.

Prof James completed her junior secondary schooling in Cradock, finishing among the top 10 learners in the province. She was then awarded the Juba bursary to study matric at Newell High school in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth.

She trained as a nurse at Livingstone Hospital Nursing College, qualifying as a General Nurse and Midwife. Thereafter, she registered for a Diploma in Intensive Care.

After working at Livingstone Hospital for many years, she applied for study leave, with the aim of obtaining a Diploma in Nursing Administration at UPE. However, she was encouraged by the then HoD of the nursing school, Prof WJ Kotze, to register for a degree instead.

She graduated with a BCur (I et A) degree (1995), followed by an MCur (2002) and DCur (2006). Owing to her change of specialty from GNS to Midwifery, she registered for and qualified with an additional MCur degree (2009) at the University of Fort Hare.

Prof James, who is employed by NMMU, was promoted to senior lecturer in 2007, at which time she was also awarded NMMU's Emerging Researcher of the Year Award for the Faculty of Health Sciences, and appointed as an associate professor in 2013.

She has successfully supervised a number of Master's and Honours degree students and plans to do the same for doctoral candidates. She also plans to increase her publication record significantly in order to make a substantial contribution to the field of midwifery before she retires.

Prof James is a single parent of two sons and a daughter, and has one grandson.



p3 & p8

Dr. Suzette du Rand



Dr Suzette du Rand was born in Imyanga in the former Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1956. To parents Kobus and Sussa du Rand. In 1969, her family moved to Pretoria, where she completed her schooling at President CR Swart High School.

Following in the footsteps of her older sister, Adrie, who was a nurse, Dr Du Rand completed her Diploma in General Nursing Science in 1977, and then went on to complete her Diploma in Midwifery. She obtained a Bachelors of Nursing degree at UNISA, later achieving her Honours in Community Health and Nursing Administration, and also Nursing Education. After being awarded a Fulbright Scholarship by the United States government, she completed her Master's in Public Health at Northern Illinois University. She also studied Ophthalmic Nursing at Sydney Eye Hospital, Australia, and was awarded the Nurse of the Year award in 1999. She completed her PhD in Nursing in 2013.

Dr Du Rand began her nursing career as a registered nurse with the De Vries Ambulance Service in Pretoria in 1978. She then spent eight years working for a surgeon in Pretoria and six years working in primary health care as a nurse unit manager for the Pretoria City Council.

In 1992, she spent a year in the US working as a student intern/clerk at De Kalb County Health Department. She then worked in various positions in South Africa, before working at Sydney Eye Hospital as a registered nurse.

Once back in South Africa, she obtained a permanent lecturing position at NMMU's Department of Nursing Science in 2007 and, in 2016, was promoted to Senior Lecturer and elected as one of two deputy HoDs.

Dr Du Rand hopes to continue making a positive contribution wherever she goes and for as long as she can.

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YEARS
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NURSES

Dr. Herman Willemsse



Dr Herman Willemsse was born in Caledon in the Western Cape, where he first attended a small farm school some 25km away, before moving to Rivieronsderend, where he matriculated.

It was after his military service that he decided to enter the nursing profession, completing his nursing education through Sharley Cribb Nursing College in Port Elizabeth in 1989. Thereafter, he completed a Diploma in Health Science Education at the University of Potchefstroom in 2003. He went on to complete his BCur Honours degree in Advanced Medical and Surgical Nursing at the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), followed by his Master's degree by dissertation at NMMU in 2006. He completed his PhD in Nursing at NMMU in 2013.

He started his nursing career in Provincial Hospital's casualty department, before being recruited back to Sharley Cribb College, where he lectured for 16 years. In 2008, he joined NMMU's Department of Nursing Science as a lecturer. In 2014, he was appointed Deputy-Principal of the Henrietta Stockdale Nursing College in Kimberley, where he is currently based.

His future plans are closely tied to Henrietta Stockdale College, specifically preparing the college to move into the higher education milieu. He will also be playing an important role in developing the college's curriculum in order for it to be aligned with national and provincial health care needs.

Dr Willemsse has a keen interest in anthropology, archaeology, animals, travelling, exploring, art and outdoor life.

p9 & p11

Dr. Maggie Williams



Dr Margaret (Maggie) Williams was born in St Andrews, Scotland, to Ian and Hannelore Logie. At the age of 10, she moved with her family to Port Elizabeth, matriculating at Westering High, before commencing with her diploma in general nursing and midwifery.

She completed her BCur (I et A), and then Diploma in Nursing Administration, through UNISA. She then completed with distinction her MCur in Primary Health Care at NMMU, followed by her PhD in Nursing Science. She has also completed numerous courses concerning HIV/AIDS/TB management, including Palsa Plus.

Dr Williams worked at Addington Hospital (labour wards and then operating theatre), Johannesburg General Hospital (operating theatre and then oncology), Millpark Hospital (cardiology unit and angiography), followed by Flora Clinic in the West Rand, where she ran the ENT operating theatre. She then returned to Port Elizabeth and worked in various sections of family planning services, after which she moved to Sharley Cribb Nursing College (now Lillitha) as a lecturer. She taught there for 11 years and thereafter worked at the House of Resurrection (AIDS Haven) NGO.

She then moved to the Port Elizabeth District Office as programme manager for antiretroviral therapy in Nelson Mandela Bay, and the accompanying accreditation of clinics to facilitate the roll-out of treatment, care and support for HIV-positive patients at primary health care clinic level. From there, she moved to NMMU as a lecturer and has since been promoted to senior lecturer.

Dr Williams has a number of research projects planned and aims to write many more articles for academic journals. She is also working towards becoming an associate professor at NMMU.

She is married to Craig and has two adopted children. She enjoys reading, research, baking, craft painting and staying fit. She is a board member of Autism EC and a member of the management team at Cheshire Homes, Summerstrand. She is also part of a networking group that assists Animal Welfare.

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YEARS
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NURSES

Prof. Iona Wannenburg



Prof Iona Wannenburg, the second of three children, was born into a stable family home in Pretoria in the 1950s. She grew up in Geneston, matriculating at Goudrif High School. Wanting to go to university with her whole heart, she chose nursing as a career as she knew it would satisfy her interests in people, teaching, management and psychology. She completed her BCur (1973) and MCur (1976) degrees at the University of Pretoria, and her DCur (1989) from the then University of Port Elizabeth (UPE). In 1993, she completed Post Doctoral Research at the University of Maryland, Baltimore in the United States.

Outside of her nursing qualifications, she also has an MA in Industrial Relations (2009) from NMMU and a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education and Training in Assessment of Learning (SAGS Unit Standard HET02) (level 7), which she obtained, with distinction, in 2005 from UPE. She has completed a number of other modules through UNISA for non-degree purposes, including Occupational Psychology 1, 2 and 3, and Labour Relations Legislation.

She is registered with the South African Nursing Council as a nurse, midwife, psychiatric nurse, intensive care nurse and teacher.

Prof Wannenburg has occupied many roles throughout her nursing career. She was a junior and senior professional nurse in general, intensive and spinal cord units at the then HF Verwoerd Hospital (now Steve Biko Hospital) in Pretoria and Head of the Clinical Teaching and In-service Education Department at Vanderbijlpark Hospital. She then moved to Port Elizabeth, where she was appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Nursing Science at UPE and, over the years, promoted to Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and full Professor.

On occasion, she acted as Head of the Department of Nursing Science and was also appointed as Academic Head of the Master's Degree in Health and Welfare Management Programme. After the 2005 merger (the start of NMMU), she moved to the Missionvale campus, where she was Acting Senior Academic Manager and Acting Campus Principal. She currently heads up NMMU's Disability Unit. She plans never to stop learning - and to continue to serve humanity with the many talents God has given her.

Dr. Maggie Williams



Port Elizabeth born-and-raised Ms Danielle Fataar completed her BCur (2008) and MCur (2013) at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), where she also completed a Self-Development Short Course. She has also obtained a number of qualifications through Netcare Education, including a Critical Care Programme (2009) and a Regional Management Development Programme (2013), which she passed with honours.

She started her nursing career in Livingstone Hospital's Trauma Unit in 2008, and then moved to the cardiac catheterization laboratory (Cath Lab) at Greenacres Hospital the following year. In 2010, she was promoted to Cath Lab Unit Manager, and then in 2014, she was made C-Ward Unit Manager. In October 2014, she took up her current position as Deputy Nursing Manager. Her future aims are to complete her DCur degree - and she aspires to become Nursing Manager or Hospital Manager.

Ms Fataar is married, with two dogs and no children. She enjoys reading, swimming and spending time with her family.



Ms Marijke Kaarschalk

Born in Port Elizabeth in 1959 to parents Golda and Wiltje Dijkstra, Ms Marijke Kaarschalk completed her schooling at Collegiate, before pursuing a career in nursing.

She obtained all her qualifications from the former University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), including her BCur degree (1982), BCur (I et A) (1985), BA Psych (1987) and BCur Hons (1990). She started her career in 1986 as Principal Community Health Nurse for Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (then Port Elizabeth Municipality), focusing on student accompaniment. While in this role, she developed a student accompaniment programme - the Theory, Demonstrations, Practice and Evaluation (TDPE) programme - for NMMU nursing students. They had to complete the programme prior to undergoing Community Nursing practice in the field. The programme included four steps, namely: theory sessions related to practical procedures and techniques; practical demonstrations of the procedures and techniques; practice, where the students had to physically practise the procedures and techniques in a laboratory situation; and evaluation of the students on their practical ability, prior to actually doing the procedures on actual patients.

In 1990, Ms Kaarschalk joined Algoa Regional Services Council as Chief Professional Nurse, and then later Cacadu District Municipality as Chief Professional Nurse: Primary Health Care Administration. Over the years, she acted at various times as Nursing Services Manager and Deputy Director of Health Services. In 2011, she was transferred to the East Cape Department of Health.

Her future plans include completing her master's degree in nursing, focusing on the development of a performance management system, linked to actual clinical competency, which is evidence-based and standard-specific to each category of nursing, so as to promote ethical and compassionate nursing service delivery and the accountability of the individual professional nurse.



Dr. Sharron Frood



Dr Sharron Frood hails from Plymouth, England. From 2002 to 2009, she lived in Port Elizabeth, completing several degrees and developing several ongoing projects in the township communities.

Dr Frood completed her training as a Qualified Paediatric Nurse (RCN/RSCN qualification) at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London. At NMMU, she obtained her BCur Honours (Advanced Primary Health Care) (cum laude), MCur (cum laude) and then her PhD, titled: "Strategies to provide care and support to children who are AIDS orphans living in township communities."

She began her nursing career in Paediatric Neurology at Great Ormond Street Hospital (1992-1993). After attending bible school in Horsham, England (1993-1994), she worked in Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Senegal and Lesotho. In 1998 and 2000, she worked as a volunteer at the House of Resurrection Haven in Port Elizabeth.

Dr Frood worked as a Paediatric Sister for physically-disabled and terminally-ill children in Sussex, UK, before spending a year as a Christian worker for Kingdom Faith Church. She then worked in Brighton, England (1996-2001), as a Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing Sister and then a Nursing Sister: Paediatric Ward with Oncology Speciality.

After coming to Port Elizabeth in 2002, she founded the Gogo Trust (www.gogotrust.org), an NGO supporting widows and orphans in township communities.

Her future plans include working for a Christian organisation in the development of social policy, influencing the care, support, protection and development of orphans and vulnerable children; and being involved in project development (and continuing existing research projects), which could improve the lives of widows, orphans and vulnerable children. She aims "to be a voice for the voiceless with words and deeds".



Dr. Colleen O'Brien

Dr Colleen O'Brien was born in East London to parents Keith and Eileen Kayton. She completed her high school education at Sacred Heart Convent in King William's Town, and her nursing training at Frere College of Nursing in East London.

She obtained diplomas in General Nursing Science (1974) and Midwifery (1975). She then commenced a BA degree through UNISA (1980), majoring in English and History, followed by a BA (Hons) degree in History (1988), and then a BPhil degree (1995). She later completed her MCur (2005) at UPE and her PhD (2011) at NMMU. By then, she had developed a strong interest in research dealing with diabetes mellitus type 2, with both her Master's treatise and PhD thesis dealing with aspects of the management of this condition.

Dr O'Brien started work as a registered nurse at Provincial Hospital in 1975, followed by a period at Victoria Memorial Home. She then moved to what was St Joseph's Hospital, where she gained experience in surgical nursing. After spending time as a housewife after her elder son was born, she worked in the nurseries at Sandford, the maternity unit at Provincial Hospital. She later moved to the Gastric Clinic at Provincial Hospital, where she spent 10 years as a gastroenterology nurse.

She then worked in the Medical Library at Provincial Hospital, where she was able to assist with the research and training needs of students. On her return to nursing, she obtained a post at the Day Clinic/Gastroenterology Unit at Greenacres Hospital, where she is currently a Clinical Nurse Specialist.

Her future plans include continuing to train staff in gastroenterology nursing. She also hopes to spend more time on research projects, as her retirement approaches.

Dr O'Brien has two sons, Sean and Neil. Her interests include genealogy, quilting, cross stitch embroidery, knitting, reading and travelling.

