seventy-five years

The Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing

Shaping Nursing Knowledge and Practice

Virginia P. Dawson  Mark D. Bowles
Throughout its history, the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing has earned a reputation as an innovator in nursing education. This was not by accident. One of the key conditions of Frances Bolton’s generous endowment of a university school of nursing 75 years ago was that it should take an experimental approach to nursing education. Bolton said that even though there might be no assurance that a particular experiment would succeed, the school should be “free at all times in the future to engage in other experiments, to cooperate with hospitals in these efforts,” and she hoped the endowment would contribute to paying for these experiments.¹

Experimentation is one of the hallmarks and central themes of the Bolton School’s history. Indeed, the new university school was itself an experiment that became permanent after a five-year trial. In 1928, Dean Nellie X. Hawkinson wrote: “This year marks the close of our 5 year experimental period—a period in which we have tried to set up an educational program which would meet the standards of university education and which would also include the highest ideals of the nursing profession.”²

The experimental approach to nursing practice and education has allowed the Bolton School to contribute to and draw upon a growing body of nursing knowledge, while promoting some of the most daring experiments in clinical teaching. Until the 1960s, nursing educators felt that instruction needed to be better integrated with practice.³ In response to this problem, Dean Rozella Schlotfeldt’s innovative “Experiment in Nursing” created a collaborative model for nursing education that enhanced the national prominence of the school.

This spirit of collaboration remained a hallmark of the Bolton School throughout the 1990s. With a renewed emphasis on educational innovation and global leadership during the Joyce Fitzpatrick years, the school established and strengthened relationships with local and national institutions such as the World Health Organization and University Hospitals of Cleveland. With this emphasis, Fitzpatrick improved the reputation of the school. Dorothy Brooten, Dean for the 21st Century, brings her own strong vision for the future, based first and foremost on maintaining academic excellence and on positioning the school as a world leader in research to improve nursing practice and the delivery of care.

Throughout 75 years of shaping nursing knowledge and practice through experimentation and innovative collaboration, the Bolton School represents both a historical example and a future model for nursing education.

¹ Letter from Frances Payne Bolton to Western Reserve University president, Robert E. Vinson, 8 March 1929, Western Reserve Historical Society (hereafter WRHS), Ms. 3943, box 93, folder 1630.
² Nellie X. Hawkinson, School of Nursing Annual Report, Western Reserve University, 1927–8, Case Western Reserve University (hereafter CWRU) Archives, Rg. 29, Series 29A, Box 2.
³ Margene O. Faddis, A School of Nursing Comes of Age (Cleveland: The Alumni Association of The Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, 1973).

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A “Social Vision”

Rozella Schlotfeldt and the Nursing Revolution

Educational Innovation and Global Leadership: the Fitzpatrick Years

Dorothy Brooten, Dean for the 21st Century

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¹ Letter from Frances Payne Bolton to Western Reserve University president, Robert E. Vinson, 8 March 1929, Western Reserve Historical Society (hereafter WRHS), Ms. 3943, box 93, folder 1630.
² Nellie X. Hawkinson, School of Nursing Annual Report, Western Reserve University, 1927–8, Case Western Reserve University (hereafter CWRU) Archives, Rg. 29, Series 29A, Box 2.
³ Margene O. Faddis, A School of Nursing Comes of Age (Cleveland: The Alumni Association of The Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, 1973).
A Reformer’s Spirit: The Lakeside Hospital Training School

From the start of the Lakeside Hospital Training School in 1898, the School was endowed with exceptional leadership. Isabel Hampton Robb, a national leader in the field of nursing, took an active role in the development of the curriculum for the new hospital. Robb’s background included authorship of one of the classic texts in nursing education and broad experience in implementing reforms that embodied the ideals of Florence Nightingale. Robb insisted that good nursing required intelligence. Ideally, training should not only prepare women to give compassionate care to the sick, but also to take an active role in reforming the conditions that produce illness. Robb thought that a training school should be a place where “properly selected women are given such moral and educational advantages that they may go forth equipped to aid in the practical solution of some of the various social problems, which can only be solved by the help of intelligent, womanly work.”

Despite the aspirations of early nurse reformers like Robb, instruction at training schools often fell short of the ideal. Because hospital training schools lacked autonomy, they functioned more as sources of inexpensive labor for hospitals than as educational institutions. Classroom time was limited, and often students were too exhausted to study after long, grueling hours on the wards. H. Elena McMillan, Lakeside Training School’s first principal, saw no immediate solution to this problem. She wrote: “I am firmly convinced that our only educational salvation is to get the pupil nurse entirely under control of the nurse educator, which means getting her away from the hospital.”

Nevertheless, in the years prior to World War I, the Lakeside Training School achieved a reputation for producing excellent graduate nurses. Part of its success as a training institution could be attributed to the quality of the supervisory staff of Lakeside Hospital, many of whom were graduates of the school. Most graduates, however, expected to minister to the sick as “private duty nurses” in their patients’ own homes. A few, catching the reform spirit of the Progressive Era, also found opportunities for service in some of Cleveland’s poorest neighborhoods. The Visiting Nurse Association had strong ties to the Lakeside Training School through Kate Hanna Harvey and Isabel Wetmore Lowman, two prominent social activists who served on the boards of both institutions.

World War I opened up a vast field of opportunity for nurses that tapped deep wellsprings of patriotism and service. The Lakeside Unit, headed by the hospital’s chief of surgery, George W. Crile, was the first American unit to serve in France. Crile enlisted G race E. Allison, the school’s superintendent, to take charge of the unit’s elite corps of 64 nurses, 43 of whom were graduates of the Lakeside Training School. Some of the nurse members of the Lakeside Unit became the nucleus of nurses for the Cleveland Clinic, set up shortly after their return from Rouen, France.

The war also prompted new thinking about the difference between training nurses and educating them. In October 1918, 437 college graduates were recruited for the Vassar Training Camp where they were given intensive training in nursing. Intended to help meet the nursing needs of the nation in time of war, the camp attracted mature, intelligent women who made excellent nurses. Twenty-nine of these college-educated recruits finished their training in the Lakeside class of 1920.

Immediately following the war, two important nursing studies provided the impetus for the ultimate formation of the Western Reserve School of Nursing. The Cleveland Hospital and Health Survey, published in 1920, provided key evidence that hospital training schools required reorganization and improvement. While this report praised these schools for exhibiting a “spirit of devotion and service,” it severely criticized them for the “inadequacy of teaching and equipment, and the exploitation of students, which has too often been accepted in lieu of education.”

During the same period, the Rockefeller Foundation funded a study of the relationship between nursing service and education. Begun in 1919, and published in 1923 under the title Nursing and Nursing Education in the United States, it was called in its time “the most notable and valuable contribution ever made to nursing education and nursing history.” This study found that the underlying problem in the education of nurses was the dual character and conflicting goals of training schools. These schools had the responsibility of both educating nurses and staffing hospitals. Frequently, these goals were in conflict and represented to nurses “the crux of our problem, the heart of our difficulty.” The Rockefeller study concluded that the most appropriate way to divide students from exploitation by hospitals was through a university school of nursing.

As a result of these studies, Samuel Mather, the President of Lakeside Hospital Board of Trustees, took the initiative to develop a university-based nursing program. In 1918 he asked Mary Dunning Twining, the wife of the President of the Western Reserve University, to form a committee. He charged the committee to come up with a plan for consolidating all the various nurses’ training schools in Cleveland into a single university school affiliated with the College for Women of Western Reserve University. In hopes of securing an endowment, the committee asked several prominent Clevelanders to join the planning committee, among them Frances Payne Bolton. The choice of Bolton was as inevitable as it was natural. Well known in nursing circles, she had served on the Board of the Visiting Nurse Association since 1905, and after 1910 on the Board of Lady Managers of Lakeside Hospital. In 1918, Bolton had used her personal friendship with Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, to arrange an urgent wartime interview. Bolton (along with Annie Goodrich, chief inspecting nurse of the U.S. Army Hospitals, and Florence Brewster of Cleveland) convinced Baker that wounded soldiers deserved to be cared for by trained nurses, not volunteers. These three...
women won his support for the creation of an Army School of Nursing, despite the refusal of the Army Chiefs of Staff to even consider it.

In 1920, Lakeside Training School’s graduating class presented the School with $450 to serve as the nucleus of an endowment for a new school of nursing. One year later, Western Reserve University set up a Department of Nursing Education. When funding was not forthcoming from the Rockefeller Foundation, prospects for the new department seemed uncertain. However, Frances Bolton, at that time a member of Lakeside Hospital’s Board of Trustees, was convinced that Cleveland needed university-based nursing education, and she had the financial resources to do something about it.

Isabel Hampton Robb, Nurse Reformer (1860–1910)

Isabel Hampton Robb graduated in 1883 from the Bellevue Hospital Training School in New York City. This school was among the first in the United States to be modeled on the reforms of Florence Nightingale. Before the hospital training school, Nightingale wrote, nurses “were generally those who were too old, too weak, too drunken, too dirty, too stolid, or too bad to do anything else.” At Johns Hopkins Hospital where Isabel Hampton served as superintendent of nurses, she published Nursing: Its Principles and Practice for Hospital and Private Use (1894). During those years she helped found the Nurses Associated Alumnae (later the American Nurses Association) and served as its first president.

Her marriage to Hunter Robb, a physician who took a post at Lakeside Hospital, brought Robb to Cleveland in 1894. Isabel Robb exerted a profound influence on the creation and early years of Lakeside Training School. Convinced that nursing the sick should go hand-in-hand with educating patients in how to preserve health, she also helped to found the Cleveland Visiting Nurse Association in 1905. Robb’s prominence as an advocate for nursing attracted a group of young, socially prominent Cleveland women who became volunteers for the Visiting Nurse Association, among them Kate Hanna Harvey, Florentine Brewster, Isabel Wetmore Lowman, and Frances Payne Bolton.

While Robb raised her family in Cleveland, she published two more books, Nursing Ethics (1900) and Educational Standards for Nurses (1907). She also set up the first graduate program in nursing administration at Columbia Teachers College and helped to found the American Journal of Nursing. Recalling her as “one of the profession’s pioneers, her successors, Adelaide Nutting and Lavinia Dock, wrote in History of Nursing (1952): “With great practical ability in details, Miss Hampton had a power of seeing the future which was like that of a sibyl. She had visions of nursing growth, organization, and activities, which came first as hazy, indefinite pictures, gradually taking form until all was clear and vivid, filling her with joy and enthusiasm, eager interest, and unting energy.”

The turning point came in 1923 with the announcement of Frances Payne Bolton’s gift to the university of $500,000 to endow a school of nursing “on an equal and independent basis with the College for Women.” This occurred the same year the Rockefeller Foundation awarded Yale University $150,000 to set up a similar experiment in nursing education. In an article for the American Journal of Nursing published in June 1923, Annie Goodrich, Dean of the new Yale School of Nursing, wrote that the Western Reserve and Yale programs marked the “Dawn of a New Era in Nursing Education.” Bolton’s “magnificent gift” had put Cleveland in the forefront of American cities attempting to set up university schools of nursing. As the largest gift ever awarded to a school of nursing, Goodrich believed that “Mrs. Bolton will prove not only a benefactor to nurses, but to all humanity.”

These landmark gifts to Western Reserve University and Yale made it possible for the nurse educator to begin the long process of creating a true nursing profession. The endowment at Western Reserve University was officially named in honor of Bolton’s mother, “The Mary Payne Bingham Fund.” Bolton saw it as significant for the entire nursing profession. She wrote Adelaide Nutting, one of the profession’s prominent educators, “This isn’t just for Cleveland—it is for nursing.” Robert E. Vinson, Western Reserve President, characterized her gift as “one of the most outstanding achievements of the university in the last five years.”
In endowing the school of nursing, Bolton recognized that the university was embarking upon an experiment that might not succeed. Thus, she gave the endowment in the form of stocks to be held in trust for five years. After five years, when the school was granted permanent status as an independent professional school within the university, the university sold the stocks. At this time, because of the meteoric rise of the stock market during the 1920s, the original gift had grown from $5 million to $1.5 million. In hindsight, selling the stocks represented a brilliant financial move. Had the university waited another year, the stock market crash of 1929 might have precluded the school from ever existing.

### Symbols of Sacrifice

The Bolton School pin, presented to all nurses who graduated from the School, has remained a consistent symbol of the values that its educators impart upon their students. This symbol was best expressed by Frances Payne Bolton in a commencement speech given to the Class of 1931. She said: "These pins are small and unobtrusive but they are full of meaning. They are the visible proof that there is, in the past of this School you are to represent, a heart large enough to sacrifice individually for a more perfect whole—a broadness of vision to see that the most valuable of all traditions that a school can have is that of Courage to establish new traditions that do not necessarily abolish the old, but rather transmute them into finer expression. And these pins are a symbol of your victory!"

Throughout the years these pins remained one of the most treasured representations of a Bolton alumna. In May 1973, the Bolton School put together a book of letters for Frances Payne Bolton in appreciation of her continuous support for the School over the decades. During the celebration, they presented her with her own pin. As Marion Moore Pritchard (who graduated in 1935—the first year that the School bore Bolton’s name) wrote: "You are already an honorary member of our alums, and with this pin, you will be an honorary graduate. We know you have earned it many times over by your great contributions to nursing and our School!"

Although the Depression brought hardships to most Clevelanders, living arrangements for nursing students actually improved. Prior to 1930 nursing students endured substandard housing. According to an author in the Cleveland Club Woman, the nursing student retired after her long day of service to "any old shack or firetrap on the hospitals grounds...At nightfall she was so tired she tolerated it; wherever she could drop down and get some sleep was good enough." N ow that nursing aspired to become a real profession on equal ground with medicine, nurses needed accommodations that supported learning. Dean Louise M. Powell wrote in 1925, "I feel sure that if we wish to attract and hold the best type of young women in our School, we must greatly improve the conditions under which our students live." Powell enlisted Frances Payne Bolton’s support in raising funds for a new dormitory complex. Completed in 1931, it was named for Cleveland philanthropists and pioneers in nursing: Flora Stone Mather, Isabel Hampton Robb, Isabel Wetmore Lowman, and Kate Hanna Harvey. Consisting of four buildings, housing 400 students in single rooms, it became the largest residential complex in Cleveland after the Hotel Statler and the Hotel Cleveland. Several years later, the School honored its most important benefactor by renaming the school The Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing. Reflecting later in life on the name of the school, Bolton wrote that she was initially reluctant to have her name associated with the institution: "I there were so many who had given long, long years of ‘blood, sweat and tears’; building it bit by bit until it had the capacity to become a U niversity School. Mrs. Lowman—Mrs. H. Arvey—Mrs. Alfred Brewster, etc. wove the warp and the woof down the years ."

In 1932, Marion G. Howell took over as dean. A Vassar Training Camp student during the war and a Lakeside graduate of the class of 1920, she was a rising star in the public health nursing field in the 1920s. Many attempted to lure Howell away from the city and the school that she loved, but Howell believed in the potential for Cleveland as a public health nursing center—a potential that she herself helped the city and school to attain. In the 1930s, Annie Goodrich commented that after Cleveland there is "no city in the United States whose citizens have so diligently sought for knowledge of its health and welfare needs and have so insistently driven to develop a program through which these needs might be met."
Goodrich concluded that the result was the “awakening of Cleveland’s social consciousness and sense of social responsibility; while their influence throughout the country of their social vision and achievements is immeasurable.”

Along with her social vision, Howell raised academic standards, despite declining enrollment during the Depression. In 1934, the school made graduation from an accredited college a requirement for admission. That year it admitted its first college graduates for study towards a Master of Nursing degree. When this class graduated in 1937, it was the first class of students in nursing with a Master of Nursing degree anywhere in the world. Their advanced training served them well. On their board examinations they took the top four honors in the state. As Martha Crawford humbly explained to the press, “My heavens! I hadn’t any idea I would come in first. I just did my best.”

Howell was criticized for making admission to the School so selective. A report issued by University Hospitals, hard pressed to keep financially solvent during the Depression, found “no reason why the Hospital should bear the costs of an experiment in education which deprives it to a large extent of the services of the student nurses.”

The Depression brought about basic changes in delivery of health care. Because households could no longer afford private-duty nurses, families sent their sick to hospitals for treatment. Now unemployed, graduate nurses were forced back into the hospitals at bargain wages. Nevertheless, they did not solve the nursing shortage that grew increasingly severe as war in Europe began in 1939.

Because of the pressing need for bedside nurses, in 1941, the Bolton School agreed to admit high school graduates to a three year diploma course as part of the program of National Defense.

Bolton School faculty and students worked closely to do their part in helping America win the war. The creation of the Cadet Nurse Corps, brought into being by the Bolton Act in 1943, was designed to address the critical shortage of nurses during World War II. The contingent of Cadets pushed enrollment to an all time high and stretched the faculty to the breaking point. They had to teach two sets of students, those with only high school diplomas who took a basic course, and those with college preparation who were eligible for more advanced courses. Dean Howell was hard pressed to look out for the well being of her students in the face of increasing demands that they work overtime in the hospital to make up for staff shortages. Howell wrote in 1945, “There is no minute of the day or night of the whole year when students of this school are not faithfully nursing the critically ill citizens of this community. It would be a startling and striking picture if it could be accurately portrayed.”

Perhaps as a result of the exhausting work during the war, Howell’s health failed, causing her to resign in 1946. A fitting testimonial to the Howell years comes in a letter from one of her former students, a 2nd lieutenant in the armed forces, who wrote in 1942, “Never has there been a moment that I have lost faith in the ideals that you have represented...And Miss Howell, again may I tell you how much you mean to me and the rest whom you have brought up in the field of nursing.”

18 Faddis, A School of Nursing Comes of Age, 211.
19 Marion G. Howell, School of Nursing Annual Report, Western Reserve University, 1944-45, CWRU Archives, RG 29, series 1DA, box 4.
20 Letter from Nancy Moss to Howell, 11 August 1942, CWRU Archives, RG 29, series 29DD, box 1.
Frances Payne Bolton (1885-1977) devoted her life to the service of humanity as a philanthropist, health care reformer, and congresswoman. She became nursing's most influential nurse layperson through her endowment of the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, her congressional legislation, and her strong advocacy of compassionate care of the sick.

A brief examination of her life reveals not only her passion, but also her wide-ranging influence on 20th Century political and social life. As a debutante at the turn of the century, she became more interested in helping “suffering humanity” and less in enjoying the prerogatives of her station in life. Her experience accompanying a Visiting Nurse on her rounds through some of Cleveland’s worst tenements left a vivid impression. To Bolton, a nurse "brought light and easement, intelligence and understanding where there was darkness." Because of this early experience, Bolton not only became actively involved in nursing education, but also supported many professional nursing organizations, including the Visiting Nurse Association, the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, the Frontier Nursing Service, and the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses.

In 1907 Frances Payne married Chester Castle Bolton and the couple produced four children: Charles, Oliver, Kenyon, and Elizabeth, who died shortly after childbirth. Always intensely interested in education, in the 1920s the Bolton’s gave the land adjacent to Franchester, their estate in Lyndhurst, to Hawken School, Chester, a Republican congressman from Cleveland’s 22nd district, died in 1939 and Frances served out his term, then won his seat in her own right in 1940. The first elected congresswoman from Ohio, she remained in Congress for 29 years, devoting her energies largely to nursing and foreign affairs. During World War II Bolton sponsored the Bolton Act to address the critical shortage of nurses and to protect the “health of the nation.” This act created the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, which graduated a total of 125,000 nurses for the nation’s war effort. In 1945, 85 percent of all nursing students in the United States were part of the Cadet Corps. Being a Cadet provided the nurse with military status and compensation equal to that of a full commissioned officer.

Cadets received other benefits as well, including "an education for life" offered by the G.I. Bill. The pewter gray wool winter outfit, trimmed with red accents, and a logo on the sleeve identified the nurse with the war effort. Bolton School emeritus professor Barbara Long recalled that when she traveled by train during the war, she made sure to wear her uniform because military people were always granted a seat and did not have to wait for a later train. Bolton observed the role that nurses played in the conflict in 1944, as the first civilian woman in liberated Paris. Beyond her contributions to the nursing profession, Bolton was an important member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the first woman to lead an overseas mission. Her trips in the late 1940s and 1950s throughout Europe and the Soviet Union helped to shape the direction of U.S. foreign policy. She also headed the committee that produced one of the most influential statements on world communism, The Strategy and Tactics of World Communism became required reading for Foreign Service Officers, and cadets at West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force academies.

The African continent and its people also became a matter of intense personal and political interest to Bolton. In 1955 she embarked upon a 99-day tour. She visited 24 African countries and observed the status of their health care, living conditions, and their political situation. She was struck that the "greatest hazard of all Africa is health." She came to love Africa intensely. Reporting to President Eisenhower, she wrote: “It has been a deeply moving experience, one that has made changes within me that as yet there has not been time to evaluate, even to understand.” Upon her return, she became one of the first U.S. Representatives to speak out against apartheid in South Africa. As former Congressman William J. Stanton said, “No person, man or woman, had greater influence in shaping American policy in Africa…Her involvement led the way for humanitarian policies…(and helping) millions of poor and starving in sub-Saharan Africa.”

Thus, Bolton’s seemingly endless well of compassion, exemplified by her own modest claim of being simply a “sympathetic layman,” had an impact not only on the American nursing profession, but also changed the course of American policy and the wellness of an entire continent.
The Crisis in Nursing

Nursing leaders in the postwar era solved neither the nursing shortage nor the tension between education and service that the Depression and World War II had exacerbated. In 1947, in an effort to raise standards lowered during the war, Dean Helen L. Bunge instituted a new basic program in nursing that required two or more years of college leading to a Bachelor of Science or a Master of Nursing degree. In her annual reports to the university, Bunge described the pressing need of the School for more classroom and office space and especially clinical instructors. She wrote in 1950, “The firm conviction of the faculty that clinical teaching ‘on the scene’ is the heart of nursing education, makes teaching facilities in the clinical field absolutely strategic to the success of the programs.”

Bunge was aware of the changing roles of women in the 1950s and how they affected women’s choices. Nursing was no longer a profession limited largely to single women. The curriculum had to be made attractive to married women, often with children. She wrote: “In nursing schools must prepare students for the expanding role of women and nurses as citizens and individuals as well as help them develop a professional competence equal to the demands of today.” In 1951, in an effort to attract practicing R.N.s, the school experimented with offering night courses.

Still, enrollment continued to decline and the shortage of nurses persisted. In 1952, an editorial in the Plain Dealer raised questions about the nursing shortage and suggested that one way to solve it might be for the school to accept women with high school diplomas into the nursing program. Frances Bolton reacted strongly against this article. She wrote to Dean Bunge, “Who is trying to shove us back into the high school graduate area?” A few days later Bunge referring to the nursing shortage at University Hospitals, replied: “Our School can never solve University Hospitals’ complex problems—even the nursing ones.... Goodness knows the country doesn’t need more Schools of Nursing, nor does it want them. The curriculum has to be made attractive to married women, often with children.”

The next year, Bunge left the Bolton School to work for the advancement of the nursing profession from a national perspective. She helped to set up an experimental clinical program at Hanna Pavilion, a psychiatric hospital within the University Hospitals complex. The new program’s main object was to give students the opportunity to “practice nursing as a new frontier in nursing service and in nursing education.”

Though this was a start, the “new frontier” envisioned by Dean Porter had yet to win the full support of the medical staff of University Hospitals. Frances Bolton agreed that it was imperative to develop a collaborative relationship with the medical staff. She wrote to Dean Porter: “We at Western Reserve, have tried various methods of cooperation between the School and the Hospital. I have watched the different experiments down the years, and I am convinced that the School and the Hospital must see eye to eye, and work hand in hand and heart to heart.” A new concept of collaboration that ensured that nursing students would receive superior clinical instruction would come two years later with the hiring of a new dean with the charisma and vision to launch a nursing revolution.

Dean Elizabeth K. Porter took over in 1956 in an era that she referred to as the “crisis in nursing.” President of the American Nurses’ Association at the time of her appointment, she had earned a national reputation as a leader of the profession. Aspects of the crisis at the Bolton School included: lack of qualified faculty to fill existing positions, low student enrollment, and the continuing tension in the School’s relationship with University Hospitals. She was also troubled by the School’s lack of control over the quality of the clinical experience students received, calling attention to the “dichotomy which exists between clinical instructors and hospital personnel with respect to responsibility for patient care.” Ultimately, she believed nursing needed a new theoretical approach. Patients would reap the benefits of improved student instruction.

Like other nursing professionals of the 1950s, Porter recognized the importance of understanding the dynamic interaction between nurse and patient. A nurse must consider a patient’s emotional state and how it facilitated or interfered with healing the process. While a doctor looked at the scientific aspects of medical problems, nurses had to be trained to consider the whole person. Educators like Porter considered it imperative that students become sensitized to the psychological complexities of nursing in a clinical setting. Ideally, they should be closely supervised by faculty who were also actively engaged in research. One of Porter’s most significant achievements was to set up an experimental clinical program at Anna Pavilion, a psychiatric hospital within the University Hospitals complex. The new program’s main object was to give students the opportunity to “practice nursing as a new frontier in nursing service and in nursing education.”

Through this was a start, the “new frontier” envisioned by Dean Porter had yet to win the full support of the medical staff of University Hospitals. Frances Bolton agreed that it was imperative to develop a collaborative relationship with the medical staff. She wrote to Dean Porter: “We at Western Reserve, have tried various methods of cooperation between the School and the Hospital. I have watched the different experiments down the years, and I am convinced that the School and the Hospital must see eye to eye, and work hand in hand and heart to heart.” A new concept of collaboration that ensured that nursing students would receive superior clinical instruction would come two years later with the hiring of a new dean with the charisma and vision to launch a nursing revolution.

25 Letter from Bolton to Bunge, 12 March 1952, WRHS Archives, Ms. 3943, box 93, folder 1634.
26 Letter from Bolton to Bunge, 10 March 1952, WRHS Archives, Ms. 3943, box 93, folder 1634.
28 Elizabeth K. Porter, School of Nursing Annual Report, Western Reserve University, 1954-55, CWRU Archives, Rg. 29, series 29DD, box 1, folder 1634.
29 Elizabeth K. Porter, “Improvement in Higher Education at Western Reserve University,” March 1957, Teachers Room Archives, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing.
30 Letter from Bolton to Porter, 4 October 1958, WRHS Archives, Ms. 3943, box 93, folder 1634.
One of the social gains made by the Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II was that for the first time African-American nurses were actively recruited into the profession. Equality within the nursing ranks was an issue close to the heart of Frances Payne Bolton. She was among the few to demand that African-American nurses be a part of the newly commissioned nursing groups. She even went to a hospital in England in 1944 to help one of these groups deal with the discrimination they continued to face in the Armed Forces.

The first African-American woman graduated in the early 1950s from the Bolton School. Betty Smith Williams was the first African-American to earn a Master of Nursing degree from the School in 1954. While her application was initially rejected, she fought hard to change the exclusionary policies. In 1971, Williams went on to found the National Association of Black Nurses, and Cleveland became the first city to have a local chapter.

In a sense, breaking the color line at the school also eased admissions for male students. A reporter characterized Russell L. Swansburg, the school’s first male graduate, as the “sole trousered member in the sweetly starched and scented nursing class.” In crossing the gender line, Swansburg faced a number of academic and social dilemmas. He declined to wear a cap and “sidestepped girlish teas of the nursing alumnae.”

He was unceremoniously excused from a “physical measurement test” in the Mather gym that involved photographing students “in silhouette, wearing rights.”

Swansburg went on to a distinguished career in nursing at Sheppard Air Force Base. He is currently Professor of Nursing Administration at the Medical College of Georgia. His publications include one of the leading texts in nursing administration, Management and Leadership for Nurse Managers (1990).

Breaking the Race and Gender Line

Rozella Schlotfeldt saw her appointment as a chance for a new beginning. Delivering a paper entitled, “Crises in Nursing—The Beginning of a New Era,” she said that in the 1960s the shortages of medical personnel, particularly nurses, represented a professional crisis. She remarked that it was ironic that it was the university that was called upon to solve the problem, since “many and perhaps most of those problems have been created by a long standing and persistent disdain for university education on the part of many nurse-practitioners and even by some nurse ‘leaders.’”

To improve the clinical environment in which students received their first exposure to the art of healing, Schlotfeldt stressed to Frances Payne Bolton the need to develop “a large group of university prepared personnel to engage in both direct nursing care of patients, and in supervisory and teaching activities.” For Schlotfeldt and her successor, Janetta MacPhail, success in helping to end the crisis represented a revolution in nursing.

Schlotfeldt conceived a collaborative program with University Hospitals to maximize the opportunities for learning in clinical settings. She modeled the “Experiment in Nursing” on the way medical students received their clinical training. Like professors in the medical school, the Bolton School faculty held joint appointments as nursing department heads in the hospital. The “Experiment in Nursing,” funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation between 1966 and 1971, achieved the long sought balance between education and service. Henceforth, all student practice would be guided and informed by educational principles rather than hospital expediency.

Janetta MacPhail, who served as director of the “Experiment in Nursing,” saw it as crucial to pushing the frontiers of nursing research. Not only did it produce a teaching environment conducive to better teaching and nursing care, but also it drew upon the skills of “clinical experts who were prominent educators and eager to promote research in nursing.”

Interestingly, the idea of creating joint appointments had existed from the earliest years of the School. In 1928, Dean Nellie X. Hawkins wrote of the “need for someone to act as a connecting link between the University Hospitals and the School of Nursing.” She attempted to create this link by establishing a new position, that of Assistant Dean and Director of Nursing Administration. But it took an era of generous funding, an atmosphere of crisis, and visionary leadership to make the new clinical program a reality.

Beneath a persona that radiated "womanly charm," Schlotfeldt had a steely determination and the clout to attract national leaders in the nursing field to join the faculty. She appointed Dorothy Gregg, a noted psychiatric nurse, to head the School's programs of psychiatric nursing education and care. Other faculty who responded to Schlotfeldt's call included: Ann Godrey, a pediatric nursing specialist; Nancy Lytle, a well known maternity nursing educator; W Ilma Phipps, professor of medical/surgical nursing; and Rosemary Ellis, a promising nurse scientist in human development. The new dean created an atmosphere that encouraged the faculty to pursue research, to participate in conferences, and to publish. At this time, Frances Bolton, as Congresswoman from the Ohio's 22nd District, was working for the passage of national legislation that resulted in the N u rse Training Act (1964). She enthusiastically supported Schlotfeldt's efforts to recruit nationally prominent faculty. In a letter to Schlotfeldt she wrote, "You are indeed a miracle worker!"

To create a cadre of highly trained professionals to lead the next generation of nurse educators, Schlotfeldt energetically pushed the graduate training of "nurse scientists." T his federally funded program enabled nurses to pursue Ph.D. studies in related scientific disciplines. It was intended that these highly motivated and academically successful nurses would return to the Bolton School to infuse the faculty with their knowledge and commitment.

The location of the new nursing school building in the H ealth Sciences Complex on the campus of Case Western Reserve University reflected the new status the Bolton School achieved as an integral member of the university medical community during the Schlotfeldt years. To reinforce the high priority accorded to nursing research, space for laboratory investigations (to complement nursing research at the bedside and out in the community) was set aside in the new building, completed in 1969.

The explosive growth of nursing knowledge and the increasing complexity of the health care environment required more highly trained nurses. During her tenure as dean, Janetta M acPhail introduced the Ph.D. in nursing, the third program in the country. MacPhail also introduced the N.D., or Doctorate in Nursing in 1979—the first professional nursing degree. Despite the difficulty of finding support for graduate students, the program attracted well over 100 applicants the first year for 50 available positions. MacPhail called this new degree "a milestone in the history of the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing and in the history of nursing education." But she also recognized the difficulties of overcoming the skepticism of colleagues in the medical profession, as well as some nurses who had "difficulty comprehending such visionary advancement in nursing education."

The first students in the program clearly understood the pathbreaking implications of the new program. As one student said, "Having already earned a degree in biology, I wanted a nursing program that would permit me to build on that body of knowledge." Of the original 47 students admitted to the program, 35 graduated as Doctors of Nursing.

MacPhail continued to promote the Experiment in Nursing. She also increased the School's commitment to nursing in the community, developing the first gerontological program in response to the demand for special skills to serve the country's aging population. Shortly before MacPhail stepped down, the School received a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant to develop a collaborative program with the Margaret W agner H ause, part of the Benjamin Rose Institute. This program would provide opportunities for teaching students in a nursing home environment and for faculty research centered on ways to improve health care for the elderly. Finally, MacPhail helped to bring the Midwest Alliance in Nursing into being, an effort at regional nursing collaboration, headed by Rozella Schlotfeldt.

In 1964, Dean Rozella Schlotfeldt recruited Rosemary Ellis, a Ph.D. graduate in Human Development from the University of Chicago. Ellis was instrumental in establishing the Ph.D. program in nursing at the Bolton School and taught courses in nursing theory from the inception of this program in 1977 until her death in the Fall of 1986. A nurse scientist, senior scholar, and influential teacher, her contributions to nursing philosophy and theory remain her legacy to the nursing profession.

Ellis outlined a system of nursing knowledge built upon four types of inquiry: science, history, philosophy, and technology. Scientific research provided a way for the nurse to draw upon fields such as anatomy and biology to understand the internal physiological processes within the patient. Historical research enabled the nurse to understand the context of illness and its treatment, such as the distinction between a disease and a health-based approach to wellness. Philosophical research humanized the nurse through the study of ethics and taught empathy in patient care. Finally, technological research included studies of various nursing apparatuses and how effective they were in interactions with the patient.

Ellis argued that a nurse was one who could use scientific knowledge in a compassionate, caring manner to improve a patient's health. She said that care ultimately had the goal of "beneficence" which was simply "doing good for other human beings." Beneficence became the central theme of Ellis's life's work. Her conception of a nurse scientist was one who strived to refine, discover, and promote a body of knowledge which nurses could call their own and practice at the bedside.

Ellis's publications, now considered classics in the nursing canon, reflect this mission of improved patient care through research and knowledge development. In a conference paper she presented in 1963 she said, "Explanatory knowledge is required to produce beneficence deliberately." Twenty-two years later, echoing this same sentiment in one of her last papers, she wrote, "Beneficence can only come with artful, ethical use of knowledge."
Educational Innovation and Global Leadership: the Fitzpatrick Years

Recruited from Wayne State University in Detroit, Dean Joyce Fitzpatrick brought a national reputation as a scholar in community health, gerontology, and psychiatric-mental health. She was noted for her research on the process of dying, publishing Nursing and Mental Health Applications in 1982. In 1983, with Ann Wali, Fitzpatrick edited Conceptual Models of Nursing: Analysis and Application, a book that has become one of the standard texts in nursing theory. Her “rhythm model” demonstrated the influence of time on patients in a variety of situations.

When Fitzpatrick took over the position of dean in 1982, the Bolton School was experiencing difficult financial problems. Her first challenge was to put the School on a secure financial footing. Declining enrollments and decreasing grant opportunities throughout the University in the early 1980s had affected morale. Within three years Fitzpatrick was able to balance the School’s budget without dipping into the School’s original endowment, a significant achievement, and one on which the rest of her initiatives could be built. During her tenure as dean, she increased the endowment to $40 million, making the Bolton School one of the most generously endowed nursing schools in the country. Fitzpatrick won funding for eight new chairs in nursing, the largest number of endowed chairs in any nursing school.

The Center on Aging and Health (led by Dr. May Wykle) has become the Center for Research, founded in 1990, became another focal point for realizing the research goals for the School. Significant funding for research was secured from the National Institute of Nursing Research and the National Institute on Aging. To encourage research by graduate students, Ph.D. students organized the Rosemary Ellis Scholar’s Retreat, held annually to explore the meanings of nursing science. The N.D. program, restructured to enhance opportunities for developing skills needed for advanced clinical nursing practice, continued to attract superior students.

The introduction of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) for undergraduate students proved to be another successful Fitzpatrick experiment. Begun in the 1990 academic year, Fitzpatrick marketed the program as a means to solve the national shortage of acute and critical care nurses. She won significant financial backing for the program from a consortium of three Cleveland area hospitals: University Hospitals, The Cleveland Clinic, and MetroHealth Medical Center. The B.S.N. gave students an opportunity to focus on acute and critical care in a clinical setting.

The introduction of nursing informatics became a significant component of the new B.S.N. training. The Bolton School launched the first program in the United States to incorporate informatics into all four years of the undergraduate curriculum. In 1986 the School won funding for the Bolton Information System (B.I.S.), a coordinated computerized system for the School’s related administrative, educational, and research activities.

New ventures included the Buckeye Health Center (B.H.C.), a nationwide model for improving access to health care for underserved areas. Started in 1992, the Buckeye Health Center offered birthing and primary care services managed by nurses (some of whom were Advanced Nursing Practitioners) for low income residents on Cleveland’s east side. An important aspect of this care was prevention and health promotion services along with annual immunizations and screenings.

Another educational initiative involved educating advanced practice nurses. T he development of a degree program for certified nurse aestheticians (C.R.N.A.) is among the most important of these programs. In 1991, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists selected this master’s degree program as one of two in the nation that they would promote. T he nurse anesthetist program, created by the merger of programs at Mt. Sinai Medical Center and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, and The Ohio State University Hospital has helped to attract growing numbers of men to the Bolton School. In addition to the nurse anesthetist program, the Advanced Practice Program also included the Community-based Nurse Midwifery Education Program (C.N.E.P.), affiliated with the Frontier Nursing Service. One of the largest such programs in the country, its graduates have found employment as nurse-midwives throughout the world. Another Advanced Practice Program produced nurse practitioners in collaboration with MetroHealth Medical Center.

Fitzpatrick achieved her global vision for the Bolton School through its designation in 1993 as a World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Home Care. The School won re-designation from the World Health Organization in 1997. Faculty member Dr. Doris M. Odly has played a key role in the development of the School’s International Health Program and serves as director of the Center. T he School’s international focus has helped to bring students from other countries to Cleveland and fostered the development of innovative educational programs in other countries.

In 1993, the Bolton School received a $1.5 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to collaborate with the University of Zimbabwe in setting up a Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) Distance Learning Program. T his program helped educate Zimbabwian nurses for leadership roles in the country’s health care and education system.

40. “Report on Distance Learning,” Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, 30 June 1997, Traditions Room Archives, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing.
41. Fitzpatrick, School of Nursing Annual Report, Case Western Reserve University, 1985-86, 1986-87.
42. Fitzpatrick, School of Nursing Annual Report, Case Western Reserve University, 1991-92.
Fitzpatrick, concluding her tenure as dean in 1997, left the School poised for continued success and leadership for the 21st Century. Through Fitzpatrick’s accomplishments in fostering innovative educational programs and global leadership in nursing, the Bolton School concluded its 75th year celebrating the past and preparing for the future. Quoting H.G. Wells in her last annual report, Fitzpatrick captured the sense of optimism and tradition by saying, “The past is but the beginning of a beginning, and all that is and has been is but the twilight of the dawn.”

Teaching the Teacher: The Bolton School’s Role with the World Health Organization

Designation as one of 33 World Health Organization Collaborating Centers located throughout the world has given the Bolton School a global presence in which to promote nursing research, teaching, and patient care. In 1948, the United Nations approved the organization of the World Health Organization as the lead agency concerned with world health. Its central mission, embodied by the W.H.O. definition of health, is to promote “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

With 191 Member States, the W.H.O. attempts to achieve this mission through four main areas of endeavor: setting global health standards; working with governments to improve their national health; developing health technology; and guiding the entire world towards better health.

To carry out its global mission, the Bolton School invites nurses from other countries and provides them with educational programs and opportunities to observe institutions involved in home care. For example, the School runs a summer program for Korean nurses who observe nursing programs at the Bolton School and sister institutions such as University Hospitals, Meridia Hospital System and the Cleveland Clinic. These nurses return to their countries with knowledge of the American model that they can adapt to their specific needs.

Because of its status as a W.H.O. Collaborating Center, the Bolton School is also given other opportunities to effect nursing on a global level. The School has signed affiliation agreements with universities in Chile, Egypt, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Lebanon, Mexico, Slovenia, Thailand, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The Kellogg Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation funded the School for capacity building projects in Africa such as establishing bachelor’s and master’s degree programs. Doris Modly concluded, really what we do here is “teach the teacher.” Through this strategy, the nursing knowledge developed at the Bolton School directly impacts the world’s health.

Dorothy Brooten, Dean for the 21st Century

Dorothy Brooten joined the Bolton School as Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies in February 1996. Brooten was recruited from the University of Pennsylvania where she headed that school’s Division of Health Care of Women for 13 years, developed several graduate programs, and served as Director of its Center for Low Birthweight Research. She is internationally known for more than 17 years of research developing and testing a model of transitional care provided by advanced practice nurses, a model that evaluates advanced practice nursing’s effects on patient outcomes and cost of care. Her seminal work with very low birthweight infants was published in 1986 in the New England Journal of Medicine.

As Associate Dean, Brooten immediately set about rebuilding the infrastructure for research at the School, mentoring faculty in securing grants, and streamlining policies and procedures in the Ph.D. program. She also worked with nursing leaders in the community to establish the Greater Cleveland Nursing Research Consortium in order to unite the research expertise of Bolton School faculty with the clinical expertise of nurses in practice sites to solve patient care and health care delivery problems. The School’s ranking in research dollars awarded by the National Institutes of Health rose from 10th in 1995, to 6th in 1996, and to 4th in 1997.

In searching for a successor to Dean Fitzpatrick’s 15 year tenure, the Bolton School knew it needed a unique person to lead it into the 21st Century, someone capable of managing and advancing the research, educational, and administrative demands of one of the nation’s top nursing schools. They found their answer with Brooten. As CW RU Provost Richard Zdanis said, her “extensive background in administration and research will provide a firm platform for the continued development of CWRU’s nursing school among the world’s leaders in nursing education.”

Brooten has a strong vision for the future of the school and its continued leadership role in the nursing profession. Her vision is based first and foremost on academic excellence, on positioning the School as world leader in advancing nursing science, having it seen as a greater resource to its local, national, and international communities, and to expand the School’s group of advocates and friends. Brooten intends to focus on academic excellence which includes maintaining a range of programs, attracting the brightest students, providing the best teachers to educate students, building interdisciplinary and inter-institutional educational initiatives, and rewarding teaching excellence.
Since nursing is a practice profession, a major focus is being placed on establishing the School as world leader in research to improve nursing practice and the delivery of care. “Such research informs our teaching and is critical in improving our practice,” says Brooten. The School is also focusing heavily on research development, on inter-disciplinary research that includes its clinical faculty and clinical partners, and on the widespread dissemination of research findings.

Brooten said that it is a “great honor to have been entrusted with the leadership of the Frances Payne Bolton School as it celebrates 75 years of excellence and innovation in the education of nursing leaders and research to improve health and patient care, and service to its communities.” As the first dean of the 21st Century, she will ensure the continuation of these traditions of excellence.

One of the themes that runs through the history of the Bolton School is the commitment to educate students with superior nursing skills. To understand the human beings they care for, students must not only master a body of knowledge, but also learn how to practice nursing in a clinical setting. The goal of their education is mastery of a framework of knowledge that is unique to nursing. Today, the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing is a national model for nursing research and teaching in a university setting. Its history reflects the remarkable determination of its leaders, both professional and lay women, to position the Bolton School to shape knowledge and practice in the nursing field—balancing the necessities of care, education, and research, yet never losing sight that patient care is the heart of their profession.

Besides a strong academic base, Brooten also sees the School offering a number of “value-added” opportunities that will make the Bolton School the most exciting nursing institution in the country. These include such innovative programs as ensuring all students publish with a faculty member, expanding international student experiences, and communicating the history and pride of heritage to all students. Her first priority remains making the School the leading center of nursing research in the world.

Dr. Dorothy Brooten received the Elizabeth McWilliams Miller Founders Award for Excellence in Research at the Sigma Theta Tau International’s 35th Biennial Convention held December 1997 in Indianapolis.