

**Memorial Resolution – Diana Girdley**  
**May 28, 1950 – May 17, 2020**

Diana I. Girdley, who guided and inspired many students over her 30 years of teaching at UW-Madison School of Nursing (SoN), died on May 17, 2020, at her home in Verona, Wisconsin, at the age of 69. Diana was born May 28, 1950, in Lancaster, Ohio and later moved to Indiana. She attended Ball State University, receiving a BS in Nursing (1972), and attended UW-Madison, receiving a MS in Nursing (1982). Prior to joining the School of Nursing, Diana's professional nursing career included practice in emergency, public health, medical-surgical, critical care, hemodialysis and staff development settings. Diana joined the UW-Madison School of Nursing faculty as a Clinical Instructor in 1986, and was an Associate Clinical Professor at the time of her retirement in 2014. She received emeritus status upon the recommendation of Dean Katharyn May.

Throughout her career, Diana was committed to teaching undergraduate nursing students. Her passion for nursing and her enthusiasm for teaching was integrated into how she guided her students in their learning. Diana motivated students by sharing her many clinical experiences and stories, conveying her interest for research, pursuit of knowledge and clinical curiosity. She expanded her student's clinical experiences by introducing them to the Verona Senior Center. Students administered medications, performed blood pressure screenings and learned the importance of listening to the stories the seniors told. She was also instrumental in developing campus-wide flu shot clinics with nursing students. Diana was universally recognized by her students for her fairness, calm demeanor and her supportive, yet challenging intellectual approach to teaching. She was acknowledged for her teaching expertise with outstanding clinical instructor awards from various student organizations.

In addition to teaching clinical nursing, Diana had a variety of other responsibilities in the SoN. She was course professor in several classes and lectured on a variety of topics. During her tenure, she mentored many new clinical faculty and graduate students. She also provided support and mentoring for existing faculty. Her critical thinking and innovative teaching strategies provided invaluable resources for students and colleagues alike. Diana supported countless instructors through difficult situations. She was an active listener who provided wisdom about teaching and navigating in an academic community.

Diana worked as a research specialist on several grant projects. She also participated in state and national NCLEX review courses. Furthermore, Diana was a member of various professional organizations including the Madison District Nursing Association, American Nursing Association, and Sigma Theta Tau. She was very active in the School of Nursing governance and was an early champion of holistic admissions, which are part of the SoN admission process today. Her work included membership on various committees, such as research and admissions.

Diana retired from the School of Nursing in December 2014. After retirement, Diana enjoyed spending time with her family and friends, quilting, volunteering at the Dane County Humane Society and monitoring the Decorah eagles through the eagle cams.

In the spring of 2018, Diana was diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer. Throughout her 2-year journey, she was optimistic, and determined to live her life to the fullest. Diana frequently expressed how fortunate she was to have the opportunity to experience the joy of spending time with her family and close friends. She considered her time after diagnosis a gift and was determined to spend it well. Quilting became a much-needed respite for her as she coped with the effects of chemotherapy. As her illness advanced, she was motivated to finish projects and gift her quilts to those special people in her life. Former clinical students honored Diana with remembrances in a collection of stories and memories of their time with her. Up until her death, Diana taught us how to live with a terminal illness and maintain a positive outlook. The teacher in her helped us all learn how to cope.

Diana is survived by her husband Forrest (Frosty), children Ian, Caitlin (Nate) Wietzel, her grandchildren Lucas and Grace Wietzel and sister, Patricia Bennett.

Her family, friends and colleagues remember Diana with a smile – not sadness. Those closest to her remember her quick wit, smile, and laughter. We honor her memory by finding joy in all animals, experiencing peace with nature, and most especially in cherishing time with loved ones.

*The Memorial Committee*

*Sarah Kruger*

*Cassie Voge*

*Sue Yadro*