

# Nursing Program



Tammy Thomas fulfilled her decades-long dream of becoming a nurse when her mother walked across the stage and attached a Clark College Nursing pin to her daughter's lapel. Tammy was one of 29 nursing graduates celebrating completing their Registered Nurse education at Clark's Nursing pinning ceremony on June 16 in Gaiser Student Center.

The room was packed with families and friends—and so many babies, toddlers and young children—who had supported and cheered on their hard-working nursing students through the rigors of Clark's program.

During the ceremony, Ethan Cockerham received the Florence Nightingale Award, which is bestowed upon a graduate who has shown exceptional clinical performance. He spoke about how Clark's nursing program is well respected throughout the

region. When he first moved to the metro area to eventually attend nursing school, he was working as an emergency medical technician (EMT). At every hospital he walked into, he asked the staff which was the area's best nursing program. Overwhelmingly, the answer was the same: Clark College.

Ethan told his fellow nursing graduates: "We started at the height of COVID when it was chaotic and complicated with nursing strikes and vaccine refusals." He added, "We've arrived! We have so much good to do in this world."

Angie Bailey, Nursing faculty department chair, explained that the Nursing graduates already have applied for licensure in the state they want to work in. They have one final step to take to earn an "RN" after their name. They must pass a rigorous exam, the National Council Licensure Examination, or NCLEX-RN. It is a nationwide examination for the licensing of nurses in the U.S., Canada, and Australia.

Standing in the back of the room, she nodded toward the stage where the 29 new nurses sat and said, "Our students are phenomenal."

In turn, each graduate stood and was pinned by someone who was important in their journey to become a nurse.

- Emilio Gomez was pinned by his wife, an ER nurse, with the help of their two children.
- Janey Hume was pinned by her sister, Esther, a former graduate of Clark's RN program.
- Miriah Mallory was pinned by her husband, who held their baby. She had become pregnant and given birth while completing the nursing program.
- Tammy Thomas was pinned by her mother, a nurse and nursing professor.



3 generations nurses: Nursing grad Tammy Thompson stands between her mother Linda Rose, *left* and daughter Daryl Hogan, *right*.

## Tammy's nursing story

Tammy always wanted to be a nurse because her mother, Linda Rose, was a nurse. After graduating from high school, Tammy enrolled in a nursing program at a community college in California, but life got in the way. With only two classes to go, she became pregnant. After her daughter was born, Tammy finished her general associate degree in 2000, but she had to put nursing school on hold to raise her daughter.

Tammy said, "I worked as a human resources manager for 16 years while I was raising my daughter, but I was always thinking about nursing."

Tammy watched her mother's fulfilling nursing career, which included working at Oregon Health Sciences University and then

becoming a nursing professor at Concordia University.

Meanwhile, Tammy's daughter, Daryl Hogan, grew up, went to nursing school and is an oncology nurse. She is earning a master's degree so that she can become a nursing professor just like her grandmother.

Now inspired by both her mother and her daughter, Tammy decided to return to college to fulfill her lifelong dream of becoming a nurse.

She said, "I chose Clark because it has one of the best and most prestigious nursing programs around."

At age 52, Tammy graduated with an AA in Nursing DTA/MRP, and next will take her exam to become a Registered Nurse. Tammy is not planning on stopping there. She plans to earn her bachelor's degree and to work in neonatal intensive care (NICU) or women's health.

In earning her nursing degree, Tammy joins her mother and daughter and completes their three-generation nursing family.

"It's been quite the journey," Tammy said. "I have learned that I have the perseverance and courage to follow my dream," Tammy said. "My advice to students: Don't give up on your dreams. Believe in yourself. It doesn't matter how old you are. Just set a goal to do what you love, believe in yourself, and take that first step. Then the next."

Then all 29 nurses stood and recited the Nightingale Pledge, pledging to uphold certain ethics and standards within their profession. It is a modified version of the Hippocratic Oath for doctors.

Many of these nursing graduates have transferred to Washington State University Vancouver and will begin working toward their bachelor's degrees in the fall. There is a seamless transition between the two schools and their nursing programs.



## History of Nursing at Clark

- First pinning ceremony: 1962
- Number of total nursing graduates: 4,351
- Number of nursing classes graduating: 144

## Nursing Pledge

In full knowledge and understanding, I promise to care for the sick with all of the skill and understanding I possess, without regards to race, creed, color, politics, or social status, sparing no effort to preserve quality of life, alleviate suffering, and promote health. I will respect at all times the dignity and beliefs of the patients under my care, holding in confidence all personal information entrusted to

me, and refraining from any action which may endanger life or health. I will endeavor to keep my professional knowledge and skills at the highest level and give loyal support and cooperation to all members of the health care team. I will do my utmost to honor the international code of ethics applied to nursing and uphold the integrity of the nurse.



*Photos: Clark College/Susan Parrish*