

Good afternoon, Everyone,

It gives me immense pleasure to be here on this wonderful occasion, and to be a recipient of this year's Distinguished Alumni Award.

First, I want to thank my Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, for enabling me to be alive and well these many years. I say that especially because just last week I celebrated a special birthday: I turned 80 years old and have joined that august company called Octogenarians. I am so grateful to have my full faculties and still be functional—this is a real blessing!

Second, I appreciate being able, once again, to join my Cornell colleagues on Alumni Day, having graduated fifty-nine years ago, on June 4, 1964! When I think back to the first time I set foot through the doors of Cornell University-New York Hospital School of Nursing, I recall that I was filled with awe at the prospect of becoming a Registered Nurse, and at so prestigious a school at that! The thought never even crossed my mind that, one day, I would be recognized as a Distinguished Alumna and granted an award!

I remember the first time I interacted with my instructors, among whom were Miss Mary Millar, Miss Carol Fray, Miss Kathy Dwyer, Miss Barbara Jones, Mrs. Constance Derrell, Mrs. Emma Winn, Miss Madeleine Sugimoto, and many others. Each, in her own way, made an indelible impression on me. In my mind's eye, I can see them now: welcoming, immaculately groomed, intelligent, and so knowledgeable about their subject matter. —Most of all though, they were “no nonsense!” They instilled in me the desire and impetus to study hard and become the best nurse I could be. They set the bar high. I wanted to achieve. I wanted to make my parents—especially my mother, herself a registered nurse--, and my family proud of me. I took pride in being a Cornell nursing student, and, later, a Cornell graduate.

So, I followed my role models. My experiences at Cornell and my interactions with my instructors encouraged me to explore the wide vista of opportunities that the nursing profession offered. Following graduation and armed with my nursing degree, I did not hesitate to venture into a wide range of healthcare situations. I loved being a nurse. It was my absolute joy to practice as a nurse-midwife and, deliver over four thousand babies during thirty-eight years of practice!

Today, I can say that, entering Cornell, my launching pad, was one of the best decisions I ever made. Despite many roadblocks and setbacks over forty-four years in the nursing profession, the head start I received at Cornell enabled me to excel in a wide range of fields, including nursing education, nursing practice, nursing service, obtaining my Masters and Doctorate degrees, becoming a published author of six books, and an ordained minister.

The adventures, the advanced study experiences, the amazing colleagues I interacted with both at home and in my international assignments, the varied healthcare environments, the sometimes-complicated patient care situations, and my tenures as nursing professor at several

prestigious colleges and universities, all combined to enrich me and made me become the person I am today. Thank you so much, Cornell!

In conclusion, I would like to say a big thank you to Marcia Owens, who nominated me for this award; and to the members of the Alumni Association Board for acknowledging my achievements and for granting me this award.

I would like to express appreciation also to my family: my husband, Neville, of forty-eight years, my three children, four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren (and one on the way!), my two siblings, and innumerable family and friends who encouraged me along the way and who still have faith in me and urge me to continue to achieve great things in my life.

God bless you all!