



25 February, 2021

Historic Clinton Nursing Program Alumni Make Gift to SWOSU School of Nursing

Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) with locations in Weatherford and Sayre has announced receipt of a donation from alumni of the former Oklahoma General Hospital School of Nursing.

In 1913, the Clinton Hospital Training School in Clinton (OK), an institution established in 1909 by the City of Clinton, graduated its very first cohort of three nurses to provide healthcare services to hospital patients. The program trained more nurses with each year that passed after 1913. In 1937, the Oklahoma Legislature acquired the Clinton Hospital Training School and renamed it the Western Oklahoma Charity Hospital School of Nursing.

The institution would later be called the Western Oklahoma State Hospital School of Nursing and then the Oklahoma General Hospital School of Nursing.

In 1973, not long after the nurse training program was discontinued, the City of Clinton took ownership of the institution, which today is managed by Community Health Systems and known as AllianceHealth Clinton.

Between 1913 and 1963, a total of 382 nurses were trained by the Clinton nursing program. The students lived on-site in dormitories adjacent to the hospital and were bused to the institution known today as SWOSU for college courses. The Clinton program had affiliations with Oklahoma City healthcare institutions and sent its nursing students on three-month experiential learning assignments to those institutions where the students were instructed in nursing practices related to obstetrics, pediatrics and psychiatry. The Clinton nursing students were “on the job” caring for patients within three weeks of beginning their schooling, working eight hour shifts in addition to their four hours of daily instruction.

Since the Clinton nurse training program ended in 1963, alumni of the program have been gathering regularly. In 2020, with participation in the alumni effort dwindling, the three remaining active alumni decided to donate their remaining funds to the SWOSU School of Nursing.

Jane Ernst of Clinton, Norma Nickel of Clinton and Nell Helfenbein of Mansfield (TX) are the remaining active alumni of the Clinton nursing program.

“The history of the nurse training program based in Clinton is truly remarkable and should be remembered and celebrated,” said SWOSU President Dr. Randy L. Beutler. “We are so very grateful that the program’s alumni have generously chosen to invest in the instruction of our SWOSU Nursing Department. It is a privilege for SWOSU to partner with those who blazed the trail for our nursing students and who provided care, facilitated healing, and demonstrated the highest ideals of the nursing profession for many decades in western Oklahoma.”

The donation from the remaining alumni of the Clinton nursing program will be used to provide a much-needed Rhythm Simulator Module for the SWOSU nursing students to use in conjunction with the defibrillator.

The gift to SWOSU from the alumni of the Clinton nursing program is stewarded by the SWOSU Foundation, Inc. An institutionally-related charitable entity, the Foundation was established in 1977 to promote philanthropy, award scholarships and distribute funds to support the activities and programs of SWOSU. Located on the Weatherford campus in the historic Burton House, the Foundation currently stewards over \$28 million in assets for the benefit of SWOSU.

For more information on the Foundation or to donate to the SWOSU School of Nursing, please visit www.SWOSUFoundation.com or call 580-774-3267.

- [Academics](#) ▷
 - [Administration](#) ▷
 - [Alumni and Foundation](#) ▷
 - [Community](#) ▷
 - [Events](#) ▷
 - [Faculty and Staff](#) ▷
 - [Miscellaneous](#) ▷
 - [Sayre](#) ▷
 - [Students](#) ▷
-

Archive Links

- [2018](#) ▷
 - [2019](#) ▷
 - [2020](#) ▷
 - [Archive](#) ▷
-



Weatherford Campus

100 Campus Drive
Weatherford, OK 73096

Sayre Campus

409 E Mississippi Ave
Sayre, OK 73662