



# Eastern-in-the-News



## EASTERN'S 1ST NURSE PINNING CEREMONY OFFERS INSPIRATION

**Moorefield – May 10, 2012** - In a moving ceremony that moistened more than a few eyes on more than a few occasions, the 18 members of a local nursing school's first graduating class of earned their pins May 4 in Moorefield.

"The pinning ceremony goes back to the time Queen Victoria presented a pin to Florence Nightingale for her pioneering work during the Crimean War," Laura Schmidle, president of the Student Nurses Association at Eastern WV Community and Technical College, told the 165 people friends and family assembled for the event at the Moorefield Middle School.

Presented nowadays as a "symbolic welcome to the profession," she said, the pins recognize all the "hard work a student has put forth" to graduate nursing school.

"Pinning is usually near and dear to a nurse's heart," pointed out Eleanor Berg, MS, RN, NP, Director of Eastern's Nursing Program. "Each college has its own, unique pin to identify its graduates."

At the ceremony, Berg offered the graduates an inspirational maxim: "Risk more than others think is safe. Dream more than others think is practical. Expect more than others think is possible."

Her own ardent work over the past two years, steering the brand-new nursing program through its provisional accreditation, charged Berg's message with the truth of committed purpose and accomplishment.

The ceremony included a salute to the Hardy County 40 & 8, who, led by Moorefield's Tom Denney, sponsor annual nurse training scholarships. Since nurses began training in Moorefield — first through Southern WV Community and Technical College, and now through Eastern — over the years the 40 & 8 have assisted 11 student nurses with some \$18-thousand in scholarships.

Individual graduates recognized and thanked specific friends and family who inspired them to become nurses. And the ceremony also celebrated Eastern's nursing faculty — Berg; Jill Landis, RN, MN; Melissa Mathias, RN, MN, NP (adjunct clinical instructor); and Judith Hott, RN adjunct clinical instructor) — for their outstanding contributions to the graduates' transformation from students to nurses.

"Nursing changes a person," Schmidle acknowledged. "We are not the same people who walked into that classroom on day one."

"We watched life come into this world, and we watched as lights were extinguished and life was taken from this world," she said, reflecting on the highs and lows the graduates had experienced. "The only word I can use to explain this is: 'Humbling'."

In her keynote address, Judith Hott, RN, CEO of the Thomas B. Finan Hospital Center in Cumberland, also spoke of the "mountaintops" and the "valleys" in nursing.

"The valleys are painful, painful for the people who are living them and painful for us as nurses," said Hott, who served as an Eastern adjunct faculty member and led Psychiatry clinical rotations during the school year.

“The mountain tops are beautiful — enjoy them, embrace them, as they will give you balance and they will sustain you. But don’t run from or be afraid of the valleys, because that is where you will be challenged, and that is where you will grow as a nurse.”

Hott reminded the nurse graduates of the importance of discovering within themselves their own passion “to incorporate both the art and the science of nursing...that will drive you to know as much as you can possibly know about a particular field of nursing, and then guide you in mastering the implementation of those skills.”

She warned the graduates that they would make mistakes, but “if you don’t make mistakes then you are not pushing yourself to be the best you can.

“You have an awesome privilege to be called nurse. It is a privilege that you have worked hard for, that you have sacrificed for, and that your families have sacrificed for. But with that privilege,” she reminded them, “comes an equally awesome responsibility.

In a field that is “constantly evolving” with “new medications, new equipment, new techniques,” Hott emphasized, “it will be equally important for you to maintain the attitude of student, as this is a responsibility that you owe to the people you will serve.”

### ***Eastern’s Class of 2012 Nursing (\* denotes honors)***

#### **GRANT COUNTY**

Cassandra R. Clark\*, Angel L. Perry and Rebecca D. Turner, all of Petersburg; Benjamin E. Hanlin, Mount Storm; Brittany M. Hawk and Freda L. Lough\*, both of Maysville

#### **HAMPSHIRE COUNTY**

Christina L. Rockwell Burlington

#### **HARDY COUNTY**

Shelby J. Hall\* and Mary M. Harrington, both of Mathias; Danielle M. LaFollette and Karissa L. Marshall, both of Wardensville; Ashley B. Conners, Laura L. Schmidle\* and Jessica M. Wolfe, all of Moorefield

#### **MINERAL COUNTY**

Christopher R. Todd Fort Ashby

#### **PENDLETON COUNTY**

Megan C. Evick Franklin; Rachel E. Rexrode\* Brandywine

#### **BOONE COUNTY**

Claudia L. Acord Whitesville