

# UPSTATE Today & Tomorrow

*Leave a lifesaving or life-changing legacy*

SPRING 2022

## M. Janice Nelson, EdD – a legacy fulfilled



College of Nursing founding dean Janice Nelson at the unveiling of her official portrait in September 2000. The painting hangs in the College's lobby in the Academic Building.

The Upstate community lost a great friend, leader and educator on January 1, 2022. Dr. M. Janice Nelson was a founding member of the Upstate Legacy Society and an ardent philanthropist with 39 consecutive years of giving to the Upstate Foundation.

Dr. Nelson came to Syracuse in 1980 as associate administrator and director of nursing at Upstate University Hospital. In 1986, she became the founding dean of the university's College of Nursing, with many notable achievements during her decade-long tenure. Unusual for its time, the College's curriculum was designed as a combined baccalaureate and

master's degree program, to prepare students for advanced practice in a clinical specialization. In 1991, the programs were granted full initial accreditation by the National League for Nursing. Over the next few years, programs were established for the role of clinical nurse specialist and nurse practitioner.

Under her leadership, the College of Nursing Alumni Association was chartered in 1992. A few years later, the alumni association honored Dr. Nelson by creating an endowed scholarship in her name. Her inspiration led many alumni and friends of the College to establish scholarships over the years. Since the first award of \$250 was given in 1995, more than 500 nursing alumni scholarships totaling nearly \$400,000 have been awarded to Upstate nursing students.



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Janice supported other Upstate initiatives as well, including A New Beginning Fund which supports stem cell research for spinal cord injuries, and The Healing Muse Fund for the annual journal of literary and visual art published by the University's Center for Bioethics & Humanities.

"Janice Nelson was beloved by all who knew her," said Eileen Pezzi, vice president for development at Upstate Medical University. "By leading the way with her own personal philanthropy, she inspired countless others to do the same. We miss her dearly."

Remembered as a gracious soul and fierce advocate for nursing education, Janice was recognized in 2019 with Upstate's prestigious President's Award for Excellence in Philanthropic Service.



**Upstate Today & Tomorrow** highlights timely ideas and stories showing the profound impact of a planned gift to the Upstate Foundation.

For more information or to have a confidential conversation regarding your legacy gift plans, contact Carolyn Hendrickson at 315-464-6490 or [hendricC@upstate.edu](mailto:hendricC@upstate.edu).

[www.UpstateFoundation.org](http://www.UpstateFoundation.org) | 750 E. Adams St. | Syracuse, NY 13210

**UPSTATE  
FOUNDATION**

Where your gift impacts the health of the entire region.

## Legacy gift provides peace of mind

The inspiration for philanthropic giving can come from unpredictable places. For Daniel Grannis, of Syracuse, it was literally a flash in the darkness.

"A few years ago I was at a local theater watching commercials before the movie started when I saw a notice about the opening of the children's hospital at Upstate," said Daniel. "I hadn't any association with Upstate at that point, but I do have a place in my heart for children. So, I picked up the phone and left a message that I would be happy to lick stamps or do whatever was needed."

Not long after, Daniel received a call from Upstate Foundation executive director Eileen Pezzi asking if he would be willing to chair a speaker's bureau in support of the capital campaign for the forthcoming Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital.

"We were trained by physicians and other Upstate staff to make the business case for the construction of the hospital to civic organizations and small businesses," Daniel noted.

Over time, Daniel's commitment to Upstate grew.

"Given that I knew people who had experienced lung cancer – and that the Upstate Legacy Society was just being formed – I made a planned gift to an endowment honoring Michael E. Connolly, who lost his life to lung cancer."

"There is a sense of peace with a legacy gift, and it feels humbling, because this will be happening after I leave this world," said Daniel. "If you have a spark to do something that's bigger than yourself, this is a wonderful avenue for it. And I would recommend it for anybody. Say yes to that impulse. Say yes to life."

Daniel attends the annual Legacy Society meeting, saying, "It's a very uplifting experience to associate with this group who've given their careers to serving this community and to hear all the great things that are going on at the hospital."



Daniel with his grandchildren



"As an alumna and longtime employee of Upstate, leaving my legacy gift to something that has been such a large part of my life is a perfect fit."

Cynthia Cary Woods, Director,  
Oasis, HealthLink and Vitality Programs

## Upstate Foundation and Upstate Oasis partner

Oasis is a pioneering program in healthy aging that has helped thousands of older adults across the country satisfy their curiosity, take charge of their health and discover the joy of giving back to their community through volunteering. Oasis offers a variety of activities, exercise programs and learning opportunities for people over 50. Locally, Upstate Oasis partners with the Upstate Foundation, which serves as its fiscal agent. As a public charity, the Upstate Foundation supports Upstate Medical University, as well as the health and well-being of the Central New York community – just like Upstate Oasis.

Because of this partnership, legacy gifts to the Upstate Foundation can be designated for Upstate Oasis. A gift to the GOLD Endowment Fund #73773 would make a lasting impact on the lives of older adults in this community in perpetuity.

## A will and a trust?

A question I often hear from trust clients is, "Do I still need a will?"

Even if you have a trust, there are still some circumstances from which the need for a will may arise: (1) when you die, some assets are not in the trust or do not have beneficiaries, or (2) someone owes you money upon your death (e.g., you die in a car accident, and your estate wins a lawsuit. The money is paid to the estate, not to the trust.) Using that example, imagine that one of your children was in the accident with you. When the case settles, the child is disabled. Without a "pour-over" will, the inheritance from your estate could cause that child to lose the disability benefits. Instead, your pour-over will directs that any estate assets be moved to the trust, instead of being distributed outright to your heirs. The pour-over will allows you to take advantage of the protection planning that is built into the trust, which, among other protective provisions, safeguards your beneficiaries from losing disability benefits because they have inherited money.



John M. Murphy, Jr., Esq.  
Safe Harbor Wills and Trusts

## FUNDS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Upstate Foundation manages over 1,000 funds, the most of any charitable organization in the region, in support of patient care, education of health care providers, scientific research, and community health and well-being. Below are just a few of the Foundation's many funds.

**Dean M. Janice Nelson Nursing Scholarship Endowment #687** – To provide scholarships for nursing students.

**Nursing Alumni Association Founders Endowment #69301** – To provide scholarships for nursing students with a preference to students who are working while attending the Upstate College of Nursing.

**Michael Connolly Endowed Professorship in Lung Cancer Research #61900** – To support lung cancer research at Upstate Medical University.

**The Upstate Oasis GOLD Endowment #73773** – To support and sustain Oasis-related programming needs.

**Oasis Music and Education Endowment #69315** – To provide for expenses associated with maintaining a concert piano for use by Oasis.

**A New Beginning Fund #28625** – To support stem cell research for spinal cord injuries.

**The Healing Muse Fund #19990** – To support the Healing Muse and Kids in Art.

To find the fund – or create a new one – that matches your giving interests, contact the Foundation or visit [www.UpstateFoundation.org/fundsearch](http://www.UpstateFoundation.org/fundsearch)