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August 29, 2022 Vol. 23 Issue 37

Information for the Oklahoma Nursing & Health Care Professional



Kathy Smith DNP, MSN, RN, serves as Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Fast Track in Nursing University of Central Oklahoma Department of Nursing.

#### story by Van Mitchell, Contributing Writer

Kathy Smith DNP, MSN, RN taught in an accelerated nursing program for years and was a strong advocate to develop one for the University of Central Oklahoma's Nursing Department.

In Fall of 2020, those efforts paid off with the inaugural Fast Track nursing class.

The Fast Track in Nursing at the University of Central Oklahoma is for students who have earned a traditional bachelor's degree in another field and would like to change to the profession of nursing.

Upon successful completion, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing is awarded.

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing and master's degree program in nursing at the University of Central Oklahoma are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

"I had actually taught in an accelerated program before for many years every summer See UCO Page 2

## Mercy Mourns **Death of Iconic** Health Care Leader

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**Recruiter Showcase** 

On Page 5

www.oknursingtimes.com

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Sister Mary Roch Rocklage was the modern-day foundress of Mercy's health care system and a national health care leader



Sister Mary Roch Rocklage was the modern-day foundress of Mercy's health care system.

Sister Mary Roch Rocklage, a Sister of Mercy and an iconic health care leader, died Tuesday, Aug. 23, at 87, following a lengthy illness.

Sister Roch, as she was affectionally known, was the modern-day foundress of Mercy's health care system. Born Antoinette Marie Rocklage, Sister Roch devoted her life to helping others and bringing people together. She was known for her humble but tenacious leadership style - a blend of compassion, bold innovation and considering others before herself.

"We must have deferential regard for those we serve and create an environment of deep respect," Sister Roch said repeatedly through the years. "Compassion means staying in the moment with the individual or group and experiencing with them what they are going through."

Sister Roch's dedication to health care began in See ROCKLAGE Page 3

#### UCO Continued from Page 1

because UCO didn't have nursing classes in the summer," said Smith, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Fast Track in Nursing University of Central Oklahoma Department of Nursing. "I picked up extra classes during the summers for another college. I really saw value in the second-degree students. I had been asking UCO for a few years in trying to get this program going. It was definitely a labor of love."

Smith said the Fast Track in Nursing is a hybrid of both online and in-classroom work.

"They finish a lot faster versus our traditional program which is five semesters and takes two-and-a-half years to complete," she said. "The Fast Track students start in the fall, go to the spring semester with a May intersession, summer, and they do another fall semester and graduate. It is really in about 16 to 17 months."

Smith said the inaugural class started with 20 students and ended up with 14.

"Enrollment has grown, we doubled the second year, and this fall we are starting with 43 students," she said. "I am not surprised because I knew there was a need there for more of this in Oklahoma. I am thrilled at the outcome. They (students) love it. The feedback has been really good."

Chelsea White is a graduate of the inaugural Fast Track class. She previously graduated from UCO with a Bachelor's degree in Organizational Leadership.

White said nursing was something that was always on her mind.

"I have a younger sister who has special needs and spent a significant amount of time in the hospital shortly after she was born, just seeing the relationship that my family formed with the staff at the hospital, and the way the nurses cared for my family and my younger sister, it was something that just really resonated with me," she said. "It made me want to get involved in the field and be there to help other families."

White said she thought about pursuing a nursing degree while first attending UCO, but the timing wasn't right.

"Nursing is something that I always considered when I was doing my first degree, but I was working full-time and I didn't have the time commitment," she said. "It just wasn't the right time for me."

White worked for a variety of restaurants after graduation with her

first degree before deciding to go back to pursue her nursing dream.

"Whenever I went back to nursing school, I was working full-time and was very fortunate to be working for a family friend as a personal assistant, so I got to work my hours around my school commitment," she said. "It was a long 16-months, and it was tough, but it was doable. It was a good fit and exactly what I needed at the time that I was going back to school."

White said the UCO nursing faculty was very supportive of her efforts.

"They were very flexible with us, especially since we were the first cohort," she said. "We got to do a lot of collaborating with the staff. All the professors, including Kathy Smith, were wonderful working with us."

White started her nursing career as a hospice nurse with Excell Homecare & Hospice, Inc. in Oklahoma City. She recently accepted a new position with Excell as their new Assistant Director of Nursing, where she will help oversee building its hospice team.

White said her two degrees intertwine well for her new position.

"It was my long-term goal to be in a leadership role," she said. "There



Chelsea White is a graduate of the inaugural Fast Track class. She recently accepted a new position with Excell Homecare & Hospice, Inc. as their new Assistant Director of Nursing.

are similarities with my restaurant work and nursing. There is a lot of customer service and learning how to work with different types of people and meet their needs."

For more information about UCO's nursing programs visit:

https://www.uco.edu/cms/academics/ nursing/.

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1954, when she studied nursing under the Sisters of Mercy at St. Xavier University in Chicago, taking her first vows as a Sister of Mercy in 1957.

Sister Roch advocated for health care on a national level, serving as board chair of the American Hospital Association and a term as the board chair of the Catholic Health Association. She testified before Congress in 1990 on behalf of the Catholic Health Association in favor of a national health program and discussed health care with then-President George W. Bush in 2002. Her passion was health care access for all, no exceptions. In recognition of her exceptional leadership and service, Sister Roch was inducted into Modern Healthcare's Healthcare Hall of Fame and received numerous awards, including the American Hospital Association Distinguished Service Award, the Catholic Health Association Lifetime Achievement Award and the Missouri Hospital Association Career Achievement Award.

In her earlier years, she served various Mercy communities in nursing and leadership roles, including administrator of St. John's Mercy Medical Center, now Mercy Hospital St. Louis, and administrator of the Sisters of Mercy St. Louis Regional

Community.

Sister Roch was later appointed to lead hospitals across seven states. Under her leadership and vision, the Sisters of Mercy Health System, now Mercy, was formed in 1986, with Sister Roch serving as its first president and chief executive officer. She led in that role for 13 years before serving as chair of the Mercy board for the next 22 vears.

"This is a tremendous loss for Mercy and all who loved Sister Roch," said Steve Mackin, Mercy president and chief executive officer. "She inspired us through her visionary and principled leadership and was a constant source of joy to everyone around her."

One of Sister Roch's favorite inspirations was: "Live fully, love deeply, commit totally, enjoy life immensely."

Consistent with her lifelong commitment to medicine, Sister Roch chose to donate her body to science. A private service will be held for the Sisters of Mercy and immediate family. A public memorial service for friends, Mercy co-workers and others who wish to celebrate her life will be held Sept. 13 at 10 a.m. at the Von Gontard Conference Center at Mercy Hospital St. Louis.

In lieu of flowers, those who wish to donate in her honor may do so at give.mercyhealthfoundation.net/ SisterRoch.



ATTN: Military Retirees - Tricare for Life Education Seminar Attend our Education Event covering valuable information about Medicare, Medicaid, and Tricare for Life. Sponsored by the Del City Chamber of Commerce, September 21st, 11:30 – 1, Mid-Del Technology Center, 3921 SE 29th St, Del City, OK 73115.

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## **CAREERS IN NURSING:** NEVER ALONE - TRADITIONS HOME HEALTH & HOSPICE CARES

It's amazing how medicine has advanced to help people. But sometimes the body signals that life will end in a matter of time.

Traditions Home Health and Hospice can make that journey more comfortable, said Johna Paul, RN.

"They're strong nurses and hard workers," she said. "We have some really hard-working people here. They go above and beyond."

Nursing in general is a great occupation for women, she said. Different aspects of care and opportunities offer a lot for personal growth.

Paul began her career as a medical surgical nurse, followed by critical care work before venturing into public health and a post coronary care unit. Paul earned her degree at OSU/OKC more than 20 years ago and has dedicated her career to hospice work for nearly three years. She always knew the time would come when she would be a hospice nurse.

"You get that gratification that sometimes you do not get in another

#### photo by James Coburn, staff writer

setting," said Paul at the Oklahoma City office of Traditions Home Health and Hospice. Traditions Home Health and Hospice provides hospice care, home health and palliative care in Oklahoma. And Paul feels enriched by providing a holistic mission of care that patients and families value.

She has worked in admissions and as a case manager. Her initial visits with patients and their families are not always easy. Some things need to be explained to families during the admissions process. Patients are not necessarily ready to absorb all the information after a physician has recently explained they face a terminal illness.

"You just have to be gentle about things, but I also have to let them know," Paul continued. "Even though it's difficult, people do want to know the truth."

Hospice nurses have a great deal of compassion for people. Hospice is an environment where nurses shine with kindness because they care about families, Paul said.

A patient's survival rate comes with a six-month prognosis knowing there are people who will survive beyond or less than that time frame. Hospice improves the comfort levels of patients but does not intervene when death is inevitable.

"So, I try to get that across really well to make sure they understand we will work to make you comfortable," Paul said.

Whether the task involves equipment, supplies, or nursing aides providing a bath, a nurse's assessment is indispensable in understanding the need for care in declining health.

She meets with the interdisciplinary team every two weeks to discuss the needs of a patient and their loved ones. The team involves social workers, chaplains, medical directors, and supervisors. This interdisciplinary team is essential in making sure the patient is meeting standards that qualify for services.

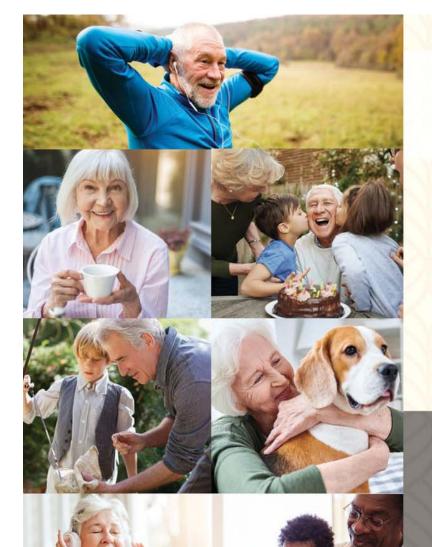
"That's why I say a nurse's

assessments are very important, so when a patient declines further, we can increase our visits," Paul explained. "It's nice to be able to start providing more care and see them more often. As they have more needs arise, that requires more attention and medications. Maybe we start introducing the comfort meds to be with them throughout this entire process to the end. I emphasize we will be the ones here - we want to be here - it's our job to take care of everything. That's what's nice. We do all of that to make sure they get what they need."

Nobody is alone. Death brings sadness. And nurses get the emotional support they need as well.

"I think you're going to have to be able to handle being in a room with someone who is dying, and that can be hard," Paul said. "You have got to be ready to take over that situation and help that

See PAUL Page 5



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Johna Paul, RN, has faith in Traditions Health Hospice's care, just like the families who offer their thanks.

#### PAUL Continued from Page 4

patient and help the family. So that sounds easy because you're caring for people, but honestly it's a stressful situation."

Chaplains do a great job in letting nurses know they can meet with them whenever there is a need, Paul said.

One of her patients was a woman struggling with anxiety due to lung cancer. Paul was invited to speak at her funeral service. A video showed photos of when the woman was younger, so beautiful and full of life.

"And then they showed pictures of when we were taking care of her," said Paul, who will never forget. She still stays in touch with the woman's mother.

Recently she was helping to assess another patient's cognitive level. It touched Paul's heart when seeing the look in the woman's eyes.

"I've got to be honest. I think I'm pretty tough, but when you have quite a few of them pass, and that does happen, it is a bit of a struggle," she said. "I would lean on them for sure. We have our social workers as well. I think they are all there for us."

Families respond by letting Paul home-health

know the care she provides does make a difference in a difficult situation.

Families express gratitude even when their feelings of grief leave them feeling vulnerable.

"At least we're there for them," Paul said. "And they really come to appreciate it."

Families are not left alone after the death of their loved one. They know they can continue to contact a chaplain or social worker whenever there is a need.

"We have chaplains that do services to help with that for some people," said Paul, a mother of five children.

Nurses must also care for themselves and gets a lot of love from her family.

"I get some down time. I've kind of learned to look for little things. If I get to sit on the back porch for a while by myself, I feel I'm doing pretty good."

She and her husband took their boat to the lake recently.

"We had the kids with us, but I did take some time to make sure I just chilled for a little bit," she said.

For more information on Traditions Home Health and Hospice visit:

https://www.traditionshealth.com/ home-health



#### (AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2022 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

## **RSU Building Legacy of Compassionate Nurses**

The RSU Department of Health Sciences offers programs in nursing and pre-allied health fields. Nursing programs include the Traditional BSN in nursing, leading to RN licensure; the RN2BSN online program which allows registered nurses with an associate degree to complete a bachelor's degree; and the bridge to Traditional BSN entry for LPNs or paramedics to earn their bachelor's degree. Allied Health sciences options include pre-athletic training, prephysical therapy and pre-occupational therapy. The Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program at RSU now offers a concentration in Healthcare Management.

With a history of over 40 years of academic excellence, RSU's nursing program provides academic rigor and a reputation that gives RSU graduates an edge in the competitive job market. Upon graduation, RSU nursing graduate NCLEX pass rates exceed the state and national average. Approximately 95% of students report having obtained an RN position before graduation. These outcomes are credited to a quality curriculum, caring and dedicated faculty. RSU's nursing faculty have more than 130 years of experience in both academic teaching and practical experience. Several low and highfidelity laboratories are utilized to provide hands-on learning so that students are well-prepared to deliver safe, high-quality nursing care in a variety of settings.

Students interested in attending medical school, complete their undergraduate studies in medical/ molecular biology. RSU's biology program has seen more than 150 students move on to professional schools pursuing medical and healthcare careers.

RSU consistently earns national recognition for affordability, both for traditional classes and its online programs. The university is consistently recognized for having one of the region's lowest student debt load with nearly half of its graduating class earning a diploma without any student loan assistance.

The Traditional BSN and the RN2BSN online programs received full accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) last year. Being the only public residential university in the metropolitan Tulsa area, RSU gives



students a traditional college experience. With the university's proximity to Tulsa, RSU is strategically positioned geographically, fiscally and reputationally to be Oklahoma's first choice in BSN education.

RSU is committed to building a

legacy of compassionate and virtuous nurses who advocate for their patients and serve the community for years to come. For more information about RSU's nursing programs or to schedule a campus tour, visit www.rsu.edu/ nursing or call 918-343-7631.

<image>

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\*Length of time required to complete degree will vary depending upon student's transfer credits.

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## Eastern Oklahoma State College nursing graduates regularly exceed national NCLEX



#### EASTERN OKLAHOMA STATE COLLEGE

Eastern Oklahoma State College's nursing program is often ranked one of the top nursing schools in the state based on the percentage of graduates who pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). The NCLEX is used by all state boards of nursing across the nation to assess a student's competency and graduates must pass the exam to become licensed registered nurses.

Gina Bullock, director of the program consistently sees high pass NCLEX-RN pass rates that are well above the state and national averages. Most recently, Eastern's graduates achieved a 97.5 percent pass rate compared to the national pass rate of 88.18 percent for firsttime test takers at the associate degree level.

"Our graduates' reliably high NCLEX scores speak volumes for the quality of nursing education provided at Eastern. This achievement is a direct reflection of our faculty's commitment to train and prepare the next generation of registered nurses and our students' dedication to providing quality care for patients," Bullock said. "We are extremely proud of our graduates and the impact their skills and knowledge will make in the communities they serve."

Eastern's nursing program offers an associate of applied science degree for students to become Eastern's Nursing Division, said registered nurses. The program has



tracks a basic licensure two program and a LPN/EMTP transition program for students who eosc.edu/nursing have been practicing as a licensed 918-465-1794.

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August 29, 2022

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## NCI-sponsored clinical trial exploring use of radiation and immunotherapy in lung cancer patients

Raid Aljumaily, M.D., hematologistoncologist at OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, is serving as an investigator for a National Cancer Institute-sponsored clinical trial for stage II and III non small cell lung cancer patients. Aljumaily is also an associate professor in the section of Hematology-Oncology in the department of Medicine at the OU College of Medicine at the OU Health Sciences Center.

The study explores the safety

and effectiveness of radiation therapy followed by the immunotherapy medicine, atezolizumab, in treating the lung cancer patients. A percentage of patients diagnosed with lung cancer are not candidates for surgical treatment or concurrent chemoradiation due to comorbidities including COPD, heart disease, stroke or diabetes. To date, treatment options for them have been extremely limited with no data to define the best treatment approach, according to Aljumaily.

The clinical trial, which is





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Raid Aljumaily, M.D., hematologist-oncologist at OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

approximately halfway through enrollment, is investigating a new approach to treat these patients with hypofractionated radiation therapy, followed by atezolizumab. Hypofractionated radiation therapy involves dividing the total dose of radiation into large doses which are administered once daily. The radiation is administered over a shorter time period which is more convenient with no known decrease in efficacy.

Cancer cells 'cover' themselves in sheets of protein which makes them difficult to target. Atezolizumab is an immunotherapy drug that works by removing the shell that covers the cancer cells, stimulating the body's immune system to find and remove them, and radiation treatment helps to improve that process. In the clinical trial, patients undergo hypofractionated radiation therapy five days per week for three weeks, followed by atezolizumad IV infusion repeated every 21 days up to 12 months, with a maximum of 17 cycles.

Pending results, the clinical trial could change the approach to lung cancer treatment. "Based on the results of this study, we may run an even larger study to broaden the patient population we target," said Aljumaily. "Our hypothesis is that this combination of hypofractionated radiation followed by immunotherapy or chemotherapy will be well tolerated and will improve outcomes for this patient population, potentially leading to a new standard of care."

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## 45TH ANNUAL SENIOR DAY

## Wednesday September 21

Free admission for Seniors 55+ (proof of age required)

### SCHEDULE OF ACTI

EXHIBITORS, PHOTO BOOTH & FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS	10 a.m 7 p.m.	-
DOOR PRIZES	Session 1: 10 a.m 1 p. Session 2: 1 - 3:30 p.m. Session 3: 3:30 - 6 p.m.	
OUT & ABOUT: SPACE WALK	10 a.m 2 p.m.	
таі сні	10:05 a.m. & 4:10 p.m.	
JUMPIN JUPITER	10:25 a.m.	
THE OKIE STOMPERS	10:40 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.	
STARDUST	11:10 a.m.	
PUPPIES OF PENZANCE	11:40 a.m.	
YMCA COMMUNITY LINE DANCERS	12:05 p.m.	
LOVE YOU TO THE MOON AND BACK COUPLES CHALLENGE	12.35 p.m.	
TO INFINITY AND BEYOND	1:05 p.m.	
IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE	1:35 p.m.	
REACH FOR THE STARS GAME SHOW	2:30 p.m.	
TWINKLE TOES		
PROFESSOR PULSAR'S TRIVIA	4:55 p.m.	
ELVIS VISITS THE MOON	5:30 p.m.	
OH MY STARS!	6 p.m. YOUR FAIR	2
ASTRONAUT'S LINE DANCE LESSONS	6:10 p.m.	4
SHAWN KLUSH - TRIBUTE TO ELVIS Chickasaw Country Entertainment Stage	7:30 p.m.	V
For more detailed information visit the Senior Day page on the Oklahoma State Fair website	COKILAHON STATE FA 2022	1A I R

HEMOOR

#### Situation Update: COVID-19

1		
New Cases 7 Day Average	1,140	
New Cases Week of 8/14/22 - 8/20/22	7,981 16,238 1,159,474 16,644	
Active Cases		
Total Cases		
CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths		
Acute Care OSDH Licensed	Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations	
Facilities/Location**	Cases (ICU)	
Region 1 (NW)	10 (0)	
Region 2 (NE)	24 (4)	
Region 3 (SW)	29 (5)	
Region 4 (EC)	19 (5)	
Region 5 (SE)	5 (0)	
Region 6 (Central)	29 (5)	
Region 7 (Tulsa)	109 (46)	
Region 8 (OKC)	104 (16)	
Total	329* (81)	
Other Types of Facilities		
Focus Facilities	7 (1)	
Rehabilitation Facilities	1 (0)	
Tribal Facilities	5 (1)	
Other Facilities Total	13 (2)	

\*Includes 27 hospitalizations in pediatric beds.

\*\*Focus, Rehabilitation and Tribal Facilities numbers are not assigned to a specific region as their patient populations reside across the state. Information provided through survey of Oklahoma hospitals as reported to HHS as of the time of this report. Response rate affects data. Facilities may update previously reported information as necessary.

Data Source: Acute Disease Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health.

\*As of 2022-08-25 at 7:00 a.m.

#### 2022 ONA ANNUAL CONVENTION



### **REGISTER NOW!**

Connect with Oklahoma nurses and organizations at the 2022 ONA Annual Convention: Power of Nursing; Educate, Innovate, Celebrate! The convention will take place on September 28 and 29 in Tulsa, OK.

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#### **RN to BS in Nursing** Finish in as little as 10 months

Finish in as little as 10 months As low as \$8,500



## Nerve Renewal

# Do You Suffer With Neuropathy?

405-422-9518

#### **Welcome To A New Medical Therapy Covered By Medicare**

Do you have any of these Neuropathy effects?

- Burning pain
- Leg cramps and spasms
- Pain with walking
- Muscle weakness
- Sensitivity to touch
- Loss of balance or coordination
- Numbness, prickling, or tingling
- Sleep loss from leg pain
- Post surgical pain
- Chronic intractable pain

Call to learn even more

Neuropathy has many different causes. The most common metabolic cause are patients with diabetes. Nearly 60% of all patients with diabetes develop neuropathy. This can commonly present as pain, numbness, swelling, burning, tingling, sleepless nights, balance issues.

Other causes of Neuropathy include:

- Chemotherapy
- Alcoholism
- Drugs/prescription medications
- Battlefield toxins, industrial toxins
- Vitamin deficiencies
- Acute physical Trauma
- Post-surgical pain





Over 80% of patients report a significant reduction in pain.

Treatments are covered by most insurance plans, including Medicare and VA programs.

No opioid drowsiness, addiction concerns, or side effects.

Enjoy better sleep due to reduced pain and recover more quickly from knee and hip surgery.

Patients reduce chemotherapy side effects and are better able to complete the entire treatment cycle.

Patients don't feel trapped by pain. They are able to move and get exercise, leading to healthier outcomes for all other medical treatments.