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July 24, 2023

Information for the Oklahoma Nursing & Health Care Professional

www.oknursingtimes.com

Vol. 24 Issue 29



Christina Mason, RN, takes a compassionate yet methodical approach to being the robotic coordinator in the OR of OU Health Edmond Medical Center.

Story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Christina Mason felt a calling to enter the nursing field during high school. She wanted to be a nurse and began working as a CNA fresh out of high school in Oklahoma City.

"I actually worked here at the Edmond hospital," said Mason, RN, OU Health Edmond Medical Center.

Today, she serves as an operating room (OR) nurse as the surgical coordinator for the robotic

division. Mason has held the OR position for more than two years.

As the robotic coordinator, she is with the team performing a lot of general cases involving urology,

See MASON Page 2

### **MASON Continued from Page 1**

gastric bypasses for weight loss, hernia repairs, gallbladder removal, and orthopedics. But she can circulate for almost any surgery.

She worked with a physician's assistant there as a nurse aide more than 20 years ago at the Autumn Life Behavioral Center. She said that at the time, she had a false sense of nursing, based on her only experience as a CNA.

She changed her major to premed and got married and started a family. But she began to learn how expansive a nursing career is with its myriad of opportunities.

"After my husband had passed, I thought, 'I already had a bachelor's degree in biology. Let's go back to my nursing roots," Mason said. "As far as going into nursing, I really loved the patient care aspect."

Mason completed a fast-track program at Oklahoma Community College for her associate degree. She already had a Bachelor of Science in Biology degree. She would earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Her entire six-year nursing career

has been at OU Health Edmond Medical Center working in med/ surg for nearly a year, and preadmission testing for more than two years before transferring to the OR.

"I was fortunate that our director gave me a chance to come into the OR," she said.

She felt more comfortable working in the OR where it is a completely different type of nursing than med-surg. She likes focusing on one patient at a time. Med/surg included having multiple patients at once, Mason said. If she is not in surgery, she is helping other nurses and scrub techs.

"In the OR your focus is just that one patient and their safety," she continued.

She loves being part of a close-knit family member of the surgery team. The team includes an anesthesiologist, surgeon, nurse, and a scrub tech. The more they work together, the better they are familiar with what each other needs. They anticipate and communicate, Mason

"That is the best thing about the OR — the team and the smoothness of the surgeries," she said.

Mason focuses compassionate with each patient. She gives 100 percent of her skilled effort. Being a nurse suits her A-type personality, she added.

"If you are well organized and you are very particular in your work, cases are much smoother. It makes patients safer if you're prepared, and as an A-type personality, preparation is the difference."

Her routine first involves evaluating patients by their chart before interviewing them prior to their surgery.

"We make sure everything is accurate. We are the patient's advocate for the surgery," Mason said. "So, after we bring them into the room, we help with anesthesia for going to sleep. So usually, the nurse is the last person the patient sees as well as the anesthesiologist, because we're usually holding an oxygen mask and they're looking right at us."

Part of the system of care involves contacting the family with an update within 45 minutes of when surgery begins. Families are updated every 90 minutes during longer surgeries, Mason said.

There have been moments she will never forget. In thinking back on experiences she has witnessed in various capacities, she recalled being deeply touched when a patient took his last breath during an organ recovery surgery.

"He was unconscious during all of this but as he took his last breath, he had this beautiful smile on his face of just pure joy. This man was unconscious before that. And it just made me realize that he had seen Jesus as he was passing," she said. "And to me, that touched me so deeply to know this man was going to a better place, even though he was in surgery for a recovery. It just touched my heart."

She embraces life. She and her 12-year-old daughter enjoy taking their dog for a walk, hiking, riding bicycles, paddleboarding and enjoying being outdoors.

She also has a 22-year-old son and a stepson, age 26.



For more information about OU Health Edmond Medical Center, visit https://www.ouhealth.com/careers/.



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Joey Gregory, APRN, and Macy Dean, EMT presented with Heartsaver Award.

Lives are saved within our hospitals every day. Our caregivers report to work knowing patients and their families are counting on us. But today, we'd like to share an example of heroism that took place outside of our hospital walls.

Joey Gregory, APRN and Macy Dean, EMT have provided emergency care at INTEGRIS Health Grove Hospital for several years and are an integral part of our team.

Recently, these caregivers witnessed a church member in cardiac arrest and without hesitation, jumped into action. They immediately began CPR and communicated critical information to emergency responders

once they arrived.

Bill Wehlage survived the episode and is thankful Gregory and Dean were at church that day. "I may not be here today if it weren't for their swift actions and attention to detail."

Earlier this month, Gregory and Dean were presented with the American Heart Association Heartsaver Hero Award, which is given to people who perform the heroic act of CPR.

State Representative Josh West presented Gregory and Dean with a citation from the Oklahoma House of Representatives in appreciation of their lifesaving measures and remarkable actions.

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# CAREERS IN NURSING:

# PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES - ER NURSE ENJOYS VARIETY AND TEAM SPIRIT

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

memory that touched the life of Lauren Funke, RN, Oklahoma ER & Hospital, located in Oklahoma

Emergency care was at zenith proportions during one of the biggest state-wide COVID surges.

"We were seeing quite a few critical patients where we would have to eventually intubate them and put them on a ventilator," Funke said.

The hospital does not have an intensive care unit. So, the intubations were necessary to stabilize and transfer patients to hospitals with an ICU.

As was the case with many hospitals, Oklahoma ER & Hospital had a patient demand exceeding its capacity, so hospitals were on a constant search for available beds in other states.

"There was one person who almost died here. That person was intubated and sent far away out of

The fall of 2021 brings back a state, and then that person ended up coming back, walked in our emergency room, looked healthy as a horse several months later and thanked everybody for saving his life," Funke recalled.

> The profession needs nurses who are empathetic, caring, and want to help after everything the nursing industry went through as a profession during the pandemic.

> "It's a very rewarding career. I would not want to do anything else with my life," she said.

> Her impetus to become a nurse occurred later in life. Funke has a previous career in music with a terminal degree in performance as a flute player from Michigan State University. She began questioning whether she was on the right path and felt a strong pull into nursing.

> "I felt it would fit my personality well, compared to what I had been doing," Funke said. "Maybe there was some burn-out.



So, I finished my terminal degree the same year I started nursing school."

Funke graduated from nursing school in 2015 from OSU/OKC. Her studies prepared her well with patient safety practices as a nurse, she said.

"It prepared me for the nursing board exam very well," she said. "I thought my teachers were great. It was a good program especially considering it was an associate degree."

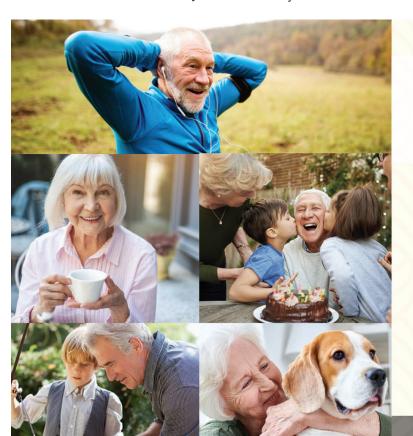
Soon after graduating nursing school Funke went directly to a hospital ICU for two years. The opportunity taught her a lot about critical thinking skills.

challenging transition going from an ICU to ER nursing. Both are considered to be critical care. But Funke said the ER requires a nurse to think a little faster on their feet. Nurses need to be more flexible, she said, and roll with the punches a little bit more. ER nurses must be good at most nursing skills, she added.

"That was a switch for me," she said. "But I do think you have to have very strong critical thinking skills."

Funke began serving part-time at Oklahoma ER & Hospital in the fall of 2020 soon after the COVID

continued next page



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Lauren Funke, RN, Oklahoma ER & Hospital, says being a nurse is an enriching career and invites others to consider entering the profession.

# FUNKE Continued from Page 4

pandemic began. Within a year she commenced full-time because she liked working there so much. Funke said she found Oklahoma ER & Hospital to be unique. The doctors, nurses, and clinical staff work well together with a mutual level of respect, she said.

"I think it's unique because it's physician owned. So, the doctors make a lot of decisions on how the place runs," she said.

Patient flow fluctuates with an average of about 35 patients a day. Typically, an ER patient will stay in observation status for 24 hours or less, Funke said. Patients needing surgery are transferred to another hospital.

The average person generally is admitted with an elevated blood pressure due the stress of coming to an ER unexpectedly.

"People are sometimes having the worst day of their lives, not always

but it's kind of a stressful place to be when you just walk in off the street and don't know anybody. And you're seeking help," she explained. "It's not a typical doctor's appointment."

Funke helps to calm her patients' fears by sitting next to them at eye level during her triage assessment. She might say, "We're going to take care of you." She has seen those words provide comfort.

Diagnostics are key in the ER as some patients enter emergency care without a previous diagnosis. They present a new health-related emergency.

"We're trying to figure out what's wrong and stabilizing the patient is the goal," she said.

After the adrenaline rush of her ER shift, Funke settles down with her husband to spend time with their 4-year-old son and 6-year-old daughter.

"They keep me extremely busy. And then I really enjoy cooking and just being outside when it's not 100 degrees," she said.

For more information about the Oklahoma ER and Hospital, visit https://okerhospital.com/careers/



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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2023 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

# OK Wesleyan Molding Healthcare Headers

Healthcare is changing and nurses are at the forefront.

That's why Oklahoma Wesleyan University is proud to offer a doctoral program designed to help create tomorrow's nursing leaders today.

Rosa Ketchum, DNP, RN is an associate professor and director of the school of nursing's new DNP program.

"One thing that is exciting is just the role of the DNP," Ketchum said. "It's becoming more evident in view of the pandemic that nurses have a very important voice in health care and they are a huge piece of the puzzle and their experience and value and perspective on health care is needed to help address practice and policy development."

Designed for working adults, this program offers two doctoral learning pathways: a Post Master's DNP and the BSN to DNP.

The **Post Master's Pathway** enables Advanced Practice Nurses, Nurse Informaticists, Nurse Educators, Nurse Administrators, and other master's prepared specialty nurses to obtain a DNP in Executive Leadership. Additionally, BSN-prepared nurses with a master's degree in a related field may also enter this pathway.

Similarly, the **BSN to DNP Pathway** allows bachelor's prepared nurses to earn their doctorate of nursing practice.

Within this pathway, students choose a focus in either Nursing Administration or Nursing Education. OKWU has designed this curriculum for experienced nurses seeking terminal degrees in practice-focused areas. Moreover, OKWU prepares nurses to function as an advocate and leader, improving healthcare and patient outcomes through innovation and involvement in practice and policy.

Most importantly,
both pathways provide
graduates with advanced
practice skills to serve as
providers and organizers of the
healthcare delivery process, or as faculty
members in a nursing education program.

Translating that bedside knowledge and pairing it with evidence-based practice is the focus of the DNP program.

Ketchum completed her DNP in 2019.

"I wanted a degree that focused on patient outcomes. That's where my nursing heart is, helping the patient whether it's one patient or a population, I wanted to impact patient outcomes." Ketchum said.

"That is part of the focus of the DNP and I wanted a piece of that. I wanted to be better able to do that whether it be through teaching students or through direct patient care."

**OKWU's Doctor of Nursing Practice in Executive Leadership program** is designed to equip nurses to serve at the highest level of nursing practice. The DNP program develops nurse leaders who improve patient outcomes and health systems by translating research into practice, all from a Christian worldview.

A new group of students begins each semester, three times a year. While most programs only accept advanced practice nurses, Oklahoma Wesleyan accepts any kind of master's prepared nurse.

"Their ideas and perspectives may be a little broader because we have nurses that are coming from an administration background,



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or education background or advanced practice background so we're getting to see them all together," she said. "The perspective is broader than some programs but they all want to impact health care and they all want to make our health care system a little bit better."

Delivery of the **program is 100-percent online** with no required visits to campus. Classes are delivered one at a time, eight weeks in length.

"Our program is designed for the working adult and that's better facilitated because they are only taking one class at a time. For eight weeks they can focus on one class at a time and I think that helps them be able to balance life, work, family, school better than if they were in a more traditional semester setting," Ketchum said.

The BSN to DNP program is 54 credit hours with anticipation of three years to graduate. The post-master's DNP is 36 hours allowing for completion in roughly two years.

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# Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health Ranks in Top 50 Best Children's Hospitals in the Nation for Pediatric Cardiology, Pediatric Gastroenterology

Oklahoma Children's Hospital ranking of Top 50 Best Children's OU Health has earned U.S. News and World Report's ranking of Top 50 Best Children's Hospitals in the nation for Pediatric Cardiology & Heart Surgery and Pediatric Gastroenterology & GI Surgery. This is the second consecutive year that the hospital has earned this ranking in these areas.

Now in its 17th year, the publication's annual ranking system is designed to assist families and their physicians in making informed decisions about where to receive care for challenging health conditions. The rankings are measured by key areas including surgical outcomes, quality, patient experience and peer reputation.

"We are incredibly proud of the recognition that Oklahoma Children's Hospital has received by U.S. News and World Report's

Hospitals in the nation for our specialties in Pediatric Cardiology & Heart Surgery and Pediatric Gastroenterology & GI Surgery," said Richard Lofgren, M.D., MPH, OU Health president and CEO. "This year's rankings reflect the commitment our team has in providing Oklahomans with such a high level of care that they truly do not need to leave the state."

Both programs were able to demonstrate improved rankings because of continued focus on clinical outcomes and continued investments by OU Health into these programs. OU Health created a new hybrid pediatric catheterization lab, complete with ambient lighting, as well as added two new procedure rooms outfitted for pediatric endoscopies. In addition, the pediatric gastroenterology team dedicated resources to grow its



at OU Medical Center

parent and family support group. Leaders of these programs include Harold Burkhart, M.D., cardiothoracic surgery; Arshid Mir, M.D., pediatric cardiology; Muhammad Altaf, M.D., pediatric gastroenterology; and Catherine Hunter, M.D., pediatric surgery.

"These physician leaders have built incredible programs," said Stephanie DeLeon, M.D., associate chief medical officer for children's services. "They are each nationally respected in their fields, and they have focused on bringing lifesaving treatments to Oklahoma's children while simultaneously ensuring

### FACEBOOK FRIENDS

Award Winners Are



Gina Crawford, DNP, APRN-CNP, FNP, CNE, Dean of Oklahoma City University Kramer School of Nursing.

AONP board member Toni Pratt-Reid had the honor of presenting awards to two outstanding leaders in nursing!

Gina Crawford, DNP, APRN-CNP, FNP, CNE, took home the NP Oklahoma State Award for Excellence for her accomplishments as Dean of Oklahoma City University Kramer School of Nursing.

Trish Farmer, DNP, APRN-CNP, received the Advocate State Award for Excellence, honoring her many years of service in AONP and her leadership at Pediatric Practitioners of

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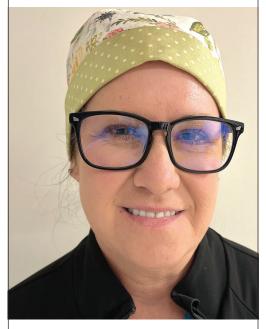
Silana Richardson, RN

"It's like what Will Rogers said, 'If you don't like it. Just wait a second.' It changes at the drop of a hat."



Chris Bolling, RN

"There is a variety of weather. If you don't like it one day, you'll like it the next."



Mendi Black, RN





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# Hospice Patient Scratches Hot Air Balloon Off Bucket List



Kelli and Paige, volunteer with INTEGRIS Health share a moment.

Like millions of other Americans, Kelli is living her life and simultaneously battling a chronic disease. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis is a progressive disease affecting nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, eventually rendering many people to a wheelchair. While this presents many limitations in a person's ability to engage in recreational activities, a volunteer with the INTEGRIS Health Hospice named Paige made it her objective to see one of Kelli's dreams fulfilled.

Paige recently shared, "A little over a year ago, I was given the greatest gift of meeting my beloved friend Kelli and her family. I had just begun as a hospice volunteer with INTEGRIS Health and was told by the coordinator that she had paired me with someone very special. The moment I walked into Kelli's home, I was welcomed with her genuine smile that lit up the room."

During one of Paige's first visits, she learned of Kelli's deep desire to enjoy a ride in a hot air balloon. With the physical restrictions of her disease, Kelli never thought she would be able to take that dream flight in the Oklahoma sky. However, Paige was up for the challenge. Focused on her goal, Paige was able to find a company that would accommodate Kelli's medical needs and wheelchair accessibility. After six months and multiple failed attempts due to weather, fantasy became reality.

Kelli and Paige met the wonderful people from the balloon company and watched as they prepared the ride and filled the balloon with hot air. Soon, the time came for Kelli and Paige to enter the basket, ascend into the skies, and experience a beautiful, peaceful sunset balloon ride - smiling the entire



time.

A.L.S. is a disease for which there is no cure, but volunteers like Paige make dreams come true regardless of the limitations. She is the epitome of a volunteer who goes above and beyond (quite literally!) to provide experiences of joy to our patients with chronic

INTEGRIS Health shared this story in light of National Chronic Disease Day. To learn more about A.L.S. and ways to join the fight, please visit https://www.als.org/.



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