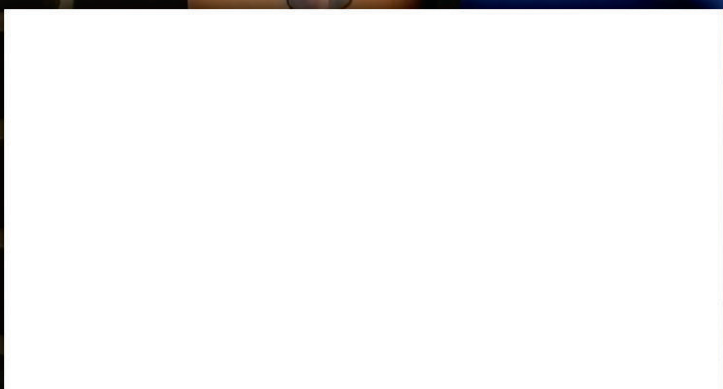


The Heart of Community Hospital

A Nurse's Journey to Compassionate Care

Read Aprille's story on page 2



Aprille Loney, RN, Preoperative Nurse - Community Hospital South

RN brings 11 years of experience and was born in Dallas Texas and moved to Choctaw

by Vickie Jenkins, staff writer

Community Hospital South campus is a full-service, outpatient day surgery hospital serving Southwest Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and the surrounding communities including Blanchard, Moore, Newcastle, Norman, Mustang and Tuttle. Here, you will be served high-quality care by the outstanding doctors and nurses. One exceptional nurse, Aprille Loney, RN brings 11 years of experience and has been with Community Hospital for two years.

Aprille was born in Dallas Texas and moved to Choctaw, Oklahoma when she was four years old. "I can still remember how I wanted to be a teacher when I was a little girl," Aprille

recalls. "I thought my teacher was really cool," she added. "As I got older, I decided I wanted to be a nurse. After graduating high school, I knew nursing would be my career. I graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma," Aprille said.

"My first job as a nurse was at Norman Regional where I worked in the step-down units. I enjoyed my job there, but after working in the same environment for nine years, I felt ready for a change. When I joined Community Hospital, I could tell its smaller size suited me well. Despite being a smaller facility we stay incredibly busy, which keeps the pace just right for me.

We all get along well and

have formed a great team. The teamwork makes a great significant difference in our daily work life," Aprille said.

Asking why she wanted to be a nurse, Aprille replied, "It makes me feel good knowing that I am helping people. I know it is a rewarding job." Aprille went on to describe some of her daily duties. "I work in preoperative getting the patients ready for their surgery. This includes paper work, vitals, getting their history and background, starting their IV, making sure everything is ready for surgery. All of us nurses rotate our duties, whether it is preparing another patient for surgery or checking on the patient in recovery. We just want to take care of our patients the best way we can," she explained.

When discussing the qualities a nurse should possess, Aprille emphasized the importance of compassion and the ability to prioritize tasks effectively for their patients. She said, "Compassion allows a

nurse to connect with patients on a personal level, providing comfort and understanding during their most vulnerable times. Prioritization ensures that the most critical needs are addressed promptly, which can make a significant difference in patient outcome."

Aprille finds the most challenging part of being a nurse is when she becomes too deeply involved with her patients and the day's work. This can sometimes become overwhelming and emotional. Despite her years of experience, there are moments when she still feels like she still doesn't know enough. However, it is these times that she reminds herself to stay strong and embrace the opportunity to continue learning and growing in her profession.

When asked what advice she would give to someone entering the medical field, Aprille replied, "If you're considering nursing as a career, you need to stick with it. Don't

Continued next page



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Aprille Loney, RN is a preoperative nurse at Community Hospital South, located at 3100 SW 89th in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. As a full service, outpatient day surgery hospital, you will be treated with the utmost care by professional doctors and nurses.

LONEY

Continued from Page 2

get discouraged and never give up. Be persistent and don't be afraid to ask questions. Study hard and learn as much as you can."

One of the most important lessons that Aprille learned as a nurse is that people should never take their health for granted and should always be thankful for what they have. Reflecting on this, she said, "I've seen how fragile health can be and how quickly things can change. It's a reminder to appreciate the good health we have while we have it." She added, "I am truly thankful

that I can be a nurse and help patients on their journey to recovery. It is a privilege to care for them and support them as they regain their health." This perspective has not only shaped her approach to nursing but also reinforced her commitment to providing compassionate and dedicated care to every patient she encounters.

Aprille is married and has three daughters. She enjoys spending quality time with her family, attending her two youngest daughters' soccer games, and spending time outdoors.

For more information about Community Hospital South visit <https://www.communityhospitalokc.com>.

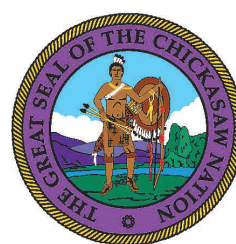
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Excellence in Rehabilitation Care

by Vickie Jenkins, staff writer

Bellevue Health and Rehabilitation Center provides an exceptional patient experience that combines expert skilled nursing and long-term care with comfort and elegance. Their friendly staff is there to assist with all of your healthcare needs. As an Admissions Nurse, you will be welcomed by an enthusiastic and cheerful Morgan Henry, LPN.

"Bellevue is a 150-bed facility staffed by a team of highly qualified nurses, CMA's and therapists. We treat each of our residents with the utmost respect, caring for them as if they were members of our own family," Morgan said. "I admit and assess the residents as they come in," said Morgan. Currently, we have about 140 residents. Those coming from surgery, go to skilled nursing for a stay of 2 weeks to 30 days and we also offer long-term care," she added.

After graduating high school in Decatur, Texas, Morgan began her healthcare career in Weatherford, Texas. Over the years, she worked as a CNA and phlebotomist in several skilled nursing facilities. Her compassion shone through as she

loved working with the residents and knew that caring for others was definitely her calling. She continued to pursue a career in the medical field and has been a nurse for five years. Moving to Oklahoma a year ago, she has been with Bellevue Health and Rehabilitation since then. "I enjoy working here. Everyone here is so friendly. We are like one big happy family. This is our home away from home," she said.

"My mother always told me that I had a kind heart and loved caring for others. When I was five years old and in kindergarten, we had to go to the front of the class and share what we wanted to be when we grew up. I wanted to be a nurse. My grandmother made me some white scrubs with little hearts on them. I wore a toy stethoscope around my neck, with a red nurses bag in my hand. I was so proud of that outfit and she took my picture. Now, I have that picture framed, hanging next to my nursing degree," she said with a smile.

When asking what qualities make a good nurse, Morgan replied, "I believe the most important thing is teamwork. We need to work together and it really does take a village to



Morgan Henry, LPN, is the Admissions Nurse at Bellevue Health and Rehabilitation Center, located at 6500 N. Portland in Oklahoma City. Whether it is skilled nursing or long-term care that you or your loved one are looking for, you can be assured you will be treated with the utmost care.

get things done. A nurse needs to be compassionate and genuine, with compassion straight from the heart. I've always had that deep desire to help others."

Morgan says her strength in nursing comes from getting along with others at an early age. When I was ten years old, I had grown up in Waco, Texas. I was involved in most of the sports that were offered. Then, my family moved to a small town. It was quite the shock. We didn't live on a farm but we had seven acres of land and had livestock. I was in FFA and the 4-H club. This is when I started showing and judging livestock. I always took the lead in things, striving to do better each time. As time went on, I remained very active with livestock and sports, playing volleyball, soccer, running track and cross-country. Because of my upbringing, I always wanted to go further and reach higher. I still feel that way. I want to do my best and then some," she explained.

When asked what advice she would give to someone pursuing a career in nursing, Morgan said, "It will be one of the best things you could do. There are so many opportunities. My advice would be to stay positive, never give up, believe in yourself and strive to do better at whatever you set out to do. Keep persevering," Morgan commented.

When not working, Morgan enjoys spending time with her seven-year-old daughter, and eleven-year-old son. "We enjoy as many activities as we can together. I also like reading and watching a good TV show every now and then. As far as sports go, I still run at least five miles three times a week. Running keeps my mind clear and gets me energized. Sometimes, I run before work and I am ready for the day."

For more information about Bellevue Health and Rehabilitation visit <https://bellevueokc.com>

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Ensuring The Best in Life

Nurse Leader Honored With Patriotic Award

by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Protecting the needs of humanity has always been a hallmark for Monica Kraft, RN, director of nursing for pediatric oncology, and the interim cardiac ICU nursing director at Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health.

Her care as a nurse was recently honored with a Patriotic Award.

She was nominated for the award by Kyler Wilson, RN. The Employee Support of the Guard and Reserve is the organization that bestows the award. Kraft has supported Wilson so he can fulfill his own patriotic military duties.

"He is in the National Guard, and I am supportive of him when he needs to take time off to go do his drills, to go on deployment, that type of thing," Kraft said.

As a 20-year veteran of the US Navy, Kraft understands the importance of supporting the hospital's military members. She has made sure Wilson is able to provide his active-duty military service.

"This award makes me recognize how important it is for us to support our service members, whether they're active duty or in the reserves or retired," she continued. "This award is very important in honoring our service members," Kraft said. "I feel very honored that Kyler recognized me for this award, because he could have recognized somebody else, and he thought to recognize me, because he feels that I go above and beyond for him. So, I just want to pass that on, and make sure that our service members feel honored and respected."

She has been with OU Health for 22 years. Kraft did her prerequisites at Rose State College, and then transitioned to OU College of Nursing for her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. She earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree from University of Phoenix in Leadership. She is also working toward her Doctor of Nursing Practice.

In 2000 she retired from full-time active duty in the US Navy. Kraft had already done some support work for the Red Cross during the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building and later the Moore tornado in 1999.

"So, I worked with some nurses.



Monica Kraft, RN, director of nursing for pediatric oncology and interim cardiac ICU nursing director at Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health has been honored with a Patriotic Award from the Employee Support of the Guard and Reserve.

And it was like, I think this would be interesting. So, at that point, I applied for nursing school," Kraft said. "I just wanted to help people. I had children, so I wanted to work with children."

Her altruism sparked by volunteering to help people in crisis mode. As her admiration for nurses flourished, Kraft recognized her future in nursing.

Nurses serving Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health contribute to best practices. Kraft said it's important for nurses to feel included. Nurses also have a say when rounding with physicians.

"It's my job to make sure that they feel supported," Kraft said.

Nurses have the supplies needed for safe patient care. The staff gives their all to their patients and families, because taking care of a child includes taking care of the family. Kraft admires nurses at Children's Hospital OU Health for going above and beyond in care. The resilience of children attracts nurses to their field and inspires against burnout.

"I know coming from my

background in oncology and seeing the little ones just wanting to be children is very rewarding," Kraft explained. "They may be sick, and they may have things going on inside their body. But on the outside, they just want to be kids. I think that we have a lot of respect for the families, because they go through a lot."

A newly diagnosed patient may be in one room. And a patient may be struggling in another room.

"Knowing that you're able to take care of both of them to the best of your ability has always been a reward for me," Kraft said.

Having respect for the decisions parents make for their children made Kraft realize this could happen to her own family or other nurses' families. Her solace is knowing she is surrounded by compassionate people caring for one another.

"I think it's really important, and it's like one big family. You know, I'm over two big service lines, and like the cardiac ICU nurses love taking care of the cardiac ICU patients, the hemoglobin nurses love taking care

of their hemoglobin patients. So, to know that you can specialize and make a difference in two different very important patient populations is an honor."

Child life specialists help nurses with child play, and how to talk to a frightened 3-year-old. Words should be simple without medical terms. You use simple terms. Child play could be sitting on the floor at their level.

"That's really important," Craft said.

Nurses thrive when having a willingness to study outside of work and accepting there will always be more to learn.

Nurses need to care for themselves outside of work, Kraft said, so they will be prepared to give their all to patients and families.

As a leader, she is always on call for assistance. She relaxes by going to movies or watching Netflix.

"I like to ride my bike," she said. "Now that it's summertime, I'm going home and riding my bike when it's not so hot or walking my dogs and spending time with my children."

NURSE TALK



If you were an animal, what animal would you be and why?

"I would be a butterfly transforming my life and I would always be changing."



Lakisha White, LPN

"I would be an octopus because they can adapt to any environment."



Alexandria Waller, LPN

"I'd like to be a dog because they are always taken care of."



Jennifer Poole, LPN



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OCU Student Overcomes Obstacles to Achieve Dreams



Amaka Okwudigbo endured quite a journey moving to the United States from Nigeria in pursuit of a career in the healthcare field.

She has overcome homelessness, food insecurity, and financial issues to fight for her career dreams.

She is currently a student with Oklahoma City University's 12-month accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program.

"I've had a lot of challenges since I've been in the United States," said Okwudigbo, who came to the United States eight years ago at age 18. "I've been homeless, and had no food, and no accommodations, but I was lucky enough to find help here at OCU. They have a food pantry and they have been really helpful with food to me. I have a place to stay. God really, really blessed me."

Okwudigbo came to the U.S. on a student visa.

"I just needed to change my environment, and someone mentioned that I should apply for a visa to see if I can further my education here in the United States and I took the risk," she said. "I first landed in Houston, Texas, and I graduated with an Associates of Science in Health, and then I moved to Oklahoma to further my education. I went to Rose State College, and I had two Associate's degrees from there, one respiratory therapy and the other one programming"

Okwudigbo credits Candace Jones, her former boss (Academic Advisor) at Rose State College, for helping her secure housing.

"She's been amazing, she gave me a roof under her house," Okwudigbo said.

After graduating from Rose State, Okwudigbo looked to expand her educational horizons.

"When I graduated with my programming degree last December, I was looking to expand my knowledge to see other options, so I started looking for schools that could give me a Bachelor's degree, which I could get very fast," she said. "I looked online and I found OCU, and when I spoke to the recruiters, the advisors at the nursing program, they were really fast with responding to me and I was like, 'I think this is the school that I am going to.'"

OCU's accelerated BSN program is the state of Oklahoma's first and only 12-month accelerated BSN. The program provides an opportunity for individuals with a non-nursing associate or bachelor's degree to earn a BSN degree in less time than a traditional baccalaureate program. This is an in-person program that consists of 56 credit hours spread over three full-time semesters during the 12-month program.

Some key features of Oklahoma City University's 12-month accelerated BSN are:

- Program consists of 56 credit hours over 12 months
- Direct transfer of previous associate or baccalaureate degree credits
- Clinical experiences at major hospital and community sites in the Oklahoma City metro area

The program will prepare you to sit for the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX-RN), which all prospective nurses must pass in order to be licensed in their state.

Okwudigbo worked her way through her previous schools, but was able to secure a scholarship to attend OCU. She hopes to find on-campus work to help with the rest of her school costs.



Amaka Okwudigbo is currently a student with Oklahoma City University's 12-month accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program.

"It's been a huge challenge, because without a job I wouldn't be able to pay for this, but I was lucky enough to get a scholarship this first semester," she said. "Even though the cost was a bit challenging for me, I was like, 'I will fight for it and I will do it,' and I am here. I am extremely proud."

Okwudigbo credits her parents for instilling her with determination and a strong work ethic.

"I grew up in an environment where we are satisfied with the little that we have, and I'm a first generation that was going to school," she said. "My parents are my backbone. I'm glad that they raised me the way they did."

Okwudigbo also thanked Gina Crawford, DNP, APRN-CNP, FNP, CNE, and Dean and Associate Professor, and Dr. Janice Carr, DNP, RN, CNE, Associate Professor, for their help at OCU's Kramer School of Nursing.

"I want to say thank you to Dean Gina Crawford and Dr. Janice Carr for their enormous support," she said.

Okwudigbo's goal is to join the military and work in healthcare.

"I am so eager to join either the Air Force or the Army," she said. "This has been my goal since I was a baby, and I would love to, actually when I graduate, if by the grace of God, practice in the military."

For more information about OCU's Kramer School of Nursing visit

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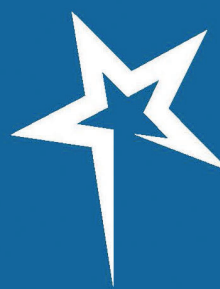
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Beyond the Zzz's

After many years, LPN enjoys being a nurse as much as ever.

Story and photo by Vickie Jenkins, staff writer



Imes Sleep Services

Sleep disorders are prevalent and most people will encounter some sleep issues during their lifetime. At Imes Sleep Services, they manage all aspects of patient's sleep evaluations, including pretesting assessments. When you arrive, their friendly staff will welcome you, and Bonnie Imes, LPN will escort you to your room. She will check you in to review your paper work, and discuss the specific sleep problem you're facing, such as insomnia.

You will find Bonnie has extended nursing experience. She has having graduated from Cedar Rapids in Worthington, Iowa. She moved her first job as a nurse was at Baptist Medical Center in the post-coronary unit. She has been working with sleep issues for about 15 years.

Some of their sleep services include diagnosis and treatment by sleep such as narcolepsy and sleep apnea. These sleep services can help sleep testing, treatments of all sleep disorders, affordable CPAP and BiPAP machines for current patients.

When asked what she wanted to be as a little girl, Bonnie smiled and said, "A nun, but that didn't work out very well," she explained, "I grew up in a Catholic community and shared a room with my sister. I wanted my own room so I decided to become a nun," she laughed. Growing up in the country, there were no other children around, so I took care of all the animals that came to our farm. Whenever they were hurt, I knew I had to 'fix them.' My mother told me she knew I would grow up to be a nurse when I was only four years old since I had a caring heart."

Bonnie stays busy with her daily duties, checking patients in, taking their vitals, and reviewing their medications. She then sits down with each patient to discuss their issues, ensuring the visit is never rushed. "Between Dr. Imes and myself, we thoroughly review all medications and dosages to avoid any potential interactions with other prescriptions. Every medication is carefully charted with close attention to detail," Bonnie noted. "A lot of time is spent educating the patient."

When asked what qualities make a good nurse, Bonnie replied, "I think a good nurse needs to be a great listener; that's so important in the medical field. A nurse also needs to be pay close attention to detail. Lastly, but certainly not least, a nurse needs genuine care and concern for the patient."

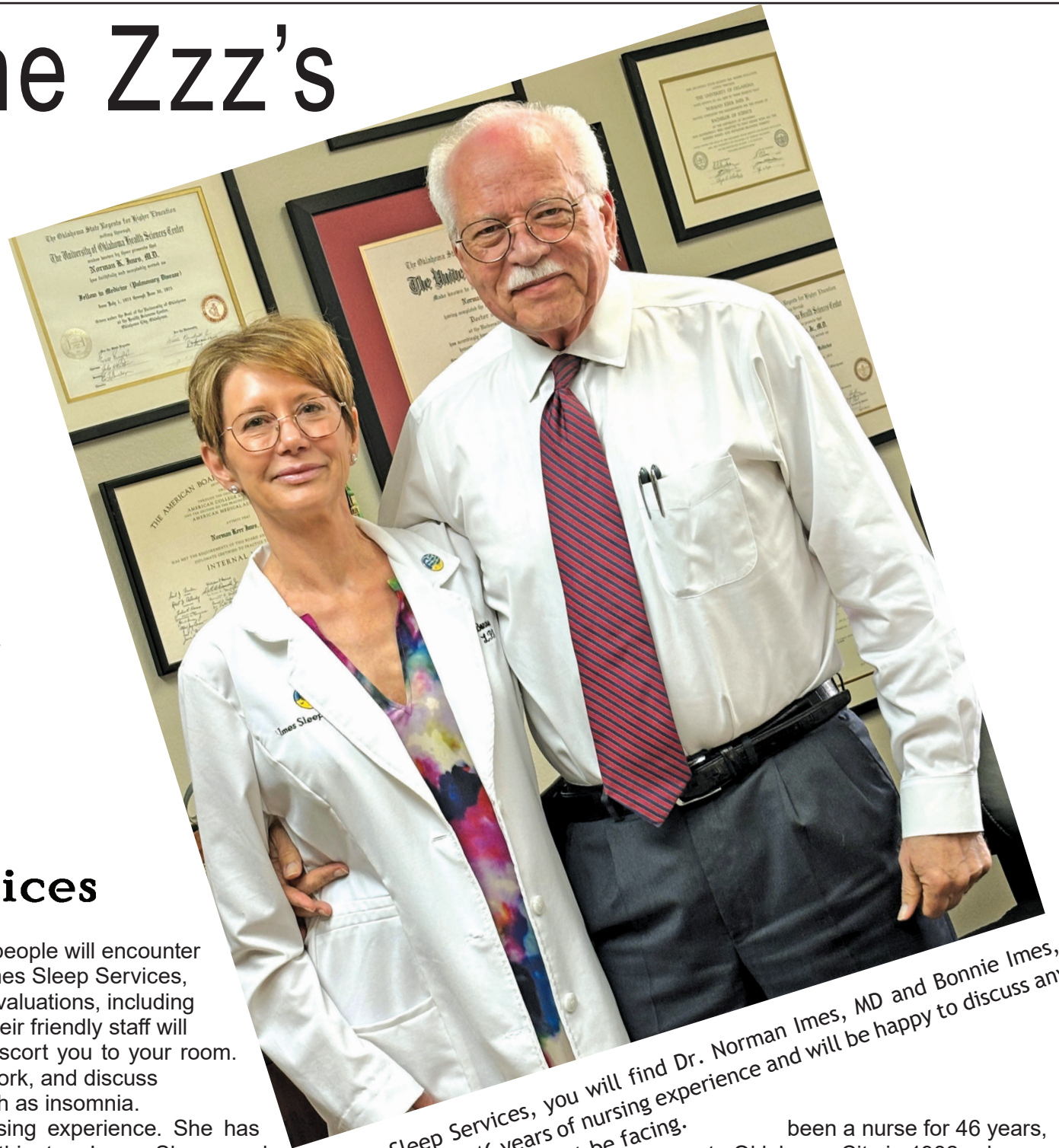
Bonnie's strength's as a nurse undoubtedly lies in her extensive experience. "I've been a nurse for so many years, and I still like it as much as when I started," she said. "In fact, I like it a little more than before," she said with a smile.

"What is your favorite thing about being a nurse?" I asked Bonnie. "I'm sure I have the typical answer that every other nurse gives," she replied. "I like helping people and I also appreciate that I am making a difference in someone's life. I think my favorite thing about being a nurse is the pride I feel in my profession. There's a certain feeling of fulfillment when a patient gives me a kind word or a simple thank-you that reassures me I'm doing something right."

Asking what advice she would give to someone wanting to go into the medical field, Bonnie replied, "Don't settle for just one area of nursing. Try out different specialties in nursing. There are so many different paths to explore, so if you don't like one, try another. The field offers numerous job opportunities just waiting to be discovered. You will know the right fit when it comes along."

When not working, Bonnie likes to spend time with her husband, Dr. Norman Imes. They both enjoy working out every morning before heading to the office. Their favorite companion is their Pomeranian, Maltese, mix, 'Pearl' who serves as a support canine and brightens everyone's day by joining them at the office every morning.

For more information about Imes Sleep Services visit <https://imesleepservices.com>.



At Imes Sleep Services, you will find Dr. Norman Imes, MD and Bonnie Imes, LPN. Bonnie has 46 years of nursing experience and will be happy to discuss any sleep issues that you might be facing.

been a nurse for 46 years, to Oklahoma City in 1982, where care unit, and then the critical care cardiac

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U.S. Naval Academy Students Complete OMRF Internship

When the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation appeared on the U.S. Naval Academy intranet as an internship option, midshipmen Chase Tabor and Josie Mazzeo jumped at the chance.

Both are chemistry majors with aspirations of being among the 10 or so accepted each year into the Navy's medical school.

"I had really high expectations coming here, and I wasn't disappointed," said Tabor, a native of Frankfort, Illinois, who recently completed OMRF's John H. Saxon Service Academy Summer Research Program. In the lab of OMRF Vice President of Research Courtney Griffin, Ph.D., Tabor worked on experiments aimed at preventing vision loss caused by blood vessel issues in the eyes.

"I've developed research techniques and skills that I wouldn't have learned otherwise," said Tabor. "This isn't something that a lot of people at the academy experience."

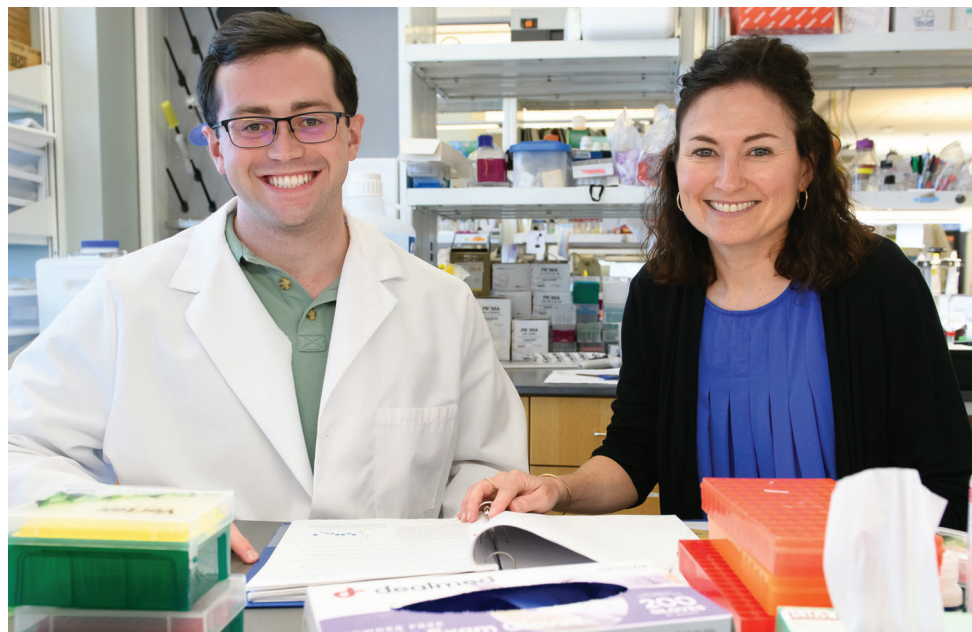
Mazzeo studied meiosis, the type of cell division that creates

egg and sperm cells. For her final presentation at OMRF, she created a time-lapse video that tracked the movements of specific spots on the chromosome. Errors during this process can cause birth defects.

"It's been quite interesting to better understand these processes," said Mazzeo, who hails from Virginia Beach, Virginia. "These things we talk about in the lab are so different from what we learn in our biology classes."

"I never cease to be amazed at how professional, mature and serious these students are," said Griffin, who has hosted eight Saxon Scholars in her lab since the program was inaugurated at OMRF in 2009. "When they come through here, I can't help thinking how lucky we are as a country to have these people training to be our future military doctors and scientists."

OMRF Board Member John Saxon III, M.D., created the internship program to honor his father, a West Point graduate and career Air Force pilot who taught at



U.S. Naval Academy student Chase Tabor, left, interned at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation this summer, working in the lab of Vice President of Research Courtney Griffin, Ph.D.

the U.S. Air Force Academy. More than 40 military students from West Point, the Naval Academy and Air Force Academy have now completed the intensive summer research program.

"The cadets in our service academies are the most impressive,

committed and dynamic young people America has to offer," Saxon said. "My father told me that being a West Point graduate opened his future to a world of possibilities. The same thing can be said of these internships at OMRF."

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Inaugural White Coat Ceremony Celebrates OSU Nursing Students

Twenty-six OSU students commemorated the start of their professional nursing education at the university's inaugural White Coat Ceremony.

The ceremony, held on April 3 in the Great Hall of the Nancy Randolph Davis Building, marked a significant milestone for the students and the nursing program at OSU. The program, developed to address a nursing shortage in Oklahoma and across the country, welcomed its first class of professional nursing students in the fall of 2023. In remarks given during the ceremony, Nursing Program Director Dr. Alana Cluck said the ceremony was meaningful to both the nursing students and OSU.

"This official White Coat Ceremony symbolizes the start of your education in the science and art of nursing," Cluck said. "When you put on your white coat, wear it with pride as you are not only representing Oklahoma State University but furthermore the nursing profession."

Although the nursing degree program is still in its first year at OSU, Cluck said she expects the 26 students recognized to be the first of many OSU-educated nurses. Eighty-six students are enrolled in the program for the fall 2024 semester, and Cluck expects the program to grow to 300 students by its third year.

Students pursuing a nursing degree must complete an additional application and pass prerequisite courses and take an exam. Cluck said the process will ensure admitted students are more likely to complete the program and pass the National Council Licensure Examination, which is required to become a licensed nurse.

Once admitted, students spend their final two years in the professional program at OSU studying and gaining hands-on experience. The program is rigorous, and by graduation, professional nursing students will have gone through two years of in-lab simulations and clinical rotations focused on critical care, medical-surgical nursing, pediatrics, obstetrics, community and leadership.

"They spend time in the lab learning and practicing skills, as well as working through simulation patient care scenarios with manikins and virtual reality," Cluck said. "Clinical rotations include long-term care facilities and hospital settings."

For students, the White Coat Ceremony represented the beginning of their health care education. However, Cluck noted that the students' new white coats carried on a decades-old tradition in the medical field and symbolized knowledge, professionalism and hope.

"These coats are worn by a multitude of medical providers as a classic symbol of medical knowledge," Cluck said. "It's as if to automatically say to a patient, 'I am here to help.'"

Learn more about Oklahoma State University's Bachelor of Science in Nursing at <https://okla.st/BSN>.



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