

**Dedication of Dean Edith Lacey Memorial**  
**Remarks by President Margaret L. Drugovich**  
**September 29, 2012**

Welcome.

Please relax as I recall for all of us the legacy of Miss Lacey. These remarks are a bit longer than I would normally give, but this program deserves our careful reflection.

On July 14, 1943, a short item appeared in the *Daily Star* newspaper. It began:

*“Eight young women have entered the first class admitted to the Hartwick College School of Nursing, according to an announcement by Miss Edith M. Lacey, director of the school.”*

This simple statement was, in fact, the beginning of a program and an educational opportunity of great and lasting importance. And from the beginning, there was Miss Edith Lacey.

Nearly one thousand Hartwick nursing graduates have followed those first eight students. Generations of students, and of faculty, have contributed in meaningful way to the program’s reputation for excellence.

Throughout the years, the nursing program has been closely connected to the reputation and financial viability. Hartwick College’s nursing program began during some of the toughest times for the College and the country. In 1943, during World War Two, President Roosevelt called members of the Enlisted Reserve Corps into service. When Hartwick's Corps contingent left, just over one hundred students remained.

Soon after, Hartwick President Henry Arnold seized an opportunity, and announced that the College had been authorized by the U.S. Public Health Service and the State Education Department to establish one of just five schools of nursing statewide.

On June 15, President Roosevelt authorized a uniformed nursing reserve. Interested students could enroll in a three-year, U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps program leading to a diploma in nursing.

Hartwick was ready. Hartwick’s first Nursing students enrolled in July as members of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. The first two baccalaureate degree candidates enrolled a year later.

Henry Hardy Heins stated in *Throughout All the Years Hartwick 1746-1946*, that the federal nursing program was what enabled Hartwick to continue operation on Oyaron Hill during the latter half of the war.

Miss Edith Lacey, an R.N. with a master's degree from Columbia University who had more than 20 years of hospital experience, was appointed to lead the new Hartwick College School of Nursing.

The early history of nursing at Hartwick balanced upon the Cadet Corps program. But the foundations established during that time and the quality of nursing education Miss Lacey insisted upon for "her girls" became the standard for the baccalaureate program in the years to follow.

Miss Lacey was determined to develop a first-rate nursing program and a dedicated faculty who shared her dream.

By the time the members of the first class were on their senior cadet assignments, three other classes of cadet nurses were on affiliation at different hospitals and a pre-clinical group was on campus. Miss Lacey felt it was vital that she and the faculty maintain contact with the students off-campus and that the groups to stay in touch with each other. In December 1945 she established a Nursing School newsletter.

Each letter included a message from her, addressed "Dear Children ..."  
An excerpt from her first letter reads:

"I wish each one of you might be home for Christmas, but unfortunately the sick and suffering are always with us. Giving up pleasure at times is one of the prices we pay for growing up, but how fortunate that you have the skill that enables you to relieve suffering..."

In September of 1946, the first Cadet Nurses graduated from Hartwick College; in June of 1948, the first two Bachelor of Science degrees with a major in nursing were awarded by the College

The work had just begun for Miss Lacey, her faculty, and her girls. The Kellogg Foundation provided funding from 1946-1951 to assist the College with the transition from a three-year cadet program into a full-fledged degree program. The Foundation was interested in the welfare of rural citizens and helped develop Hartwick's Rural Nursing Education Program.

In step with widespread debate within the nursing profession, Hartwick's program became a forerunner in efforts to integrate the nursing program more fully integrated into the liberal arts setting.

The National League for Nursing (NLN) supported the integration of the liberal arts into the nursing program and provided its own accreditation of baccalaureate nursing programs.

Dean Lacey understood the value of this accreditation. In 1956, she and the faculty spent several months doing a detailed curriculum review, completing self-study reports, and discussing the program's strengths and weaknesses. The first application was submitted in 1956; the program received full accreditation from NLN until 1966.

Nothing stays the same. In 1959, Dr. Frederick Binder reorganized the academic structure of the College. The School of Nursing became the Department of Nursing within the Division of Applied Arts and Sciences.

Credited with building a solid, reputable collegiate nursing school and developing the program and clinical affiliations that gave Hartwick nurses the best possible education in nursing, Dean Lacey announced her retirement effective at the end of the 1960-61 academic year.

In her final annual report on the state of the Nursing program, submitted in May 1961, Miss Lacey stated "I have always believed that the best possible service I could render Hartwick College was to produce the best possible nurses- nurses not only skillful in their profession but young women respected for their intelligence, their integrity, and their sense of responsibility. My years at Hartwick have been strenuous ones, but soul-satisfying. It was well worth-while." We would all be lucky to reflect on our careers as soul-satisfying.

Dean Lacey retired fifty one years ago. And yet I have heard more about Dean Lacey than I have heard about any other woman in Hartwick's long history. Alumni credit Edith Lacey and the faculty for giving them an excellent education, strong sense of belonging to the Hartwick community even though they spent more time away from Hartwick than they did on campus and a strong camaraderie with the legion of Hartwick nurses.

### Similarities to the Nursing Program Today

#### **Current Mission:**

Many of the values embraced by Dean Lacey live on in today's program. Our mission is to educate a highly qualified, self-directed nurse who will competently function in the present and rapidly changing healthcare system of the future. The graduate will possess the personal, intellectual, and social skills necessary to meet the challenges of an ever-changing interdependent and diversified world.

#### **CCNE Accreditation**

The Hartwick College Nursing Program is currently in the process of renewing the accreditation of our BS programs from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), a nationally recognized accrediting agency for baccalaureate and graduate degree programs in nursing education.

#### **Theory vs. Practice: Professional Nursing & The Liberal Arts**

The nursing profession and expectations of nurses have changed significantly over the last few decades. Hartwick's baccalaureate nursing program is built on a broad knowledge base drawn from the humanities, physical and life sciences, and social and behavioral sciences; this broad background of preparation is integrated with the knowledge and theories of nursing and competently applied to the practice of professional nursing. Our nurses, like all of our Hartwick graduates, are exposed to ideas beyond the profession, ideas that make Hartwick nurses more

prepared to meet the unknown and untold number of social, cultural, political and medical challenges that they will encounter during a career. This education enables students to become competent providers, designers, managers, and coordinators of care. Leaders.

A strong clinical component centered in a variety of settings with diverse populations provides our students with the opportunity to synthesize and apply their broad knowledge base in the practice of nursing care. Personal and professional standards and values, such as caring, altruism, advocacy, autonomy, promotion of human dignity, integrity, and a belief in social justice and the individual's right to self-determination are addressed as a framework for providing professional care.

### **Faculty's Responsibility**

Leadership made the difference in 1943, and it makes the difference today. The need for and impact of strong and passionate leadership was obvious in Miss Lacey's day, and continues. Hartwick faculty guides their students in the development of cognitive skills such as critical analysis, synthesis, and effective utilization of knowledge rather than simple knowledge acquisition. They engage our students. They maintain clinical expertise and competencies which are relevant. And they care about our students.

### **Community and Foundation Support for Rural Health Nursing**

We support today's nursing program.

With funds from my budget I bought a simi-toddler for the nursing department two years ago, and because of the generosity of a \$250,000 grant from the Clark foundation we have now grown this family to include adults and a baby.

Grant is also helping Hartwick College acquire distance education technology to provide more educational support that addresses ongoing need for well-prepared nurses in rural parts of the state.

This fall we almost doubled the number of full time nursing faculty lines from 6 to 11. This is an investment made directly by the college and I hope stand as evidence of our strong commitment to the viability of this needed and well respected program.

### **Current Statistics**

Throughout its history, Hartwick's nursing program has responded to trends in the field and the needs of the health care profession. The College has established productive relationships with regional health care agencies and higher education institutions, including community colleges within the state system, to offer RN mobility options that allow practicing nurses to earn the bachelor's degree. Over ten years ago, the College developed an Accelerated Summer Program to help nursing students enter the field more quickly, and in 2009, Hartwick launched the Rural Nurse Opportunity Program (RNOP), an accelerated option that allows working adults and

career changers to complete the bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) degree and enter the workforce in 18 months. The first cohort of ten students graduated this past January.

In the almost 70 years since its inception, Hartwick's nursing program has over graduated 1,300 nurses who practice in 43 states and five foreign countries. The majority of Hartwick nurses remain in New York State, and 65% work within the Bassett Healthcare Network.

### **Now I would like to reflect on the Class of 1962**

The Nursing Class of 1962 comes together every year. In 2010, they held their reunion at Pine Lake and I was fortunate to be invited to join you for lunch at the Neptune Diner. It was at this lunch that the idea for a formal recognition of Dean Lacey crystallized.

Members of the class agreed to ask their fellow Nursing alumni to support this tribute and the Edith M. Lacey Memorial Scholarship.

In total, \$119,904.25 was raised for the Scholarship resulting in an additional \$4,000 in scholarships for this year.

An additional \$13,000 was raised to fund this permanent tribute to Dean Lacey.

A Hartwick nurse commented to me last Sunday that Ms. Lacey deserves a building in her name. Given the magnitude of her impact of generations of nurses, such a monument might well be appropriate. But if I understand the woman at all, I think that Miss Lacey would be most appreciative of this recognition of her soul-satisfying experience as the head of this program. Monuments crumble over time, but the legacy of Miss Lacey will now live on both in those who remember her and those who pause to read this durable tribute.

### Unveiling

#### Text of the plaque

DEAN EDITH M. LACEY

*Edith M. Lacey was the first director of the School of Nursing at Hartwick College, established in 1943 as part of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps program. She directed the school as Dean of Nursing until 1961.*

*Dean Lacey created a program of nursing studies within the baccalaureate degree curriculum; therefore, Hartwick's early alumnae were some of the first nurses to earn the bachelor's degree with their nursing education.*

*Dean Lacey's program was rich in theoretical education and practical experience. Her quiet grace imbued the program with the humanity and professionalism of nursing. During their hospital experience, the students were shepherded by other dedicated nurse instructors, but it*

*was Dean Lacey's philosophy which shaped the nurses she sent out into the world upon graduation.*

*Dean Lacey cherished each of her students during their studies and for years after their graduation. It is they and the successive Nursing graduates of Hartwick who honor her with this plaque and the scholarship which bears her name.*

*Dedicated September 29, 2012 by the Nursing graduates of Hartwick College and Dr. Margaret L. Drugovich, President*