

The Bjoring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry

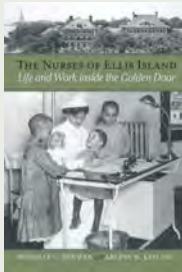
FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

FALL HISTORY FORUMS

SEPTEMBER 16

"The Nurses of Ellis Island"

Michelle Hehman, PhD, RN, NPD-BC and Arlene Keeling, PhD, RN, FAAN



NOVEMBER 18

"Labored Care: the 1926 Nurse Strike in Colonial Korea"

Sonja Kim, PhD



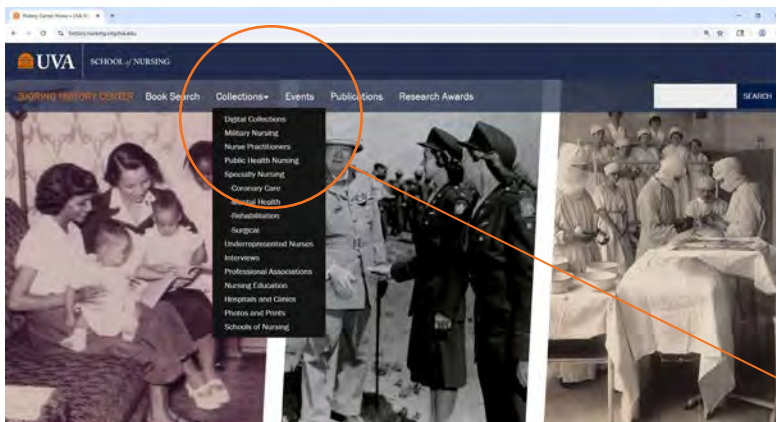
HOSTED BY THE BJORING CENTER, ALL FORUMS WILL BE HELD FROM 12-1 P.M. ON ZOOM. VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS.

Where Research Takes Us

A great opportunity to showcase our scholarship came in May, when Center Director Dominique Tobbell, post-doctoral fellow Ren Capucão, and PhD candidate Tegan Flowers participated in the annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine in Boston. Dominique and Ren took part in a roundtable that explored new methods, institutional challenges, and engaging clinical audiences in the history of nursing. Tegan presented on her dissertation research about the history of reproductive care for transgender people. Connecting with other historians of nursing, medicine, and healthcare also made this a worthwhile conference.

Several enterprising undergraduates also pursued historical research this year, even as they juggled heavy clinical course loads. Adelaide Hinson (BSN '26) served as Dr. Tobbell's research intern for the academic year, supported by the

UVA SON Office for Nursing Research. Adelaide undertook research in support of Dr. Tobbell's project on the history of nurse-led clinics, which involved literature reviews, reading historical newspapers, reviewing oral history transcripts, and conducting background research on potential individuals to interview. Faith Bush (BSN '25) completed the Distinguished Majors Program with Dr. Tobbell serving as her faculty mentor. Throughout the academic year, Faith researched the history of the Charlottesville-based Westhaven Nursing Clinic, analyzing the Bjoring Center's Doris Glick Collection and Westhaven Clinic Collection, plus newspaper articles and nursing literature from the late 1980s through the early 2000s. The final project, "The Westhaven Nursing Clinic: History, Funding, and Community Impacts," was outstanding. ●



BETTER BROWSING

We've redesigned the Bjoring Center's website to make our collections more visible and easier to navigate. Our archives are now organized by subject area, highlighting the range of our holdings: military nursing, public health nursing, nurse practitioners, specialty nursing, nursing education, underrepresented nurses, hospitals and clinics, professional organizations, and much more. We've also improved the searchability for our library of historical nursing texts, through UVA Library's online catalog, Virgo. We continue to add new features and hope to digitize more of our holdings in the future, as resources allow. Send us an email with your feedback on this new format to mks2d@virginia.edu.

history.nursing.virginia.edu

Rewinding the First Year

By Reynaldo Capucan, PhD, RN
(Fellow, Aug '24– Aug '26)

Reynaldo Capucan just completed his first year as the inaugural Mellon Race, Place, and Equity Postdoctoral Research Associate in the History of Nursing and Healthcare at the UVA School of Nursing. His 2024 dissertation, “Pressed into Starched Whites: Nursing (Dis)ability in Filipino/American History” earned the school’s Phyllis J. Verhonick Dissertation Award for its outstanding scholarship—just the second time that a doctoral thesis with a research focus on the history of nursing and healthcare has received this recognition.

The Verhonick award, symbolizing the merit of my scholarship and its significant contribution to nursing knowledge, offered me reassurance and a reminder of the importance of my work during a time of ongoing introspection around career prospects and academic belonging. This past year, I focused on refining my craft as a historian while considering how my humanistic social science approach fits into nursing science.

Most of my time has been dedicated to transforming my dissertation research into a book. I recently returned to the Philippines to continue my ethnographic research on the culture of nursing. My field work is necessary to write the epilogue, which historically intervenes upon the present and persistent racialized disablement of Filipino nurses. The revision of my dissertation also led to other publications. One of my chapters will appear in the forthcoming *Routledge Handbook on the Global History of Nursing*. I also wrote a biographical essay for the Virginia Museum of History and Culture’s publication, *We the People: The World in Our Commonwealth*, an accompaniment to the forthcoming exhibition of the same name.

Aside from research, I sought experience in teaching, designing courses, and communicating to broader audiences. I developed an undergraduate course, “Healthcare in Filipino/American History,” which I will be teaching this fall through the American Studies Department. At the American Association for the History of Medicine Conference in May, I participated alongside other early-career historians on a panel to discuss



Ren Capucan celebrates his doctoral degree with his parents and sister.

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”

innovative methodologies for studying the history of nursing and healthcare, as well as strategies for making historical scholarship more relevant to the practice and theory of nursing and health policy.

Beyond my academic commitments, service has been integral. I currently serve on the editorial board of the *Nursing History Review*, helping to solicit more diverse and critical perspectives in nursing and healthcare history. During the 2025 Philippine Nursing World Congress in Davao City, Philippines, I taught a workshop titled “Harnessing the Untapped Potential of Historical Methodology in Nursing Research” and spoke on the panel “Care Culture: Narratives of Filipino Nurses Elevating Standards.” While there, I received the Violeta Lopez Award. I was one of six Filipino doctoral nursing graduates from around the world to receive this honor, which symbolizes our significant contributions to nursing and potential to advance the profession as early-career scholars. ●



WELCOMING A SECOND MELLON FELLOW

Bradford Pelletier, PhD, has joined us as the School of Nursing’s second Mellon

Race, Place, and Equity Postdoctoral Research Associate in the History of Nursing and Healthcare. Pelletier’s research examines the struggle for medical civil rights during the 20th century with a particular focus on the influence of African American activism on American psychiatric practices in the South.

During his two-year fellowship, Pelletier will expand his dissertation research into a book while also developing new research on the history of nurses’ strikes and their role in advancing equity in healthcare. He’ll also help develop teaching modules that incorporate material from the “Race in Healthcare: Historical Essentials for UVA Nurses,” our newly created digital repository, and will help nursing faculty integrate its lessons into undergraduate- and graduate-level courses.

Under the guidance of Bjoring Center Director Dominique Tobbell, PhD, Pelletier will also mentor doctoral nursing students and collaborate with Bjoring Center faculty and staff to develop public history projects and exhibits centered around topics that address race, justice, and equity issues in the history of nursing and healthcare.

Pelletier earned a PhD in History from the City University of New York in the spring of 2025. He received a master’s degree in European history and literature from Columbia University; a master’s degree in American history from the College of Charleston; and a bachelor’s degree in History and French from Roanoke College. The recipient of numerous fellowships, including a Rockefeller Archives Center Fellowship, Pelletier also brings considerable teaching experience to UVA, having taught at John Jay College and Baruch College, and serving as a Writing Across the Curriculum Fellow at New York City College of New York. He also previously worked as an English tutor and teacher in France.

A Signature Spring:

The Randolph Award and a Joint Conference with the Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science



Karen Flynn, PhD, with Bjoring Center Director Dominique Tobbell, PhD, at the conference in March.

Scholar, teacher, and public intellectual Dr. Karen Flynn received the 2025 Agnes Dillon Randolph Award this spring from the Bjoring Center for her outstanding scholarship documenting the experiences of Caribbean nurses and Black nurses in Canada and the U.S.

Dr. Flynn is the Terrance and Karyn Holm Endowed Professor in the Department of Population Health Nursing Science at the University of Illinois, Chicago, College of Nursing, and director of the Midwest Nursing History Research Center. Her research lies at the intersection of Black feminist and diaspora studies, health and care work, nursing history, and transnational mobilities with keen attention to race, gender, and equity.

Her award-winning 2011 book, *Moving Beyond Borders: Black Canadian and Caribbean Women in the African Canadian Diaspora* (University of Toronto) is the first book-length manuscript that examines the experiences of Black Canadian and Caribbean nurses and the transnational formation of the occupation. She is completing a second book project tentatively titled *The Black Pacific: The African Diaspora in East Asia*, to be published by McGill-Queen's University Press. With Dr. Dominique Tobbell, she is co-editor of the forthcoming second edition of the *Routledge Handbook on the Global History of Nursing*. Dr. Flynn also co-leads the Mapping Care project, a traveling exhibit and website that documents both the historic and current contributions of Black nurses in Chicago.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was the theme of her keynote address at the 2025 Joint Randolph Nursing History and Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science Conference,

THE TWO-DAY CONFERENCE DREW 75 ATTENDEES FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY.

where she spoke on "Caregiving During a Pandemic: Black Nurses' Praxis of Black Feminist Ethic of Care."

The conference, held in person on March 14-15 at the UVA School of Nursing, drew 75 attendees from around the country—faculty, students, independent scholars, archivists—and was co-sponsored by the UVA Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, the UVA Center for Health Humanities and Ethics, Historical Collections at UVA Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, and the Beta Kappa Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau. ●



Participants in post-session discussion.



PUBLICATIONS

Tucker, T., Capucão, R., Tobbell, D., "Reckoning with Historical Harms to Transform Nursing at the University of Virginia." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 98, no.4 (2024): 501-511. <https://doi.org/10.1353/bhm.2024.a955170>

Necochea López, R., Baker, J.P., Glenn, J.E., Medeiros, A., Tobbell, D. "Race Relations at Academic Health Centers: Historians' Notes of Caution and Encouragement." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 98, no.4 (2024): 475-480. <https://doi.org/10.1353/bhm.2024.a955167>

Tobbell, D.A., "The Role of Communities in Nurse-Led Clinics, 1965-2000: Lessons from History." *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice* (2025) 26(1): 6-15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15271544241289416>

Anderson, K.M., Tobbell, D., Cessato, B.W., Graham-Perel, A., Yearwood, E. "Nursing Disciplinary Knowledge: Honoring the Past and Envisioning a Future of PhD Nursing Education to Advance Health Equity." *Nursing Outlook* (2025) 73(5): 102491. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2025.102491>

Tobbell, D., "School Nurses and the Promotion of Inclusive Menstrual Health." *AJPH* (2024) 114(9): 849-851. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2024.307776>

Tobbell, D. "Nursing Education," in Jacalyn Duffin (eds.) *Oxford Bibliographies in History of Medicine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2025). <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780197768723/obo-9780197768723-0003.xml>

Tobbell, D. Book review: Digitizing Diagnosis: Medicine, Minds, and Machines in Twentieth-Century America by Andrew S. Lea. *Technology and Culture* (2025) 66(2): 541-542. <https://doi.org/10.1353/tech.2025.a956857>

Tobbell, D. "Review: Nursing Clio." *Reviews in Digital Humanities* (2024) 5(11). <https://doi.org/10.21428/3e88f64f.41939aae>

Bonito, Sheila and Reynaldo Capucão. *Raising Standards, Saving Lives: The History of UP Nursing*. Manila, Philippines: University of the Philippines Manila (2023).

Capucão, Reynaldo. "White Capped Dreams: The (Dis)appearance of Filipino Men Nurses, 1910-1945." In *Routledge Handbook on the Global History of Nursing*. 2nd ed. Forthcoming.



The nursing school's library in McKim Hall in 1964.
UVA SON Collections.

WHAT INSTITUTIONAL HISTORIES REVEAL

BY HENRY K. SHARP, PhD

If we were to meet at an event and the conversation turned to the most intriguing stories from nursing history, I think few of us would suggest institutional histories—at least not right off the bat. And yet, here at the Bjoring Center, a very substantial and important collection on our shelves are **the papers of the University of Virginia School of Nursing**. Institutions have been taking a hit these days, and while the work of university administration is neither easy nor glamorous, nor free from differing opinions or even controversy—it is absolutely critical to the survival of the field.

Education, of course, is the foundation of the institution and of the profession. A significant component of the collection addresses the development of courses and curricula; we can observe change over

time and witness the organization of new programs. All levels of teaching are concerned, but there is an especially important section, for example, on the establishment of the doctoral program. Descriptions of faculty research projects are included, as well as outreach programs: clinics in the local community and further afield, as well as efforts to harness new technologies, both for nursing service and education. Stepping further back, materials concerning the foundation of the collegiate school of nursing offer some insight into how education was handled through the early and mid-twentieth century, particularly as a component of the University Hospital. Composition of the student body, segregation, and integration reflect evolving public policies concerning civil rights.

Faculty meeting minutes and administrative documentation reveal not only similar substantive questions at issue but also the dynamic of personalities, an important perspective for observers to take: is any institution always on point, efficient, or unified? Another significant component of the collection traces the planning, financing, and construction of McLeod Hall, and stimulates thinking about what kinds of facilities best serve nursing education and how funding can be encouraged. In sum, it is difficult to imagine a more comprehensive treatment of the trends and theories motivating nursing education, the professionalization of the field, and the management of the institution—both in itself and as an integral component of an expansive university and even larger academic and public community. There are a lot of fascinating stories to find here. ●



PRESENTATIONS

Capucan, R., "Care Culture: Narratives of Filipino Nurses Elevating Standards," Panel, Philippine Nursing World Congress, Davao City, Philippines, June 26, 2025

Capucan, R., "Harnessing the Untapped Potential of Historical Methodology in Nursing Research: Standards and Evaluation," Workshop, Philippine Nursing World Congress, Davao City, Philippines, June 25, 2025

Flowers, T., "Trans Families: Exclusion and Radical Caring through Coalition," Annual Meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine, Boston, MA, May 3, 2025

Tobbell, D., Capucan, R., Nichols, M., Rosario, A. "Resuscitating the History of Nursing: Roundtable on New Methods, Clinical Audiences, and Institutional Challenges," Annual Meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine, Boston, MA, May 3, 2025

Tobbell, D., "The Making of Nursing Science: Health, Politics, and the Transformation of American Nursing," Keynote Address, Southern Ohio Northern Kentucky (SONK) Consortium, Cincinnati, OH, April 4, 2025 (keynote)

Tobbell, D., "Dr. Nurse: Science, Politics, and the Transformation of American Nursing," Speaker Series in the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Cedars-Sinai, Los Angeles, CA, March 20, 2025 (virtual)

Tobbell, D., "Using History to Advance Equity and Justice," Facilitator, Equity in Action: Dismantling Racism in Nursing, American Nurses Association and National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing, March 19, 2025 (virtual)

Capucan, R., "Confronting Racism in Healthcare: A Panel Discussion on 'Everybody's Work,'" Virginia Nursing Association Nursing Staffing Summit, Richmond, VA, November 23, 2024

Tobbell, D., "Using History for Health Equity," American Association for the History of Nursing Annual Conference, Milwaukee, WI, September 20, 2024

Capucan, R., "(Un)fit to Nurse: Efficiency and Discipline at the Philippine General Hospital, 1898-1916," History Talks, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD, April 25, 2024

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Tobbell, D., "Nursing in the Community: Nurse-Led Clinics and the Politics of Community Health in the U.S., 1960-2010," Franklin Research Grant, American Philosophical Society, 2024

Ren Capucan:
– Phyllis J. Verhonick Dissertation Award, UVA SON, 2025
– Violeta Lopez Award, Filipino Nursing Diaspora Network, 2025

Tegan Flowers, Barbara Brodie Scholars Endowment Award, 2025-2026

Rita C. Chow Named a ‘Living Legend’



Rita Chow as a student at Stanford University School of Nursing in 1948

DR. CHOW HELPED DEVELOP ONE OF THE FIRST PRISONER-RUN HOSPICE PROGRAMS IN THE NATION

In 2024, the American Academy of Nursing honored Dr. Chow as a “Living Legend” for the many trails she blazed. Among them: she implemented a music and movement program for patients with leprosy at the National Hansen’s Disease Center in Carville, La., and helped develop one of the first prisoner-run hospice programs in the nation, at the Federal Bureau of Prisons Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas.

Her talent for innovation was apparent early on. As a graduate student, she spearheaded a [research project using closed-circuit television](#) in the intensive care unit to record nurses’ real-time actions and responsibilities. That work culminated in her 1976 textbook, *Cardiosurgical Nursing Care: Understandings, Concepts, and Principles for Practice*. She went on to author and edit more than 100 professional publications. Numerous national awards recognized her impact on the nursing profession and her unwavering dedication to health equity.

Sadly, Dr. Chow passed away on June 9, 2025 at the age of 98. ●

One of the most robust collections in the Bjoring Center’s archives traces the experiences of Rita K. Chow, PhD, RN, FAAN, a first-generation American of Chinese descent who entered nursing in 1950. Thankfully, she was a keeper rather than a tosser of records, giving scholars an especially wide vantage of [public health nursing](#) over a lifetime, often in challenging posts and serving historically marginalized groups.



Dr. Chow at a ceremony in 1987, where she received a National Institutes of Health award from Surgeon General C. Everett Koop.



A SNAPSHOT OF NEWLY FUNDED RESEARCH

SARAH CRAIG, PhD, RN, CCNS, CCRN-K, CHSE, CNE
APRIL MATTHIAS, PhD, RN, CNE
BETH HUNDT, PhD, APRN, FAHA
2025 Nurse Practitioner History Preservation Award
“Creating Accessible Education to Share Nursing History Narratives: Preserving the Legacy and Advocacy of the Advanced Nurse Practice Role”

This project will design, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of an active-learning, comprehensive learning module that will focus on the historical development, key figures, sociopolitical influences, and evolving roles of the nurse practitioner and clinical nurse specialist.

CORY ELLEN GATRALL, PhD, MFA, RN
2025 Barbara Brodie Nursing History Fellowship
“Race, Racism, and Reproduction in Public Health Nursing, 1915-1945”

This project will analyze how public health nurses in the early- and mid-twentieth century engaged with concepts of racialized social difference (e.g. “race,” “nationality,” and “culture”) through their work in sexual and reproductive health, including pregnancy and perinatal care as well as birth control and family planning.

DANIEL WESEMANN, DNP, MSW, PMHNP-BC, ARNP, FAANP
JULIE ROEBUCK, DNP, PMHNP-BC
2024 Nurse Practitioner History Research Scholar Award

“The Lived History of Advanced Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses Worldwide”

Introduced in the 1950s, advanced psychiatric mental health nursing has undergone several important transitions in the decades since, but its history in the U.S. and the role of psychiatric mental health nurses globally is lacking. This project will capture its evolution and international expansion through archival research and oral histories.

PATRICIA RISSMILLER, RN, DNSc, PNP-BC
2024 Nurse Practitioner History Preservation Award
“Massachusetts First Generation Nurse Practitioner History: Preservation Project”

This preservation project will organize and digitalize recently recorded oral histories of 40 nurse practitioners who pioneered the movement in Massachusetts from 1965 to 1985.

Thank you for supporting the Eleanor Crowder Bjoring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry. You can give to the center in a variety of ways.

USE YOUR CREDIT CARD

Give online at the ECBCNHI's secure website: history.nursing.virginia.edu

SEND A CHECK

If you prefer to make a contribution by check, please make it payable to the UVA School of Nursing and mail it to: University of Virginia, P.O. Box 37963, Boone, IA 50037. In the memo section, please state that it is for the Bjoring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry.

DONATE STOCK

To make a gift of stock, or for UVA tax ID information, please contact Elle Blevins in the UVA School of Nursing at (434) 924-0138.

For questions about donating papers and artifacts, contact us at nurs-hxc@virginia.edu.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY! ALL GIFTS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.



A mother poses with her children as part of a 1964 public health campaign for the new oral polio vaccine. Aurelie Knapik Collection.

Page 1 (top image): Tuberculosis patients at Blue Ridge Sanatorium, Charlottesville, Va., undated. CNHI Collections. These and other archival photos are featured in the center's current storefront exhibit, "Epidemics, Disability, and Nursing in History."

THE ELEANOR CROWDER BJORING CENTER FOR NURSING HISTORICAL INQUIRY

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The Eleanor Crowder Bjoring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry, established at the University of Virginia in 1991 to support historical scholarship in nursing, is dedicated to the preservation and study of nursing history. The goals of the center include the collection of materials, the promotion of scholarship, and the dissemination of historical research findings.

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SCHOOL of NURSING

