

Dr. Cherry Beasley receives 2017 Award for Excellence in Teaching
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PEMBROKE, N.C. – For nursing professor Cherry Beasley, it isn't the way she delivers lectures at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

Her students' success hinges on them having the tools to be great learners.

"Lots of times we forget that students have to be taught a lot of things related to how to be a learner," said Dr. Beasley, the Belk Endowed Professor in Rural and Minority Health.

"The content in my discipline, and in all disciplines, is going to be outdated in five years. But I can teach you how to learn and how to be curious," she said.

"One of my biggest struggles is how do I help whet the appetite of the student to want to be motivated. If I can teach them to think and be willing to be a learner, and be enthusiastic, they can master any content."

For 25 years, Beasley has mastered her craft. She is responsible for a generation of outstanding UNCP nursing graduates. She has been honored with the 2017 *Award for Excellence in Teaching*. *The UNC Board of Governors presents the award each year to one faculty member from each of the 17 universities. Recipients receive a \$12,500 stipend and a bronze medallion.*

"It is quite an honor," Beasley said. "I don't think there is anything more satisfying than your colleagues recognizing that you are doing a good job at what you are striving to do.

"For me, being a teacher is the quintessential role in my life. I have been a nurse. I have practiced, but being a college professor, you get to put it all together."

Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings described Beasley as a leader in all aspects of her profession: teaching, research and service.

"Her passion for students, the field of nursing and our region is inspiring," Cummings said. "A genuine desire to serve others is an essential attribute for nurses and educators, and UNCP students could have no better role model than Dr. Beasley."

Dr. Beasley has devoted her professional nursing career as a nursing provider, educator, and researcher.

She began carving her professional path as a student at Red Springs High School. She spent a lot of time observing the care her grandmother received after she was diagnosed with cancer. The intimate relationship between the nurse and the client is what attracted a young Beasley to the field.

She began reading and studying the various levels of patient care. The more she studied, the more she was assured she was on the right path. She received her nursing degree from the University of Michigan and landed her first job at the Santa Ana Psychiatric Center in California.

Beasley went on to receive a master's in Nursing and Public Health Nursing from UNC Chapel Hill, a post master's Family Nursing Practitioner from the University of South Carolina, and Ph.D. from East Carolina University.

Dr. Beasley is the first Lumbee to have earned a baccalaureate, masters, and doctor of philosophy all in nursing. Her areas of expertise are cultural roles

in health care decision making, rural health, diabetes, nursing workforce issues, and women's health.

She taught at North Carolina Central University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

While in Tennessee, she joined the U.S. Army Reserve Nurse Corp. She served eight years, rising to the rank of major. She held positions as a school nurse with the Robeson County Health Department and served a principal investigator for the Office of Minority Health.

When UNC Pembroke's nursing program (a BSN program for registered nurses) began in 1992, Beasley was the first nursing faculty member hired.

"I initially thought I would stay about four or five years, but I am still here," Beasley said. "The fact that I have stayed so long speaks to the idea that I was able to continue to grow and to be challenged."

Her teaching style depends on the content and the development level of the student. Interacting with students during lectures is key, as is ample time for reflective thinking. Though she is an expert in the field, Beasley continues to develop innovative ways to present the content in a way that has enticement.

Dr. Beasley has written and administered many grants and is the author of numerous articles. Her research and practices have been focused on Lumbee health issues including child development and breast cancer. She is a member and leader in numerous nursing organizations, including the American Nurses Association, the North Carolina Nurses Association, Sigma Theta Tau, the National League for Nursing, and Delta Omega.

She is the past chair of the N.C. Center for Nursing. Her book, "American Indian Women of Proud Nations: Essay on History, Language, and Education," which was co-authored with her colleagues Dr. Mary Ann Jacobs and Ulrike Wiethau, was published in the Critical Indigenous and American Indian Studies book series.

Beasley has a rich history of family members who graduated from UNCP, including her mother, Joyce B. Maynor, who holds two degrees, her father and step-mother, Drs. Waltz and Louise Maynor, and grandfather, Wayne Maynor.

At UNCP, Beasley says she feels a sense of community. As she strolls across campus her mind reverts to childhood, when parts of the campus were fields where she cropped tobacco.

"I can walk across campus and I have a sense of those men who founded this campus," she said.

"I am proud to help continue with that vision. I get to play a role in that building of community and the mission this place has. My faculty colleagues here are excellent. They get the mission.

"This is the fourth university that I have served as a faculty member and I have never seen the quality of teaching at any place that I see at UNC Pembroke."