
Marion G. Miles, RN '54

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I grew up in Northern Durham County, North Carolina, in an area named Rougemont, which was predominantly Black. During my teenage years, it was suggested that I continue my education after high school. My mom suggested nursing school. She stated, and I quote, "Study to become a nurse, because people are always sick." After sending out general applications to nursing schools and visiting the School of Nursing at Lincoln hospital and meeting with the director of Nursing, Mrs. L.Z. Williams, I decided to attend Lincoln Hospital School of nursing.

I arrived at Stokes Nurses Home at Lincoln Hospital School of Nursing in September 1951 and was assigned to a room with three other roommates. We slept on bunk beds and I was fortunate to get a bottom bunk. We had to share the desks and dressers, but all of us were compatible and adjusted very well. Our classes were taught on the campuses of Lincoln Hospital and Northern Carolina College (now North Carolina Central University). Courses such as nutrition, chemistry, microbiology, and biology were taught at North Carolina College. Nursing educators and doctors taught the other classes at Lincoln Hospital. In the second semester of our first year, we began to get hands-on experience with patient care, such as giving baths, cleaning rooms, making neat beds, and communicating with the patients and staff. Over the three-year period, we received special training in all the departments of the hospital, including the operating rooms, obstetrics, medical surgery, and the emergency room. During my senior year at the school, I spent three months at Crownsville, Maryland Psychiatric Hospital for psychiatric nursing and Meharry School of Nursing for pediatric training.

During my study of nursing I was taught the importance of understanding the patient's mental, physical, spiritual, and social needs. While in school, I was exposed to other activities to help me become a well-rounded person. It was mandatory that we attend Vespers on each Wednesday night, which was held on campus. We were also encouraged to sing in the school choir, which was directed by Mrs. Virginia Alston. On occasion, at Christmas, we sang at other churches as well as at Duke Hospital. Students were also encouraged to attend a church of their choice. In my senior year, I was selected to be the speaker for the preclinical class and I capped the students during the service. I graduated in 1954. Nursing has been a very good career for me. My family consisted of my husband, three children, and me. Nursing allowed me to work the shifts that suited my family. After graduating from nursing school, I continued to take courses that would enhance my career. My work experience has been as a staff nurse, a head nurse, a nurse supervisor in a hospital setting, and a managing nurse in an industrial setting. I worked for forty years in the nursing profession and continue to volunteer in a hospital setting and in the community.

My accomplishments during my career include the following: Nurse of the year, Lincoln Hospital School of Nursing Alumni, 1983; Leadership Recognition, National Council of Negro Women, Inc., 1986; Durham Academy Auxiliary, Durham Academy of Doctors, Dentists, and Pharmacists, 2007; Honoree for the Committee on the Affairs of Black People, 2008; The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, 2009.