

Embracing decades of students:

Nurse Betty receives official holiday for 31 years of service

By **SALLY BOYCE**
Contributing Reporter

In 1974, Nurse Betty Brown arrived at Vol State to become the resident school nurse. Thirty-one years later, Nurse Betty has become a legend.

April 5, was declared Nurse Betty Day by several student organizations including The Settler, The Pioneer, the SGA, and ACE, in order to honor this nurse for her years of dedication to the well-being of Vol State students and staff.

Students Jennifer Easton and Lindsey Sircy came up with the idea to put on this event. "I'm always hearing students say how much they appreciate something Nurse Betty has done for them," said Easton. "She really goes out of her way to help others and becomes a fast friend to everyone she meets."

After Easton and Sircy gave their presentation, someone yelled, "Bring her up!"

Nurse Betty was called to the podium, and as she walked up, everyone gave her a standing ovation.

As she was presented with roses, the side door of the cafeteria opened to reveal her two daughters and her husband.

"When I saw that my family had come, it knocked my socks off. Everyone should have the opportunity to feel this good," said Nurse Betty.

Her oldest daughter had driven up from Chattanooga to honor her mother.

She was also presented with a gift card to the Amata Day Spa from the students, a nurse's cap with her name in rhinestones, many flowers, and a large scrapbook full of quotes from people all over Nurse Betty's life.

"Jennifer and Lindsey researched and got all these people to write quotes. They even got a secretary I had 20 years ago to write something!" said Nurse Betty. "I am going to cherish and read it many times. I feel so blessed."

After Easton presented the scrapbook, and before cake and punch were brought out, Chief of Public Safety William Rogan approached Nurse Betty and told her a man had fallen in the Caudill

Hall Building.

Nurse Betty didn't wait to see her cake.

Instead, she grabbed her blue medical bag and rushed to the back of the Wymess Auditorium where a maintenance worker had fallen off the catwalk ladder.

Nurse Betty remained with him until the ambulance arrived, which was close to an hour later.

"I was afraid he might have broken something, so I stayed. I missed the cake, but it was just one of those things," she said.

Nurse Betty has phoned him since the accident. Nothing was broken, and he was expected home soon.

This incident is just one example of the selflessness and devotion Nurse Betty has demonstrated to Vol State, both to staff and students.

In fact, the students are what Nurse Betty says she is here for.

"I love my job, and I love students," she said. "They are why I'm here. It's not about the money. Every time I have looked to go on to another job, someone comes in who needs help. You have got to love what you do and feel called to it. I'm where I'm supposed to be. It's not a high status or glorious job, but it is one I feel called and committed to."

Those who have known and worked with Nurse Betty agree that she is all about students—and not just here for their physical health.

"Quite often, when students go from high school to college, there is a drastic change in lives. College is more cold and there is more a feeling of aloneness. As a consequence, everyone needs a strong anchor. Period, we need to be wrapped in loving arms, and Nurse Betty has served that function at Vol State since 1974," said Dr. Bob Ruff, a contemporary of Nurse Betty.

Health services secretary Vicki Stratton agrees. "She has aided students in more than just their

health. She has contributed to the whole student. She treats them like they are her own children."

Apparently students share the feeling.

"It was special that the day was

retired, agreed that Nurse Betty was very deserving of a day in honor of her.

"She has done a beautiful job," he said. "She has professional knowledge of medical matters, and what's more, she is a wonderful counselor, a warm person and concerned about people. She is also generous with her time. She has made a fine contribution to the college. She has made a big difference, and everyone loves and respects her. She is one of the important professional people on the college staff."

"She impacts everyone," said Stratton. "She is the cement that holds the school together because she is one of the few on campus who sees everyone as they are, not separate as students or staff. She impacts everyone, and there are not a lot of people you can say that they influence the whole campus."

Dr. Ramer also suggested that students go and meet Nurse Betty even if they don't have any medical need.

In spite of all this praise, Nurse Betty remains her humble self.


"It was a very humbling experience. It made me feel like a queen bee...It's something I haven't finished digesting," she said. "Everyone else around here should be honored for what they do too."



PHOTO BY SARAH KINGSBURY

from the students," said Nurse Betty. "They said I was like their mama, someone to sit and listen to them."

Dr. Hal Ramer, the founding president of Vol State and now




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