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## CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY: 100 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP

One hundred years ago, in the year 1912, a small group of dedicated nurses joined forces to realize their dream of transforming nursing from a job to a profession. These outstanding women of vision and faith established the Arkansas Graduate Nurses' Association, later renamed the Arkansas Nurses Association (ARNA). Their original mission transcends time: to provide the highest quality of nursing services through nursing education, research, practice and patient advocacy. Families of the early 1900's trusted nurses to care for their loved ones with skill, compassion, dignity, respect, and integrity. In the year of 2012, the public still holds nurses in high esteem, retaining the number one ranking in the Gallop Poll for "The Most Trusted Profession" for the past twelve years. Some highlights that reflect ARNA's impact on the emergence of nurses as a valid member of the healthcare team follow.

- **1900's:** ARNA establishes a professional state nurses association in 1912. Initiates legislation for registration of graduate nurses; passed in 1913. Arkansas Board of Examiners forms in 1913 to oversee registration process. ARNA becomes constituent member of the American Nurses Association (ANA). Responds to call from Red Cross to help with flu epidemic. Begins education lectures at meetings.
- **1920's:** World War I national efforts with Red Cross. ARNA members initiate teams to respond to Arkansas flood disaster of 1927; pioneer public health efforts. Initiate discussion with Arkansas Dean of College of Medicine to include a College of Nursing in the future Little Rock Medical facility.
- **1930's:** Depression; first recognized shortage of nurses at state and national levels. Hospitals face student welfare issues as their nurse training programs include long daily work hours for students.
- **1940's:** World War II increases need for hospital nurses. Focus on educational preparation of nurses, hospitals versus colleges. Initiation of inspection and accreditation of schools of nursing. AR Nurse Practice Act amended to create a Practical Nurse Division in the Arkansas Board of Examiners.
- **1950's:** Practice setting of nurses expands from hospitals to schools and community. Supreme Court segregation ruling closes all black schools of nursing and their respective hospitals. Critical care units begin to appear initiating interest in a new nursing practice role.
- **1960's:** Major transition in nursing education brought about by ANA's 1964 Position Paper proclaiming that professional nursing education should take place in institutions of higher learning. ARNA supports the document. Arkansas among first states to close diploma programs and open more collegiate programs.
- **1970's:** Welfare of nurses comes to forefront. Focus on nurse staffing and workplace issues. A second recognized nursing shortage emerges and continues into the 2000's.
- **1980's:** Health care surfaces as a major industry. Specialty nursing practice roles increase; standards of care, required credentials, regulation of practice formulated for new roles. Faculty preparation studied. Growing interest in nursing research.
- **1990's:** Collaboration and cohesion among nursing organizations to maintain the highest standards of nursing care in all settings of nursing practice. ARNA nationally accredited as A Provider and Approver of Continuing Nursing Education. ARNA initiates campaign to pass legislation to establish the Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) role, along with prescriptive authority for qualified APNs.
- **2000's:** Nursing research matures to "evidenced based practice" as a norm. Professional credentialing mandates increase. Nurses required to become proficient in new healthcare technologies. Major changes in approach to healthcare. Patient and family advocacy primary concerns.

A critique of ARNA's history reveals the accomplishments of ordinary women with extraordinary courage, vision, dedication and strength. Their sphere of influence in the communities where they lived and practiced was exceptional. Our nursing ancestors set forth a path toward excellence in practice by promoting and ensuring advanced education, clinical competency, high standards of care, nursing research, patient and nurse advocacy. As ARNA celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we honor the efforts of nurse leaders who created a professional organization that continues to advance the nursing profession.