



**Marquette University
College of Nursing**

*90th Anniversary
Historical Exhibit*

May 1, 2026 - May 31, 2026

90 Years of Impact

In September of 1936, the Marquette campus welcomed 23 nursing students. They were not just the first students to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing on Marquette's campus, but the first to do so in the state of Wisconsin. They were, in many ways, like the students of today: young, hopeful, eager to serve. There's no way they could have known how far the legacy they began would ultimately extend.

Over the course of nine decades, more than 13,000 nurses have graduated from Marquette, and they have collectively treated hundreds of thousands of patients. The challenges to the American healthcare system have multiplied exponentially over the years. Clinical and simulation standards have shifted. What a nurse looks like, and who can be a nurse, has also undergone a transformation.

Surviving and thriving for 90 years has demanded a combination of responsiveness to these changes and clarity about what should remain constant. The principles of a Marquette Nurse — caring for the whole person, advocating for the vulnerable, championing social justice, thinking critically and leading courageously — have been a steady, unyielding moral compass for everything we do. Although we are always discerning what it means to live those principles in the times we are in, our commitment to the principles themselves has never wavered. Marquette is a trusted name in nursing specifically because we educate nurses that have so consistently embodied these qualities.

In celebration of 90 years, we collaborated with a visual & experiential merchandising class from Mount Mary University to display our collection of historical uniforms. We hope you enjoy.

Jill Guttormson, PhD, MSN, RN
Dean of the College of Nursing

Historical displays created by Mount Mary University Fashion Business Majors, **Mikaeyla Owens, Hilary Ramirez, Je'Nyia Williams, & Isabelle Wohlgemuth** under the direction of Assistant Professor of Fashion Business, Trish Kuehnl, MA and Mount Mary Fashion Archive Curator and Instructor, Amanda Davy, MA.



Our history begins with an affiliated school and precursor to the Marquette University College of Nursing (MUCN): the St. Joseph's Hospital Training School for Nurses. Class portraits from St. Joseph's from 1901, 1908, 1915, and 1930 accompany a variety of historical nursing garments and catalogue the changing uniforms from the early 20th century.



St. Joseph's Hospital Class of 1901



St. Joseph's Hospital Training School for Nurses Class of 1908



St. Joseph's Hospital Class of 1915



St. Joseph's School of Nursing Class of 1930

The military nurse experience encompasses those called to serve patients, communities and their country. Marquette has a proud history of nurses who serve—from the accelerated nursing program begun at Marquette in 1943 (preparing cadet nurses during World War II) to the ROTC nursing students of today. This exhibit features a 1940s cadet nurse uniform alongside a 1940s clinic bag and a 1978 navy nurse uniform.



Clinic Bag
Circa
1940



Cadet
Uniform
Circa
1940s



The second floor display features uniforms of the 1950s complete with a midcentury MUCN cape. Accompanying the display are vintage hypodermic syringes alongside class pictures from 1952 and 1957.



The third floor display features uniforms of the 1960s alongside a set of ceramic lamps and thermometer.



A nursing student answers the telephone at a hospital desk, 1968-1969

The lamp used as part of this 1961 capping ceremony (above), harkens back to the earliest days of the nursing profession of Florence Nightingale who carried a lamp in military hospital wards during the Crimean War.

The fourth floor display features uniforms of the 1970s alongside a set of bed pans from St. Joseph's hospital and a set of nursing caps.



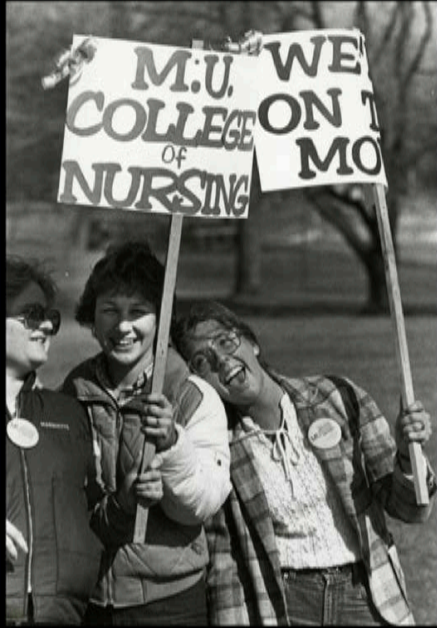
A nursing student adjusts her cap, 1972-1973



Students practice the administration of shots by using an orange, 1973



Joan Mulligan instructs a nursing student in the use of clinical instrumentation, 1975



Nursing students carry signs to promote the college, 1981



Nursing student Carol Alston reviews intravenous devices, 1988-1992

The fifth floor display features uniforms of the 1980s alongside decorative nursing class pins, vintage needles, a vintage “hospital-surgical ware” irrigator as well as two 1980s era photos of students promoting the college and a student practicing with an intravenous device.



The late 70's and 80's marks the transition in nursing uniforms in America with the retirement of the traditional cap and the rise of scrubs. The navy blue scrubs used as the nursing student uniform of today has remained largely unchanged for decades.

