



NORTH CAROLINA BAPTIST NURSING FELLOWSHIP HISTORY 1983 - 2013

World Events Opening the Doors for Change

In 1972 President Nixon made a surprise visit to China which filled people with new hope and anticipation for a happier exchange between peoples of the world. The Vietnam War ended in 1975. The United States celebrated her bicentennial in 1976. Increased global air travel, improved communications- the development of personal computers, internet/e-mail, cellular phones, and economic prosperity in the USA paved the way for the great volunteer movement which began in the mid nineteen-seventies.

Baptist Medical-Dental and Baptist Nursing Fellowships Organized

A group of twelve Baptist physicians and dentists organized the **Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship** in **1976** to participate in volunteer health care missions under the umbrella of the Baptist Brotherhood, SBC.

Many nurses and other health care professionals attended their inspiring annual meetings. Since membership was not open to nurses, the BMDF encouraged the nurses to join with them in exploring with Woman's Missionary Union the possibility of providing an umbrella for the nurses.

Baptist Nursing Fellowship was organized in November, 1983 under **WMU sponsorship**. **Ellen D. Tabor, NC**, was elected president. **BNF** was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the State of Alabama in 1983. State chapters have been established in many states.



North Carolina Baptist Nursing Fellowship (NC BNF) State Chapter Organized

On **February 12, 1983**, the North Carolina Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship President, Fred Graham invited Ellen Tabor to share the developing plans for the national BNF at the annual state meeting. Nurses were invited to attend. Nine North Carolina nurses: **Inez Arant-Charlotte**; **Carolyn Barbe-Tarboro**; **Mary Ellen Benton-Wilmington**; **Lorna Lane-Greensboro**; **Bobbie Lewallen-Asheboro**; **Brenda Alford-Mooresville**; **Judy Ginn-Salisbury**; **Jacequeline Ledford**; and **Ellen Tabor-Winston Salem** organized the North Carolina Baptist Nursing Fellowship. **Inez Arant became the founding president.**

**NORTH CAROLINA BAPTIST NURSING FELLOWSHIP
PRESIDENTS
1983- 2013**



**Inez Arant
1983 - 1985**



**Suedel
Bedsaul
1985 - 1987**



**Ellen Tabor
1987 - 1993**



**Donna Rodgers
1993-1998;
2003-2010**



**Sandra
Rakestraw
1999 - 2000**



**Pamela
Uzzell
2001 - 2002**



**Paula Louise
Tutherow
2010 - 2013**

The purposes of the organization are: to provide Christian professional fellowship; to promote continuing nursing education and growth for members and nurse missionaries; and to encourage nursing service evolving from a personal commitment to Jesus Christ (Matt. 25:40).

A **prayer partner relationship** is encouraged between a nurse missionary and individual members, and a **prayer chain** is activated when prayer requests are received.

The NCBNF **Mission Statement: NC BNF is a fellowship of Christian nurses seeking to model and encourage others to model Christian professional care giving** was adopted in 1998.

Since the national WMU was providing leadership and assistance at the national level, the new NCBNF was presented to the ninety-second annual session of Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina on March 19, 1983 by Ellen Tabor and Carolyn Barbe requesting sponsorship. At the **WMU- NC May, 1983 Board meeting, sponsorship was granted to the NCBNF.**

From 1983-2012 **WMU NC Executive Directors - Nancy Curtis (1983-1993), Dot Allred (1993-1994 Interim), Irma Duke (1994-2000), Katharine Bryan (2000-2001 Interim), and Ruby Fulbright (2002-2012)** have provided excellent supportive leadership and guidance on behalf of WMU NC to NC BNF. In the January, 1988 newsletter the NC BNF president's message included: "**We are thankful:**

- **that WMU NC is our supportive sponsor,**
- **that national WMU and national BNF are leading us to grow and develop into a strong mission support organization,**
- **that North Carolina nurses are involved in missions in local church, association, state, national and international settings,**
- **that we are prayer partners with our nurse missionaries."**

On May 4, 1983 Carolyn Barbe, Secretary presented a NC BNF logo, which was designed by Susan Barbe Fecho, to the NC BNF Executive Board. The logo was adopted as the official NC BNF logo with the addition of WMU inserted below the cross.



In 1983 NC BNF members began serving as **camp nurses** for the WMU camp programs at Mundo Vista. **Lois Culler** and husband, Grady and **Suedel Bedsaul** and husband, Bill served many summers. **Donna Rodgers** has led in the recruitment of camp nurses since 1993 and serves as Health Care Director at Camp Mundo Vista. **Two BNF members volunteer their services each week of camp.** Hear a testimony from Donna:

"Nursing at Camp Mundo Vista "

I remember the first time I volunteered as the Camp Nurse at CMV. There was no Health Care Center, no way to communicate with the Camp Director, no cabinet full of medications and I was completely alone,,,,,,**wow** times have changed. We are fortunate now at CMV to have an 1800 square foot Health Center building with two sick rooms with private baths, a cabinet full of over the counter medications, and immediate access to the Camp Director and two volunteer nurses serving each week.....

And talk about homesick, the first time I served I was so homesick I thought **I would die**. Now I cannot wait for my week every year, and then I am not ready to go home when Friday comes. But the second time I volunteered, it was a completely different story....I had the best mentor anyone could have, **Lois Culler**. She taught me so much about camp nursing...you know every girl that comes to the HCC with a "tummy ache" does not have appendicitis! Lois just knew how to minister to each camper and knew what was going on with her at the time.

After a couple of years, NCBNF looked for a way the organization could give back to WMU NC. WMU NC agreed to allow NCBNF nurses to volunteer. Thus, began the task of providing two nurses each week during the camping season. Not only did NCBNF provide the nurses but at the annual meeting of NCBNF, nurses bring Wal-Mart gift cards to help supply OTC medications and supplies for the HCC.

I have the privilege to coordinate the volunteer nurses for many years. A couple of years ago, NCBNF established funds to be set aside for the HCC. At that time, I was asked to serve as the Health Care Center Director. It is a volunteer position but the funds aid the director in travel expenses. I enjoy the recruitment and orienting nurses to the procedures of the HCC."

A newsletter, "**The Pulse**" is published three times a year. It was begun in 1985 on an irregular basis. In March, 1990 volume One, Issue One under the new name, **The Pulse**" was published. **Mary Boyles** and **Jeanette Kennedy** had suggested the name in the Name the Newsletter Contest. The president-elect is editor of the newsletter.

NC BNF is a **professional nursing organization** with a **dues paying membership**. The officers, who are elected for a two year term, serve as the **Executive Committee**. This committee has the power to act for the organization between annual meetings. The annual meetings are held for business, inspiration, accredited continuing education, and fellowship. **Local community chapters** are promoted to increase our outreach to nurses and health care professionals. **Ten local chapters' activities** were reported in **The Pulse**, December, 1991.

A **trust fund** was established in 1990 to assist in nurse missionary interactions and mission projects. Churches are invited to honor their nurse members on **Nurse Appreciation Day**. Members are encouraged to **mentor** new graduates and nursing students. NC BNF was granted a Second Century grant in 1990 from national WMU to

pilot the **parish nursing education of churches and nurses** in the area of churches employing a nurse staff member to give direction and call attention to health care concerns in the church/community. Churches have been slow in responding to hiring nurses to serve in their congregations, but many nurses serve in a volunteer role in educating and guiding people in regard to health issues.

North Carolina BNF presidents-Inez Arant (1983-1985), **Suedel Bedsaul** (1985-1987), **Ellen Tabor** (1987-1993), **Donna Rodgers** (1993-1998), **Sandra Rakestraw** (1999- 2000), **Pamela Uzzell** (2001- 2002), **Donna Rodgers** (2003- 2010), and **Paula Louise Tutherow** (2010- 2013) have provided excellent leadership. **Serving with them have been many other dedicated officers.**

Under their guidance NC BNF has been active in many areas of Baptist and Christian missions life. A few of these include: organizing and hosting community medical and dental care using the **N C Baptist Men's Medical- Dental buses**, free clinics, health services for county fair workers, **Red Cross- BNF Disaster partnership care**, Camp nursing, First-Aid coverage at meetings, leading **education conferences on medical issues** such as HIV/AIDS, sexuality, human trafficking, care of homeless, obesity, and aging. Members participate in WMU's MissionsFests, plan, lead or participate in medical mission trips to Togo, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Bosnia, Gaza, Israel, Iraq, India, China, Korea, Honduras, Guatemala, Haiti, Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico and other international areas, and nationally to Alaska, Kentucky, West Virginia, California, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Mississippi Region projects, Louisiana, and Alabama to name some of them.

A Challenge Worth Repeating

At the tenth anniversary **Nancy Curtis, WMU NC Executive Director** challenged: "Those of you who are members can be justifiably proud of your organization, for **BNF** is more than a group of officers and a list of dues payers. It is an organization that has taken seriously the calling of making a difference in people's lives for Jesus' sake. And as more local units are begun more and more people can experience God's healing touch spiritually as well as physically through the hands and hearts of Christian nurses.

May we count on each of you to be part of an ever expanding ministry through NC BNF by encouraging your friends and associates to join and by your remaining active and becoming a part of the many outstanding activities, events and projects carried out by the North Carolina Baptist Nursing Fellowship. Ministry is two-way. Those involved give countless blessings to others, which are returned in kind."



Donna Rodgers, Ellen Tabor & Nancy Curtis
@ NC BNF annual meeting - 1992

The thirty year challenge extends the national Baptist Nursing Fellowship theme:
**"The Story Lives On" through the North Carolina BNF Chapter as we accept "As
for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" -Acts 4:20**

Compiled by Ellen D. Tabor - 2012