

MERCY SCHOOL OF NURSING

# Alumni Spotlight

Therese Browne Abraham ('54)

In 2012, Mercy School of Nursing (MSON) set out on a mission to update contact information for over 1,500 alumni for whom they had mailing addresses. To the school's delight, soon after the initial mailing, information update forms began flowing in via fax, email, and mail.

Contiued on page 6

### A Note of Thanks

In 1996, Christa Anderson Overcash ('48) began hosting an annual Mercy alumni luncheon at her home in Charlotte, North Carolina – a tradition that continued until 2012. These special luncheons (some with over 40 alumni in attendance) provided classmates the opportunity to get together and keep in touch – and oh how they looked forward to seeing one another each year!

Over the years, many classmates assisted with these luncheons, including: Helen Baity Marks ('47), Mildred Overcash Parnell ('47), Edna Cagle Juhan ('47), Catherine Fisher Cline ('48), Lula Stanford Ashley ('48), and Catherine Babb Lowry ('47).

Friends and classmates of Christa Anderson Overcash would like to extend a special thank you for graciously hosting the alumni luncheon for so many years.

"The field of education is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference."

-Debbie Blackwell | Dean



## From the Dean

As the fall semester starts and I get my four children back to school, I am filled with much excitement. I often reflect about my own educational experience and the important role it has played in my life. I view education and the teachers responsible for providing that experience as one of the best gifts I have received. My education has afforded me some wonderful opportunities just as I am sure your education has for you. I know you are quite aware of the nursing shortage that exists in many parts of this country. What some of you may not be aware of is that there is just as big a shortage of nursing faculty. In 2012, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing released a Special Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions which found a total of 1,181 faculty vacancies in the over 600 surveyed nursing schools with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs.

The field of education is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference. Mercy School of Nursing is fortunate to have an excellent faculty. Over 37 percent of the faculty are certified by the National League for Nursing as nurse educators, and 100 percent of full-time faculty hold a master's in nursing graduate degree. In order to maintain that level of excellence in nursing education at Mercy School of Nursing as well as across this country, nurse educators need to mentor nurses as educators. The first experience that many bedside nurses have in educating student nurses is as a clinical preceptor. At MSON, we use preceptors in the clinical elective course and in the capstone course. The experience has been very positive in that students benefit from the clinical expertise of the nurse and the nurse has the opportunity to be mentored into the nurse educator role. Perhaps some of these nurse preceptors may choose nursing education as their new career focus as a result of this experience.

What does it take to become a nurse educator? First, you need to have the clinical expertise in nursing. Second, you ultimately need to be prepared at a graduate level with an emphasis in nursing education. Third and probably the most important is you need to have a passion to share your love of nursing with others. If you think that nursing education might be of interest to you, I suggest contacting your nearest college or university with a graduate nursing program to discuss a career in nursing education. I would also suggest taking advantage of any opportunities to "test the waters" including becoming a preceptor to nursing students or serving in the role of an adjunct clinical faculty member. Education is a precious gift. Maybe you would like to give the gift of education by sharing your passion for nursing with others as a nurse educator.



## Faculty Accomplishments

Congratulations to Debbie Blackwell, PhD, on being selected as one of the "Great 100 Nurses" in North Carolina for 2013. This award recognizes Dr. Blackwell's accomplishments as a nurse, educator, and administrator. Dr. Blackwell has served concurrently as the Dean of Nursing for both Mercy School of Nursing and Carolinas College of Health Sciences for over 10 years. She joins the following MSON past recipients of this honor:

#### MSON Faculty:

Teresa Anderson Barbara Holliday ('75) Tara McMillan-Queen Lise Turner Angel Vasquez

#### Alumni:

Rhonda Lynn Jones Atwell ('75)
Lisa Clement Bryant ('94)
Marie Black Comer ('65),
Carrie Lentz Edgison ('00)
Yevette Hardwood ('86)
Denise Chantal Howard ('75)
C.J. Harris Smart ('86)
Debra Thomas Stavrakas ('75)
Sherry Holshouser Wolfe ('77)



#### School News

It has been an exciting year at Mercy School of Nursing. Since last fall, three graduation ceremonies have taken place and the alumni association gained 74 new members. The NCLEX pass rate for 2013 is currently at 100 percent.

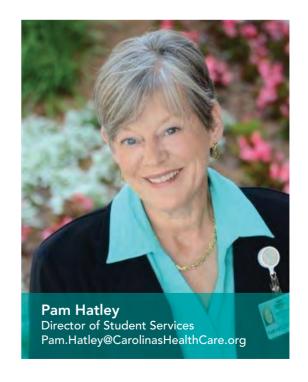
During the past year, MSON welcomed 92 new students. These students came from a wide assortment of careers and life experience including, law enforcement, chemistry, education, retail, military service, accounting, social work and more. Many of these new students hold advanced degrees in a variety of disciplines. Ages of the new classes range from 20 to 50+. This fall we have a total enrollment of 136.

Graduations in December, May and August featured alumni speakers that included Andy Cook, ('07) and Mike Cavacos, ('02). The next graduation will be held on December 12, 2013 at 2 p.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church. Alumni from the classes of 1943, 1953, and 1963 will be honored. The graduation speaker will be Lisa Foster, ('86). All alumni are invited to attend.

Our students were introduced to two new faculty members in the past year. Lou Litton received her BSN from Indiana–Purdue

University and her MSN from Indiana Wesleyan University. She previously worked in emergency care and flight nursing. She has been a nursing instructor in various capacities since 2008. Jackie Meunier received her BSN from East Carolina University and her MSN from Gardner-Webb University. Jackie was the nurse manager in the surgical intensive care unit at CMC-Mercy for many years.

There has been a change to the student uniform. It became more and more difficult to obtain the traditional blue pinfeather material for the uniform tops. The company that made the tops for the last 10 years suddenly closed and the uniform supplier could not find another source. The decision was made to change to a ceil blue scrub top and navy blue scrub pants. The new student uniform will be phased in over the next year. We have kept samples of the uniforms over the years and will add the now defunct blue pinfeather scrub top to the collection.



## In Memorium

Lena Orders Cloninger Class of 1946

Julia Howell Eudy Class of 2006

Mary Hutchinson Gill Class of 1934

Elizabeth Grice Class of 1947

Gayle Kendrick Hall Class of 1954

Teresa Wolhar Masotti Class of 1947

Betty Buie McGinnis Class of 1947 Barbara Nestlerode McMahon Class of 1965

Clyde Vickery Simpson Class of 1953

Carolyn Brookshire Stephens Class of 1950

Martha Whitlock Wilson Class of 1953

> "When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure."

> > -Author Unknown

## A Mercy Keepsake

Thomas F. Clark, a well-known talented sculptor in the figurine industry, was commissioned by Mercy in 2006 to design a Mercy School of Nursing (MSON) gnome in honor of its 100th anniversary celebration.

There are only a few MSON limited edition gnomes still available for purchase for \$45. Proceeds benefit the MSON Alumni Association.

For more information contact Barbara Holliday at

704-512-2041 or Barbara. Holliday@Carolinas Health Care.org.



## From the Alumni Association President

Lately there's been a cool feel to the mornings and the promise of a wonderful holiday season is in the air. As the fall season commences, the recently re-birthed MSON Alumni Association completed its first year and what a year it's been!

We enjoyed a year of social events, motivating speakers, and community service. Last October we held the first Annual "Come Home to Mercy" Alumni/Faculty/Student picnic. What fun it was to see current students and their families along with alumni and faculty. The event was such a success that we are eagerly looking forward to the second Annual event in October!

During our holiday meeting we enjoyed a very heartfelt presentation from Holy Angels and were overwhelmed by the story of a heart transplant recipient who now works for LifeShares.

After the holidays we enjoyed a lively dinner at a local restaurant and enjoyed sharing stories of the good old days! The younger participants were enthralled by the stories of working in operating rooms with windows that were often open and surgeons who showed their displeasure by throwing instruments out of the windows!

In the spring of this year the 2nd Harvest Food bank benefited from a small group of volunteers who spent some time sorting food and assisting in making sure those in need received quality food and supplies.

While it's been a great first year, it's been a year with relatively small numbers of attendees. The goal of this second year is to increase the number of participants that attend our meetings, social events and community service functions.

We'd like to know what would entice you to attend our alumni events and be an active member of the association. We know that work, family demands and commitments can often make it difficult to get out the door to attend one of the meetings, but in my mind, attending one of our meetings or functions is like making time for me. These times together renew my spirit.

During this next year I challenge you to attend one, just one, alumni function. Come to a meeting, to our next dinner out or volunteer at our next community event. Renew your spirit; reconnect with classmates and encourage future generations of nurses to join us at many of our meetings and functions.

With the fall comes an opportunity to take moments to reflect on special blessings and things that we are thankful for. I am thankful for each and every one of you, Mercy nurses, and I am thankful to have a way in which to connect throughout the year in the form of our Alumni Association.

A glorious fall and holiday season to each and every one of you!



# Alumni Spotlight

## ■ Therese Browne Abraham ('54) - Continues from pg. 1

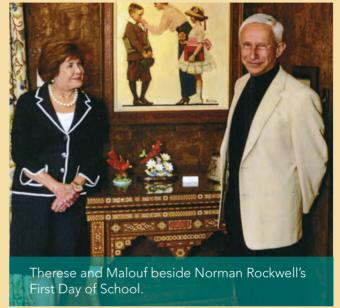
Many alumni chose to fill in the life update section of the form where they could update classmates on where their lives have taken them since leaving MSON – information that is then included in the Class Notes section of the alumni newsletter.

Ruthie Mihal, MSON's alumni relations coordinator, recalls reading through many update forms one afternoon when she came upon the one from Therese Browne Abraham ('54): "I so enjoyed reading all the life updates from the alumni," says Ruthie, "but when I flipped Therese's form to the back to read her update, I stopped half way through and thought, wait, is this for real?" Therese's very casual and unassuming update read as follows:

I worked in nursing for 12 years then raised my three boys; after they were grown I became the mayor of Canadian, [Texas]. I was the mayor for ten years. My husband and I have donated our home and art and money to establish a museum in Canadian, TX. The name of the museum is The Citadelle. Look it up on the internet: thecitadelle.org.

I loved my time at Mercy. You could say it changed my life in many ways. I met my husband of almost 50 years while working at Cone Hospital in Greensboro and that changed my life too. The Sisters of Mercy taught me to be a really good nurse and to be an organized person. These skills enriched every area of my life.

-Therese B. Abraham



Needless to say, Ruthie quickly jumped online and looked up The Citadelle and learned about a love story and life story that is nothing short of extraordinary.

Malouf and Therese Abraham met in 1963 at Cone Hospital in Greensboro, North Carolina. After knowing each other for only three short weeks, Malouf proposed and they were married six months later on December 28, 1963. They will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary this December.

They eventually moved to Canadian, Texas (Malouf's hometown) and, as with most young couples, they spent the next phase of their lives juggling work and family; Malouf was a physician and Therese stayed at home with their three boys: Eddie, Salem and Jason. Once the boys had grown, Therese served as mayor of Canadian for 10 years. But in the midst of this timeframe, something life-changing happened – the couple purchased a Norman Rockwell painting titled "First Day of School." That painting would be the start of their now famous art collection, and ultimately grow into The Citadelle, which consists of the Abraham's home, their gardens, their art collection and the Citadelle Art Foundation. Their family has also grown to now include three daughters-in-law and 13 grandchildren.

Their home – also know as The Mansion at The Citadelle – is a refurbished Baptist Church that was originally built in 1910. The Abrahams purchased the church in 1977 to save it from being torn down. They share a passion for historical preservation and

could envision the potential of this 8,000 square foot structure. They knew it would one day be their dream home – even though everyone around them thought they were crazy. However, this is a couple that is used to having non-conventional plans and they still do to this day because – as Therese explained on the back of her update form – the Abrahams have donated their home, gardens and art collection to the community of Canadian, Texas as an art museum. Their goal in life is to leave the world better than they found it. It looks as though they can already cross that off their to-do list.

For more information on the Citadell Art Foundation, visit TheCitadelle.org.



The Abraham family in 1977 in front of the former First Baptist Church with a sign that reads "We think you're crazy too." The sign was in response to the many comments made to them about their decision to purchase and renovate the church.

## ■ Announcing: The Mercy School of Nursing Alumni Association's Young Alumni Council

#### What is the MSON Young Alumni Council?

The term young alumni refers to those who have graduated within the past ten years (approximately) regardless of age. This is a group within the alumni association created to address the needs of recent grads through programs and/or events that will focus on professional development, educational advancement and mentorship programs with MSON students.

#### Is this group part of the MSON Alumni Association?

YES! The young alumni council was created to address the needs of this particular group – but is an integral part of the overall association.



### What if I graduated more than 10 years ago?

If there is an event that interests you, please join us! Ten years is not a hard-and-fast rule; all interested alumni are welcome. The MSON alumni Facebook page and newsletter will list upcoming events. However, specific notification emails and invitations will only be sent to those who graduated within the past ten years.

#### Off to a great start!

The first official Young Alumni Council event was held on May 16, 2013 at Levine Cancer Institute. This inaugural event was a professional networking function that included a cocktail reception, tours of Levine Cancer Institute, and the opportunity to learn about careers in oncology. Guest speakers included Derek Raghavan, MD, president of Levine Cancer Institute, Ellen Sheppard, EdD, president of Carolinas College of Health Sciences, and Lisa Barber, manager of the Blumenthal Infusion Center at Levine Cancer Institute. This was a joint effort with the Carolinas College Young Alumni Council – and what a great turnout there was! Plans for the 2014 Young Alumni Council event are underway; more details to come.

#### MSON Alumni Online Portal!

Did you know that as an alumnus you can view and update your contact information, search for classmates from your graduating year, and print unofficial transcripts? You can do all of that through SonisWeb, the school database.

#### How to use this tool:

- 1. Access to SonisWeb is based on the email address we have on file for you. If you haven't received an email from the school lately, we need your email address to activate. To register your email with us, please:
  - a. Contact Ruthie Mihal at alumni@CarolinasHealthCare.org or 704-609-1542 with your personal email, or
  - b. Need a free e-mail address? Follow the instructions at google.com/accounts, then use the steps above to inform MSON of your email address.
- 2. Log into the Alumni Portal by entering http://sonis.cmc-mercy.org/ into your browser window. Then click on Alumni in the list of options.
- 3. Enter your personal e-mail address (the one MSON has for you) and PIN. The PIN is your Date of Birth in the format "mmddyy". That is, if your birthday is June 29, 1975, your PIN would be 062975. If your DOB does not work, try this default date: 010100.
- 4. For additional instructions on how and what you can do with SonisWeb contact Ruthie Mihal at **704-609-1542** or alumni@CarolinasHealthCare.org for a copy of the SonisWeb Alumni Support Manual.

# The Future of Nursing



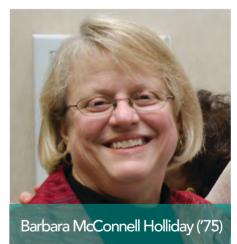
### ■ Grads on the Go!

Barbara McConnell Holliday graduated from Mercy School of Nursing (MSON) in 1975. After working as a staff nurse at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte, she joined MSON in 1979. She obtained her BSN and MSN from The University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 1983 and 1996 respectively. Barbara was the school's health nurse prior to assuming a faculty position in 1991.

Through the years, Barbara has embodied the image of the nurse that we as nurse educators hope our students will aspire to. Barbara represents the nurse that many look up to as a role model. She is knowledgeable, caring and professional. As a teacher she is dedicated to the excellence of nursing. She is able to see potential in every student she educates and prepares to be future practitioners.

As a faculty member, she has always risen to the challenge of every endeavor she has been assigned. Her commitment, dedication and unselfishness are quickly apparent to those who come in contact with her. Barbara's contributions to the nursing profession and patient care led to her being recognized as one of the Great 100 Nurses in North Carolina in 2010.

Barbara is married to Billy Holliday and has two children, Stacy and Brandon. In 2011, Barbara became the proud grandmother of grandson, Cody.



## **Class Notes**

Please send news you'd like to share with classmates via email to alumni@carolinashealthcare.org

#### 1936

Mable Carson Davis is living in an assisted living facility in Stanley, North Carolina, and celebrated her 100th birthday in December 2012. She is still very active and continues to pursue her love of reading and learning with her Kindle and membership in a book club.

#### 1948

Katherine Carson Pitts (Kay) has moved from High Point to an independent living apartment in Raleigh, North Carolina, in order to be closer to her son and daughter. She reads voraciously, enjoys her family, and is the proud grandmother of a therapy dog.

#### 1949

Eileen North Livingston earned her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Rochester in 1972 and her Masters in Elementary Education from Nazareth College in 1974. She retired after 20 years as a school nurse-teacher in the Rush Henrietta Central School District. She and husband, Bill, reside in Victor, New York and have been married for 66 years! Eileen and Bill have four children, 11 grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

#### 1956

Emily Hawkins Sloop is happily retired and living in Durham, North Carolina – and has for the past 20 years. Before retiring, she worked for many years at Durham V.A. Medical Center. Now, she enjoys classes through the OLLI program at Duke University and is anxiously awaiting her first great grandchild.

#### 1959

Joan Blossom Carr resides in Clinton, North Carolina near her son, her daughter and her six grandchildren. Joan worked for most of her time since graduation in various positions before retiring in 2005. After retirement, she traveled extensively through Europe and the United States and then decided to go back to school. Joan has taken (and continues to take) various art classes and is a member of the Sampson Art Council. She also teaches a homecare/ health aide course at the local college. She and classmate Elizabeth Barnhill Shelley continue to keep in touch but she would love to hear from her other classmates and friends.

Jean Townsend Settlemyre Tashman resides in Hickory, North Carolina. Prior to retirement, Jean was the Administrator/CEO of Frye Regional Medical Center in Hickory until 1983. She then accepted a position with parent company American Medical International (AMI) in Beverly Hills, California, as the corporate vice president of nursing and management development. While in her role, Jean created AMI Corporate College – a leadership program for healthcare executives that was the first of its kind in the US In 2002, she retired and returned to her hometown of Hickory, North Carolina.

#### 1961

#### Ann Armstrong Scheimberg

resides in New York City, New York, but plans to move to New Bern, North Carolina. She loves New York, but says, "It's time to come back to North Carolina!" She enjoys communicating with her classmates – they share stories and have a good laugh.

#### 1964

#### Mary Clark Wooldridge

retired in 2012 from Richland School District One where she served as a school nurse for students with disabilities for 32 years. She continues to do home health on a PRN basis. Since retirement, Mary's extra time is spent with her grandchildren, ages 16, 14 and nine including a school trip to Europe in June of 2013 with her grandson. She resides in Cayce, South Carolina near both of her children. Mary says: "hello to all my classmates."

#### 1968

#### Barbara J. Crookshank (BJ)

retired from the US Army Nurse Corp and various bedside nursing positions. She recently lost her younger brother, Dan, to colon cancer in January 2013. Currently, Barbara teaches part-time for Virginia College in Augusta, Georgia.

#### 1968

## Dulin Mills resides in

Lancaster, South Carolina and has been working with the same ophthalmologist for 30 years. He's had opportunities for overseas missions to China, Antigua, Guyana, and Brazil – 19 trips that were a combination of medical/surgical (dispense eyeglasses and cataract surgeries) and evangelism.

Janet Morrison Sims resides in Hamlet, North Carolina and is a first year ADN instructor at Richmond Community College. She is currently working on her MSN Ed with only two classes and a thesis to go. She has two sons; the oldest is serving in Afghanistan and the youngest is a fireman in Fayetteville on a heavy duty rescue team.

#### 1983

Cathy Head earned her BSN from Gardner-Webb University 1998, followed by her MSN in Adult Health Practice from UNCC. Cathy was awarded the North Carolina Nurse Advocacy Award from the American Association of Nurse Practitioner's Convention in Orlando, June 2012. Cathy is currently in full time practice at Lakeside Family Physicians in Cornelius and is a DNP Candidate at the University of South Alabama.

#### 1992

#### 1992

Sharon Hudson Hewat works for Humana as a Utilization Management nurse for the skilled nursing facilities in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. She has two grandchildren, ages 14 and six and two pug dogs. Sharon and her husband just celebrated their 36<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary! They reside in Waxhaw, North Carolina.

#### 1997

#### Kimberly Brown Ross was accepted at Duke University for their adult nurse

practitioner program with a focus in oncology. She will start this fall.

#### 2001

#### Melondie Edwards has

completed her journey with Walden University and is now a master's prepared nursing educator – she graduated in August with a 4.0. Melondie has been working as a clinical nurse educator for over four years at Novant Health Huntersville Medical Center.

#### 2003

Janet Spoto Selz resides in Waxhaw, North Carolina with her husband Andy Selz ('03) and 19 month old daughter, Carlie. They are expecting their second daughter in December. Janet is the lead nurse practitioner at York County Free Clinic in Rock Hill, SC. Janet and Andy will soon be celebrating their 9th wedding anniversary.

Andy Selz resides in Waxhaw, North Carolina with his wife Janet Spoto Selz ('03) and 19 month old daughter, Carlie. They are expecting their second daughter in December. Andy works in the Emergency Department at CMC-Pineville. Andy and Janet will soon be celebrating their 9th wedding anniversary.

#### 2008

#### Jessica Underwood received her BSN from Queens University in 2011.

She currently works in the post anesthesia care unit at Caromont Regional Medical Center. Prior to her current position, she worked in the post intensive care unit at Caromont Regional Medical Center and at Carolinas Medical Center-Main in the neurosurgical intensive care unit. Jessica resides in Gastonia, North Carolina.

#### 2010

Amber Carter resides in Wilmington, Delaware and works in a cancer center in Pennsylvania.

Carly Stephens is a weekender at CMC-Northeast on a pulmonary unit – but she spends all her extra time on a new make-up business she and another nurse created called NicoleRoseAndCo. Although they love nursing they also love makeup! Between nursing and makeup, Carly stays pretty busy. She hopes everyone at MSON is doing well!

#### 2011

Brittany Bost Taylor resides in Georgia with her husband Justin. Brittany and Justin were married in 2012 – first by proxy – then in person after Justin returned from a oneyear deployment to Korea. At that time, Brittany worked as RN at CMC-Mercy on 2 North. Justin was then stationed to Ft. Stewart, Georgia where Brittany held a position as an ICU RN. Currently they are stationed at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Georgia. Brittany is an RN at St. Joseph Candler Hospital on a med/surg unit that specializes in secondary chemo and gastric surgeries.

#### 2012

Lisa Frazier received the Daisy Award on October 4, 2013. She works at CMC Mercy Hospital on 3–North.

### Friends Forever

Each year, the Class of 1963 reunites in various locations across the United States. This spring, they celebrated their 50th anniversary of graduation from MSON in Branson, Missouri. Nine of the 14 classmates attended. Those in attendance were: April Rogers Whyte (Las Vegas, NV), Ann Sullivan (Johns Island, SC), Bonnie Bean Wacker (Inman, SC) Jan Griffin Tuller (Cordover, TN), Anne Norris Watson (Carrboro, NC), Jaye Martin House (Charlotte, NC), Pat Garbark O'Donnell (Mooresville, NC), Aggie Anderson Shaw (Hartsville, SC), Annette Westerman Dorries and husband, Dave (Atlanta, GA). The location is already set for 2014 in Atlanta, Georgia. This class, along with the classes of 1953 and 1943 will be recognized at the December 12th MSON graduation ceremony as well.





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# **Upcoming Events**

Tuesday, November 12, 2013 **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETING**6:30 to 8 p.m. at MSON

Thursday, December 12, 2013 **GRADUATION** 

With special recognition of the classes of '43, '53 and '63

Tuesday, February 18, 2014 **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETING**6:30 to 8 p.m.

March 19-30, 2014 ALUMNI TRIP TO SPAIN, FRANCE & ITALY

Tuesday, May 20, 2014 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETING 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday, August 19, 2014 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETING 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, November 11, 2014 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETING 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

If there is news you'd like to share with classmates, please send that via email to alumni@carolinashealthcare.org or mail to:

Ruthie Mihal Mercy School of Nursing 701-B Forest Point Circle Charlotte, NC 28273



#### February 2013 alumni meeting at Trio's Restaurant

First Row Seated: Ruthie Mihal, Geraldine Thomas Price ('44), Becky Blount Mitchell ('59), Adeline Turner Wall ('54). Second Row: Jean Sergeant Faulkner ('54), Abbey Lee ('12) Gigi Gordon Hudson ('06), Yolanda McLeod Moore (05), Sarah Walker ('12), Third Row: Lisa Mundt Foster ('86), Michelle Tarrant Johnson ('00), Alex Black ('11).