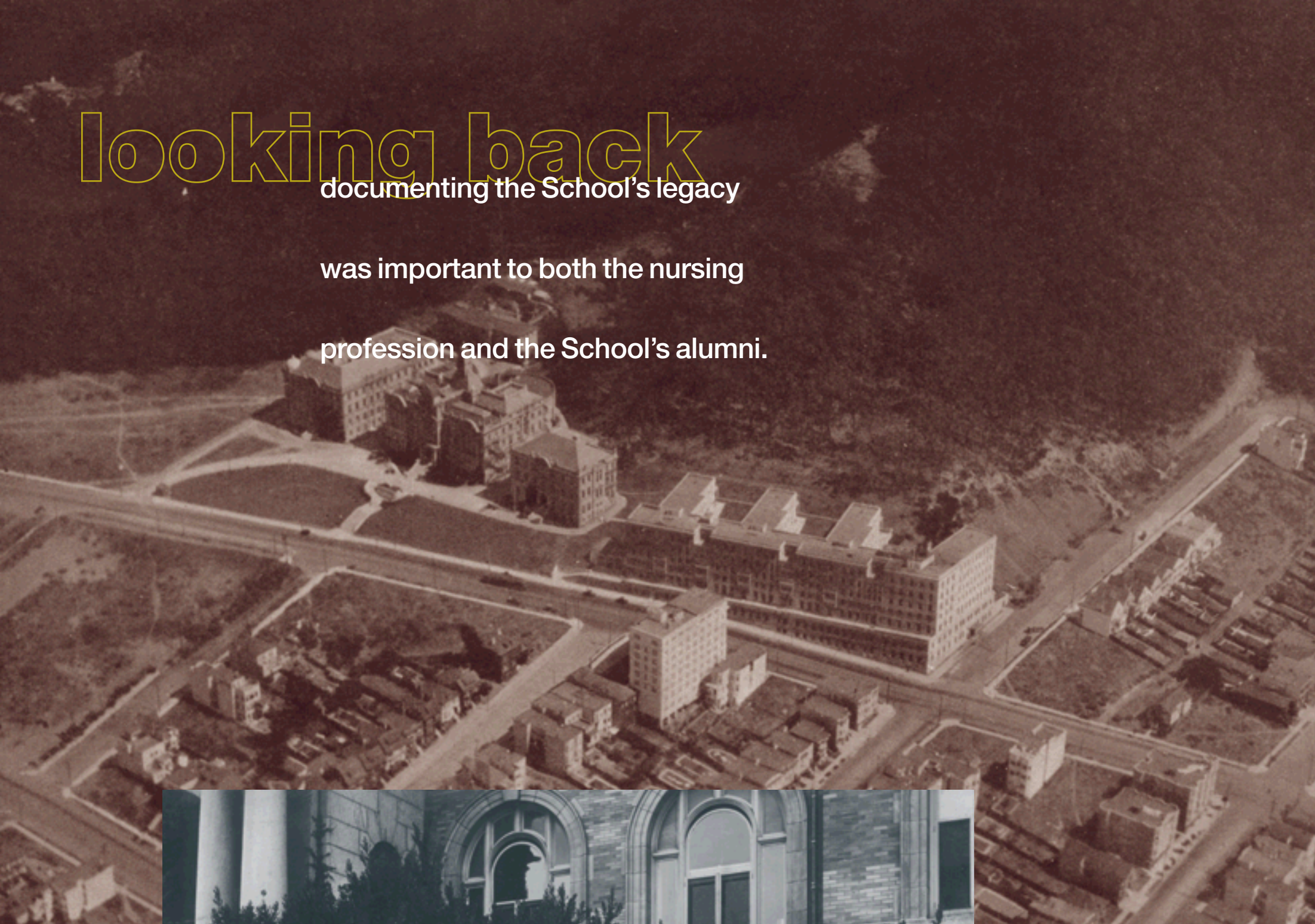


looking back

documenting the School's legacy

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The University of California Hospital Training School's first class of nursing students.

Nursing was almost the only way for women to be directly involved in the war effort.



Marilyn Flood, associate dean emerita

In a November 2002 meeting with the Nursing Alumni Association, Dean Kathleen Dracup was asked to consider developing a historical account of the UCSF School of Nursing. Dean Dracup and then-alumni president Kevin Worth agreed that documenting the School's legacy was important to both the nursing profession and the School's alumni. With the board's unanimous approval, they then set about finding someone equal to the task.

Associate Dean Emerita Marilyn Flood accepted the assignment and soon began collecting anecdotes and archival material. What follows is a vignette from a formative period of the UCSF School of Nursing's early history. The full history will be published in time for the School's centennial in 2007.

Looking Back by Marilyn Flood

Twenty-nine young women celebrated graduation from University of California Hospital Training School (UCHTS) in a week of festivities in early May 1921. These festivities closed a kaleidoscopic three years, during which the students' training, profession and the world itself changed dramatically. Fueling the change were five key events.

World War I and Its Aftermath

The UC nursing students had enrolled in 1918, when nursing was enjoying unprecedented public approbation and visibility. The United States had gone to war in April 1917, and nursing was almost the only way for women to be directly involved in the war effort. Intense war enthusiasm fueled public idealization of nursing and support for more nursing education programs.

The University of California in Berkeley had put the entire resources of the campus at the disposal of the US government. One consequence was the creation of a summer 1918 intensive course, comprising mainly science and social welfare subjects, for women college graduates who wanted to enter nursing. It was understood that they would complete their nursing preparation in just two years, rather than the usual three.

"Twelve college girls" came to UCHTS in 1918. It is unclear from available records whether these were college graduates who had taken the Berkeley summer course or a similar one elsewhere in the country, or students who had completed letters and sciences lower-division requirements for the bachelor in nursing degree plan that was first announced by University of California in March 1918.



About 50,000 San Franciscans contracted the flu in 1918-1919 and about 3,500 died.... Only one nursing student died of influenza.

By 1921 when the three-year students graduated, nursing schools across the United States, along with those in other human service fields, were suffering a radical decline in applicants. The idealism that had swelled the nursing ranks during wartime had dissipated, along with the public health crisis that coincided with the end of the war.

Influenza Pandemic of 1918

During their first year of nursing school, this cadre of UC nursing students provided care to patients in the great influenza pandemic. Although California nursing students were protected by the 8-hours-per-day, 48-hours-per-week labor law, the crisis demanded everyone's utmost energy. Classes were canceled and students, whether new or nearly graduated, worked 12 hours per day all week long for several weeks. The plan was that San Francisco General and Children's hospitals were to receive flu cases, and other hospitals, including University of California Hospital (UCH), were to remain "clean" for other essential care. Despite strenuous efforts to screen patients, this proved better in theory than in practice.

When the second wave of influenza came in late December 1918, UCH also admitted influenza



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cases. Children's Hospital was administratively related to UCH in this era; 10 UCHTS students at a time went to Children's to supplement their staff. So many people were ill at the same time that essential occupations and functions could barely be maintained in the city. About 50,000 San Franciscans contracted the flu in 1918-1919 and about 3,500 died. Two-thirds of the persons who died were between 20 and 40 years old. According to Emily Spangler, a night supervisor at UCH at the time, only one nursing student died of influenza. But the loss, fear and lingering debilitation of the epidemic affected everyone.

Student Self-Government Developed

Student government came to UCHTS on June 12, 1918, with the arrival of Dr. William E. Musgrave as superintendent of the hospital. Students had organized holiday events, and during the war had formed a Knitting Club to make socks for servicemen. During the meetings, letters were read from graduates who were in military service, and special speakers, e.g., from the Red Cross Nursing Service, spoke on timely topics. Group singing accompanied by the Ukulele Club was also a part of these meetings.

With the offer of self-governance, students set about to write a constitution and bylaws. They were to have responsibility not only for their own social and extracurricular activities, but also for establishing and enforcing regulations related to nonacademic-clinical life, especially dormitory living. Within a short time, the students organized a YWCA chapter and had support from a YWCA staff person, who served as a recreational director.

Although both student government and YWCA chapters were common on university campuses, UCHTS was among a very few nursing schools with its own YWCA chapter, and one of the early schools to have a student government with serious responsibility. This shifted the tone of relations between superintendents and students.

Students had been so unhappy in 1916 that they had petitioned the Regents about the inadequacy of the nursing superintendent, and Emily Spangler recalled considerable student unhappiness just after she came in August 1917. By contrast, the 1921 *White Mortarboard* (student yearbook) dedication was to Jessie Greenwood, "our Superintendent, friend, and advisor, in appreciation of her tireless efforts at all times to understand



JESSIE E. GREENWOOD, B. N. WILLIAM E. MUSGRAVE, M. D. EMILY SPANGLER, B. N.
 ERNEST CURTIS, B. N. LOUISE MORROW, M. D. ALICE E. RALSTON, B. N.



Residence Built

Housing for students in 1918 was rather makeshift. Some lived in space that had been built as an auditorium in the old Medical School Building, which had subsequently served as the hospital and was now housing the outpatient clinics. Students had curtained off sleeping cubicles in this large room that afforded little privacy. Outweighing all other drawbacks was the safety issue: The door to the room was locked from the outside at night!

Other students were scattered in four different apartment buildings within a couple of blocks of the hospital, making the close supervision associated with nursing schools of the period almost impossible. But by July 1919, the new seven-story dormitory at the corner of Parnassus and Third avenues was ready for occupancy. Curiosity and anticipation had impelled students to climb ladders to watch progress and to speculate on advantages of various rooms.

Soon after they moved in, the University held a gigantic open house for 3,000 invited guests and the press. The open house included afternoon tours and a dance in the seventh-floor auditorium in the evening. The tours, led by nursing students and UCH house staff, actually spent more time in the hospital (which had opened under constrained circumstances in August 1917 during the war) than in the dormitory itself. The miracle of the celebration was that the residence elevators functioned all day long.

The seven-story nurses' dormitory at the corner of Parnassus and Third avenues.

Housing for students in 1918 was rather makeshift... Students had curtained off sleeping cubicles in this large room that afforded little privacy.... The door to the room was locked from the outside at night!

Leadership Diversified

Dr. Louise Morrow, a member of the medical school faculty, with additional preparation in social economics, was director of the school, in addition to Hospital Social Service, from 1918 to 1921. According to Emily Spangler's account, this was an era when the medical school service chiefs put considerable energy into improving UCHTS. The public health nursing certificate course, which later was solely in the Department of Hygiene at Berkeley, was initially in this period jointly sponsored by "The School of Nursing and Social Service of the Medical School and Hospitals" and the Department of Hygiene in Berkeley. Berkeley faculty representatives, including Edith S. Bryan, who had been appointed assistant professor of public health nursing in the Department of Hygiene in fall 1918, joined the UCHTS Standing Committee.

Certainly, organized nursing was not aspiring to physician administration of nursing schools in this era, but a subsequent nursing director, Mary May Pickering, in a retrospective assessment, believed Dr. Morrow's leadership had been very constructive. Soon after 1921, some

of the alumnae moved to have the new dormitory named Morrow Hall. Although this never came to pass, the students and graduates must have had high regard for her.

This was a period of stabilization and consolidation for the School. It laid the groundwork for the development of the 1922-1933 period and the years that followed. And best of all, UCHTS continued to attract sufficient numbers of students, so that it never had to make exception to its entrance requirement of high school graduation, despite the statewide minimum prenursing education requirement having dropped to just one year of high school.

The May 1921 graduation celebration was certainly a high point. But each of these 29 students actually finished her program on a different day, depending on how many days she had missed due to illness. On her last day, just before noon, each student went to the office of the training school director to receive her diploma and pin, together with congratulations and best wishes. And then, as a graduate, she went to the hospital dining room, where her friends and classmates waited to congratulate her and join her for a celebratory salad.



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