



Stony Brook School of Nursing

15th Annual

SCHOLARSHIP & AWARDS CEREMONY

STUDENT PROFILE BOOKLET



A P R I L | 23 | 2025

STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

Congratulations to all of our Recipients



RUTH ELIZABETH AMADOR SIERRA

Barbara Mills Scholarship in Nursing

Nursing/Senior

Medford, NY

She, Her, Hers

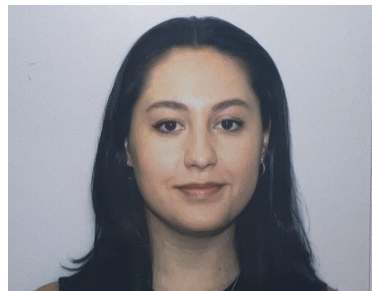
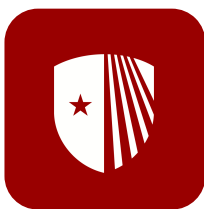
Sierra wants to combine her passion for pediatric nursing with her heartfelt desire to make a tangible difference in the lives of her youngest patients. Driven by personal experiences and a deep-seated empathy for families in need, she is pursuing a nursing degree that promises to transform her dreams into impactful realities.

Sierra's career choice was shaped by her sister's medical situation, which introduced her to the compassionate world of nursing at a young age. This exposure sparked a dedication to provide the same level of care and support she once witnessed, aiming to make a similar impact on other families navigating health challenges. Her classes provide hands-on experiences, including an influential evidence-based practice project to enhance patient care in a medical-surgical unit, reflecting her commitment to merging clinical expertise with compassionate patient interactions.

She chose Stony Brook because of its vibrant campus life, diverse community and strong nursing program. Here, she has deepened her medical knowledge and embraced opportunities to lead and volunteer, enriching her academic and personal life.

"Thank you for your incredible support. This scholarship has allowed me to concentrate fully on my studies and my future in nursing. Your generosity is not just aiding me but also the many lives I plan to touch as a nurse."

- Ruth Elizabeth Amador Sierra '25



MARIAISABEL AMAYA AMADOR

Diane Ducey Hitchings-Tiernan '72 RN Baccalaureate Endowed Scholarship

Nursing/Junior

New York, NY

She, Her, Hers

Amador envisions herself positively contributing to the community by doing what she can to close the gaps in health equity. She strives to do this by obtaining her master's degree in midwifery after completing her bachelor's in nursing at Stony Brook.

Amador has wanted to care for pregnant people for as long as she can remember. Throughout her teenage years and into adulthood, she committed to attending medical school and becoming an obstetrician-gynecologist. But as she learned more about public health and osteopathic medical approaches, she was intrigued about the care that midwives provide. Her first step toward becoming a midwife and fulfilling her dream was accepting a spot in Stony Brook's School of Nursing.

Amador is focused on thriving in her program. Due to the asynchronous nature of Amador's program, most of her learning and participation comes from working with other students on collaborative projects, one being an epidemiological research project that seeks to understand the hepatitis A outbreaks that began in 2016 and their implications for nursing care.

Amador's drive and determination comes from receiving supportive resources, especially the Diane Ducey Hitchings-Tiernan '72 RN Baccalaureate Endowed Scholarship. This scholarship has motivated Amador to join the growing number of nurses who have excelled at Stony Brook and, more important, to inspire others to do the same.

"This scholarship has given me a sense of respite during these few months of balancing full-time work and academic responsibilities. It has allowed me to focus on excelling within my program and gaining the skills I need to succeed in my future career. Thank you for believing in me."

- Mariaisabel Amaya Amador '26



TZIPORA BACKMAN

Marie Frey Memorial Award

Nursing - Midwifery/Graduate

Brooklyn, NY

She, Her, Hers

Backman is on a journey to discover her place in midwifery. She's navigating through clinical experiences in hospital settings and home births, keen on finding where her true passion lies within the diverse practices of her field.

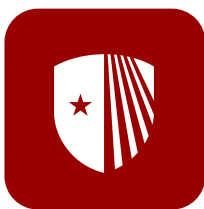
Choosing Stony Brook was a strategic decision for her, drawn by its reputable midwifery program — one of only four in the state and known for its rigorous training and comprehensive curriculum. It offers her a robust academic foundation and valuable hands-on experiences that are critical in this personal, impactful profession.

Backman's current clinical rotation in a midwifery office is particularly rewarding; she appreciates direct patient care and mentorship from seasoned midwives. This experience enhances her practical skills and deepens her understanding of patient care, preparing her for a future where she can make a difference in families' lives.

Her scholarship has been a game changer, allowing her to concentrate fully on her training and familial responsibilities. It has empowered her to excel, ensuring she can pursue her studies and clinical practice with undivided attention.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your support has been instrumental in my journey to become a midwife. It has allowed me to focus on my passion and training without the weight of financial stress, and for that, I am endlessly grateful."

- Tzipora Backman '26



DHIYA BINU

Julia O. Wells Memorial Education Foundation Award

Nursing/Senior

Franklin Square, NY

She, Her, Hers

During clinical rotations at Cohen's Children's Medical Center and a summer internship in the NICU at Mercy Hospital, Binu discovered a strong interest in caring for critically ill children. These experiences, which included direct patient care and working alongside experienced professionals, reinforced a commitment to pediatric nursing, specifically in the pediatric intensive care unit. The fast-paced, collaborative nature of the PICU excites Binu, who values the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of young patients and their families.

Dedicated to developing clinical skills and staying informed about evidence-based practices, Binu has embraced both coursework and hands-on training. Exposure to complex medical cases in the NICU and PICU settings has strengthened her technical proficiency and deepened her appreciation for the compassionate side of nursing. Active involvement in professional development opportunities, including national nursing conferences, has further enriched her educational experience.

A rewarding aspect of Binu's education has been the supportive faculty and camaraderie among fellow nursing students. As a member of the Student Nurses' Association, Binu has taken advantage of networking opportunities and leadership development. Attending the National Student Nurses' Association conventions in Florida and Kentucky provided valuable insight into the profession, from advocacy to advanced patient care techniques.

Receiving the Julia O. Wells Memorial Education Foundation Award has allowed Binu to focus fully on academic and clinical training. Without the stress of financial concerns, Binu has been able to dedicate more time to coursework, hands-on learning, and professional development opportunities.

"This scholarship has not only relieved financial pressure but has also reaffirmed my commitment to nursing. Knowing that others believe in my potential motivates me to work harder and continue striving for excellence in patient care. I look forward to honoring this investment in my future by becoming the best nurse I can be."

-Dhiya Binu '25



CHRISTINE BURYIAK

Ellen Weisenberg Endowed Nursing Scholarship

Family Nurse Practitioner Program/Graduate

Liberty, New York

She, Her, Hers

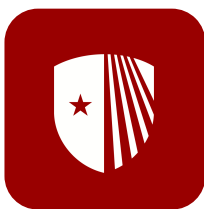
When Buryiak decided to advance her nursing career, she knew Stony Brook University's Family Nurse Practitioner Program was the stepping stone she needed. With nearly 14 years of experience supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and a personal connection through her daughter with ASD, Buryiak is not just pursuing a career; she's advancing a lifelong mission to provide compassionate care to some of the most vulnerable populations.

Her commitment to specializing as a family nurse practitioner is driven by her deep-seated desire to expand her capacity to make a difference. Stony Brook's reputable program offers the flexibility to balance her education with her responsibilities as a working mother, minimizing her commute and maximizing her learning. The program's structure perfectly aligns with her needs, allowing her to continue working closely with her community while pursuing her educational goals.

Buryiak chose Stony Brook for its academic rigor and supportive environment, finding a community that fosters professional growth and personal development. The Ellen Weisenberg Endowed Nursing Scholarship has been pivotal in this journey, lightening her financial burden and enabling her to focus more on her studies, rather than financial logistics.

"Receiving this scholarship means more than just financial support; it represents faith in my potential and investment in my future. I am deeply grateful for this honor and I am committed to living up to the legacy of support that this scholarship embodies."

- Christine Buryiak '26



ASHLEY MARIE CASELLA

Academic Excellence Award - Nursing Leadership

Nursing Leadership/Graduate

Franklin Square, NY

She, Her, Hers

With a poised determination, Casella is charting her path in the challenging yet rewarding field of pediatric oncology nursing. After completing her baccalaureate at Stony Brook, returning for her master's in nursing leadership was a natural choice. Casella is pioneering as the first pediatric oncology navigator focusing on comprehensive patient and family support at Northwell Health. Her current project involves developing educational strategies for caregivers of pediatric oncology patients, which demonstrates her commitment to enhancing patient care.

Casella's involvement with the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses and her role as a legislative ambassador showcase her dedication beyond her immediate responsibilities, extending to the broader field of healthcare. Her leadership extends beyond clinical duties; she actively participates in policy discussions that could shape the future of nursing care.

The Academic Excellence Award - Nursing Leadership Scholarship has had a profound impact on Casella, affirming her dedication and fueling her ambition. This financial acknowledgment has alleviated the stress of educational expenses, enabling her to focus on her professional development and community contributions.

"Receiving this scholarship has truly honored me. It's not just a financial relief; it represents faith in my abilities and contributions to pediatric oncology. I am deeply grateful for this recognition, and it propels me to continue making a difference in the lives of the children and families I serve."

- Ashley Marie Casella '25



CLAIRE CLARKE

Jim Stelling Family Endowed Scholarship in Nursing, Jean M. Bellia Award

Nursing/Junior

Port Jefferson Station, NY

She, Her, Hers

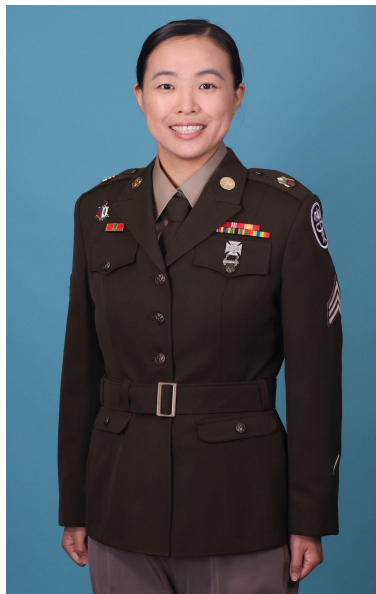
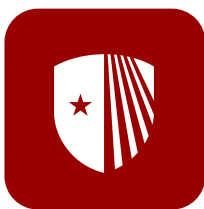
From a young age, Clarke was drawn to the medical field, fascinated by the ability to provide hands-on care and emotional support to those in need. Now majoring in nursing, Clarke plans to begin her career in bedside nursing before advancing to become a women's health nurse practitioner or a general nurse practitioner. No matter the path, the goal remains the same: helping patients through their most vulnerable moments with skill and compassion.

The collaborative spirit among students and faculty has been one of the most rewarding aspects of Clarke's education. Through organizations such as the Pre-Nursing Society, Stony Brook Student Nurses' Association, American Association for Men in Nursing, and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, she has built meaningful connections and gained invaluable insight into the profession. These experiences have shaped her not only as a future nurse but as a person dedicated to lifelong learning and service.

Receiving the Jim Stelling Family Endowed Scholarship in Nursing and the Jean M. Bellia Award was a turning point for Clarke, offering recognition for her dedication and affirming that hard work leads to opportunity. It has allowed her to focus fully on her education, knowing that her commitment to nursing is seen and supported.

"This scholarship reminded me that every effort matters, even on the toughest days. It has given me the encouragement to keep pushing forward, knowing that my future patients will one day benefit from the knowledge and skills I am building today."

- Claire Clarke '26



YAHUI DING

Hugh J.B. Cassidy III Memorial Award & Student Veterans Recognition

Nursing/Graduate

Mililani, Hawaii

She, Her, Hers

From the sunny shores of Mililani, Hawaii, to the bustling campus of Stony Brook, Ding has embarked on a dedicated path toward becoming a military nurse anesthetist. Fueled by her military background and passion for nursing, Ding is driven to provide critical care in high-pressure military environments.

Ding chose Stony Brook for its exceptional nursing program, celebrated for its high NCLEX pass rates and robust academic reputation. Despite challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, the university's commitment to excellence solidified her decision, promising a stable foundation for her ambitious career goals.

Ding cherishes the dynamic interaction between students and faculty, particularly during the on-site seminars that bridge online and in-person education. Engaging in the Stony Brook Student Nursing Association, she has taken a pivotal role in creating a yearbook for the nursing program, a project that encapsulates the shared experiences and growth of her cohort.

The Hugh J.B. Cassidy III Memorial Award has significantly lightened the financial load of Ding's education, enabling her to concentrate on her studies and community service. This scholarship supports her academic endeavors and bolsters her professional confidence, empowering her to pursue leadership roles and further her commitment to nursing and military service.

"Receiving this scholarship has transformed my academic journey, allowing me to dedicate myself fully to becoming the best nurse anesthetist I can be. Thank you for believing in my potential and supporting my dreams."

- Yahui Ding '25



MARLY EDOUARZIN

Kim Mehmood Scholarship in Nursing

Nursing/Senior

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

She, Her, Hers

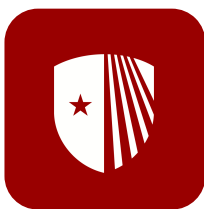
Edouarzin is focused on a future in cardiology, aiming to advance her nursing career into specialized roles such as a nurse practitioner or certified registered nurse anesthetist. Attracted to Stony Brook for its acclaimed School of Nursing, Edouarzin values the supportive faculty and rigorous academic environment that challenges her to excel.

Edouarzin is currently exploring opportunities to enrich her knowledge and skills, with plans to establish an online platform to support aspiring nurses. This initiative reflects her commitment to her field and her desire to share valuable insights with others.

The Kim Mehmood Scholarship in Nursing has significantly eased the financial strain associated with her studies, allowing her to concentrate more fully on her academic and career goals. The scholarships support her financially and validate her efforts and achievements.

“If I could meet the donors, I would thank them for their generosity. They have allowed me to focus on becoming a well-prepared nurse to make a difference in the healthcare field.”

- Marly Edouarzin '25



LISA MARIE FRANCOIS

New York State Office of Mental Health Scholarship

Psychiatry/Doctoral

Freeport, NY

She, Her, Hers

Starting her first year in the doctoral psychiatry program, Francois is on a clear path to achieving her DNP within a field she is passionate about. Her academic pursuits align closely with her career aspirations, preparing her thoroughly for a future where she can contribute to mental healthcare.

Francois chose Stony Brook for its diversity and the strength of its psychiatric program, recognizing the university as a leader in preparing healthcare professionals to address complex mental health issues. The supportive and diverse cultural environment at Stony Brook was a major draw, allowing her to learn in a community that values broad perspectives and varied experiences.

Francois finds the academic environment enriching and supportive. Her daily interactions and learning opportunities make each day unique. She also made her mark in athletics, setting a long-standing record in women's hammer throw, which remains a proud achievement.

The NYS Office of Mental Health Scholarship has been instrumental for Francois, significantly easing the financial pressures of doctoral studies. It allows her to focus more intently on her education and professional development without the overarching stress of financial constraints.

“Receiving this scholarship has been a tremendous help. It not only supports my educational goals but also reinforces my commitment to pursue psychiatry with renewed vigor and dedication. Thank you for this incredible support.”

- Lisa Marie Francois '27



ANN GALLAGHER

Academic Excellence Award - Pediatric Primary Care Nurse Practitioner

Pediatric Primary Care/Graduate

Baltimore, MD

She, Her, Hers

Gallagher deftly balances her bedside nurse role with her pediatric primary care nursing studies. She chose the master's program in nursing for its flexibility, which allows her to maintain her position in New York City while advancing her education. This arrangement keeps her clinical skills sharp and provides real-world experiences that enrich her academic pursuits. Her goal is to enhance her pediatric health primary care skills, focusing on delivering exceptional care to children and their families.

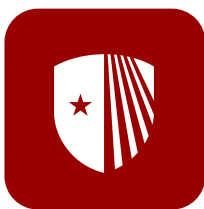
The asynchronous nature of the master's program is particularly appealing to Gallagher. It offers her the opportunity to manage her professional responsibilities alongside her education. This flexibility is crucial, allowing her to integrate her clinical experiences with her academic goals.

Gallagher values the semiannual on-site seminars. These seminars offer a rare chance to engage face to face with faculty and fellow students, fostering a sense of community and collaboration that enhances her educational experience.

The Academic Excellence Award - Pediatric Primary Care Nurse Practitioner has been instrumental in allowing Gallagher to pursue her educational and professional objectives without the overwhelming financial burden. This support has not only facilitated her academic progression but also empowered her to focus on becoming a leader in pediatric primary care.

"I am immensely grateful for the generosity of the donors. Your support is not just an investment in my education; it is an investment in the health and well-being of the children I will serve."

- Ann Gallagher '25



CHRISTOPHER GARCIA

Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award

Nursing/Senior

Freeport, NY

He, Him, His

Garcia's journey to Stony Brook University was fueled by a passion for nursing and a desire to serve in the fast-paced environment of emergency care. Initially inspired by friends who spoke highly of the program, he was drawn to the university's reputation for academic excellence and the opportunity to challenge himself in a dynamic setting.

His time has been marked by leadership and service. As nominations & elections co-chair for the Nursing Students' Association of New York State, Garcia played a key role in creating two need-based scholarships, distributing \$10,000 to support nursing students across the state. This experience reinforced his commitment to giving back to the nursing community and supporting future healthcare professionals.

Beyond academics, Garcia has immersed himself in campus life, joining clubs such as the SBU Strength Club and the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Club, embracing the diverse opportunities available. These experiences have enriched his education, providing balance and a strong sense of community.

Receiving the Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award has been a significant milestone, reaffirming his dedication to his career path, where he aims to provide compassionate, high-quality care in emergency settings.

"Thank you for supporting nursing students like me. Your generosity not only alleviates financial burdens but also inspires me to give back and support future generations of nurses. I am truly grateful for this opportunity."

-Christopher Garcia '25



Zachary Gennaro

Matt Silverstone Memorial Award

Nursing/Senior

East Northport, NY

He, Him, His

Gennaro's commitment to a career in emergency department nursing stems from his fascination with high-pressure environments. Gennaro's aspiration is fueled by the adrenaline and pace of emergency care, aiming to significantly impact patient outcomes.

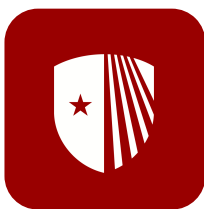
Choosing Stony Brook for its outstanding nursing program, Gennaro found a community that mirrored his commitment to service and excellence. The collaborative spirit and rigorous training have prepared him to thrive in the demanding atmosphere of emergency nursing.

His involvement with the Student Nurses Association as a community health director exemplifies his dedication to community outreach. Gennaro has organized blood drives, beach cleanups and health screenings, enhancing the community engagement of Stony Brook students. A standout initiative, the Nursing Olympics, allowed him to merge creativity with advocacy, fostering a spirit of teamwork and competition among his peers.

The Matt Silverstone Memorial Award Gennaro received underscores his potential and commitment. It has alleviated financial burdens and emboldened his educational pursuits, allowing him to fully engage in the unique opportunities Stony Brook offers.

"Receiving this scholarship has been transformative. It's an honor to carry forward the legacy of excellence it represents. I'm immensely grateful for the financial support and the affirmation it provides as I prepare to enter the demanding field of emergency nursing."

- Zachary Gennaro '25



CHRISTINE GILBERT

Academic Excellence Award - Neonatal Nurse Practitioner, Phyllis Zuckerwise Sterne and Family NICU Nurse Practitioner Scholarship

Neonatal Nursing/Third Year Graduate

Poulsbo, WA

She, Her, Hers

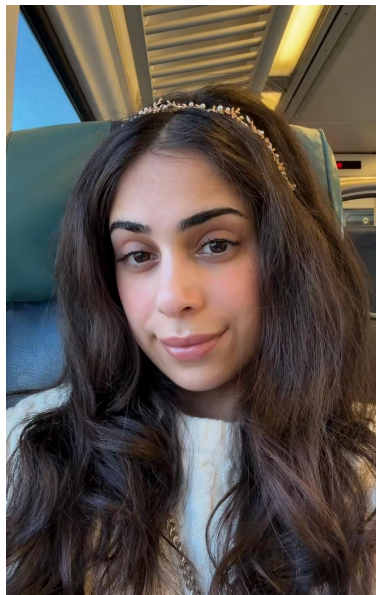
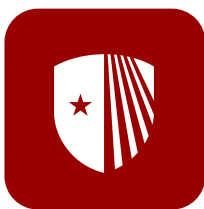
Gilbert arrived at Stony Brook with a long-held dream: to become a neonatal nurse practitioner and dedicate her career to caring for newborns and their families. After over two decades of planning, Gilbert is on the brink of realizing this dream, driven by her passion for helping the most vulnerable patients.

Gilbert's time at Stony Brook has been transformative. Despite the challenges of commuting between Washington state and New York for clinical rotations, the university's support has been pivotal. This journey has been made possible by the Phyllis Zuckerwise Sterne and Family NICU Nurse Practitioner Scholarship, which has significantly eased the financial burdens associated with her education.

Currently, Gilbert is completing her clinical hours in the Stony Brook University Hospital NICU, an experience that has both enriched her skills and deepened her commitment to her future profession.

"This scholarship was crucial. It allowed me to finish my master's despite numerous unforeseen expenses. Thank you to the donors for your incredible generosity and support. Your help has been a beacon during challenging times, and I am profoundly grateful."

- Christine Gilbert '25



MELANIE HAFISOV

School of Nursing Alumni Board Scholarship

Nursing/Senior

Queens, NY

She, Her, Hers

Enrolled in the undergraduate nursing program, Hafisov is set to graduate this May with visions of a specialized career in pediatric intensive care. Her educational aspirations don't stop there; she plans to further her expertise by pursuing advanced roles such as a pediatric nurse practitioner or a certified registered nurse anesthetist.

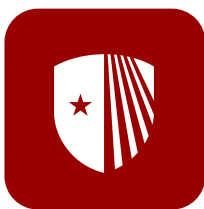
Hafisov chose Stony Brook for its stellar nursing program, renowned for its dedicated faculty and integrated clinical experiences at Stony Brook University Hospital. The program's robust resources and supportive environment have been pivotal in her academic and professional development. In addition to her studies, Hafisov is an active participant in campus life, from dance to ceramics, and plays a significant role in the Stony Brook Student Nurses' Association.

Her most unforgettable college experience has been her pediatric clinical rotation, where she cared for her first patient. This encounter affirmed her choice to specialize in pediatric nursing and fueled her commitment to her chosen field. Hafisov looks forward to representing her university at the National Student Nurses' Association Annual Convention, where she will present a resolution to enhance the lives of children facing housing instability.

The School of Nursing Alumni Board Scholarship has been instrumental in allowing Hafisov to pursue her academic goals without financial burden, enhancing her ability to focus on her rigorous studies and extensive campus involvement.

"I am immensely thankful to the donors for their support. Your recognition of my hard work and academic commitment has provided financial relief and motivated me to continue striving for excellence in my field."

- Melanie Hafisov '25



MELISSA A. JOHNSON

George E. Xippolitos Memorial Award for Doctoral Education in Nursing Research

Doctor of Nursing Practitioner, Family Nurse Practitioner/Doctoral

Oyster Bay, NY

She, Her, Hers

Johnson is forging a path in healthcare that bridges her deep passion for clinical practice with a fervent commitment to academic research. As a doctoral student in the Doctor of Nursing Practice, Family Nurse Practitioner program, Johnson is dedicated to improving patient outcomes, particularly in heart failure management.

Johnson chose Stony Brook for its outstanding reputation in nursing education and its commitment to groundbreaking research. The university's focus on innovation and high standards of patient care perfectly aligns with her career aspirations to influence healthcare policy and practice, ensuring top-quality patient care.

Johnson has immersed herself in a doctoral project aimed at reducing 30-day hospital readmissions by enhancing nurse and patient education regarding effective discharge processes. This work is not only a professional challenge but also a personal mission to elevate the standard of care in healthcare settings.

The George E. Xippolitos Award for Doctoral Education in Nursing has been instrumental in supporting Johnson's academic and research endeavors. It has provided her with the financial freedom to focus on her studies and contribute meaningfully to the field of nursing education.

"Receiving the George E. Xippolitos Award has been both an honor and a profound responsibility. It has allowed me to pursue my passion for improving healthcare outcomes without the burden of financial stress. I am immensely grateful for this support, which fuels my commitment to advancing the nursing field."

- Melissa A. Johnson '25



MATTHEW KALINSKY

Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award

Nursing/Senior

Smithtown, NY

He, Him, His

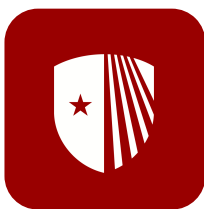
Kalinsky's path to nursing has been one of dedication and perseverance. From earning his EMT license to completing his prerequisites, he has spent the last 2 1/2 years preparing for a career in emergency and intensive care nursing. His goal is to become proficient in helping patients in crisis while also developing the skills to provide long-term care. Now, as he nears graduation, he is focused on securing a position in an ER or ICU setting, with the potential to pursue a future as a certified registered nurse anesthetist.

Stony Brook's accelerated nursing program at a prestigious Level 1 Trauma Center was the ideal choice for Kalinsky. Its rigorous academic environment and hands-on clinical training provided the foundation he sought. Beyond the classroom, he values the camaraderie within the School of Nursing, where students support one another and organize activities, including a memorable ski trip that he helped coordinate. Rock climbing remains a personal passion, offering him a way to stay sharp and balanced amid his studies.

Receiving the Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award has been a tremendous help as he prepares for his nursing exams and licensing.

"This is an immense help as I take the next step toward working in an ER or ICU. I understand that many others would have benefited from this as well, and I am truly grateful."

- Matthew Kalinsky '25



MATTHEW GEORGE KILLIAN

New York State Office of Mental Health Scholarship & Student Veterans Recognition

Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner / Doctoral

Lancaster, PA

He, His, His

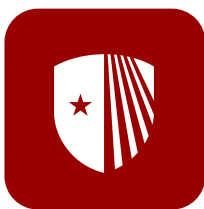
Killian is a dedicated psychiatric nurse practitioner committed to serving American military veterans and his local community. His passion for mental health stems from the belief that, with the right support, individuals struggling with mental health and substance use disorders can lead healthier, more fulfilling lives. He finds immense reward in guiding his patients toward stability and renewed purpose.

Currently enrolled in Stony Brook's DNP program, Killian values the opportunity to expand his knowledge beyond his specialty. For his doctoral project, Killian focused on improving the care provided to veterans at the Northport Veterans Affairs Medical Center. His research centers on the often-misunderstood issue of substance use disorders — conditions frequently seen as personal failings rather than medical diagnoses. He believes that, with better understanding and targeted interventions, healthcare providers can offer more effective treatment and support to veterans battling these challenges.

Receiving the New York State Office of Mental Health Scholarship has been a pivotal moment in Killian's academic and professional journey. As a father, veteran and mental health provider, financial assistance has provided him with the freedom to pursue his Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree without the added burden of financial stress. In today's uncertain economy, this support has been instrumental in allowing him to refine his skills, deepen his expertise and ultimately become a more effective provider for his patients. This act of generosity has not only lightened his financial load but has also reinforced his commitment to giving back to those in need.

"Because of your generosity, I have been able to pursue my academic and professional aspirations with confidence. I look forward to continuing my service to veterans and my community, using my expertise to advocate for better mental healthcare and shape the future of psychiatric nursing."

- Matthew George Killian '25



THOMAS LOVERDI

Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award, Stony Brook Alumni Association Dean's Choice Award

Nursing/Senior

Staten Island, NY

He, Him, His

Loverdi was drawn to nursing by the example set by his late aunt Rena, a dedicated nurse for over 40 years. She often spoke about the need for more men in the profession, a message that remained with him throughout his life. During his summer externship at NYU Langone, he cared for a palliative care patient who had not spoken since admission. For three weeks, he fed, comforted and engaged with the patient, who eventually called his name and asked about football — his first words since a stroke. That moment affirmed Loverdi's commitment to nursing and the deep impact of compassionate care.

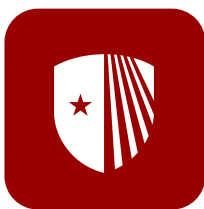
As president of the American Association of Men in Nursing Stony Brook Chapter, Loverdi has worked with his team to expand the organization's reach and programming. Under his leadership, membership grew from 30 to 135. The group collaborated with campus organizations to host workshops on vital signs and sign language, organized panels with experienced nurses and launched a toy drive for pediatric patients facing financial hardships.

Surrounded by supportive faculty and peers, Loverdi appreciates the hands-on learning and sense of community. He still remembers the moment he received his acceptance while eating on campus with friends, a milestone that felt even more special because he was with people who had supported him throughout the process.

Receiving the Keane T. Kyle Memorial and Dean's Choice Award has been a tremendous honor for Loverdi. It has allowed him to focus on his education and leadership roles while reinforcing the value of hard work and perseverance.

"Thank you for recognizing the importance of diversity in nursing and for inspiring students like me to lead with compassion and integrity. Your support enables me to give my best to my studies, my patients and the nursing community."

- Thomas Loverdi '25



THOMAS MAHER

Academic Excellence Award - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

Nurse Practitioner of Psychiatry/Graduate

New City, NY

He, Him, His

From his first step onto Stony Brook's campus, Maher knew it was where he would shape his future in psychiatric care. Driven by a commitment to mental health care, especially for children and adolescents, Maher is set to graduate with advanced training to make significant strides in pediatric inpatient psychiatry.

His journey into healthcare was sparked by his passion for advocacy and desire to provide crisis intervention for young patients. Stony Brook's reputation for excellence in psychiatric nurse practitioner training offered him the perfect amalgam of rigorous academic coursework and vital clinical experiences. The program honed his clinical skills and deeply embedded the importance of patient advocacy — a principle that now guides his professional ethos.

Choosing Stony Brook was an easy decision for Maher, who was influenced by the university's strong focus on interdisciplinary collaboration and evidence-based practice. His time at the university has been filled with enriching experiences, including participating in advocacy groups and contributing to healthcare policy.

"Thank you for your incredible support. This scholarship has been pivotal in my journey, allowing me to dedicate myself fully to my studies and advocacy work. Your generosity is helping me and the many lives I aim to touch through my career in mental health."

- Thomas Maher '25



BEATRIZ MAKHOULIAN

Gene E. Mundie Endowed Scholarship for Doctoral Study, Academic Excellence Award - Doctor Nursing Practice

Doctor of Nursing Practice/Doctoral

Roslyn, NY

She, Her, Hers

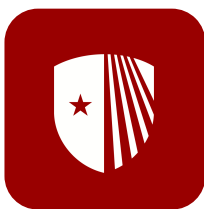
As she nears the completion of her doctor of nursing practice (DNP) program, Makhoulia is poised to further her ambitions by advancing to a post-master's degree as a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner. This next step is integral to her mission to seamlessly integrate family health and mental health care, aiming to provide comprehensive, holistic services across diverse communities.

Makhoulia chose Stony Brook for its strong emphasis on healthcare innovation and leadership, values that align perfectly with her career aspirations. Her dedication is evident in her impactful DNP Quality Improvement project, which focuses on collaborative approaches to managing depression in primary care settings. Her work allowed her to present at the 37th Annual Scientific Sessions, underscoring her commitment to enhancing mental health accessibility.

Makhoulia thrives in an environment that fosters academic and professional growth. She participates in university-led events and initiatives such as the Healthy Aging workshop. The support from the Gene E. Mundie Endowed Scholarship for Doctoral Study has been transformative for Makhoulia, bolstering her professional development and personal journey. This scholarship has enabled her to share her research at conferences, extending her influence in the field and honoring the legacy of Gene Mundie.

"Receiving the Gene E. Mundie Endowed Scholarship and the Academic Excellence Award have profoundly impacted my career and research capabilities. They have allowed me to pursue advanced studies and make significant contributions to mental health care. I am immensely grateful for this support, which enables me to honor Gene Mundie's legacy through my commitment to healthcare excellence."

-Beatriz Makhoulia '25



RAUL MARTINEZ

Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award

Nursing/Senior

Brentwood, NY

He, Him, His

Martinez is on his way to becoming a nurse in May 2025, aspiring to start his OR residency upon graduation.

Martinez's passion for medicine was ignited by his time volunteering with the Brentwood Legion Ambulance, where the adrenaline and thrill of emergency calls, combined with the impactful outcomes, drove him to nursing. He's currently engaged in a research project aimed at improving pain assessment methods for patients in the neurology unit who are unable to communicate their pain, such as those suffering from Alzheimer's or intellectual deficits.

Choosing Stony Brook for its accredited and challenging nursing program was a no-brainer for Martinez. The university's rigorous yet supportive environment confirmed his decision to continue his nursing education at this institution. Stony Brook's community has profoundly enriched Martinez's academic life. He appreciated the camaraderie with fellow students, especially during early morning drives to distant clinicals, which have transformed rigorous academic challenges into memorable experiences through shared laughter and support.

The Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award has not only acknowledged Martinez's hard work but also reinforced his belief in the value of his academic efforts. The scholarship has personally touched him, making him feel recognized and appreciated by more than just his immediate circle.

"Thank you for seeing the effort I put into my academics. Your support reassures me that my hard work is worthwhile and truly makes a difference."

- Raul Martinez '25



COURTNEY MEDRANO

Ora James Bouey Scholarship

Nursing/Senior

Holtsville, NY

She, Her, Hers

From the moment she stepped onto the campus, Medrano knew Stony Brook was where she wanted to pursue her nursing degree. Having already earned her first undergraduate degree from Stony Brook, she found it an easy decision to continue her education in nursing, given her admiration for the university's programs. Medrano's dedication is now steering her toward a career in emergency medicine, where she aims to excel in providing critical care to patients when they need it most.

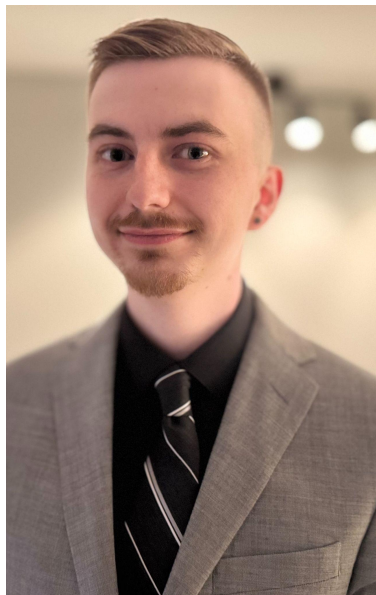
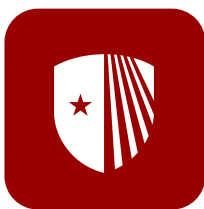
At Stony Brook, Medrano has found more than just an education; she has found a community. As an event coordinator for the American Association of Men in Nursing, she is pivotal in creating enriching experiences for her peers, fostering a supportive environment for all nursing students. This role complements her academic pursuits and allows her to contribute meaningfully to the university community.

Medrano's journey has been marked by supportive professors and enriching experiences that have prepared her well for her future career. Her most memorable experiences include the profound interactions and support she has received from her professors, interactions she will carry with her long after graduation.

Her scholarship, the Ora James Bouey Award, has been a lifeline during a particularly challenging year. It has not only alleviated financial pressures but also reaffirmed her resolve to succeed against all odds.

"Receiving this scholarship has been a beacon during my toughest times. It reminded me that perseverance through adversity is recognized and rewarded. I am deeply grateful for this invaluable support."

- Courtney Medrano '25



RYAN MURPHY

Hugh J.B. Cassidy III Memorial Award & Student Veterans Recognition

Nursing/Senior

Yaphank, NY

He, Him, His

Murphy's passion for the operating room was solidified during an OR winter immersion clinical experience, where he was inspired by the teamwork and complexity of surgical care. Murphy aspires to join the Operating Room Fellowship at Stony Brook to continue developing his skills and contribute to critical patient care.

Murphy has been actively involved in an evidence-based-practice project aimed at improving pain assessment for neurology patients, demonstrating his commitment to enhancing patient outcomes. Additionally, he helped develop an award for the Sigma Theta Tau – Kappa Gamma Chapter to recognize outstanding nursing care and community involvement.

Receiving this scholarship as a veteran reaffirms Murphy's decision to transition into healthcare and motivates him to continue excelling in his nursing education. He is grateful for the opportunity to make a meaningful impact in perioperative care and is committed to upholding the values of service, excellence and continuous learning throughout his career.

"As a veteran transitioning into healthcare, I'm deeply motivated by the opportunity to combine my military experience with my passion for nursing. I'm excited to be part of a team that makes a real difference in patients' lives, especially in the operating room. This scholarship is a reminder of the values I hold dear — commitment, resilience and the drive to serve — and I'm honored to carry those values forward as I continue my journey in nursing."

- Ryan Murphy '25



MONICAH MWANGI

Mary G. Bourguignon Memorial Scholarship

Nursing - Midwifery/Graduate

Corning, NY

She, Her, Hers

Mwangi is reshaping the future of maternal healthcare. Currently a third-year graduate student in the nurse midwifery program, she is driven by her goal to earn a PhD in women's health and committed to empowering women and birthing persons through enhanced education and care.

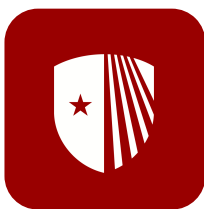
Mwangi chose Stony Brook for its esteemed midwifery program and diverse community, which have equipped her with vital skills and knowledge. The supportive faculty and rich cultural experiences have been pivotal in her development as a healthcare provider.

She engages in projects to improve maternal health, such as increasing awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding and advocating for the involvement of birthing persons in their care plans. These efforts align with her career aspirations to improve prenatal care and empower women in her home country of Kenya.

The Mary G. Bourguignon Memorial Scholarship has been transformative for Mwangi, alleviating financial stress and enabling her to focus on her studies.

"I am deeply grateful for this scholarship; it not only supports my educational goals but also validates my commitment to advancing women's health."

- Monicah Mwangi '25



ALANA NERIA

Yvonne Corinne Headley-Harmon Memorial Award

Nursing/Senior

Brooklyn, NY

She, Her, Hers

Neria's journey at Stony Brook began with a focused goal: to master clinical skills and excel in nursing. Her aspirations include flourishing as a nurse and educating future healthcare professionals. Her commitment to improving patient care through research is clearly demonstrated by her participation in an evidence-based practice project focused on enhancing pain assessment for dementia patients.

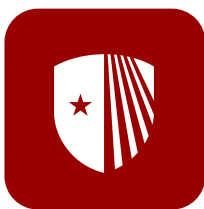
Neria's choice of Stony Brook was influenced by its strong nursing program and direct connections to its hospital, providing a myriad of opportunities for hands-on experience and professional growth. The university's reputation for fostering a supportive and dynamic learning environment played a significant role in her decision, ensuring she would have the resources necessary for success.

Neria appreciates the welcoming and inclusive community, which has been a cornerstone of her educational experience. Participating in the Hall Council and various clubs, she has forged significant connections and received invaluable support from mentors and peers, making her time at the university enjoyable and enriching.

Receiving the Yvonne Corinne Headley-Harmon Memorial Award has been a profound affirmation for Neria, acknowledging her hard work and dedication. This recognition has bolstered her confidence and commitment to the nursing profession.

"Receiving this scholarship has validated my efforts and reminded me that I am on the right path. I am grateful for the support that empowers me to continue pursuing my goals with conviction and care."

- Alana Neria '25



ANA VICTORIA OLIVERO

Phyllis Zuckerwise Sterne and Family NICU Nurse Practitioner Scholarship

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner / Graduate

Orlando, FL

She, Her, Hers

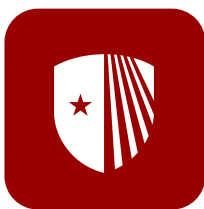
Olivero is pursuing her goal of becoming a neonatal nurse practitioner, aiming to support patients and their families through challenging times with effective and compassionate care.

She focuses on balancing her studies with her family life and work. While her schedule has not allowed for research projects yet, she remains committed to her coursework and clinical responsibilities.

The Phyllis Zuckerwise Sterne and Family NICU Nurse Practitioner Scholarship has provided crucial support for Olivero, helping to relieve some of the financial stress of her education. This support has been especially meaningful as it recognizes her hard work and dedication as she integrates into the professional community.

“Thank you for the scholarship. It has helped ease my financial concerns and motivated me to keep pushing forward in my studies. I’m very grateful for your generosity and support.”

- Ana Victoria Olivero '26



NATHALIA PAPPAS

Yvonne Corinne Headley-Harmon Memorial Award

Nursing/Senior

Bayside, NY

She, Her, Hers

Pappas is dedicated to advancing her education and career in nursing. She plans to pursue a master's degree and become a nurse practitioner, driven by her passion for providing direct care to people.

During her internship at the Long Island State Veterans Home, she gained valuable experience in infection control, wound care, adult day healthcare and nursing education. She collaborated with preceptors to develop and enhance nursing skills, focusing on POC glucose monitoring, vital sign assessment and other procedures.

Pappas chose Stony Brook for its prestigious nursing program and its proximity to home, which allows her to balance her academic and personal life effectively.

Being involved in organizations has enriched her university life. Her commitment to nursing is evident in her involvement in Music and Medicine, the University Scholars Program, the Pre-Nursing Society and the American Assembly for Men in Nursing. She also served as assistant student manager for the Department of Information Technology.

Stony Brook's supportive environment has been a significant factor in Pappas' positive experience. She has made lasting friendships and appreciates the financial support that enables her to focus on her studies.

"Thank you for providing support for students who are truly dedicated to the cause of nursing. It helps us tremendously!"

- Nathalia Pappas '25



RHEA DAVINA PERSAUD

Hilda R. Maier Endowed Scholarship

Nursing/Senior

Rosedale, NY

She, Her, Hers

Persaud plans to use her nursing degree to advocate for patients in diverse specialties. She's actively involved in mentoring underprivileged students, offering academic guidance that aligns seamlessly with her academic pursuits and personal values.

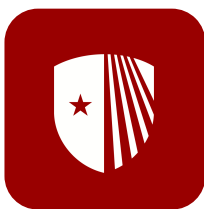
Persaud chose Stony Brook for its robust commitment to diversity, inclusion and clinical excellence. This choice allows her to engage with a varied student body and learn from patients from different backgrounds, enriching her education and preparing her to become a compassionate healthcare provider.

At Stony Brook, Persaud values the sense of community and the myriad opportunities for meaningful engagement. She is particularly moved by her experiences in the NICU, where she works alongside dedicated nurses caring for newborns — an experience that will remain with her long after her graduation.

The Hilda R. Maier Endowed Scholarship has been a cornerstone in Persaud's academic journey, enabling her to concentrate on her studies and professional growth without financial stress. This support extends beyond finances, providing a significant morale boost that fuels her dedication to nursing.

"Thank you for this scholarship. It has supported my education financially and motivated me to strive for excellence in my studies and future career. Your generosity is creating bright futures, mine included."

- Rhea Davina Persaud '25



TAYLOR O'CONNOR

Kappa Gamma Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Scholarship

Nursing/Senior

Saint James, NY

She, Her, Hers

O'Connor is on the brink of achieving a significant milestone. She will soon graduate with a Bachelor of Science in nursing. Inspired by her mother, a dedicated nurse with over 30 years of experience, O'Connor is driven to follow in her footsteps by working in critical care settings such as the Intensive Care Unit or Emergency Department at Stony Brook University Hospital. Her ultimate goal is to advance her qualifications by becoming a nurse practitioner.

O'Connor's choice of Stony Brook was influenced by its proximity to her hometown and its reputation for nurturing exceptional nursing professionals. The university's commitment to pushing students toward excellence resonated with her, mirroring the support and ambition she values in her personal and professional life.

O'Connor has cherished the close-knit Stony Brook community and the hands-on experiences that have prepared her for a demanding career in nursing. Her involvement in the School of Nursing has been particularly formative, providing her with lifelong friends and future colleagues.

The Kappa Gamma Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Scholarship has been pivotal to O'Connor, especially during challenging times following her mother's passing. This scholarship rekindled her motivation and reaffirmed her commitment to her studies and future career.

"Receiving this scholarship has reignited my passion and drive, reminding me of the value of hard work and the support surrounding me. Thank you for believing in my potential and helping me pursue my nursing dreams."

- Taylor O'Connor '25



JORDAN ROMANACCE

Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award

Nursing/Senior

Lake Grove, NY

He, Him, His

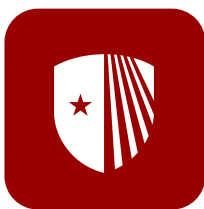
Romanacce's commitment to a nursing career is geared toward perioperative and cardiothoracic intensive care, areas known for their high stakes and profound patient impact. His goal is to extend his nursing education to the highest level possible, fueled by a dedication to patient care and academic excellence.

Romanacce's academic journey has been marked by significant achievements, including a research project on pain scale usage for dementia patients, which was selected for presentation at the Eastern Nursing Research Society's annual conference. This experience highlighted the practical impact of his studies and the university's support for innovative student-led research.

The Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award has been pivotal for Romanacce, easing financial pressures and allowing him to focus on his studies and clinical training. This support has affirmed his career choice and inspired him to pursue further specialization in his field.

"I am deeply grateful for the scholarship; it has been a critical support in my studies and a major motivator to excel in my field. Thank you for making this possible."

- Jordan Romanacce '25



KYLE SAMUEL

Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award

Nursing/Senior

New York City, NY

He, Him, His

Embarking on a fast-paced journey through Stony Brook's accelerated nursing program, Samuel is driven by a passion for dermatology and plastic surgery. Aspiring to specialize in these fields, he's focused on acquiring the necessary skills to offer meaningful support and advanced treatment options to his future patients. While not currently engaged in specific research projects, Samuel channels his commitment into mastering his coursework and clinical skills essential for his chosen career path.

Choosing Stony Brook was a strategic decision for Samuel, influenced by the university's strong reputation in healthcare, its affordability and the accelerated nature of the nursing program. These factors combined to make Stony Brook the ideal place for him to quickly transition into a rewarding and impactful nursing career.

Samuel values the close connections he's made with his diverse group of peers, bonds he anticipates will last a lifetime. One standout experience was leading a group karaoke session during a class event, a fun and memorable break from the rigorous demands of nursing studies.

The financial support from the Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award has been significantly impactful, allowing Samuel to focus more on his studies and less on financial burdens. This scholarship has not only facilitated his academic pursuits but also enhanced his professional preparation by reducing the financial stress associated with higher education.

"Thank you to the donors of the Keane T. Kyle Memorial Award. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and truly makes a difference in our lives, setting us up for success as we prepare to enter the healthcare field."

- Kyle Samuel '25



JULIA SYSKA

Frances Bisignano Scholarship

Nursing/Junior

Słupsk, Poland

She, Her, Hers

Syska is embarking on a journey to master the multifaceted role of a nurse. Driven by a passion to advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves, Syska is dedicated to becoming a voice for her patients, ensuring their needs are heard and met with compassion and skill.

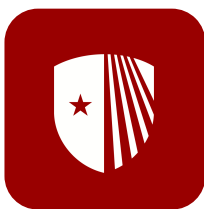
She was drawn to Stony Brook's highly regarded nursing program, which is known for its commitment to fostering personal and professional growth among its students. The program's supportive environment and rigorous curriculum motivate her to delve deeper into the complexities of healthcare, understanding patient care not just clinically but holistically.

Syska is actively involved in the Stony Brook Student Nurses' Association, which complements her academic learning with practical, real-world experiences in healthcare settings. These engagements, particularly her clinical rotations, have been transformative. They have provided her invaluable insights into the immediate impact of medical care and the intricate balance of physical and emotional support that defines nursing.

The Frances Bisignano Scholarship has been instrumental in Syska's educational pursuit, significantly easing the financial burden of her studies and allowing her to focus on her rigorous training. This support has not only affirmed her choice in Stony Brook but also fueled her determination to excel.

"Receiving the Frances Bisignano Scholarship has been a blessing. It has allowed me to pursue my nursing education without the looming worry of financial strain. This support has not only helped me financially but also motivated me to give back to the community that has invested in my future. Thank you for making this possible."

- Julia Syska '26



SAMANTHA WALSH

Academic Excellence Award - Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner

Nursing/Graduate

Ronkonkoma, NY

She, Her, Hers

On her path to becoming an adult gerontology acute care nurse practitioner, Walsh is deeply committed to her education. With a focus on treating critically ill patients suffering from conditions like heart failure and COPD, she relishes the challenges and responsibilities that come with making impactful clinical decisions. She aims to blend critical thinking with compassion to enhance patient care and family relations in acute settings.

Walsh chose Stony Brook because of its outstanding reputation for nurturing advanced-practice nurses through rigorous, evidence-based training. The university's dedicated faculty and its strong focus on practical, real-world experience were key factors in her decision, promising the kind of intensive training she sought.

She appreciates the supportive community and the opportunities to apply classroom knowledge in clinical settings. A recent medical mission trip to El Salvador was a transformative experience. There, she provided vital healthcare services to underserved communities, reinforcing her passion for accessible healthcare and underserved populations.

The Academic Excellence Award - Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner has been crucial for Walsh. It alleviated financial pressures, allowing her to concentrate on her studies and clinical practice fully. This support has not only fueled her academic pursuits but also reinforced her dedication to becoming a skilled nurse practitioner.

"Receiving this scholarship has been incredibly motivating. It has allowed me to focus on becoming a skilled practitioner who will contribute meaningfully to healthcare. I am immensely grateful for this support and committed to making the most of this opportunity."

- Samantha Walsh '25



MARGARET WICHROWSKI

Sigma Award in Recognition for Doretta Dick

Nursing/Doctoral

Patchogue, NY

She, Her, Hers

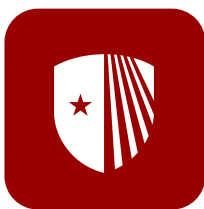
Wichrowski is a dedicated nursing professional with a passion for education, research and improving patient care. She aspires to become an educator in the School of Nursing while continuing her research in hospital-at-home programs and effective strategies for addressing patients' social needs.

Currently, Wichrowski is conducting an integrative review to assess the outcomes of social determinants of health screening in emergency departments. Her work is instrumental in helping healthcare organizations develop evidence-based programs and policies to better serve patient populations. Her research contributions have been recognized at the Annual Eastern Nursing Research Conference, where she has been accepted for poster presentations for two consecutive years.

Wichrowski's journey in nursing began at Stony Brook, where she earned both her BSN and MSN. Inspired by the university's rigorous academic environment and supportive faculty, she has found her education to be transformative, preparing her for both clinical practice and scholarly pursuits. She credits the faculty at Stony Brook's School of Nursing for their encouragement and mentorship, which have played a pivotal role in her intellectual and professional growth.

"Receiving the Doretta Dick Award has been an honor and a milestone in my academic career. I deeply admire the legacy of Doretta Dick, a dedicated educator who fostered a strong sense of community within the School of Nursing. The recognition has bolstered my confidence in academic writing and reaffirmed my commitment to advancing nursing education and research."

- Margaret Wichrowski '27



MATTHEW ZENDER

Margaret Hoffman Scholarship in Nursing

Nursing/Senior

Sayville, NY

He, Him, His

From a young age, Zender knew his future would intertwine with the field of pediatric nursing, especially after his own battle with pediatric cancer. Motivated by the exemplary care he received during his treatment, Zender chose to dedicate his life to providing the same support and compassion to other children facing similar challenges.

Zender is majoring in nursing and also serves as the vice president of the National Student Nurses' Association. His role allows him to influence the association's development, enhancing its support for nursing students nationwide. Stony Brook was a natural choice for him, not only for its renowned nursing program but also because it was where he received lifesaving cancer treatment as a teenager.

The vibrant campus life at Stony Brook allows Zender to engage in various activities, including his role in the Student Nurses' Association and participation in Project Sunshine. He also merges his creativity with campus spirit as a student photographer for the athletics department, making his college experience both enriching and fulfilling.

The support from the Margaret Hoffman Scholarship in Nursing has been pivotal, enabling Zender to pursue his studies without the burden of financial stress.

"Receiving this scholarship has not only lightened my financial load but has also reaffirmed my commitment to becoming a nurse. The generosity of the donors inspires me every day to give back to the community that has given me so much."

- Matthew Zender '25



SANDY ZHU

Julia O. Wells Memorial Education Foundation Award

Nursing/Senior

Brooklyn, NY

She, Her, Hers

Zhu is drawn to a career that promises continual learning and the chance to significantly impact individual lives. Her vision is shaped by early experiences in healthcare settings with her mother, which instilled in her the importance of advocacy and support during vulnerable times. This foundational experience has been enriched by her involvement in Stony Brook's Pre-Nursing Society and interactions with seasoned nurses, deepening her love for the profession's dynamic and ever-evolving nature.

Zhu cherishes the vibrant campus life at Stony Brook, which encourages trying new things and facilitates both personal and professional growth. Her standout experience came during a global outreach trip to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where she gained insights into culturally competent care — an experience she values deeply as she prepares to become a nurse.

The Julia O. Wells Memorial Education Foundation Award has been instrumental for Zhu, providing her the means to pursue her nursing ambitions without financial burden. This support has been a crucial enabler in her education and future career in nursing.

"Your support has made it possible for me to focus fully on my studies and my future career in nursing, ensuring that I can give back to the community as much as I have been given. Thank you for this incredible opportunity."

- Sandy Zhu '25



Additional Recipients

Omar Aguilar

Student Veterans Recognition

Alyssa Fabrizi

Academic Excellence Award - Pediatric Acute Care Nurse Practitioner

Teresa Manning-Carter

Stony Brook Alumni Association Dean's Choice Award

Trina Bascom

New York State Office of Mental Health Scholarship

Cara Finkle

Academic Excellence Award - Nurse Midwifery

Jennifer Patel

Academic Excellence Award - Doctor of Philosophy

Serena Buckholz

Academic Excellence Award - Nursing Education

Angela Gong

Academic Excellence Award - Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner

Krystal Robinson

Student Veterans Recognition

Leunz Cadely

New York State Office of Mental Health Scholarship

Tishana Griffith

New York State Office of Mental Health Scholarship

Christian Routh

Dr. Jacqueline Rose-Hott Memorial Award

Hina Dar

New York State Office of Mental Health Scholarship

Leda Kushner

Sigma Award in Recognition for Doretta Dick

Megan Veirun

New York State Office of Mental Health Scholarship

Bintu Dumbuya

School of Nursing Alumni Board Scholarship

Tamica John

New York State Office of Mental Health Scholarship

Nicole Forman

Academic Excellence Award - Family Nurse Practitioner



Student Veterans Recognition

Undergraduate

Omar Aguilar

Basic Baccalaureate Program Student - Hospital Corpsman Third Class,
US Navy

Yahui Ding

Basic Baccalaureate Program Student - Sergeant, US Army

Ryan Murphy

Basic Baccalaureate Program Student - Sergeant, US Air Force

Krystal Robinson

Basic Baccalaureate Program Student - Sergeant, US Army

Doctoral

Thomas Killian

Doctor of Nursing Practice Student - Captain, US Army





Stony Brook University School of Nursing Distinguished Alumni Awards

The Distinguished Alumni Award celebrates alumni who have demonstrated exceptional achievement, outstanding service, and significant contributions to the field of nursing. Honorees embody the values and excellence that define our university, serving as an inspiration to current students, faculty, and fellow alumni.

Truly great universities are measured by the impact and accomplishments of their graduates. Through their leadership, dedication, and commitment to advancing healthcare, they not only elevate the profession of nursing but also bring great pride to our alma mater. The Distinguished Alumni Award honors their legacy and the meaningful difference they continue to make in the world.



Kenya V. Beard, EdD, AGACNP-BC, ANEF, FAAN, FADLN

Distinguished Alumni Award

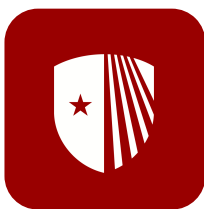
Kenya V. Beard, EdD, AGACNP-BC, ANEF, FAAN, FADLN is the inaugural Dean and Chief Nursing Officer at Mercy University's School of Nursing and the past chair of the New York State Board of Nursing. An esteemed health equity expert and transformational leader, she consults with organizations nationwide to build inclusive healthcare environments that expand access and improve the quality of care for all. Her visionary approach has reshaped nursing education, policy, and practice, making her a highly sought-after speaker and global leader in the field.

Dr. Beard's influence extends beyond academia into public and policy spheres. As a 2012 Macy Faculty Scholar, she established the Center for Multicultural Education and Health Disparities, a pioneering hub for research and scholarship aimed at improving health outcomes among culturally diverse populations. She has partnered with institutions across the country, including the Harvard Macy Institute, where she delivers sessions on negotiations and transformational leadership in their Leading Innovations in Health Care & Education program. Her sessions have empowered educators and executives to drive impactful change.

Her contributions also extend into media and public health. Dr. Beard co-produced healthcare disparity segments on WBAI-FM, reaching over 400,000 listeners, and served as a Senior Fellow at the Center for Health Policy and Media Engagement, where her expertise informed national conversations around health equity. She currently serves on the board of Public Health Solutions, the largest non-governmental nonprofit public health organization in the U.S., which delivers essential services to under resourced communities.

A policy influencer, Dr. Beard served as a reviewer for the Future of Nursing 2020–2030 report and co-edited the book, Future of Nursing 2020–2030: Global Applications to Advance Health Equity, offering key insights into integrating global equity frameworks in nursing. She also led the development of one of the nation's first national nursing faculty residency programs, designed to support and prepare faculty in building innovative learning environments. Her current initiatives include integrating artificial intelligence into nursing education to advance health equity and equip future nurses with cutting-edge tools for patient care and learning.

A fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, the Academy of Nursing Education, and the New York Academy of Medicine, Dr. Beard serves on the editorial board of the American Journal of Nursing and the American Academy of Nursing's Institute for Nursing Leadership. She also co-founded the Academy of Diversity Leaders in Nursing (ADLN), a national organization committed to improving the delivery of equitable healthcare. Dr. Beard's exemplary leadership and unwavering dedication to equity, education, and innovation continue to shape the future of nursing and healthcare. Her work as a consultant, educator, and national thought leader leaves an enduring legacy of impact and transformation.



Frankie Hamilton, MBA, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE
Distinguished Alumni Award

Frankie Hamilton is a dual master's prepared, board-certified nurse leader with extensive experience in both clinical and administrative roles. He taught high school chemistry and biology for four years before he decided to pursue a career in nursing. He began his journey as a med/surg nurse and has since progressed through various leadership positions, including: Assistant Nurse Manager, Quality Management Specialist, Assistant Director of Nursing, Nursing Administrator, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer, Senior Director of Ambulatory Care, and presently, Vice President of Nursing Operations at Maimonides Medical Center, a level one academic, tertiary care hospital in Brooklyn, NY, where he oversees all nursing initiatives alongside his CNO.

In addition to his clinical and leadership experience, Frankie is deeply involved in various professional organizations. He serves as a board member at large and President of the Local NYC Chapter of the American Association for Men in Nursing. He is also the Clinical Inclusion Advisor for the Healthcare Leaders of New York chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives and an advisor on the Sepsis Advisory Board through the Sepsis Alliance. Frankie is a member of the Dean's Advisory Board for the Hofstra School of Nursing and Physician Assistant Studies, and serves as a member of the awards committee for the American Nurses Association, New York chapter.

Frankie serves as a Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy Reserves Corps where he works to ensure the medical readiness of Sailors in preparation for deployments and mobilizations. He is also the Assistant Training Officer for his unit, and the Assistant Awards Officer for his command based in Bethesda, Maryland.

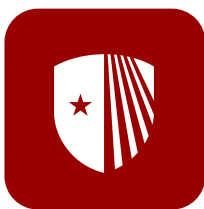
On the education front, Frankie is adjunct faculty at the University of Mount Saint Vincent in the Bronx and is pursuing his PhD in Nursing at Seton Hall University, as well as his DNP in Nursing Leadership at Quinnipiac University. His book of work is focused on improving the delivery of safe, quality patient care, and to elevating practice and nursing excellence within our profession.



Sarah Pesce, ANP, MSCDL
Distinguished Alumni Award

Sarah Pesce, ANP, MSCDL, is the Chief Operating Officer at Radence. She previously served as the COO of Thorne Lab, a pioneering division of Thorne HealthTech, where she led the development of an innovative clinical platform providing a comprehensive, 360-degree view of individual health.

Before her tenure at Thorne HealthTech, Sarah was the COO of Lab100 at Mount Sinai Medical Center, where she played a key role in shaping clinical operational strategies for developing advanced digital screening assessments for the Mount Sinai Health System. She also served as the Senior Director of Business Development and Clinical Operations for the renowned Executive Health Program at Mount Sinai Hospital. In addition, Sarah worked as the office Nurse Practitioner for Dr. Valentine Fuster, Physician-in-Chief of Mount Sinai Health System, managing complex cardiology patients and leading the design and launch of several impactful ambulatory programs.



Tonight, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to all the students, alumni, and preceptors recognized and honored. Your dedication, achievements, and contributions are truly inspiring. We also wish to express our sincere gratitude to the families and friends whose unwavering support has played an integral role in the success of our honorees. Your encouragement and belief in them are deeply appreciated.

A special thank you to the School of Nursing Awards Committee and all of the faculty, staff, and student volunteers whose efforts and meticulous planning have made this evening a resounding success. We are profoundly grateful for your commitment to excellence and your passion for celebrating the accomplishments of our community.

Finally, thank you to our donors. Your generosity provides support to our students that make this possible.