



AN AFFILIATE OF HOSPITAL SISTERS HEALTH SYSTEM

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 15, 2013

CONTACT: Erica Smith, Public Relations

217-544-6464 ext. 44307

**KATE SCHERZER SELECTED FOR ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE 2013 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA AWARD**

SPRINGFIELD – Catherine “Kate” Scherzer, has been selected by the St. John’s Nursing Alumni Association to receive the 2013 Distinguished Alumna Award. Kate will be recognized as the distinguished Alumna at a special event to honor her on Tuesday, May 21, from 2 – 4 p.m. in the Bunn Auditorium/Foyer at St. John’s Hospital.

Kate served at St. John’s Hospital for 42 years caring for premature babies. Her devotion to caring for tiny babies between 1945 and 1987 is legendary. “This has always been the love of my life. My heart was dedicated to the babies,” said Kate during a reception in 2005 in which a special plaque honoring her was unveiled outside the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at St. John’s Children’s Hospital.

“Kate represents the very best in the nursing profession. Her commitment to caring for the most vulnerable and her selfless dedication and duty to her patients and colleagues makes her worthy of this honor,” said Brenda Jeffers, RN, PhD, Chancellor, St. John’s College.

Kate entered St. John’s School of Nursing in 1942 immediately after graduating from Pana High School. Even before she graduated from St. John’s in 1945, she was given an opportunity to care for premature babies. Over the years, Kate was instrumental in advancing the care for premature babies. In the early 1950s, she worked to establish a dedicated room for premature infants; the 1970s she worked with faculty from the newly founded Southern Illinois University School of Medicine to recruit a neonatologist to Springfield.

Despite the many technological advances that occurred in the care of neonates during Kate’s career, she always recognized how important it was to get to know her tiny patients so well that she could tell what was wrong with them by the way they cried or how they laid in their cribs.

“The care of the babies didn’t involve the high tech monitoring that is done today, and that meant that as a nurse you had to determine what was going on with the baby,” said Kate. “As I got to know my little patients, I found there was nothing more gratifying than to see a two pound baby go home with his mother.”

For more information about St. John’s College, Department of Nursing, visit [www.stjohnscollegespringfield.edu](http://www.stjohnscollegespringfield.edu).

---

**About St. John’s College:**

St. John’s College founded by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, offers innovative programs to prepare individuals for patient care, with individual attention for students and an enviable array of clinical experiences ranging from birth and wellness to care of the dying. The College has continued its proud legacy of excellence for over 125 years. St. John’s College is located on the campus of St. John’s Hospital, in Springfield, Illinois.