



News Release

Dublin Vinson VA Medical Center, 1826 Veterans Blvd., Dublin, GA

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

May 12, 2023

VA Holds Secretary's Nursing Excellence Awards Ceremony

Dublin, Ga. – The Dublin VA Medical Center recently held its annual VA Secretary's Nursing Excellence Awards ceremony in the medical center's auditorium. Medical Center Director Manuel M. Davila and Associate Director for Patient Care Services Dr. Pam Jackson presented awards to staff from the medical center who had been nominated for the Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary's Nursing Excellence Awards, the highest honors bestowed by the Department on its nurses.

After a welcome by Jackson, LPNs Stephanie Pelham and Caldron Ricks rendered invocations and RN Wanda Wilcher performed a musical interlude. RN Lillian Braziel then introduced keynote speaker Dr. Donna Ingram, RN, Chair of the Department of Nursing at Middle Georgia State University.

In her address, Ingram, a registered nurse for 36 years, underscored the history of development of the nursing profession from Florence Nightingale's revolutionary, science-based efforts to modern evidence-based practice. She emphasized that, while technology has created a starkly different profession from that she started in, the need for compassionate nursing has not changed and will not.

"The personal touch that nursing requires is here to stay and will only grow in importance. Nursing is, and always will be, based on our ability to reach our patients on a personal level," Ingram said.

Awards recipients included RN Jessica Hogan, who received accolades as "RN in an Expanded Role"; RN Kimberly Rozar for RN in a Staff Nursing Role"; LPN Victoria Cason, who works at the Brunswick VA Clinic; and Nursing Assistant Tyrus Carlyle.

In her remarks, Jackson lauded award recipients as exemplars of professional nursing and acknowledged their commitment to service regardless of the many challenges they have faced.

"Nursing is a challenging profession in and of itself, and COVID only made things harder, but you all came through like the professionals that you are. I couldn't be prouder of each and every one of you," Jackson said.

Displayed during the ceremony was a table memorializing World War II nurse and U.S. Army Nursing Corps 2nd Lieutenant Meta Monteleon, a longtime resident of the Dublin VA who died recently at age 108. Monteleon passed away shortly before Nurses Week began and all festivities during the observance were dedicated to her memory.

Other Dublin VA nursing staff who were nominated for VA Secretary honors included Andrea Gaston, CNA; Angela Height, LPN; Bernadette James, RN; Bettina Jernander, RN; Charlotta Willis, RN; Darlene Mathis, RN; Erin Lanier, RN; Hannah Tapley, RN; Karla Elton, RN; Kenyatta Smith, CNA; Kim Davis, NP; Kimberly Thomas, NP; Lillian Braziel, RN; Naomi Coleman, RN; Rebecca Brown, CNA; Rhonda Tillman, RN; Robyne Samuels, NP; Sharon LeRoy, RN; Shequila Wiggins, LPN; Sheronica Chatman, CNA; and Tessa Forde, NP.

In her closing comments, Jackson again thanked her nursing staff and encouraged them to help recruit new teammates to the VA.

“We will have a virtual job fair for RNs and LPNs from May 22nd to May 26th, so be sure to pass the word that if nursing professional want to join the best nursing team in VA, now is the time,” Jackson said.

Jackson encouraged those interested in RN and LPN positions to visit the VA’s Facebook page at “Dublin VA Medical Center” to learn more about the virtual job fair. The VA will host an onsite job fair June 24 from 9 a.m. until noon. The Dublin VA employs over 800 nursing staff in a variety of specialties.

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Photos:

- 1) RN Jessica Hogan
- 2) RN Kimberly Rozar
- 3) LPN Victoria Cason
- 4) NA Tyrus Carlyle







