

# Portraits of Nursing Leadership

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## A Nurse Leads Across Diverse Roles

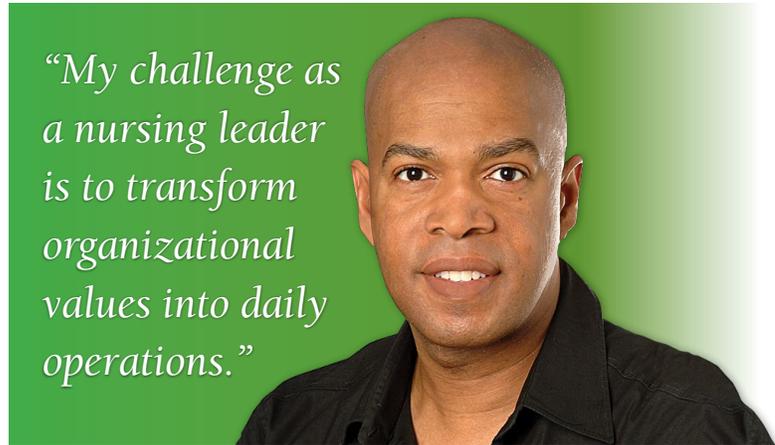
**RAYMOND E. PHILLIPS** is a doctorally prepared nurse leader with clinical and leadership experience in both the military and civilian arenas. Phillips is a mentor for Community Connections, a year-long School of Nursing field-work course which partners master's-degree students with mentors from regional organizations to seek solutions to complex, system-level health-care problems. He also serves on the school's Regional Advisory Group. Phillips is the associate chief of nursing services, inpatient nursing and nursing research at the Veterans Affairs Northern California Health Care System, an integrated health-care delivery system that serves more than 375,000 veterans across 17 counties. He conducts research and leads education and research programs in areas connected to the mission of the Veterans Health Administration.

Phillips served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps. His military service roles included working as director of nursing services for the U.S. Naval Hospital in Yokosuka, Japan. He taught nursing at multiple California educational institutions, and published peer-reviewed articles on public health issues facing enlisted personnel in the U.S. Navy.

Further details about the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis are available at [nursing.ucdavis.edu](http://nursing.ucdavis.edu).

**Q.** *What prompted you to pursue a leadership role in nursing?*

**A.** My journey toward leadership had its nascent beginnings in the U.S. military. Caring for patients



within the military all over the globe provided very fertile ground for the diverse roles the nurse may be engaged in—as clinician, researcher, educator, administrator, organizer, advocate and change agent.

While in a baccalaureate program for nursing, I was awarded a Reserve Officers' Training Corps merit-based scholarship, which provided training for me to become an officer in the armed forces. Upon graduation, I was subsequently commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps. The next four years shaped my career expectations in important ways. As both an officer and a nurse, I was afforded the autonomy to assume an enormous amount of responsibility both clinically and administratively. This challenge was highly motivating for me and forced me to learn how to make decisions and set priorities effectively.

Following my initial commitment in the Army, I seized an opportunity to augment my clinical acumen and leadership capability by transferring my commission to the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps to pursue an advanced

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practice degree as a clinical nurse specialist in critical care at UC San Francisco.

Upon retirement from the Navy, I fulfilled a long-term career goal of completing a doctoral degree in nursing from UCSF. Academic doctoral preparation provides me with the tools to expand the scientific knowledge base for nursing through research and scholarly activities as well as serve in leadership capacities in a variety of arenas within society and nursing. Doctoral education also enhanced my understanding of the unique contribution of nursing to society, which is to view the individual holistically when diagnosing and treating illness experiences that are caused or contributed to by factors other than disease. No other discipline has this focus—this is the *raison d’etre* for my contributions to health care.

**Q. What do you like about the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing?**

**A.** Since its inception, the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing has made an indelible commitment to transform the future of nursing. The school exemplifies the principles of leadership, community and research in which I so strongly believe. Simply stated, I want to be a part of this incredible journey to assist in shaping the future of nursing and health care.

**Q. What motivates you to focus in your particular area?**

**A.** Leadership within nursing appeals to my desire to create a culture and environment that supports nurses and nursing practice while ensuring excellence in nursing for patients and families. I strive to achieve this goal by building upon the evidence in the literature, utilizing the standards recommended by professional organizations and tapping into my own insights and experiences. My challenge as a nursing leader is to transform organizational values into daily operations, yielding an efficient, effective and caring organization.

In my role at the Veterans Affairs Northern California Health Care System, I have the opportunity to continually foster and sustain a nursing practice environment where nursing research and evidence-based practice is integrated into both the delivery of nursing care and decision-making at the administrative level; look for improvement opportunities in the workplace and take the initiative with new programs and services; and design and implement the direction of nursing staff development across the organization.

What motivates me to work toward these goals is my passion to preserve and enhance the integrity of high-quality patient-care systems, in collaboration with nursing, medical and administrative staff.

**Q. How can the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing transform education and health care?**

**A.** The Betty Irene School of Nursing can lead the way for a new era of education for health professionals that advances transformative learning and harnesses the power of collaboration between education for health professionals and the delivery of health care. The goal is ultimately to assure that individuals everywhere have access to high-quality comprehensive health services. In a very real sense, the school is promoting a new professionalism, one that focuses on interprofessional education, which occurs when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and quality of care.

Institutions of higher learning also have a social mandate as well: to ensure that the health-care workforce mirrors the patient population it serves, both clinically and managerially. The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing is poised to prepare students from culturally diverse backgrounds to assume leadership roles in nursing clinical practice, leadership, teaching, health policy and research.



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The *PORTRAITS OF NURSING LEADERSHIP* series is available at [nursing.ucdavis.edu](https://nursing.ucdavis.edu)