

## Honorary Nursing Alumna

### Barbara C. Unell

Author and Social Entrepreneur

Founder, Back in the Swing

Founder, The Raised with Love and Limits Foundation



**Barbara Unell** might not be a nurse, but she has brought to her diverse career the same holistic approach to promoting health that nursing embodies.

A 1973 graduate of the University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor's degree in journalism and psychology, Unell has written 18 books (19, if you count the dictionary she co-authored with a friend at age 8). These works, most of which are about children and healthy parenting, have sold more than a million copies and been translated into 27 languages. She also co-founded the first national magazine for parents of multiples, TWINS, and first city-based parenting magazine for our region, Kansas City Parent.

And that's just her bibliography. Unell, who grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, has also created a number of programs and initiatives promoting healthy living. They include the school-based project, "Kindness is Contagious...Catch It!" which teaches kindness, respect and compassion to children throughout the Kansas City area, and Uncle Dan's Report Card, a program that helps build personal responsibility, positive relationships and learning readiness of children.

One of her proudest accomplishments is Back in the Swing USA, a program she founded in 2000 to improve and protect people's health and well-being after breast cancer. It launched first at The University of Kansas Cancer Center and has since been implemented throughout the country.

In 2016, in response to a challenge by the American Academy of Pediatrics, she co-founded the Raised with Love and Limits Foundation to prevent toxic stress in children's lives and improve their health and learning. The Foundation's flagship initiative is Behavior Checker, an online tool piloted at the University of Kansas Department of Pediatrics. It gives providers strategies they can share with parents to address over 150 common childhood behaviors.

At the KU School of Nursing, Unell has helped the Ribbons of Pink Foundation provide specialized clinical training opportunities for advanced practice nurses in cancer survivorship and continuing cancer care. "We are especially grateful for all that Barbara has done to help this become a reality," Nelda Godfrey, associate dean for innovative partnerships and practice, wrote in a letter nominating Unell for this award.

Unell and her husband, Robert, are parents of two adult children, twins Amy and Justin. She lists her family among her greatest supporters and thanks them for lifting her up with their unfaltering spirit.

For her nursing-inspired work promoting health in Kansas City and beyond, the KU Nurses Alumni Association takes great pride in presenting the Honorary Nursing Alumna Award to Barbara C. Unell.