Bonnie Peterson, PhD’12, MN’79, N’65, NEA-BC
2015 Distinguished Nursing Alumna

For a lifetime devoted to the profession of nursing, the KU Nurses Alumni Association is honored to present the late Bonnie Peterson, PhD’12, MN’79, N’65, NEA-BC, with the 2015 Distinguished Nursing Alumna Award.

Dr. Peterson was born in Chillicothe, Missouri. Her family moved to Kansas City in 1945 when her father was discharged from the U.S. Navy. Dr. Peterson attended Southeast High School and earned her bachelor of nursing degree from the University of Kansas in 1965.

She began her career as a pediatric nurse at St. Mary’s Hospital and then at Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City. While at Children’s Mercy Hospital, she began working on her master’s degree in nursing, receiving her degree in 1979.

In 1980, Dr. Peterson accepted a position as vice president and director of nursing at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Hannibal, Missouri. In 1985, she accepted a similar position at Children’s Mercy Hospital and was subsequently promoted to senior vice president of patient care services. She was part of the team that planned a new wing of the hospital and was involved the opening of the Children’s Mercy South clinics in Overland Park.

In 1998, Dr. Peterson accepted the position of vice president and chief operating officer at Lawrence Memorial Hospital in Lawrence, Kansas. Under her leadership, the hospital started a Wound Healing Center with hyperbaric treatment; a hospital-based Oncology Center; and a Woman’s Center at Lawrence Memorial Hospital South.

Her contributions to nursing education spanned four decades, and she served as a mentor and guide to thousands of young nurses, many of whom went on to earn advanced degrees and assume leadership positions.

In 1985, she married Oscar Peter Peterson. She retired from Lawrence Memorial Hospital in 2004. While completing her doctorate degree at KU and teaching at Washburn University, she was diagnosed with cancer. She lost her battle with the disease on April 8, 2015. She is greatly missed by her family, friends and colleagues.

For her leadership, mentorship and countless accomplishments in the field of nursing, the KU Nurses Alumni Association is privileged to posthumously present Bonnie Peterson, PhD’12, MN’79, N’65, NEA-BC, with the 2015 Distinguished Nursing Alumna Award.