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UNC-Chapel Hill professor emerita wins 2025 Governor James E. Holshouser, Jr. Award

Dr. Carol Durham honored for excellence in public service

RALEIGH, N.C. – Dr. Carol Durham of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a winner of the 2025 Governor James E. Holshouser, Jr. Award for Excellence in Public Service.



The award recognizes faculty who exemplify the UNC System’s commitment to service and community engagement. She received the honor Thursday from the University of North Carolina Board of Governors.

Professor Emerita in the School of Nursing, Durham also served as director of the Education-Innovation-Simulation Learning Environment, an initiative that put the university at the forefront of simulation-based education. Her innovative method of teaching set new standards for excellence, ultimately improving the quality of care for patients throughout North Carolina and the nation.

In nominating Durham, UNC-CH Chancellor Lee H. Roberts said, “While her influence extends around the world, the depth of her impact in North Carolina is especially profound.”

Not only a pioneer in healthcare simulation, Durham has also been a mentor to generations of faculty and students across the UNC System, including North Carolina Central University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Western Carolina University. She has built partnerships to cultivate leaders and has trained thousands of healthcare professionals during her career.

She served as president of the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning from 2012 to 2016, impacting practice across the globe. Here in the state, her work with NCFutureCare took mobile, high-fidelity simulation training to more than 80 skilled nursing facilities across North Carolina. She developed the Medication Aide Training Course for the NC Board of Nursing; the course was launched 20 years ago and is still in use today.

Durham began her career at the School of Nursing in 1981 when she served as a research data technician and lab teaching assistant while obtaining her Master of Science in Nursing. She rose from clinical instructor to clinical professor and has directed the simulation center since 1988. In 2009, she received a Doctor of Education at NC State University. During her career, Durham has been recognized with nearly 20 awards from UNC institutions, state and national associations.

“Dr. Durham has been a role model for so many across North Carolina,” said UNC System President Peter Hans. “Some of her former students are now faculty mentors themselves, inspiring future generations of nurses to improve the health and wellbeing of their communities.”

“We are grateful to Dr. Durham for years of dedication in the classroom and simulation lab,” said Board of Governors Chair Wendy Murphy. “Her commitment to her students, the nursing profession, and our state has been exemplary.”

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About the UNC System

The University of North Carolina System enrolls 256,000 students at 17 institutions, including the state’s 16 public universities and the nation’s first public residential high school for academically gifted students. The UNC System is among the strongest and most diverse higher education systems in the country, with \$2.2 billion in research expenditures and campuses that serve every region of North Carolina. Affiliate organizations include PBS North Carolina, with 12 public television stations across the state, and UNC Health, with 19 hospital campuses and an extensive healthcare network.