

# Remaking McLeod

## Alumni and friends join forces to redefine teaching and research

School of Nursing assistant professor **Beth Epstein, PhD, RN**, wants to improve parents' experiences within the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). This fast-paced environment where multiple healthcare professionals care for premature and often seriously ill infants is demanding on anxious and sometimes grieving parents.

In a recent study, Epstein found an association between the number of providers caring for an infant and the parents' and providers' perceptions of care. Her research explores the importance of coordinating care as a way to improve the experience of NICU families. Epstein is just one of a handful of innovative researchers in the School of Nursing who are developing new ways to improve the health of patients, families, and communities.



Reconfigured space in the School of Nursing's McLeod Hall will support innovative researchers like Beth Epstein.

### A bold new design for nursing research

When the School of Nursing's McLeod Hall was built in 1972, the discipline of nursing research was in its infancy. Today, nursing research focuses on advancing new approaches to healthcare by developing a better understanding of what patients and communities need and by designing new tools, techniques, and systems to help them.

The renovation of McLeod Hall will allow the School of Nursing research enterprise to grow significantly, and the school's alumni are taking notice.

Teresa DiMarco (BSN '77), Rebecca Ruegger (BSN '73) and her husband Peter, and Pat Woodard (BSN '69) and her husband Keith all have a long history with the UVA School of Nursing. But it's the future, not the past, which interests them the most. For that reason, this group has come together to make a combined commitment of \$450,000 toward the renovation of McLeod Hall. They are challenging other school alums and friends to join them, with the goal of raising at least \$1 million toward the next phase of the renovation.

"I am thrilled that our alumni are stepping forward to support the renovations," says School of Nursing Dean Dorrie Fontaine, RN, PhD, FAAN. "In the new McLeod Hall, 21st-century technology will exist side-by-side with archives dedicated to the history of nursing. It will reflect the excellence of UVA's nursing faculty research and offer the best possible research and educational opportunities for students."

### Place matters

With dedicated space in McLeod Hall, Epstein is able to integrate her research into an ethics class she teaches to nursing students, and she frequently discusses her insights with faculty members. As part of the NICU Coordination of Care group, whose aim is improving care for the tiniest premature infants and their parents, she puts her research into practical action every day.

A reconfigured McLeod Hall will support researchers like Epstein and foster productive collaborations—collaborations that will impact us all, from our students to our smallest patients.

For more information on supporting McLeod Hall, please contact Amy Karr at (434) 924-0097 or [askarr@virginia.edu](mailto:askarr@virginia.edu).

This story first appeared in [Pulse](#), a newsletter highlighting philanthropy in action at the UVA Health System. Learn more at [the UVA Health Foundation Web site](#).