



MARVEL KING DAVIS

RN, MSN

The Historian

Marvel King Davis had a tough decision to make as a young girl — become a teacher like everyone else in her family or follow her dream to become a nurse. When she discovered that nursing blends teaching with health care, her career path was clear.

“Teaching is an integral part of nursing,” Marvel said. “We provide training to staff, teach families how to provide care and teach patients about their illnesses. It is just part of the practice,” said the mother of three, who is a past cochair of the Urban Health Fair. The New Haven wellness event addresses health care disparities among minorities by providing access to health care screenings and health information.

Nursing, Marvel believes, is an undervalued profession. “We are talking about life, the responsibilities that come with it and the impact in life that we make in concrete ways,” she said. “Through my work, I encourage patients to start where they are today and look forward. I want to help their tomorrow to be better.”

After completing a full rotation at a nursing hospital, Marvel decided to specialize in psychiatric nursing. “It fit like a glove. I felt comfortable talking to the patients,” she said. “I was frightened at first, but then I saw how the psychiatric patients could recover and leave the hospital. I had an impact on them.”

Marvel has experienced nearly every aspect of psychiatric nursing, from corporations, to schools, to hospitals, to clinics, to state institutions. Her current role as service manager for dual diagnosis at Yale-New Haven Psychiatric Hospital has led her down a respected path. Two years ago, she received a distinguished alumna citation from the Yale School of Nursing. She also serves as president of the board of directors of Dixwell Newhallville Community Mental Health Services, which is working to address mental illness among minority and underserved populations.

Recognizing that “what’s important starts early in life,” Marvel expects to become a mentor for students in the future. “I’d like to take what I’ve learned over the years and teach others.” For now she’s focusing her energies on the National Black Nurses Association, for which she was appointed historian in 2001.