Loving Reflections

Dr. Sally Lehr, PhD, PMHCNS-BC, FAACS, CIRT
Dear Sally and Family–

It is with heart felt, deep sadness that I am writing this message to you. Sally you have been such an inspiration and joy to be around all these years I have known you. I was very lucky to share the office next to yours and remember all of the encouragement you so kindly and generously provided. This is especially true when we were both going through cancer treatment at the same time and the mostly funny stories we shared (loved your wicked, funny humor). One day you had me look at your port which was inflamed so I was prodding around under your shirt and someone walked by and said “what are you two doing”, and you very calmly said “Becky is giving me a shoulder massage”. I greatly admired the courage and strength you showed during your cancer experience which helped me get through mine. You fought a hard battle with grace and dignity, never complaining and always upbeat.

You have always been a bright light and shining star no matter where or what you were involved with over the years. Being at Emory for 56 years you certainly were our historian and legacy of past memories, and this was proudly displayed at graduation every year as you spoke to the audience. You were not physically with us this year, but we were all thinking of you that day and what you meant to all of us and your wonderful and loving spirit will be ever present among us.

As you entered your final journey, I know you were surrounded with the deep love and blessings of family and friends that will celebrate your life, one that was

Sally,
You will be forever missed!
Your NHWSON Family
Although I did not get a chance to know Dr. Lehr well during my time at the SON, I do know the impact she made on people reached far beyond our walls.

I first heard her name from a Transgender woman with whom I was taking a course in Transgender issues at Georgia State while waiting to begin my AMSN program. Her name was Dr. Erin Swenson and she was a regular guest speaker in Dr. Lehr’s sexuality course. I last heard Dr. Lehr’s name just this past Thursday at the Atlanta Chapter of Nurses in AIDS Care Meeting. The evening’s speaker was Michelle Sariev, NP-C. Before she opened her talk on bone health and HIV she asked if the group would observe a moment of silence because one of the best teachers in her career had just passed away – as you know that teacher was Dr. Lehr.

I wish I had the chance to have gotten to know the force behind the pioneer that was Dr. Lehr. As her psychical presence leaves our halls, it is my hope that we do not lose traction on the preparation she has made to ensuring that our students are prepared to provide care across the varied spectrum of sexuality within which our patients exist.

~ John L. Stanton, Jr., MPH

well lived and meaningful. I will miss you Sally, you always put a smile on my face and will in the hopefully many years to come as I think of you.

Blessings Sally,

Your friend and colleague,
Becky Gary

Dear Lehr family,

I do not have the long history with Sally that others are so very fortunate to share, but in my four years at Emory, she has made a deep and lasting impression. Every time I would see her in the halls, her brilliant smile and warm hellos, made me feel so appreciated. I loved the presence of an Alzheimer’s Walk team at Emory, and this gave me strength as we walked though my mother’s journey with Alzheimer’s, knowing that there was a big community of support at the Emory SON, lead by Sally. On the day that I learned that she passed, I thought to myself, I need to strive to “be like Sally” in life... to follow her amazing example of strength, warmth and positivity.

Keeping you all in my thoughts and prayers,
Amy Becklenberg, MSN, APRN/FNP-BC
Dear Sally-

I miss you. I miss seeing you as I traipse in and out of the break room... you perched at your desk... peaking over your half-glasses at the screen of your Apple computer.

I missed being continually surprised by you....for instance I never would have thought you would have been one of the first persons at the School of Nursing to get an Apple computer for your office....and only years later did I ask “How did you manage to get an Apple computer so early on?” ...and as I remember it you said “I had an Apple at home and so, I asked for one at work”. Oh! I thought to myself, it works if you ask for stuff — that was some good wisdom.

That broke open the box I’d put you in...I never would have guessed that Sally Lehr would be an early tech adopter....because you simultaneously hung onto using the overhead projector in the classroom until the bitter end... your adopting the new and holding onto the old was a great teacher for me in lots of ways...a reminder of how we are all such a mix of things...and seeing that in you, made it easier to accept in myself, and in others...and I loved being surprised by you....

I miss your quiet wit, eyes squeezing smiles and ready laughter. You always seemed to lean on laughter – as a buoy for the hard times...and daily crap we all slog through.

I miss being able to stop in at your office door, lean on the door frame for 10-15 minutes for and catching-up....about

I have so many pictures of she and I (large in part because of the stark height difference that we all loved to laugh at) from school, NSNA in Phoenix, AZ, and the Alzheimer's Walk Fundraising that she so strongly supported.

She always brightened up my day seeing her little cute self coming my way with that smile that we all knew and loved to see. She was very loved and I’m sure will be missed by everyone she came in contact with.

I was at work actually when I read the news that she had transitioned from this world and I had to take a couple of minutes to process it all. I felt the deep sadness that comes from losing a family member. But after I prayed for her family’s healing and that she rests well, I was met with a beautiful inner peace and happiness to have had the opportunity to know her and feel her love.

To her family, mann...you all were lucky to have had her all of those years! I only got 3 and a half and I’m hurt! Lol. Hold on to all the beauty that was Sally and remember that cute smile, loving soul, and bright red top :)

Blessings and peace to you all.

~ Chuncey Ward BSN 16
and given me confidence and courage to follow my dreams. The nursing degree that I have is hugely due to professors like you within the Emory community who I have had the privilege to know. I will always laugh, cry and appreciate our moments together, Sally.

~ Alisha Amin Bhimani, Class of "16 BSN graduate

Dr. Lehr was one of the sweetest people I've come across, and was a much loved professor. We will all miss her so much.

~ Rachel Behrend

Mrs. Sally was just the sweetest little redberry of the bunch! From day one she and I had the most awesome relationship. She set me straight from day one when I called her "Dr. Lehr." She looked at me and said, "It's just Sally." And I said "Yes ma'am," and that was that.

After finding out that SHE was teaching a nurse sex education course, that was just the icing on the cake! Lol. I am so grateful to God that He brought me to Emory's School of Nursing at the exact time He did so that I could be blessed by this kind, sincere, knowledgeable, and gracious little soul.

family, former students and colleagues...to get some guidance about something I was wrestling with or have my spirits lifted by your simple, determined, unflappable, down-to-earthness

I miss teaching with you .... through all these years. I appreciated learning early on that you were “Queen of APA”...and had all the rules at your fingertips...another surprise and not what I would have thought.

I miss your exemplary modeling of what to wear at work to be comfortable.... which was a constant visible reminder of your down-to-earth, non-pretentiousness....your clothes said without words... “I am who I am, what you see is what you get”...I really loved that about you. You had your own lovely uniform of pants and tops that shouted “be comfortable and easy with yourself!”

I miss connecting with you about our common friend Sam* who I know from the Café and you know for O’Hearn House....who was part of your annual expert panel of patients with mental health issues.

I miss sharing our office together...which we did from the time we moved into our new 1520 building until we each got our own offices...down the hall from one another.

I miss doing the Blessings of the Hands with you...

I miss you cause our lives have been woven together here at the school for 37 years.....and now I am the one whose been at the School the longest...that can’t be true...where is Sally?
I pine for all the stories and institutional wisdom that we lost when you died...what a treasure – suddenly vanished...

I miss the goodness that you poured into the school, the students, colleagues, staff, and patients. I miss having you here as a friend and colleague. You are the kind of person we need around us...and now you are gone...we don't have you....

Sally, you epitomize loyalty. Look up "loyalty" in the dictionary and your picture would be there. There are so many wonderful qualities that describe you and yet don't capture the breadth of who you are – honest, caring, real, unafraid, hard-working, fun-loving, faithful, generous, clever, cunning, kind, interested in those at the edges, gentle, persistent, salt of the earth....I cannot think of another person I would rather have had as a colleague and friend...and it is a deep, deep sadness that you are gone.

I love you Sally and I miss you!

~Ann Connor

Sally Lehr was one of my professors at Emory from 2005-2007. There are not enough words in the dictionary to describe this phenomenal woman. She always had a peaceful smile and a soft spoken voice. Eager to help all students and always giving back to the community! Dr. Lehr will be truly missed by her peers and the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of nursing family. She was a true legacy.

~ Demetta Payne, RN, BSN, MSN

"I have always grown up in an environment where you learn to respect all of the teachers you have had, the good ones and the bad ones. There have been many in my life, but very few who have impacted me like Sally. Sally, your fight with cancer is a fight that no one as kind as you should have to face.

Throughout the struggles of nursing school and finding my passion, you have strongly influenced my life and many others.

Thank you for always greeting me with a warm smile and hug every day for the most important years in my college education.

Thank you for being someone who dedicates yourself to molding our minds with knowledge of not just nursing but also life lessons. Very few have the capacity to inspire values such as compassion, hard work, and integrity. You have shown me kindness through rough times in my life
I know that the days ahead will be difficult. Please remember that your Emory family is here ready to help in every way possible.

~ Angela Frederick Amar, PhD, RN, ANEF, FAAN

Dr. Sally Lehr. A true role model for any nursing student and for any person for that matter. I first met Dr. Sally Lehr on my first day of the Mental Health Nursing course this past fall semester. She was a petite and friendly person. I remember thinking to myself that I just love the smile of hers. She was one of those professors who I knew from off the bat that she would be always be there to answer questions, to give encouragement when things got tough, and to always be smiling, and I was right. I could remember that I would go to class to see the smile of hers to get me through the rest of the stressful week. She truly did brighten up my day and the school. I am blessed to have got to know her.

As a person who witnessed the impact that she has given to people around her, I also want to be that kind of person to those who I meet whether it be at work or in personal life.

Thank you, Dr. Lehr. May you rest in peace and continue to brighten our hearts.

~ Minyoung A. Kim

had a lasting impression. I've heard from a friend about her involvement with the opening of the Marcus Autism Center, while I personally experienced learning about mental health and all it's complexities. Sally really made the classroom come alive! With guiding students to perform skits to retelling of stories through patient care, she really helped you feel and see in the eyes of those who suffer.

Perhaps my favorite memory was at the GANS convention in Athens this past fall. Sally had come with us as a volunteer chaperone and there was a delegate session where the teachers were seated in the back of the auditorium. I got up during a break and walked towards the back of the room to exit and get a drink. It was then I spotted Sally. Seated in a chair while moving her shoulders up and down, she was dancing to the rhythm of the music playing. I walked over and asked if I could dance with her. “Sure!”, she replied with a smile larger than life, and grasped my hands, but didn't get up from the chair. I didn't think twice about her not getting up and just had fun swaying our hands back and forth to the music. She had never let on to us students just how sick she was. But looking back to this day, I am in awe of the positivity and strength she carried for herself and for her students.

Although Dr. Lehr has left us physically at the Emory School of Nursing, her legacy lives on. As we continue to do her work in creating a better space for the care of mental health, she will be in our hearts forever.

Rest well dearest Sally.

~ Faye Grossblatt
Sally was such a force! I went through dozens of psychiatric student orientations with Sally over the years, sometimes as many as 6 times a year.

Sally handled these first mental health rotation days with 20+ students beautifully. She put the students at ease so they could admit their nervousness and fears, and we could put their worries to rest usually.

We did many, many “simulations” where one of us played a depressed, prostate post-op patient with worries of impotence, incontinence, and cancer recurrence and had some hysterical moments as part of this.

The last time we did a simulation together was the last day of February this year. I played an agitated, intoxicated veteran in the emergency room with a broken arm and she was my partner. We both totally hammed it up, to the students delight.

I will always treasure all of these memories. Sally mentored me and gave me great advice over and over, for the many years I had the privilege of working with her.

We got to meet in Normandy on one of her trips for the D-Day celebration.

Again, such a pleasure to be with her and Ralph, eating crepes in Caen!

Thank you for sharing your wonderful Sally with us for all of these years.

~ Linda Grabbe, PhD, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC

I will miss her colleagueship, sage advice, and warm smile. I will also miss finding butterfingers on my desk. Once Sally learned that they were my favorite candy bar, she left them on my desk on a regular basis. That was her way, making each of us feel special.

Sally has always extended a warm welcome and has been incredibly helpful and supportive. The students in general, but especially in the undergraduate program, adore Sally.

In their course evaluations, they describe Sally as one of our BEST faculty and one of their favorites. It is incredible to see how many lives she touched and how she did it in her quiet way.

I will miss her colleagueship, sage advice, and warm smile.

~ Kathy Markowski
proach embodied the therapeutic use of self. She modeled that both in the classroom and in the clinical setting and was always teaching by example. Sally also taught all of her students to not only care for others but to care for themselves and that we can only be our best selves as human beings and nurses by finding a moment to care for our selves. This was an important part of the weekly journal for a student to find that time for themselves even if just one brief moment but, as importantly, to find a moment to reach out to another human being and make a connection. Sally realized that brief connection can make a difference. Sally made connection throughout our school and mental health community. She made a difference in my life and in the lives of all around her and will be missed sorely.

~ Dr. Dorothy Jordan

Sally was such an extraordinary friend and colleague that words seem woefully inadequate to express my feelings for her and the sadness that envelops me following her loss. She embraced life fearlessly, and she loved her family, friends, and students fiercely. The adventures we shared traveling with the students to their conventions will always reside among my happiest and most treasured memories. I marveled at her resilience, humor, and determination to live her best possible life in spite of daunting challenges. Perhaps her greatest gift, however, was her ability to connect so effortlessly and so lovingly with so many. When she looked at me, I knew I was being seen. When she lis-

I am truly regretful to have not been fortunate to have encountered this faculty member, as she is widely adored among undergraduate students, graduate students, and nursing faculty. Her impact is clear!

~ Susan Brasher, PhD, CPNP

I met Dr. Sally Lehr in the first few weeks of nursing school. She was one of the first faculty members I personally spoke with. It was a meeting for service learning for a class I was taking fall semester 2016. I volunteered to help her lead it, and little did I know that this would lead me to such a close relationship with her. Throughout the semester I helped her plan the schedule for service at Clairmont Place. By the end, we had become very close. I had told her that I wasn’t going back home to Arkansas for Thanksgiving due to an exam the following week and that winter break was so close anyway, and she so welcomingly invited me to her family’s Thanksgiving. It was so wonderful. I enjoyed getting to know her even better, along with all her loving family members. Ralph, Allison, Carolyn, Jeff, David, Katherine, Madeline, Jim, Annette, and Sally, thank you so much for taking me in. It was so nice to be able to spend time with you. I still think about how amazing and welcoming you all are.

Sally was one of a kind. She cared so deeply for all her students, and brought so much to the nursing profession. She shaped me as a person in that she made me more confident in myself as a student and my ability to lead a
team. She also made me realize the true reason that I want to become a nurse. I saw how she took care of people: her students, the residents of Clairmont, anyone. She took care of them from all perspectives, medical or not. She listened to their stories. Spent time with them. Gave them her all. That is nursing. I strive to be a nurse just like that. Just like Sally.

I miss you so much Sally. Thank you for all you have given me.

~ Olivia Morton

Dear Sally,

Your impact on my life was short, yet so profound. I can remember the moment I decided to switch into your Human Sexuality elective last semester and how welcoming and passionate you were from day one. Your dedication to nursing was contagious and I can only hope to earn as much influence as you had on the entire student body at Emory SON. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for prioritizing minority populations and for highlighting contributions of LGBT leaders and members of our community.

You delved into topics that most shy away from. You exposed us to new ideas and new perspectives in the most nonjudgmental manner I have ever seen. With your help, I stepped outside my comfort zone and learned about populations I knew nothing about. Your influence will not be

EVERYONE knew and loved Sally and by being taken around by her, I quickly realized, I was automatically given a seal of approval.

Sally was an amazingly supportive mentor and I found myself drifting to her office countless times to just touch base and talk things through. I had the pleasure of developing our school’s first semester long mental health nursing class and Sally was invaluable in this effort. We were a team and she was thrilled that first day of class as we stood at the front of the classroom and kicked the course off. Sally insisted on maintaining contact with members of the mental health community that she had relied on in the past to visit class, lecture, and share their perspectives. In the development of this course we were encouraged to reduce the number of outside speakers and I worked hard to maintain that balance of a new approach with the tried and true methods Sally had used for years. I pushed to cut down on our outside speakers and Sally was wonderfully stubborn! I finally realized that for many of the speakers lecturing and meeting with students was making a difference in their lives. The students learned, the presenters benefited, and Sally enjoyed making those connections and firmly believed this sharing was critical to learning about mental health and reducing stigma.

Deep compassion was cornerstone of her care of patients and her relationship with colleagues, and students. Sally was a storyteller, embraced all aspects of each person she came into contact with. We talked about patient histories in class and we tried to convey how to be open to a patient’s and family’s story, how there was so much to learn, know, and inform our approach with patients. Sally’s ap-
Dearest Lehr Family,

I have known Sally for a long time. What I loved about Sally was her consistency. She was always genuinely happy to see me. Our encounters were often brief but always pleasant. She demonstrated that niceness was important and how we treated each other on a daily basis mattered. And boy oh boy did the students love her. She cared about them and she inspired them. Her contributions helped make the nursing school a great place to work, teach, and learn! Sally will be missed but her spirit lives on when we spread kindness and compassion to each other, our students and our patients.

~Kate Yeager

Thoughts on Sally:

My first graduate nursing degree was from Emory (Child Health Nursing). When I added psychiatric mental health nursing as a specialty, it wasn’t long before I got to know Sally. She welcomed me as a faculty member with open arms. I started with mental health nursing clinical rotations at Peachford Hospital where Sally has been taking students for decades. Sally insisted on accompanying me on my first Peachford visit, not just to orient me but to personally introduce me to every single member of her Peachford “family” from the Director of Nursing to custodial staff, ECT staff, kitchen staff, and throughout Peachford Hospital.

lost, I can promise you that. I will strive to provide the most equitable and accessible care to my future patients. With your guidance in mind, I promise to uphold the health and safety of gender and sexual minorities. I miss you dearly but I know nothing would make you happier than to see your students making a difference with what you taught us and this transforms my sadness into great hope for the future.

Love,
Tara Noorani

Not many professors impact your life and soul, but when they do they stay with you for a lifetime. Many students at NHWSN referred to Sally as the golden standard for an alumna. But Sally was so much more than that to the community. One of my very first classes at the SON was with Sally as a guest lecturer. Her smile instantly lit up the room and her humor made the intensity of the class lighter.

Not many professors can impact your education and soul at the same time, but Sally did that for me. During my class with her I had some personal issues going on and Sally was my advocate. She helped me navigate the waters of mental health for a family member while also making sure that I was taking care of myself. However, her call of duty went beyond that, she made it her job to email me and frequently check on me in the weeks following. Her way of
life will stay with me forever, I can honestly say Sally was one of the best professors during my entire college career. She challenged students to think outside of the box, she challenged us to look at sex and mental health differently, and she challenged us to take care of ourselves even in the difficult times.

Sally's smile and compassion will stay with me for a lifetime and help light the way of my nursing career for years to come. I am so glad I was a part of THE Emory with Sally in it, I can only imagine how different it would have been without her.

Forever we love Sally, she will be deeply missed.

~ Sunny Porterfield

Dr. Sally Lehr… It took me quite sometime to call her Sally. She was my professor in graduate school and then my mentor when I joined on as faculty.

Sally was such a delight, always smiling and pulling me into her office to tell me a joke about a student's experience in clinical. Her humor was infectious. Her wisdom and life experiences so valuable, to both her students and colleagues. She was a force to be reckoned with!

Now she is surrounded by angels looking down on us as we continue in her legacy of compassion and commitment. I will surely miss her.

God bless!
Sandra Spence

For Sally's family:

There are times when there are too few words left to heal us, when what we wish for is to be carried, when all we have left is the hope that tomorrow will be a gentler place to land than today. (Author unknown)

There are not adequate words to let you know how greatly Sally impacted so many students, friends, and others who she crossed path with. Feel comfort knowing that she will live in the minds and hearts of so many for years to come.

As the days and weeks pass, and as you return to life's routine, may you continue to feel comforted by the love and support of family and friends; you will see reminders of her all around you. These are little messages she will send to you!

With care,
Jeannie Weston