

Celebrating



Andy and Barbara Gessner
College of Nursing
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

A Decade of Dedication

Celebrating Today, Investing in Tomorrow, Committed to the Future

Friday, September 19, 2025 • Houston Country Club



Honorees

Andy and Barbara Gessner

Circle of Excellence

Nomita Bajwa, PharmD, EdD

Nancy Blair, MBA

Eugenia (Ginger) Blomström, PhD, RN, CNS-Psych/MH

Lesil Gessner, BBA

Janet Leatherwood MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Lenora McWilliams, PhD, MS, RN

Tom Omondi, JD, MSN, MBA, RN

Marisa Ramirez, BA

Hope Reeves, MSN, RN

Olivia Thompson, MPA



Welcome

Kathryn Tart, EdD, MSN, RN, FNAP

Founding Dean and Professor

EMCEE

Haley Hernandez, KPRC 2 News

Invocation

The Reverend Dr. David Tart

Recognition

HONOREES

Andy and Barbara Gessner

Circle of Excellence

DINNER

VIDEO

TESTIMONIAL

Closing Remarks

Dean Tart

Menu

Harvest Salad

Seasonal greens, pickled red onions, apples, strawberries,
dried cranberries, gorgonzola, caramelized pecans and sherry vinaigrette

Entree

Petite Filet Mignon with pinot noir sauce
Sautéed Snapper Pontchartrain
with shrimp, grilled asparagus, creamy herb polenta,
mushroom and white wine sauce

Mini Dessert Trio

Gessner College of *Nursing Achievements*



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- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education accreditation (2023 - 2033)
- Society for Simulation in Healthcare accreditation for simulation centers at UH Sugar Land and UH Katy Campuses (2024 - 2029)
- \$20,000,000 naming gift for the Andy and Barbara Gessner College of Nursing (5/8/2023)
- First cohort of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students graduated at the University of Houston (5/2024)
- Opened University of Houston College of Nursing Health Clinic (2021), a nurse managed clinic, with expansion to second clinic day (2022) with care for over 1,000 individual patients including interprofessional experiences with UH College of Optometry and UT Dental
- Enrolled first pre-nursing students at the University of Houston (2020)
- Celebrating ten years at the University of Houston (9/1/2015 – 9/1/2025)
- Enrolled first cohort of Traditional BSN students at the University of Houston Katy Campus (2019)
- Awarded the INSIGHT Into Diversity Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023)
- 100% Pass rate on the national certification exam for the Family Nurse Practitioner degree (2015 to 2024)
- 100% First-time pass rate on the NCLEX-RN exam (2015, 2016, 2017, 2020, and 2024)
- 100% Employment rate at graduation for BSN graduates (2017 - 2022)

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Indian Nursing Council; Swansea University, Wales; University of Applied Sciences Rotterdam, Netherlands; Faith in Practice, Guatemala
- 114% increase in pre-nursing enrollments from fall 2020 to spring 2025
- 900 Gessner College of Nursing graduates between fall 2015 – spring 2025
- 70 total publications, 96 professional presentations, \$3,376,596 grant funding, \$722,617 research expenditures (2019-2023)
- 111 active affiliation agreements for student clinical learning (2025)
- Expanding Traditional BSN options for Honors College and Population Health minor
- Interprofessional education (IPE) through Household Centered Care with College of Medicine and Graduate College of Social Work and IPE experiences for graduate students (2020-2025)
- Curriculum revisions through COVID-19 and implementation of American Association of Colleges of Nursing – The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (2021) www.uh.edu/nursing 8/5/2025





Andy & Barbara Gessner

Andy Gessner has deep roots in the city of Houston, as evidenced by a familiar street name after his uncle. He is the former president of Industrial Air Tool, where he worked for over 40 years eventually rising to the role of co-owner and president. Through his leadership, Industrial Air Tool grew into one of the leading supply businesses in the oil industry.

Barbara Gessner, an Ohio native, studied at Texas Woman's University where she began dating Andy Gessner ('68)—and the rest is history. Together, the couple has made a significant philanthropic impact in the Greater Houston, area where Barbara has prioritized volunteerism through tutoring adults seeking their GED and volunteering with Houston ISD's Volunteers in Public Schools Program. She was an active member in her church.

Gessner credits the University of Houston, where he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in 1968, for his success in business management and sales, and enjoys "paying it forward" to help future generations. In 2023, Andy and his wife Barbara, both children of nurses and inspired by their mothers' dedication to healing, generously named the Andy and Barbara Gessner College of Nursing at the University of Houston. The gift has strengthened nursing education and research, funded scholarships and fellowships for students, and it will increase the number of highly educated nurses in the workforce.

The couple also contributed to the C. T. Bauer College of Business establishing the Andy and Barbara Gessner Sales Program Top Salesperson Awards and the Andy and Barbara Gessner Sales Competition Team Endowment. Their giving has extended to Houston Public Media, the UH Alumni Association Circle of Excellence, the President's Fund for Student Success and Athletics. Both Andy and Barbara continue their legacy of service as members of the university's National Development Council.



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Special Thanks

Event Underwriter
Fred and Mabel R Parks Foundation



John Greco and Danny Cohen, AACN-TV

David Bertman,
*Associate Professor of Music of the
Katherine G. McGovern College of the Arts
and Director of Band Operations for UH*

Students of the UH Moores School of Music

UH Spirit of Houston Marching Band



**To donate online:
bit.ly/uhnursing10**