

March 3, 2023

To: Fellow Nurses, Active or Retired

Re: Nurse Honor Guard, formation of a Delta Xi Chapter

From: Jeanne Bryner, Coordinator

Dear Fellow Nurses:

I hope you and yours are well. Please allow me to introduce myself. I am a long time member of the Delta Xi Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International Nurses Honor Society at Kent State University and a retired emergency department nurse. Midsummer 2022, I learned about the Nurse Honor Guard (NHG) from a nurse friend in South Carolina. This encounter inspired me to become involved. With the help of Delta Xi, we have started a Nurse Honor Guard Chapter. We are looking for others who are inspired to show their respect for fellow nurses who die. I'm proud to report Delta Xi Chapter has pledged \$500 to support the formation of this new NHG chapter.

The Nurse Honor Guard groups were established by volunteer registered nurses and licensed practical nurses to perform services to honor nurses when they die. Like military honor guards, a dress uniform is required. The nurses wear whites, a cap and capes. A minimum of two nurses and maximum of ten perform the brief, reverent ceremony.

Once the family agrees to have this ceremony, it can take place at a funeral home, hospice house, House of worship or memorial service. Please allow me to share the highlights of the ceremony. Specific information on each nurse may be gleaned from the obituary, family and friends. This information is organized and becomes an integral part of each program. The nurse's life, of course, is central to the ceremony; and under *The Nightingale Tribute*, their name will appear on program's cover along with the date and location of the service.

The Nightingale lamp is lit at the beginning of the ceremony when the NHGs process toward the casket, urn or photo. The specifics of the honored nurse's life will be read by one of the NHGs. This reader or another will share: As we honor _____, we will perform the Nightingale Tribute, Nightingale lamp lighting, present a white rose and final roll call for duty. A brief explanation of the lamp ceremony and white rose is given. The Nightingale Tribute is read by one reader. A poem, "She Was There" (gender specific) is read. The white rose ceremony occurs next and the rose is placed. During the final roll call for duty, we invite nurses present to stand. The fallen nurse's name is called three times. We ring a triangle after the name is called and pause. Then we officially release the nurse from her earthly duties. The lamp is extinguished and presented to the family. The NHG process to back of the room/space.

Our organization is embryonic; NHG, Delta Xi Chapter needs a firm foundation. We are brainstorming to get diverse volunteers, funds, caps, capes and share our mission with active/retired nurses, hospice facilities, clergy and funeral directors. We are responsible for Trumbull and Portage county areas, which are a lot of territory. We want to draw a radius around towns and define mileage volunteers will cover so they have an idea of expectations. There will be initial costs for volunteers: caps, capes (\$55), clasps, whites and shoes. If you want to gauge your interest before committing, Delta Xi will loan a cape, clasp and cap for a service. Prior to participation, you will need to have your white uniform and white shoes. Service requests come

quickly. We need to have enough people to respond accordingly. Please share this letter with your colleagues and join us as we begin an important journey to honor the shoulders we all stand upon. If you are interested in this opportunity, please email deltaxi@kent.edu with Nurse Honor Guard in the subject line.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Bryner, RN, BA, CEN (rtd)
Delta Xi Chapter Member
Nurse Honor Guard Chapter Coordinator