Notre Dame of Maryland University receives $1.5 million gift from alumna

By Catholic Review Staff

Notre Dame of Maryland University announced July 10 it has received a $1.5 million gift from The Pitts Family Foundation to fund the first endowed chair in its School of Nursing.

The gift, from Our Lady of the Chesapeake, Lake Shore, parishioner and alumna Frances Kay Pitts, is among the largest the Baltimore university has received from an alumna.

The Frances Kay Pitts Endowed Chair for Nursing Leadership and Innovation will fund scholarships, research and special projects in the School of Nursing.

Frances Kay Pitts earned a bachelor's in nursing from Notre Dame in 1996 and a master's from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. She became a certified nurse midwife in 1999 as part of her 37-year nursing career.

During a recent visit to Notre Dame, Pitts toured the nursing school's Center for Caring with Technology, which uses simulation experiences to help students develop essential nursing skills.

"It's amazing to see the level of technology that is helping them to learn the many skills you need as a nurse," Pitts said in a statement. "To think that this endowed chair will enable these opportunities to expand even more, it's exciting for me. It makes me proud to be part of it."

Frances attends her Pasadena parish along with her husband, James.

"Our school is rapidly expanding and this gift will enrich the learning experience for our students and help to enhance our program," Katharine C. Cook, dean of the university's nursing school, said in a statement. "In addition, it will support faculty scholarship."

Dr. Marylou Yam, who became Notre Dame's 14th president July 1, began her career as a nurse and nursing educator. She is still a licensed registered nurse.

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