

# Preface

This book showcases the Basic Nursing Education Programme (BNEP) as was conducted in the School of Nursing at the University College Hospital, later University Hospital of the West Indies at Mona, in Kingston, Jamaica, from 1949 to 2006, a period of over half a century. It is to be noted that in 1949 the programme began with a joint Kingston Public Hospital/University College Hospital of the West Indies Preliminary Training School programme based at the University College, Mona. Nurses trained for the University College Hospital did their complete studies and training at the Kingston Public Hospital. The full BNEP based at the University College Hospital started in 1952 when the newly built hospital accepted patients. This book highlights the structure, administration and evolution of the programme as relates to the provision of an improved standard of basic nursing education and by extension that of nursing care services. We acknowledge a limitation to this publication due to the fact that most of the school's files were destroyed and the library dismantled, resulting in the loss of many sources referenced in the book.

This book will also serve to augment the paucity of existing literature on nursing education in the region. We believe that this book will be a useful reference to a wide cross-section of health professionals and academics. It provides a historical reference for nurses participating in the construction and delivery of nursing education programmes in Jamaica, the Caribbean and beyond. It is also a source of information for other groups involved in investigative and constructive academic activities.

The book begins with a brief introduction of the origins and progress in nursing education in Jamaica prior to 1949. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the events and issues influencing the BNEP. Relevant developments taking place at the international, regional and local levels during the period 1949–

2006 are covered. The main focus of the text, the BNEP as was conducted at the University College/University Hospital of the West Indies, Jamaica, is described in chapters 3 to 6 in the following periods: 1949 to 1961, 1962 to 1980, 1981 to 1999 and 2000 to 2006. The main features and specific elements of the programme are described. Comments made by a sample of graduates of the School of Nursing on the quality of their training and the extent to which it has prepared them to carry out their role as graduate nurses appear at the end of each chapter. Chapter 7, the conclusion, summarizes the contributions of each administrative head of the BNEP and outlines milestones along the road to excellence. In keeping with the penchant of the Jamaican personality for humour, a compilation of light-hearted anecdotes supplied by graduates has been placed in appendix 1.

We the authors, all graduates of the school, are pleased to have had the opportunity to write this historical book on nursing education at the University Hospital of the West Indies, Jamaica. We regret that Enid Lawrence, the first director of the school, who had been a member of the team, passed away shortly after the project began. Her extensive knowledge of the programme and considerable experience in nursing education have been sadly missed during the remaining period of our work.

We invite you to read this book which describes the development of the BNEP at the University College/University Hospital of the West Indies as it progressed from an apprenticeship towards student status. This road traversed by the students of the School of Nursing of the University College/University Hospital of the West Indies was the way to excellence in the education and practice of nursing. The comments made by the sample of graduates are instructive in this regard. The extent to which graduates have been sought after for employment both at home and in the diaspora also substantiates the school's reputation for excellence.