



In the strictest sense, Dillard's baccalaureate nursing program is an outgrowth of a hospital nursing program that was located at Flint-Goodrich Hospital (pictured). Mr. Albert Dent, the superintendent of the hospital who would later become president of Dillard University, was a staunch advocate of the baccalaureate nursing program. Mr. Dent said "a nursing program in Dillard University should develop better persons as well as better nurses; persons who will provide leadership in an increasingly important profession." Together with Ms. Rita E. Miller, an especially able nurse who understood and championed professional nursing education, their argument for a black baccalaureate program in nursing was persuasive. Ms. Miller devised a rigorous five-year academic program with high admission standards, and with the support of President Dent, the baccalaureate program began in 1942.

The excellent working relationship between the academic program at Dillard and Flint-Goodridge Hospital offered access to hands-on-experiences and established Dillard as a model and an inspiration for the development of other black collegiate nursing schools, most notably the one that came into existence at Florida A&M. This early start gave Dillard the distinction of offering the first baccalaureate nursing program in Louisiana. The nursing program received full accreditation from the National League for Nursing in 1952. It has maintained this status and also operates with state approval.

The first class of nurses graduated in 1947. Since that time, more than 1,200 nurses have completed the program. Dillard has educated students from across Louisiana, the United States, and abroad. Dillard's nursing graduates work in the health care, education, private industry, and political fields. Individually and collectively, their achievements are numerous, and their contributions to the profession of nursing and society are significant.

Ms. Miller led the nursing program until 1973. Under the leadership of her successor, Dr. Mervell Bracewell, the length of the program was reduced to four years. Curriculum content was modified in accord with current trends in nursing education and practice.

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