

(Continued from page 3)

Hall featuring Meredith Post from OSHA talking about workplace violence. This served as an excellent reminder that not everything is addressed through legislation; nurses have other steps they can take to address workplace violence, start-

ing with reporting the incident. As we look to additional Town Halls in 2025 (often advertised on MyCNA), I ask you what topics would best meet your needs. Send those ideas to mark@coloradonurses.org or info@coloradonurses.org. ■

Mile High Nurses Honor Guard Becomes a Reality

Patricia Barrow, RN



Members of the Mile High Nurses Honor Guard attend a service to deliver a heartfelt Nightingale Tribute, honoring the legacy and contributions of a fellow nurse.

In January my daughter, Dorothy Barrow, gave me an article to read about the National Nurse Honor Guard Coalition and told me that since I was 10+ years retired, I needed to start a chapter in the Denver metro area. After reading it I knew I had to start a group here. I reached out to retiring and retired nursing colleagues about starting one and in August 2024, the Mile High Nurses Honor Guard became a reality.

What is a nurse honor guard? It is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to recognize and honor the women and men who have dedicated all or a portion of their lives to nursing. Upon their death, it is important to shine a light on their contributions to the nursing profession and humanity as a whole. It can also help ease the grief of the mourners. It is similar to the final salute given to a deceased military

person, police officer, or firefighter. The concept started in Kansas in 2003 when the Kansas State Nurses Association sent a nurse to pay tribute during a nurse's funeral. A hospital in Detroit paid tribute to staff nurses who passed. In 2011, Julia Murray learned what the Detroit nurses were doing and founded a group in Michigan — the National Nurse Honor Guard Coalition.

Nurses wear traditional white uniforms and shoes, nurses' caps, and traditional navy blues capes. At the request of the family, they attend the funeral or memorial of anyone who at some point in their life was a nurse. The brief ceremony takes approximately 10 minutes. They provide a presence at the service or visitation, recite the Nurse's Prayer, explain the symbolism of the lamp and rose, recite the Nurse's Pledge, give a brief history of the nurse's ca-

reer, recite the "The Nightingale Tribute," lay a white rose by the casket, urn, or picture, do a final roll call, release the nurse from their earthly nursing duties, extinguish the lamp and present it to the family, and file out. All members of the honor guard are currently practicing or have been a nurse at some time in their lives, who volunteer their time to honor fallen comrades. There is no cost to the family.

There are currently 250+ groups across America. There are 6 groups now in Colorado. Carolyn Rasmussen is the Colorado state coordinator.

1. Grand Valley Nurse Honor Guard (covers Mesa, Delta, Montrose, and part of Garfield counties).
2. Mile High Nurses Honor Guard (covers the greater Denver metro area).
3. NE Colorado Nurse Honor Guard (covers a 40-mile radius of Sterling).
4. Northern Colorado Nursing Honor Guard (covers Wheatridge and north).
5. Royal Gorge Nurse Honor Guard (covers Fremont and Custer County).
6. Southern Colorado Nurse Honor Guard (covers El Paso, Pueblo, parts of Huerfano, and Alamosa).

We are always looking for more members. Contact Pat - barapat@aol.com for more information on the Mile High Nurses Honor Guard or Carolyn Rasmussen- carolyn@yahoo.com for contact information about other groups. ■