



**Mississippi
Nurses Foundation**
Nurses Touch Lives

Nurse Oneita Dongieux Award for Excellence

Onita Dongieux, a leader in nursing education, was born in Moselle, Mississippi. She graduated from Beaumont Texas High School and received her diploma in nursing from the University of Tennessee School of Nursing. At age 5, her mother died. During that time, she and her siblings were shuffled around from aunt to aunt while growing up because her father worked on the Southern Pacific Railroad. Mrs. Dongieux assumed the “mother role” of her two siblings and always made sure the three of them stayed together regardless of the circumstances. She worked her way through high school, college and graduate school. Throughout her life, she always saved her money and never spent any on herself except for her education. She believed in providing and educating those less fortunate than herself. She was married to J.E. Dongieux.

In 1937, Mrs. Dongieux moved to Jackson, MS to accept a position as staff nurse for the Mississippi State Department of Health. During her six years of service at the State Health Department, she completed work for her certificate in public health nursing from Vanderbilt University.

In 1948, Mrs. Dongieux's love for nursing education began to blossom when she embarked upon a career as an educator/instructor for the Sonny G. Montgomery Veteran Memorial Hospital where she was appointed assistant chief of nursing education. In 1959, she received her Bachelors of Science degree in Nursing from the University of Mississippi School of Nursing where she was later employed as faculty. In 1961, she was appointed executive director of the Mississippi Nurses Association. During her tenure, she was instrumental in securing mandatory licensure for RNs and LPNs. She was an advocate, a lobbyist and a leader in moving nursing education into the higher education system.

The Onita Dongieux (\$500) Award of Excellence was established through the Mississippi Nurses Foundation in honor and memory of her legacy.

Criteria:

- Currently enrolled and in good academic standing in a Mississippi school of nursing
- A Mississippi resident
- 3.0 or higher G.P.A. on a 4.0 scale
- Application and essay submitted by the deadline date – February 3, 2012

Essay Requirements:

- Addresses the topic: “Who or What Inspired My Interest in Nursing”;
- Demonstrates how one person or thing impacted your decision to become nurse;
- Previously unpublished essay;
- Limited to 2 pages – typed and double-spaced on letter-sized paper;

Complete Application Must Include:

- Student information form;
- Essay;
- Letter from school verifying the student is enrolled and in good academic standing.