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## **School of Nursing Graduates its 104th Class Reaches milestone of 2,500 graduates**

**SCHENECTADY** – Ellis Hospital’s School of Nursing graduated its 104th class of students on **Friday, May 15, 2009 at 7 pm** in commencement exercises at the **Memorial Chapel at Union College.**

The 24 graduates, 2 men and 22 women, began their studies in September, 2007. They join a tradition of excellence, dedication and service as the Ellis Hospital School of Nursing has graduated more than 2,500 students since 1903.

The Class of 2009 is a diverse group of students ranging in age from the mid-20s to late-40s. Some enrolled while in the midst of raising families. Most were already in health care-related jobs and more than half worked at Ellis while pursuing their nursing degree. Some students were inspired by nurses in their families or by their family’s positive experience with nursing care.

- Kolleen Collins of Schenectady, was inspired to become a nurse when her younger brother was hospitalized with a serious illness and she observed “amazing nurses”. Friday, she’ll share her accomplishments with her family—including her newborn baby. Kolleen gave birth to her son and took her nursing school final exams just days later, in her words, “it’s been an exciting week.”
- Kristina Wise realized her calling as a nurse in her mid 30s while she worked as a medical technologist. “I knew that I needed to be closer to patients and touch their lives.” As the mother of three young children, returning to school was both daunting and challenging, but Kristina credits her husband, who also has a demanding career in health care, with tremendous support.

At least 75% of the graduates will work at Ellis Hospital. “We’re proud and pleased to provide job opportunities for our School of Nursing graduates – especially during these difficult economic times. We know firsthand that our graduates are of the highest caliber and we’re delighted to welcome them to our team,” said Vice President of Nursing, Cece Lynch.

School of Nursing director Dr. Marilyn Stapleton notes that Friday’s graduation is significant on a broader scale as the nation continues to face a nursing shortage and as the “Baby Boomer” generation ages, needing more services. “The School of Nursing is proud to help lead the effort to provide highly qualified nurses in the field –whether they stay here at Ellis or take jobs elsewhere,” said Stapleton.