

Holly Fontenot: Not Your Average Academic

Getting to know SONDH's newest faculty member

This August, the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene (SONDH) welcomed its newest faculty member, Holly Fontenot, PhD, RN, WHNP-BC, FAAN, FNAP, to serve as the Francis A. Matsuda chair in Women's Health and as an associate professor.

Fontenot's accolades include degrees, professorships, and director roles at the Connell School of Nursing at Boston College, nearly 75 publications in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and

a book, invited and refereed presentations throughout the nation, and funding by the National Institutes of Health, the CDC-Division of Adolescent and School Health, and the American Cancer Society. Fontenot's work has resulted in substantive, sustained impacts on the health of women and adolescents.

Fontenot's efforts led to her achievements, but that's not all that brought her to where she is today. She has a love for sports and the outdoors, which almost led to her pursuing a career as a physical therapist, but volunteering as a nursing assistant one summer placed her on another path.

"I loved what the nurses were doing," Fontenot says. "It fit



for me. It all clicked, and I knew this is what I wanted to do.”

When it comes to research, Fontenot credits her mentor for steering her toward a doctorate.

“I had an amazing mentor when I was in my nurse practitioner program,” Fontenot says. “She kept in touch with me after I graduated and kept pushing me. She said I would be a great instructor and researcher and that I needed a PhD.”

Now, Fontenot is eager to begin the next chapter in her new roles at SONDH.

“The School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene has an excellent reputation and after meeting faculty members, I knew I wanted to explore this option further,” she says.

The location was also a major draw, as Fontenot recalls her local ties.

“My grandmother was born in Hawaii,” she says. “When I was young, my family used to visit here often. My mother went to summer school during college at the University of Hawaii, and I remember her trying to teach me hula as a child.”

Fontenot and her family have made Hawaii home. Her 17-year-old daughter, Ella, has started her senior year of high school, and her husband, Dave, will be joining them soon. They share her love for the outdoors and water sports.

“At the university, I am looking forward to engaging with new colleagues and seeing how my skillset can help my new UH community and the larger community of Hawaii,” she says.

Just for Fun

Outside of academia, Fontenot spends time with her 17-year-old daughter, Ella, and her husband, Dave. Here is a short list of her favorite fun activities:

- Trying new foods
- Surfing
- Boating
- Hiking
- Stand-up-paddle boarding
- Skiing
- Painting
- Reading and watching witty, dry-comedy books and TV shows

More About: The Frances A. Matsuda Chair in Women's Health

Dr. Frances A. Matsuda Sano spent much of her life supporting community-based interventions to improve women's health in the Pacific Basin. Born in Hanalei, Kauai, in 1917, Matsuda Sano completed her MD and PhD in Japan, where she worked in an international hospital, served as an officer of the International Women Doctors Association, and became Editor of the Heart Research Journal of the Tokyo Women's Medical College. She established the Frances A. Matsuda Sano Fund with a specific focus to improve health care delivery to women in the Pacific Basin. The fund includes a nursing fellowship, public health fellowship, and the position of Chair in Women's Health in the School of Nursing.