



## Nurse Overcomes the Odds to Graduate and Win University Award

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12 March 2007, A local nurse has scooped a prestigious award from the University of Stirling, in recognition of excellence in student performance, specifically in clinical practice. This year's recipient of the R G Bomont Award for Recognition of Clinical Excellence is Rachel Kennedy (23) from Barvas, who became even more determined to dedicate her life to nursing after her fiancé was paralysed in a car accident.

Rachel, a student in the 2003 Adult Nursing Programme based on the University of Stirling Western Isles Campus, will receive her award on Monday 12 March at the Western Isles campus of the University of Stirling. She is the first nurse based in the Western Isles to receive the award. She completed her training in September, and now works as a staff nurse in Medical Ward 2 in Western Isles Hospital.

Rachel Kennedy, said: "Prior to commencing my final year of the course my fiancé Sandy was involved in a serious car accident. Unfortunately he sustained traumatic injuries to his back. It was a difficult and trying time for the family. I took time away from the course in order to be with Sandy, as he required specialist care and rehabilitation in a mainland hospital in Glasgow. He spent 9 months in the spinal unit and I remained with him in Glasgow until we came home together. My personal tutor Gill kept in touch regularly and encouraged and supported my return to do my final year in 2005. I had a renewed determination and motivation to complete the course. I looked back on the year that I spent with Sandy in hospital as a life changing experience but also positively as a learning curve in my life. This encouraged me to carry on and give it my all to the nursing profession."

The University of Stirling's Department of Nursing and Midwifery was created in 1996 and Dr Robert Bomont, the then University Secretary, was an influential part of positioning the University to take on this subject area. The RG Bomont Award is presented annually to the student who has demonstrated a high level of commitment and achievement during their clinical placements as a student. The fact that Rachel has won the award is not only a boost for her, but also for the Western Isles campus and her fellow students.

Head of the Department of Nursing Midwifery, Professor Tommy Starrs said: "We are delighted that this year's recipient is Rachel Kennedy who was recently a student in our Western Isles campus. She shows all of the attributes that one would expect of an excellent nurse: she is caring, empathetic, and knowledgeable and has the ability to instil confidence and security in the patients she cares for. Rachel has been chosen from some 300 graduates in year group which completed in September of 2006. The judges of the competition had an incredibly difficult task as fortunately we have a wealth of excellent graduates and highly skilled nurses completing our programme. In the end however Rachel's consistency and dedication led to the decision that she should be the recipient of this award."

Chief Executive of NHS Western Isles Laurence Irvine added: "Rachel's success is testimony to the sustained effort she has made throughout her nursing studies and represents an outstanding achievement."

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