

Jane Curry (center) with NUPOC students from the class of 2019, from left to right: Charity Smith, Blakeley Koziol, Andrew Large, Cory Wilson, Hanna Williams and Beth Petrovic

"Jane's consistent generosity and foresight reflect her deep sense of selflessness and her desire to have a significant impact on the lives of others in the future."

—Dr. Elliot Roth

Jane Curry '64, '65

Jane Curry has served as an educational model at the Northwestern University Prosthetics-Orthotics Center (NUPOC) since 2012. She is a valuable resource for students, particularly as a transhumeral (above the elbow) amputee, which is difficult to find among educational models at NUPOC. In addition to her dedication to serve as a model, Jane recently pledged an estate gift to support the most pressing operational costs at NUPOC, as well as scholarships within the center.

"Working as an educational model with faculty, fellow amputees and especially students has given me not only a new and invaluable perspective on this important profession, but also on myself, which is very cool," said Ms. Curry. "Scholarships help bring students to NUPOC. This is my 'thank you' to them for the gift of purpose they give to me."

"Jane's consistent generosity and foresight reflect her deep sense of selflessness and her desire to have a significant impact on the lives of others in the future," said Elliot J. Roth, MD, chair of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Paul B. Magnuson Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine. "Her participation as a volunteer patient model in our training program assists future practitioners to better help their patients. This generosity of spirit is made even more meaningful by her recent gift, which will help to support the successful training of these professionals to enable them to help their patients with disabilities in the future."

When Ms. Curry was 14, her arm was amputated above the elbow after she received a diagnosis of grade two fibrosarcoma. She wore a prosthesis throughout high school and college. Upon her graduation, though, she decided that the prosthesis was a burden and thus abandoned it. For decades she lived happily and productively,

until recently when she began discovering some of the ill effects of, as she describes it, "one-armedness," including fatigue on her remaining hand and overall balance issues.

"I was ready when I was approached by a NUPOC instructor in 2012 to be an educational model. I had been gearing up to proactively discover the amputee part of me—a little late, but nonetheless," said Ms. Curry. "I had started some preliminary reading and was doing a few physical exercises to get back in touch with my phantom limb, which had always fascinated me."

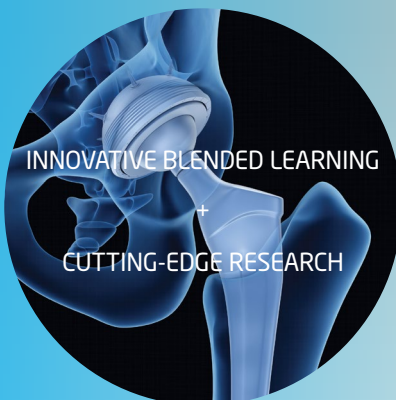
"From what I see," she continued, "the entire attitude about living with limb loss has changed dramatically and for the better, particularly for women, who often have a much greater issue with body image."

Ms. Curry began her communications career in the Chicago Police Department and later served for 17 years as director of communications at the Erikson Institute, a graduate school and research center for advanced study in child development. Now retired, she spends time volunteering in hospice care and working with neighbors to preserve and improve her community. She recently helped to establish The Village Chicago (formerly Lincoln Park Village), a nonprofit organization that provides services, programs and a strong sense of camaraderie and purpose for individuals aged 50 and older.

In 2017, Ms. Curry was invited to give a commencement address for Northwestern's graduating master of prosthetics and orthotics students. She shared: "Put simply, I am having so much fun being an educational model at NUPOC. There is nothing sweeter than taking what by most measures is a deficit—a missing arm—and being able to turn it into an uproariously useful asset. It does not get any better than this."

Northwestern University Prosthetics-Orthotics Center

Founded in 1958 to advance the quality of life for persons who use prostheses and orthoses, NUPOC is the largest and oldest accredited prosthetics-orthotics training institution in the hemisphere. It combines innovative blended learning and a cutting-edge research program that responds to the rapid pace of advances in science, technology and health care. Many noteworthy advances in prosthetic and orthotic rehabilitation have resulted from work done within NUPOC laboratories.



SCIENCE



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