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Nursing students celebrate the life of the Lady with the Lamp

Twenty-four nursing and midwifery students from Northumbria University have been invited to Westminster Abbey today (Wednesday 11 May) to take part in a major ceremony commemorating the life and legacy of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.

Nightingale was commonly known as 'The Lady with the Lamp' after tending to wounded soldiers during the Crimean War. In 1860 she established the world's first nursing school at St Thomas' Hospital in London which has informed and inspired the future education of all nurses for more than 150

years.

Today, her legacy lives on through International Nurses Day, which is celebrated globally on the anniversary of her birthday, and through the Florence Nightingale Foundation, which awards scholarships to advance the study of nursing and promote excellence in nursing practice.

Northumbria University is the largest provider of nurse education in the North East of England and the Foundation approached the University to invite its nursing and midwifery students to take part in a commemoration service to celebrate the life of Florence Nightingale.

The Westminster Abbey ceremony will highlight the significant achievements of the nursing and midwifery professions and provide an opportunity to transfer knowledge from leaders in the field to future generations of nurses and midwives. It will also honour the lives of those nurses who have died in the service of others.

Emma Sebag-Montefiore is one of the students selected to take part in the event. Emma, 22, who came to Northumbria from Roundhay, Leeds, specialises in child nursing. She is due to graduate from Northumbria later this year.

She said: "It's a privilege to be chosen to be involved, especially as the only students involved in the ceremony and procession are from Northumbria. There was a huge demand to take part and all of our branches of nursing specialisms – adult, child, learning disability and mental health, as well as midwives – will be represented at the ceremony. It's a real honour for us all to have been selected.

"Westminster Abbey is so beautiful and one of the extra benefits of going is that we will be in the same building where William and Kate were married. I'll be able to say that I have walked up the same aisle as her!"

Amanda Clarke, Professor of Nursing and Head of the Department of Healthcare at Northumbria University, said: "Florence Nightingale is renowned for introducing the caring standards and evidence-based principles that lie at the foundation of nursing today. She is remembered for recognising that hygiene and sanitation were essential for good healthcare

and her efforts in social reform. She was – and remains – an inspiration to all nurses and we are honoured to have been asked by the Florence Nightingale Foundation to take part in this special commemorative service.”

Northumbria University’s nursing courses were the first in the UK to be accredited by the Royal College of Nursing and rank in the top 20 in both the Sunday Times and Complete University Guide league tables.

For more information on nursing courses at Northumbria, visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/nursing or register to attend our Open Days on Friday 1 and Saturday 2 July at www.northumbria.ac.uk/openday

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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