

[District](#)[Schools](#)[Programs](#)[Students](#)[Families](#)[Community](#)[Careers](#)[MPS](#) > [District](#) > [Newsrooms](#) > [Dessie Levy, Ph.D, Is Wisconsin's First Black Dean of Nursing](#)

# Dessie Levy, Ph.D, Is Wisconsin's First Black Dean of Nursing

Monday, February 7, 2022



Stepping out of Washington High School on her graduation day in 1979, Dessie Levy had no idea she would make history in Wisconsin. "I did not set out to be Dr. Levy. I wanted to be a nurse," she said. Levy became a registered nurse, went on to earn her Ph.D., and in 2005, was hired as the first Black dean of nursing in Wisconsin at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC). She is currently an assistant professor for the Clinical Translational Science Institute at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Levy started high school at North Division, but was among a group of students transferred to Washington while the old building was being torn down so the current school could be built. At North Division, she says she was supported by "the best educators/mentors and honorary parents—Robert Fisher, Jack Carroll, Ms. Landry, Emma Fenceroy—all of whom were instrumental in raising my interest in science and math." Her years at Washington High School provided educators who took her under their wings because they often stated that "I was going to do something special." Dessie recalled that a number of teachers weren't afraid to scold her or call her parents as needed—Lizzie Sims, Albert Brown, Diane McNally, and Principal Jerome Brandl. With their support, she gained the opportunity to attend the university of her choice.

Levy became a registered nurse and then went on to earn a doctoral degree in Leadership and Administration from Cardinal Stritch University. She pursued her career with a single goal in mind. "An old Negro spiritual song by Mahalia Jackson says that if I could help somebody along the way, my living will not be in vain, and that's a mantra of mine," she shared.