



*Alumni of Achievement*

*Dr. Cindy Cooke*

*MS Nursing '98*

"I had such great friends and mentors at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH)," said Dr. Cindy Cooke, ('98 MSN, College of Nursing). "Dr. Joan Williamson (Professor Emerita of Nursing) was one of the people who encouraged me the most."

Cooke, whose husband's military career moved the family around South often, finally landed in North Alabama in 1987. "We were staying in Huntsville...I heard many good things about the nurse practitioner program at UAH, so it was not a difficult decision on where to pursue my master's degree in nursing.

"Dr. Williamson always had faith in me and has been a great resource for me and has continued to mentor me to be the leader I am today," Cooke said. "She encouraged me as we started the Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Alabama, as well as running for the state representative of then the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. That set out the trajectory of leadership positions in the association as Regional Director (representing Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida and the Caribbean), Recording Secretary, and I am now President of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)."

Cooke currently works in the Primary Care Clinic at Fox Army Health Center on the Redstone Arsenal providing primary care for active duty and retired military personnel and their families.

A native of Abilene, Texas, Cooke grew up in Canton, Ohio, where she graduated from high school. She returned to Abilene and received a diploma in nursing. She eventually earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from The University of Texas at Arlington.

"My UAH degree set me on a path to clinical expertise, health policy advocacy and mentoring others as well as leadership roles in nurse practitioner organizations at the local, state and national levels," Cooke said. "I am greatly humbled and honored to receive a 2015 Alumni of Achievement Award. I know who the graduates of UAH are and the amazing work that has been accomplished by the university's graduates. I count the recognition a great honor and hope to continue to increase visibility for the university as I travel nationally and internationally on behalf of the AANP."

Cooke earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree at The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

