The 2012 recipient of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award from Duke University is Mrs. Barbara Dotson, RN, MSN, Nursing Faculty Instructor for the Watts School of Nursing. This award seeks to perpetuate the excellence of character and humanitarian service of Algernon Sydney Sullivan by recognizing and honoring such qualities in others. A recipient of this award is known to his/her colleagues and peers as someone who exemplifies the qualities of generosity, service, integrity, and deep spirituality, as well as “nobility of character,” which the Sullivan Foundation defines as “when one goes outside the narrow circle of self-interest and begins to spend oneself for the interests of humankind.”

As course coordinator for the senior class, Barbara has worked tirelessly to support her students in their journey to become professional nurses. Under her leadership, the students at Watts School of Nursing are employed throughout the Duke University Health System as well as nationwide in other health care settings. Many are known for making a positive difference in the field of nursing, and these successes are directly related to Barbara’s diligence and dedication. She also plays an important role for other faculty as a seasoned nursing instructor, providing guidance and mentorship to new faculty and ensuring a swifter, more supportive transition to the newer members of the team.

The work Barbara performs at the school is the most visible of her contributions, but that is only because she remains humble about the extent to which she volunteers apart from the Watts School of Nursing. She generously gives her time, talent, and treasure: helping raise money annually for the Multiple Sclerosis Society and Duke’s Robert Tisch Brain Tumor Center, assisting with free prostate cancer screening clinics, and collecting food, clothing, and toys for the needy during the holiday season. Additionally, Barbara serves as the Faculty Advisor for the Nursing School’s Community Service Club, encouraging and enabling others to better serve Durham and the surrounding areas. Her nominators agree that she leads by example to perpetuate excellence among the faculty and students of the Watts School of Nursing.

Her noble character and high level of selflessness have made her an excellent candidate for the Sullivan Award. Barbara Dotson exemplifies the values of care and concern for others and effective humanitarian engagement inherent in the awarding of this prestigious honor.