

Contact: Carol Rubiano
212-580-9706

PHILLIPS BETH ISRAEL SCHOOL OF NURSING NAMES
PLAYWRIGHT SHEILA ROHER AS 2010 ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

May 28, 2010 -- Nurses world-round are celebrating 2010 which has been designated as the International Year of the Nurse. One hundred years have passed since the death of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. To celebrate the accomplishments of Ms. Nightingale, Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing has chosen playwright Sheila Roher as its fifth Artist-in-Residence.

Ms. Roher is the author of *Stealing Fire*, a play about Florence Nightingale, whose actions in the Crimean War in the 1850's paved the way for the nursing profession.

"Ms. Roher's play portrays 'The Lady of the Lamp' in a way that many people may not have known. Ms. Nightingale did more than provide hands-on nursing care. She was a brilliant epidemiologist, a strong administrator and very skilled in the use of public relations. She was a courageous nursing pioneer ... *Stealing Fire* gives us a fresh look into the challenges that Florence Nightingale faced and handled deftly," said Dean Janet Mackin, RN, EdD, who announced Ms. Roher's selection. "The play allows a deeper understanding and appreciation of the courage, intelligence and common sense of a woman whose lifework is the backbone of our profession."

Ms. Roher also wrote another historically based play, *Hannah's Case*, about Freud and incest, a finalist for the 2001 Jane Chambers Award. However, it was the inspiration of Florence Nightingale and learning so much about her role in public health that Ms. Roher says has led to a career switch.

"When someone is exploring or challenging some critical aspect of health, like Freud and Florence, it puts them on a collision course with society. It's the degree to which one can change society that really determines whether we become healthier," said Ms. Roher, who is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health.

A recent reading of the play at Phillips Beth Israel, with a cast of professional actors directed by Jonathan Mazer, was well-received. Joining the students and faculty in the audience were three previous Artists in Residence – playwrights Barbara Hammond and Jim Mandler and fine artist and educator, Robin Glazer. The photographer, Annabel Clark, was also an artist at the school.

The Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing's Artist-in-Residence program began in 2006. The program was designed to help nursing students learn and grow in their sensitivity in patient care. Professor Lynn Rubenstein, Program Chair, put it well, "Artists are skilled in touching the hearts and souls of people and we thank them for giving our students a new perspective on patient care."