

# Dr. Linda Mason Barber

## Committed to Nurse Education Excellence



**Linda A. Mason Barber, PhD, RN, ANP-C**

Assistant Professor  
University of West Georgia



### WHAT'S INSIDE?

Meet Linda A. Mason Barber, an experienced cardiac Adult Nurse Practitioner, a passionate nurse educator and a frequent presenter on the topic of nurse education.

Learn about Linda's thoughts on the need to continually advance the quality of nurse education and her focus on clinical skills development. See how she's addressed the need to connect theory with practical application.

“Nurses are expected to perform at higher skill levels today than ever before. As nurse educators, we owe it to our students to provide the best possible training to prepare them for practice.”

- **Linda Mason Barber, PhD, RN, ANP-C**  
Assistant Professor, University of West Georgia



## THE GOAL

“As a nurse educator, my primary goal is to work to the best of my ability to prepare my students to perform well in practice.”- stated Linda Mason Barber, an assistant professor at the University of West Georgia. Having worked as a cardiac nurse for many years, she’s seen firsthand how the role of the nurse in patient care is changing. Linda explained that nurses now have much more decision making responsibilities as they’re integrally involved in the patient care plan. Nurses are expected to know more as they enter the profession - especially in the area of physical assessment skills. Linda added: “I cannot emphasize enough how important it is that we improve the skill level of our students. This goes well beyond academic knowledge. The need for solid clinical skills is critical.”

## THE CHALLENGE

With improved physical assessment skills as the goal, and specifically improved auscultation skills, Linda considered the various technology options available to her. She identified four key requirements for an effective teaching tool. These included: sound quality and clarity, repetition, a wide range of normal and adventitious heart and lung sounds and proper auscultation technique practice. Although she had access to high-fidelity human patient simulators, Linda noted that it’s common for these to produce mechanical noises that interfere with the clarity of their heart and lung sounds. Those extraneous sounds often impede her students’ ability to concentrate on identifying the auscultation sounds. Because of this, Linda commented: “Training with the right tool is key. To be most effective we have to be using the best technology available.”

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## About Linda A. Mason Barber, PhD, RN, ANP-C

Linda Mason Barber began her career in nursing just after receiving her B.S.N. from the University of Florida. After receiving her M.S. From the University of South Florida she began practice as an ANP. Following several years of practice in a variety of cardiac care roles, Linda focused on her desire to move into nurse

education, acquiring a PhD from Georgia Baptist College of Nursing of Mercer University. Today Linda is a frequent speaker and advocate for the advancement of nurse education. She also currently serves as an Assistant Professor at the University of West Georgia where she guides and inspires future nurse professionals.



## About Cardionics

Cardionics is a leading supplier of innovative auscultation training products and services. The company designs, produces and distributes products that facilitate and support classroom education and clinical & tele-health programs in medical institutions and universities worldwide. Cardionics is known for the

high-quality life-like sounds it produces for its auscultation manikins, its online training program and its sound generating CardioSim product. The company's SimScope product supports Standardized Patient programs while its E-Scope products support tele-health programs and hearing impaired clinical users.

## THE SOLUTION

In considering which tools were best suited for the task, Linda determined that a couple products fit her criteria nicely. She said: "The SAM II manikin is excellent at producing high-quality heart and lung sounds, while also connecting the physiological element with the sounds." Linda uses SAM II in her undergraduate physical assessment courses and labs to teach students basic auscultation technique and introduce them to normal and abnormal patient sounds. For her APN students SAM II not only refreshes the student on basic skills proficiency, but it's also used in their assessment course. Another benefit Linda noted about the SAM II manikin is its light weight, which allows her to place SAM on a cart and wheel it into a classroom where she can demonstrate auscultation technique to a class of 130 just as easily as she does with a small group in the Skills Lab.

Linda uses a second product - the SimScope - to add another dimension to her student's physical assessment education. SimScope is an auscultation trainer primarily designed for Standardized Patient scenarios. Like SAM II, SimScope can be programmed with a wide range of normal and abnormal sounds - making it ideal for student use in sharpening their assessment and differential diagnostic skills.

## THE RESULT

Linda finds the hands-on training her students experience with these tools is having a positive impact on their confidence and ability to identify cardiac and pulmonary abnormalities. Commenting on how their educational experience is enhanced, Linda said: "The real benefit of the tools is how they help students tie together the didactic with the practical application. I always enjoy seeing their eyes pop open when they hear an aortic stenosis on SAM for the first time. It's the moment when it all becomes clear." For Linda, there's an additional important benefit. It's knowing that she's continuing to improve the quality of nurse education through advanced skills training and is preparing her students to excel in their future nursing careers.

*"I enjoy seeing my student's eyes pop when they hear an aortic stenosis on SAM for the first time."*



*"We're educating undergraduate nurses to become leaders in their field. Advanced skills training goes a long way in attaining that goal."*

**- Linda Mason Barber, PhD, RN, ANP-C**  
Assistant Professor, University of West Georgia

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Webster, Texas 77598

800-364-5901