Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing

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Fathers’ Experiences with Their Premature or Unhealthy Neonates

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Time: 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Place: 312 Seton Hall

Abstract
This hermeneutical phenomenological study interprets what it was like for eleven fathers of premature or unhealthy neonates during their infants’ stay in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Each participant was interviewed once. Interviews were unstructured, conducted over the phone, digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed using hermeneutic data analysis based on writings of Diekelmann & Ironside. The overall constitutive patterns that emerged were Being Thrown Into Groundlessness and Gaining Resoluteness, with overlapping dynamic experiences of Knowing/Not Knowing, Being Present/Being Absent and She And I Are Different. The findings revealed that these fathers seek acknowledgement that is vitally important to their ability to withstand the pervasive uncertainty of life in the NICU. The constitutive pattern and sub patterns provide a glimpse of the real-world phenomenon of fathering a premature or unhealthy neonate and what it means to be such a father.

Keywords: phenomenology, qualitative, fathers, fathering, fatherhood, neonatal intensive care, premature, premature infants

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Dr. Roxanne Vandermause, Ph.D. – Committee chair
Dr. Susan Dean-Baar, Ph.D. - Committee member
Dr. Julie Bertram, Ph.D. - Committee member
Dr. Lottchen Wider - Committee member