

Issue

14

Fall

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Special Edition

Mercy Hospital turned 80 on October 15, 2024. This newsletter is dedicated to history of the past years of Mercy Hospital.



The

Heartbeat

by Mercy Hospital

Hands

By: Verla Friesen, RN (retired)

Today I paused and looked at my hands. They are just an ordinary pair. Two hands, ten fingers, bulging veins, a few freckles, normal as can be for a lady who carries a Medicare card.

I have been thinking where those hands have been and what all they have done in the past forty-five years. Mercy Hospital was a busy small hospital when I joined its ranks in 1978. Fresh out of Nurse's training, those hands of mine were put to work at once. Here are some of my memories.

Hands: drawing up injections, a quick flick of the wrist and it is done. The most loved reply, "I didn't even
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80 Years a Hospital

Take a moment to imagine the world in 1944. In the midst of the global events of World War II, there was a need in our small town for a place of healing and care. When a property was generously offered to the Holdeman Mennonite Church, it came with a certain condition: it must be used to care for others. This large house, known as the Leatherman House, became the birthplace of Mercy Hospital. On Sunday, October 15, 1944, the community gathered for the dedication, with approximately 2,000 people in attendance. The following Thursday, the 19th, the hospital officially opened its' doors. From 8:00 until noon was the first
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1944: Dedication and opening of Mercy Hospital at the Leatherman House

1953: Construction of an elevator.



1947: Transition from an osteopathic hospital to a medical hospital

1953: Construction of the brick east wing, including a clinic.

1954: Upper floor of east wing completed. New wing now has patient rooms and surgery area.

(Hands - continued)

feel that!" Hands: giving pills, putting tubes into stomachs. Hands: ever documenting with pens, keyboards, or sometimes quick notes dashed on scraps of paper, even paper towels and stuffed in pockets.

Sensitive fingers are on those hands. Palpating veins was a task I loved. Will I get it on my first stick? Those hands assessed the sites before the pick was prepped. A silent prayer, "Dear God, let this be the one."

Warm water and soap on a cloth and those hands washed away the perspiration of a bed-bound body. Refreshing clean sheets are given. Lotion is massaged on the tired back: up, down, around, up and around again. It is relaxing, calming and hopefully sleep will come.

A flat line on the monitor, a dash to the room, one hand clenched into a fist; down on the sternum it struck. Chest compressions followed, two hands-one on top of the other, down and up they went. "One, two, breathe, one, two, breathe" went the rhythm.

Another day, another room, those hands were clasped together in prayer. "Father in Heaven, our friend is having so much pain. It is difficult for her. Please reach down and give her some relief."

Two hands, donned with blue surgical gloves, ready for the job ahead. My eyes are watching, anticipating the surgeon's every need. Then slap (I love the sound), the instrument is in the physician's hand. Suture, clamp, cut and over again. My hands working together with the surgeons for a job well done.

The room is quiet. How can I best show that I care? I lay my hand across her cool one and hold it there. Will she draw some warmth from mine as she takes her last breaths on earth? Will it help her to know she's not alone in her final hours?

Hands on a mother's abdomen, palpating a contraction, checking dilation and then the biggest joy of all; to hold the newborn baby. Hands that dry the baby, wrap him in a warm towel and give him to his parents to love. There is joy for my hands today. But I remember another time when the baby was cold

and unresponsive and the towel wrapping hands felt only grief that day.

Hands that washed dirty instruments, counted and arranged them in green, towel-lined trays. Hands that wrapped everything from 4x4's to large instrument trays to meet their date with the sterilizer.

Hands that held the tiny little baby, scarcely two pounds, inserted a small suction catheter into her throat to clear the mucus. How pleasing was the first small wail.

The ER bell rings. What will it be? The ringing of the bell always brought that question to mind. This time it was a hand, a hand like mine, yet not like mine, because it was mangled and bleeding. My hands reach for sterile dressings to wrap the injured hand. My same hands then reached for the phone. "Doctor an emergency is here!"

Lastly, a pan of warm water and two tired way-worn feet. My hands had the privilege of washing those tired pilgrim's feet. Could I ask for a better role than to kneel and wash her feet, a mother's feet, a grandmother's feet, a great grandmother's feet? Jesus loves her and so do I.

What other career is there where your hands can have so many blessings, so many privileges to serve and care for others on the journey of life? Thank you, God, for my two hands, humble though they be, through them my life has been enriched beyond measure.

(80 Years a Hospital - continued)

Gift Day. Gift Day was used in following years as a way for people to support the hospital, including programs and lots of good food.

The early days of Mercy Hospital were filled with the spirit of community and collaboration. Local churches rallied together, providing canned goods, meat, fruit, and vegetables in impressive quantities. The first floor of the remodeled house featured an office and waiting room, seven rooms with a total of eight beds,



1954: Upper floor of east wing completed. New wing now has patient rooms, and surgery area.

1965: Dr Kaufman and Dr Loganbill build new clinic at 115 N. Christian

1969: Original Leatherman House torn down to make way for new brick west and north wings.

1974: City of Moundridge purchases City and Mercy Hospital shared Ambulance Garage onto the hospital radio tower that the 2-way radio in t

1956: Grant from the Ford Foundation for substantial facility enhancements and modernization

1969: Doyle Johnson becomes administrator; major building project begins.

1969: Dedication of the new hospital.

1981: Emergency Room remodeled

1985: Ambulance Entrance enclosed

two restrooms, and a utility room. The second floor housed five more patient rooms, a sun porch, another restroom, and crucial medical facilities including the surgery room, sterilization room, delivery room, and nursery.

The heart of Mercy Hospital was its dedicated staff: five Practical Nurses, one Registered Nurse, two cooks, a floor girl, and the caretaker/administrator. Together, they navigated the challenges of the early days, driven by a shared commitment to providing care and comfort to those in need. There was a nurse's house and an administrator's house. The nurses and administrator both helped to maintain a garden for the hospital. Nurses wore traditional uniforms and the white nursing caps.

As the years went by, Mercy Hospital continued to grow and adapt to the needs of the community. In March 1945, an autoclave was purchased, replacing the previous method of sterilizing in a pressure cooker. By April 1947, the hospital transitioned from an osteopathic hospital to a medical hospital, closing for a month during the transition. March 1953 saw the construction of an elevator, ingeniously built using a cage, electric motor, and vehicle transmission!

The hospital's expansion continued with the construction of the brick east wing in 1953. At first, just the lower portion with the clinic was finished out and used, but by 1954 the upper patient rooms and a new surgery area were completed as well. A significant boost came in 1956 with a grant from the Ford Foundation. This was used to enhance the hospital's facilities, including a new boiler room, autoclave, incinerator, air conditioning, laundry equipment, and fire safety equipment. Plans for a new hospital began in 1967 to replace the Leatherman House.

In January 1969, Doyle Johnson took over as administrator, and a major building project began. In May of that year, the original Leatherman House was torn down, making

way for the new hospital, which was dedicated on October 12th, 1969. Mercy Hospital was now a 27-bed hospital. Construction cost was \$320,000.

The city purchased an ambulance in 1974. There was a joint project including the City of Moundridge, with the construction of the ambulance garage and the radio tower for two-way communication with the ambulance. In 1981, the emergency room was remodeled. The ambulance entrance was enclosed in 1985. In 1986, the front lobby was enlarged and the front entry enclosed.

Backing up to 1965, Dr. Kaufman and Dr. Loganbill had their own clinic built at 115 N. Christian. It was a cochlear shaped building which rated a review in "Medical Economics" for its unique design. The doctors were dedicated to providing care at the clinic and at the hospital, whatever time of day or night it was needed. In the early 90's a change was needed with the two older doctors wanting to retire. A note of interest is Dr. Loganbill delivered 1,353 babies in his career. There was a time in 1993 when OB was discontinued until they could hire a younger physician. Beginning in 1994, the hospital ran the clinic after hiring Dr. Hayes and before Dr. Loganbill retired. There was also a clinic in Inman during these years. In 1997 the hospital transferred ownership of the clinic to the physicians representing Partners in Family Care. The round clinic building served Moundridge until PIFC built next door to the hospital in 2001. Their practice has grown into the communities of Hesston and McPherson along with adding additional providers through the years. Mercy Hospital has been very privileged to have this group acting as our medical staff since that time.

The hospital underwent another significant re-
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es an ambulance. The
the cost of adding an
ital and setting up the
the ambulance will use.

1994: Hospital takes over management of clinic

2004: Significant remodel including a new Emergency Room and Ambulance Bay

2021: Covid-19 pandemic funding allows for new equipment and facility updates

2022: Opening of the new front entrance.

1986: Main entry enclosed; main lobby enlarged

1997: Partners in Family Care buys the Clinic

2001: Partners builds new clinic next door to the Hospital.

2012: Transition to using Electronic Medical Records.

2022: Opening of Mercy Therapy at 324 E. 2nd St.

2024: Conversion to a Rural Emergency Hospital (REH)

(80 Years a Hospital - continued)

model in 2004, including a new Emergency Room and Ambulance Bay. In May 2012, Mercy Hospital transitioned to Electronic Medical Records, embracing modern technology to improve patient care. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 brought some government funding, allowing the hospital to purchase a CT scanner, new telemetry and nurse call system, convert some rooms to negative pressure/isolation rooms, update patient furniture and other equipment. Around this time, the hospital started to hire additional ER Providers to lighten the load that had been on the PIFC Doctors for many years. Specifically allocated grant and tax credit funds enabled us to remodel the front entrance again to make it ADA compliant with 100% donated funds! In July 2022, the community celebrated the opening of the new front entrance, followed soon after by the opening of Mercy Therapy in November 2022 at 324 E. 2nd St.

There have been significant changes in our physical structure and delivery of care over the years. Some services have been discontinued and different ones have begun. Most recently, in January 2024, Mercy Hospital converted to a Rural Emergency Hospital (REH), adapting to the changing realities of our time. Years ago, a procedure like cataract surgery may have taken several hours and been followed by an inpatient hospital stay of a day or two. Today, those same types of surgeries are done in outpatient settings and the patient goes home soon afterward. While these advancements in medical technology are wonderful for the patient, it does mean that historic overnight patient volumes can no longer be expected for many hospitals, requiring a shift in focus to remain financially viable.

Through the changing years, we are glad to have been a part of this community, and trust that Mercy has built a legacy of peace in the difficult times of your lives.

Excerpts from an Administrator

Doyle Johnson holds the record as the longest-serving administrator of Mercy Hospital. He was in accounting at AGCO before being hired by Mercy in 1969 at the young age of 26. He retired in 2017, marking a tenure of 48 years! Several years into his career at the hospital, Doyle was elected as a minister in the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. When he was hired the old Leatherman house was still in use along with the wing built in 1953. There were many facility improvements during his time here along

with changes in delivery of care as felt was necessary during the years. We have included a few of his personal experiences he shared with us:

- Doyle and his wife Jane experienced a nerve-racking ride in the rattly, creaky elevator in the old hospital while she was in labor, unsure if they would make it upstairs to the delivery room! He remembers Dr. Loganbill telling nervous fathers-to-be "Don't worry, I've never lost a father in the delivery room yet!"
- When the old Leatherman House was demolished, employees were given the opportunity to take a sledgehammer to the old structure, which they thoroughly enjoyed.
- Once, Doyle was given the task of mailing a package after a surgery, only to discover it contained a leg! He took it to the post office, where it was mailed without any questions.
- When Doyle was hired, the administrator's job duties were quite open ended. His attempt at fixing a toilet resulted in a geyser of water, leading him to call Goering Hardware for assistance. That incident marked the end of his maintenance endeavors.
- Sometimes the surgeons would allow family members of the patient to watch surgeries.
- One time a nurse rushed to find Doyle to send him out into town to find a patient's husband. The patient was dying, and the nurse was making a last effort with the defibrillator. By the time Doyle and the husband got back, she was stabilized and telling the nurse that if that happened again to not bring her back as "she had been in the most beautiful place"!
- Doyle reminisced about end-of-life experiences of past patients, recounting visits to individuals as they faced their final moments. These stories were both inspiring and sobering, highlighting the spiritual atmosphere of Mercy Hospital.
- A salesman once remarked on the serene feeling he experienced while waiting in the lobby for Doyle. The hospital has always been a place where staff can pray with patients or otherwise offer comfort during their most unsettling times.

Thank you, Doyle, for your dedication to Mercy Hospital and for caring for this community!

The HEARTBEAT is published quarterly by Mercy Hospital in Moundridge, Kansas. It is distributed without charge to all those in the Moundridge zip code and 12 Church of God in Christ Mennonite congregations in central Kansas. Send questions, comments and thoughts to info@mercyh.org or give us a call at (620) 345-6391. Newsletter committee: Alex Koehn, Derek Peachey