



## Celebrating 100 Years!

Avera McKennan Hospital and University Health Center is Celebrating its Centennial from December 2010 to November 2011. To recognize the impact nursing has had with our organization we would like to introduce you to LaVonne Gaspar. LaVonne has been a nurse with Avera McKennan for 48 years. Please read her answers to the below questions.



LaVonne Gaspar, RN

### *How long have you been a nurse?*

I graduated from Presentation School of Nursing in 1962, so I have been a nurse for 48 years...always at McKennan/Avera. I have also been a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator since 2000.

### *Where was your first job?*

I was a Clinical Instructor for diploma nurses at McKennan Hospital. I always loved to coach/teach...but had to be asked to do this as I had no self-confidence. I just saw myself as a little rural farm girl. When the Coronary Care unit was ready to open I took classes and worked in a dual role as Instructor and as the second RN in the four-bed unit.

### *What is the biggest change that you have seen over the years in nursing?*

Technology and the "business" of health care. Nursing was considered a "dedicated profession" so you never asked what you would be paid. You went to school to help people and the reimbursement was very low. Health care was inexpensive then and not a lot of people had insurance. Health care also was not as complex as today.

### *How many beds did McKennan have in your early career?*

In the range of 200. If we ran out of room during flu season we just put up a curtain around a bed in the halls.

### *How many patients would you take care of in a shift?*

We had five or six patients, but of course the acuity was very low by today's standards. There was no "outpatient" concept. We rotated in the operating room for six weeks. Surgeries were much more basic then.

### *What was a day like?*

As student nurses, we were awakened at 6 a.m., with breakfast at 6:30 in the hospital cafeteria, and we were on the unit at 7. We took temperatures with glass thermometers carried on a tray, passed linen, took blood pressure, and filled water pitchers. Students were issued three nursing uniforms which were processed at the central McKennan laundry. They were starched so heavily they could have probably stood alone. There were no disposables, so everything was washed and sent to "Central Supply" for terminal cleaning or sterilization. There was no reality shock when graduating as we already worked weekends and rotated shifts. You didn't ask for a day off, you always just planned your schedule around the hours assigned to you.

### *How were nurses viewed by the public?*

Nursing was a respected profession but nurses did not have the autonomy of today.

*Nursing is an art: and if it is to be made an art, it requires an exclusive devotion as hard a preparation, as any painter's or sculptor's work; for what is the having to do with dead canvas or dead marble, compared with having to do with the living body, the temple of God's spirit? It is one of the Fine Arts: I had almost said the finest of Fine Arts.*

- Florence Nightingale



## Calendar of Events

Feb 15 - Lunch & Learn  
11:00 - 12:00 Avera McKennan  
Education Center

Feb 23 - Lunch & Learn  
11:00 - 12:00 Avera McKennan  
Education Center

Mar 3 - Lunch & Learn  
11:00 - 12:00 Avera McKennan  
Education Center

Mar 16 - Lunch & Learn  
11:00 - 12:00 Avera McKennan  
Education Center

Come join fellow students and faculty on your lunch breaks during clinicals! To RSVP for the Lunch & Learn Event's please call 605-322-7840.



Live Review: Tuesday, Jan 4<sup>th</sup> - Friday, Jan 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011.  
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