Stories are as universal as language itself. Stories are circular, always returning to the place or the person where they began. This book is a commemorative celebration of the 100th anniversary of St. Elizabeth Hospital. It is the story of the people who helped make St. Elizabeth what it is today, a health care network that is both community and Christ-focused. Every story and person in this volume represents hundreds of others who have had an impact on the growth and history of St. Elizabeth Hospital. This book begins as our lives do, with a sense that each of us is part of what has come before and that each of us is a storyteller for the future.

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“And the world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles, no matter how long, but only by a spiritual journey, a journey of one inch, very arduous and humbling and joyful, by which we arrive at the ground at our feet, and learn to be at home.”

–Wendell Berry
From *The Unforeseen Wilderness*
Appleton was incorporated as a village.

The Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in St. Louis, Missouri are first asked to create an Appleton hospital.

November 19, the Feast Day of Saint Elizabeth, Sisters Carola Lachnicht and Philippa Breidenbach arrived to open the hospital.

Appleton’s first hospital was located in an 11-room wood frame house. Funding in the amount of $6,472.53 is collected for a new hospital.

The cornerstone was laid for a new hospital. Cost: $500,700.

The polio epidemic strikes the Fox River Valley.

The Sisters bought eight acres and with $8,734 of community donations, construction began on a new hospital building.

The hospital’s capacity was increased from 50 to 75 beds by eliminating private rooms and by adding beds in the corridors.

St. Elizabeth Hospital welcomed the birth of 243 babies.

The hospital’s first Physical Therapy Department was established.

The Articles of Corporation for St. Elizabeth Hospital were formed. 3,989 patients were treated and hospital personnel included 46 Sisters, 16 graduate nurses and 43 domestics.

St. Elizabeth Hospital welcomed the birth of 243 babies.

More than 2,000 patients were admitted and 1,763 surgeries were performed. Personnel included 29 Sisters, a medical staff of 30, two secular graduate nurses, and 16 domestics.

An intensive care unit and recovery room adjacent to surgery were installed, and the hospital opened its psychiatric unit.

A new 250 room, five-story, red brick hospital building was completed.

The 1901 building was refurbished to house an obstetrical unit with accommodations for 28 mothers and newborn babies.

The first Tumor Registry began as a data collection system providing lifetime follow-up for cancer patients.

Air conditioning was first installed in the surgical unit and recovery room at a cost of $34,000.

The hospital registers 2,069 births, including 22 pairs of twins and one set of triplets, to date.

The first approved intensive coronary care center in Wisconsin is established.

May 8, the hospital was formally dedicated by Bishop Sebastian G. Messmer.

St. E’s begins plans for additional expansion.

July 28, the St. Elizabeth Hospital Auxiliary, a volunteer program, was established.

A stand-by generator, powerful enough to light a town the size of Hortonville, was installed.

Funding in the amount of $6,472.53 is collected for a new hospital.

The hospital registers 2,069 births, including 22 pairs of twins and one set of triplets, to date.
The original 50-bed hospital was razed, and in its place a three-level building was erected, including a new five-level south wing.

A modernization program updated the 1924 building to accommodate a cafeteria and various therapy departments.

Telephone monitoring of intensive care patients in Waupaca, Clintonville, New London and Chilton hospitals begins.

September 16, St. Elizabeth Hospital opened its new 24-hour emergency department, the first in Appleton.

St. Elizabeth became the first hospital in Wisconsin to use RhoGam (Rh Immune Globulin).

September 16, St. Elizabeth Hospital opened its new 24-hour emergency department, the first in Appleton.

St. Elizabeth Hospital is fully integrated into Affinity Health System.

The Radiology Dept. acquires a six million electron volt linear accelerator.

The Madison Center, a physicians office structure adjacent to St. Elizabeth Hospital, was built.

St. Elizabeth had 332 beds. Its average daily rate was $327 and the average length of stay was 7.1 days.

The Kathleen Rankin Hospital opens.

The Hospital’s Pharmacy becomes the first and only hospital pharmacy in the Fox Valley with 24-hour pharmacist coverage.

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St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Health Science Library was selected Wisconsin Health Science Library of the Year by the Wisconsin Health Science Library Association. Later that same year the hospital’s creative learning center was dedicated in memory of Dr. James W. Erchul.

St. Elizabeth celebrates its 75th anniversary.

A $20 million-plus renovation and modernization project began and was completed in 1991.

A new state-of-the-art intensive care unit was remodeled and opened.

St. Elizabeth Hospital Foundation established.

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A $400,000 remodeling project included a new medical nursing unit, concentrated care unit and the relocation of the psychiatric ward. The hospital became one of the first in the state to add a Medline literature searching computer service to its professional library. St. Elizabeth Hospital’s rehabilitation program was established.

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St. Elizabeth Hospital and Mercy Medical Center in Oshkosh affiliated to form Affinity Health System, a Catholic sponsored regional care network.

St. Elizabeth Hospital installed a Rauland-Borg Responder IV nurse call system.

The La Salle Clinic name was changed to Affinity Medical Group.

Franciscan Care and Rehabilitation Center became a member of Affinity Health System.

The Fox Valley’s first hospital-based subacute care unit opened in the 4-West wing of St. Elizabeth Hospital.

St. Elizabeth Hospital installed a Rauland-Borg Responder IV nurse call system.

The Hospital’s Pharmacy becomes the first and only hospital pharmacy in the Fox Valley with 24-hour pharmacist coverage.

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The Radiology Dept. acquires a six million electron volt linear accelerator.
Appleton had its early beginnings in 1853 when it was incorporated as a village. By the late 19th century it was a prospering industrial center without a hospital. Dr. Hamilton A. Levings, mayor of Appleton, organized a group of community leaders in 1885 and with the support of Father Kaster, pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Levings contacted the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in St. Louis, Missouri. He invited them to come to Appleton to help create a much-needed hospital but the Sisters were not able to comply with the request.

In 1899, Bishop Sebastian G. Messmer of Green Bay, local doctors, and the community of Appleton again invited the Sisters. This time their request was granted. Sisters Carola Lachnicht and Philippa Breidenbach arrived on November 19, 1899, the Feast Day of Saint Elizabeth who had been canonized for her dedicated service to the sick in Europe. Sisters Armella Restle and Aegidia Steinmetzer joined them in December.

The plan was to raise $25,000 to build a hospital the following spring on land provided by local leaders. Townspeople raised $5,218.63 and the Sisters added $1,253.90 from collection tours.

**Humble Beginnings**

In spite of the shortage of funds, the hospital got its start in an 11-room wood frame house on a 3½-acre lot at 110 East Fremont Street. The first patient was brought to the hospital by an Appleton doctor using a horse-drawn wagon. There were no beds or medical supplies, but doctors and neighbors responded with the basic necessities and the Sisters’ dedication to caring for patients began.

The small and unpretentious hospital was an ambitious undertaking for the four Sisters. They reserved the attic for their quarters so the remaining rooms could be used for patients. In warm weather, the Sisters used a small wooden shed without any flooring as a summer kitchen. Two empty barrels and a wooden plank served as a table, but it was a welcome respite from the heat and confines of their attic world.

Above: The first St. Elizabeth Hospital at 110 East Fremont Street. Pictured outside is 10-year-old Mercy Poetzel Schreiter.
The Story of St. Elizabeth

St. Elizabeth Hospital was named for a young woman who was born in 1207, the daughter of the Hungarian King Andreas II and his wife Gertrude. Elizabeth was given in marriage to Ludvig IV, son of the Landgrave Herman of Thuringia in 1221. At a time when famine and disease affected the poorest segments of the population, the couple lived in Wartburg Castle which was built on a steep rock where the sick and weak were not able to climb. Elizabeth often carried baskets of food to the poor. She became the central figure in a legend known as the Miracle of the Roses. When critics accused her of wasting money, Elizabeth told her husband she carried flowers in her basket. When Ludwig looked inside, the bread had supposedly turned to roses and he became her strongest supporter. Elizabeth had a hospital built at the foot of the rock and often made beds and attended and fed the sick with her own hands. She fed over 900 people daily throughout the kingdom and provided for helpless children and orphans. When she ran out of money, she sold her jewelry and fine garments to help the poor.

When Ludvig died of the plague, contracted while away on a crusade, Elizabeth renounced all of her possessions and embraced a life of poverty as a Franciscan Tertiary. She dedicated her life to God, and built yet another hospital in which she served the sick, risking infection from leprosy and other diseases. The weight of her work eventually took its toll. St. Elizabeth died at the age of 24, on November 17, 1231. Her canonization was granted by Pope Gregory IX in 1235.

Centuries later, on November 19, 1899, the feast day of St. Elizabeth, four Franciscan Sisters from St. Louis came to Appleton to carve out a rich tradition of healing in honor of a young woman whose mission it was to minister with care and compassion to those in need. For years, the Sisters at St. Elizabeth Hospital kept a rose garden in memory of the legend of the roses.

Right: A portrait of St. Elizabeth from the hospital mural painted by Winneconne artist, Sheri Jo Posselt.
The regular kitchen, with a stove badly in need of repair, served as a morning prayer room, dining room, laundry room, and occasional surgical suite. Thomas Nooyen was the hospital’s first surgical patient. He was admitted by Sister Clothilda who prepared him for the operation and kept watch as he awakened from the anesthetic. The next day she went back to cleaning and scrubbing floors. Even though they suffered physical and financial hardships, the Sisters were determined to fulfill their commitment to Appleton and the surrounding area. Neighbors became aware of their poverty and helped provide for their daily needs. Produce and baskets of food were delivered for the Sisters and patients—food that was badly needed until they could raise livestock and fruits and vegetables of their own to fill the hospital pantry.

In time, the Sisters were able to supply most of the food for themselves and their patients. They tended chickens, rabbits, goats, sheep and cows to provide eggs, milk and meat. They kept an apple and plum orchard and grape arbor, and tilled a huge garden, canning four thousand quarts of vegetables, fruits and meat yearly. Along with providing direct care for patients, the Sisters also cooked and served meals for them and did the laundry and ironing. Their administrative duties included admitting patients, keeping treatment and financial records and assisting the doctors.

A Constant Struggle

Finances were an ongoing problem and the Sisters went from door to door in Appleton and surrounding communities asking for money to help support the hospital. Sister Clothilda Schaefer and Sister Antonia Klostermann took the train to Stockbridge to beg for assistance. Sister Clothilda met a young woman named Annie who offered to drive her by horse and wagon. Sister stopped at every house along the way and when one woman told her they had no money to donate, her son joked in German that she could have half of the pig he was butchering. Sister, who also spoke German, immediately accepted the offer before he could change his mind. In the next several days she added chickens, ducks, a goose, vegetables, and a total of $190 and Sister Clothilda even enlisted Annie’s father to help crate the goods for the train ride home.

The Sisters took their fiscal responsibilities seriously and earned the trust of the people they served by their hard work, dedication and stewardship of money. Fraternal and charitable organizations offered donations and although the Sisters often received financial advice, they assumed all hospital debts, never once defaulting, and were known for repaying their creditors early.
Founding the Franciscan Sisters

Anna Theresa Pfaender was born December 6, 1827 in Hallenberg, Westphalia (now Germany). Theresa eventually became the founder of the Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, of Salzkotten, Germany, of which the Wheaton Franciscans are a Province.

Theresa was five years old when her mother died but followed her mother’s dedication to the Catholic faith. Her father supported her wish for an education and accepted her decision to join a religious community. She joined the Sisters of Christian Charity in Paderborn and received her habit and the name, Sister Clara, on November 4, 1850. She completed her teacher training in 1858 and began searching for a stricter form of religious life. After being refused by several communities, Sister Clara and close friends, Regina Loeser, and Aline Bonzel, formed their own community. In 1859, they received permission from Conrad Martin, Bishop of Paderborn, to start a community at Olpe. They settled in a house, provided by the Bonzel family, and began their work of caring for orphans and the sick and offering prayers for the Church.

On October 30, 1860, Bishop Martin appointed Sister Clara Superior of the Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. In order to avoid competition with an already established hospital in Olpe, Mother Clara moved the mother house to Salzkotten in 1863.

In 1872, the Sisters established their United States Province near St. Louis, Missouri. Along with the growth of the religious community came an expansion in the Sisters’ scope of service. Ever growing needs were met through the founding of hospitals, schools, orphanages and other human services. Headquarters for the U.S. Province were relocated to Wheaton, Illinois, in 1947, and the Sisters became known as Wheaton Franciscans. With the number of religious women diminishing, the historical role of lay partnerships throughout the years has resulted in purposeful growth, including the establishment of housing communities for the poor and elderly, schools, hospitals and oasis for spiritual contemplation.

On July 29, 1999, a Founders Day Celebration was held at St. Elizabeth Hospital to honor the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters and the founding of St. Elizabeth Hospital.
In the hospital’s first 14 months, 108 patients were treated and 95 of those had surgery. In 1900, the Sisters bought eight acres adjacent to the first hospital, and with $8,734 of community donations, construction began on a new hospital building. The two-story brick facility had room for 50 beds, a surgical suite, and X-ray machine, as well as a laboratory, pharmacy, and laundry.

The hospital was formally dedicated on May 8, 1901 by Bishop Messmer and the community was invited to a reception the following day. The Sisters enlisted the help of four young girls from St. Joseph Parish to help serve lemonade to all those who eagerly came to see Appleton’s first real hospital.

Below: The original rendering of the 1900 hospital by architect Herman Wildhagen.

A Vision For the Future
Much of the training for the wide range of work the Sisters did was provided by older Sisters who passed their hard-earned nursing knowledge on to the younger ones. The informal apprenticeship also included domestic skills, gardening, and the care of animals.

Elmer Otte, Appleton, remembers his mother’s story of bringing him to St. Elizabeth Hospital in 1912. He was two years old and suffering from rickets. “An illness,” Otte says, “that was fairly common in those days. We were a farm family living near Kaukauna and my mother had no oranges, cod liver oil, or any form of vitamin C so I spent a lot of time in a baby buggy out in the sun. My legs were bowed and she was afraid I would become crippled so she took me by horse and buggy to Appleton and then by streetcar to St. Elizabeth Hospital. There was a father and son team of doctors by the name of Foster and they straightened my legs in the only way they knew how. They placed my legs on a wooden block and broke and reset both of them by hand. The straightening procedure worked and I have cross-shaped scars on my legs as a life-long remembrance.”

Over the years Otte served the hospital in a variety of ways. He was a member of the first board of lay directors in 1966, and served as founding director of St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Community Foundation and on various fund raising campaigns. “The roots go deep,” he said. “St. Elizabeth Hospital has a strong background of health care that has been well nourished for 100 years.”

By 1919 the St. Elizabeth Hospital staff included 27 Sisters, 17 of whom were registered nurses. In less than 20 years they had cared for 13,433 patients at an average cost of $10 per week for bed, board, and nursing.
The Need For Advanced Medical Care

As the Appleton community grew rapidly so did the need for advanced medical care. The hospital’s capacity was increased from 50 to 75 beds by eliminating private rooms and by adding beds in the corridors. The Sisters’ order agreed to provide a $200,000 expansion fund for the hospital if the people of Appleton would contribute $300,000.

Twenty-six doctors organized a fund raising campaign through the Appleton Post-Crescent and the money was raised in four days. It would take another $700,000 for furnishings, equipment and other costs. The cornerstone was laid in October 1921.

During 1922, the last full year in the old hospital, 2,008 patients were admitted and 1,763 surgeries were performed. Personnel included 29 Sisters, two secular graduate nurses, 16 domestics, and a medical staff of 30.

When the new hospital was completed in 1924 the five-story, red brick building housed 250 rooms, offered modern conveniences, the latest medical equipment, automatic elevators, a chapel, terrazzo floors and glass door knobs.

The old building was refurbished in 1924 to house an obstetrical unit with accommodations for 28 mothers and newborn babies. That year 243 babies were born at St. Elizabeth Hospital. In 1947, the hospital would register 2,069 births, including 22 pairs of twins and one set of triplets.

In the 1920s, nurses were in charge of patient care: taking temperatures and blood pressure readings, giving baths, treatments, medicine and back rubs, serving food trays, washing dishes, cleaning and sterilizing.

There were usually two lay nurses who worked with the Sisters on each floor of the hospital.

Below: St. Elizabeth Hospital circa 1924.
Women were housed on the second floor and men on the third floor. General nurses were paid by the month with a salary that included room, board, and the cleaning of their uniforms. Private duty nurses were paid $7 for each 24-hour shift.

The hospital’s first Physical Therapy Department was established in 1926 following the retirement of a local physician who was willing to sell his equipment to the hospital. The one-room department was staffed by a Sister and one aide and the Sister’s pet parrot who greeted patients as they came in.

The Articles of Incorporation for St. Elizabeth Hospital were formed in 1930—a year when 3,989 patients were treated and hospital personnel included 46 Sisters, 16 graduate nurses and 43 domestics.

On June 3, 1939, a life and death story so dramatic it was featured in a Chicago newspaper, took place in the delivery room at St. Elizabeth. Dr. C. E. Ryan had just completed the complicated delivery of a baby when he collapsed to the floor and died. The doctor was anointed by the chaplain and his body was taken to a nearby room. The husband, at the hospital waiting for the outcome of his wife's long labor and delivery, was told of the doctor’s death. He went home, gathered his eight children and returned to the hospital. When one of the Sisters later went to the room where Dr. Ryan had been taken, she found all eight children gathered with their father around the bed praying the rosary for the man who had saved their mother’s life.

The Polio scare hits home.

When the polio epidemic struck the Fox River Valley in the summer of 1955, the staff of St. Elizabeth Hospital worked overtime.

“The polio scare was a terrible time for families and physicians alike,” says Dr. Walter Giffin, one of the founders of the Medical Arts Clinic who was a general practitioner at the time polio hit. “The Fox Valley community was scared, and rightfully so. We devoted one and a half floors to polio patients, 225 in all. The National Polio Foundation sent three iron lungs to supplement the one we already had and the nuns worked hard to keep them going, often pumping them by hand. Local paper mills provided paper felts and we used them as hot poultices for patients with paralyzed limbs.”

The fear that doctors might become carriers was rampant and Dr. Giffin recalls taking every precaution to avoid passing the illness on to his family. “I stayed away from my own children as much as possible and none of the neighbors played with our kids. My wife put clean clothes in the back hallway and I changed in the garage when I got home from the hospital, and washed up before I would even enter my own bedroom,” he recalls.

“Until Salk came along, we didn’t really know how to treat polio. We had a tiger by the tail. And when the vaccine came on the scene, there wasn’t enough of it at the start,” Dr. Giffin says. “People were literally begging for it and we had to set up a workable system. When we got a batch in, the police closed off the street by the hospital so people could line up for it.”
The hospital received its first continuous accreditation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals in 1954. They received excellent ratings on the basic requirements of a sound building, facilities and equipment, special hospital services, qualified medical staff, nursing staff and hospital personnel, a responsible governing body, medical records, and medical library.

An intensive care unit was added in 1957, equipped and staffed to provide state-of-the-art care for critically ill patients. That same year a recovery room adjacent to surgery was installed at a cost of $13,000, and the hospital opened its psychiatric unit with three psychiatrists on staff.

The St. Elizabeth Hospital Auxiliary, a volunteer service program, was established on July 28, 1958, just a few months short of the 60th anniversary of the hospital. Miss Helen McGrath served as the Auxiliary’s first president. One of the first projects of the organization was to redecorate the hospital’s three sun rooms. Over the years members have provided thousands of hours of service which include feeding patients, receptionist and personal cart service, fund raising, operating a gift shop, and a wide variety of community awareness and public relations activities.

St. Elizabeth Hospital installed a stand-by generator in 1958, a unit powerful enough to light a small town. In 1960, air conditioning was installed in the surgical unit and recovery room at a cost of $34,000.

Remodeling and expansion continued throughout the years but in 1962, St. Elizabeth Hospital’s needs were again outgrowing its facilities.

Expansion and Modernization

After two years of planning, ground was broken in 1964 for a $9-million expansion and modernization program. That same year, St. Elizabeth Hospital established the first approved intensive coronary care center in Wisconsin.
In the summer of 1966, a new, five-level south wing addition was built, with the top four levels devoted to patient care. That same year a new three-level east wing, housing X-ray, laboratory, emergency, outpatient, and special studies departments, was completed and occupied.

The original 50-bed hospital was razed, and in its place a three-level building was erected, with the ground floors furnished as quarters for the Sisters, including a library, recreation, dining, study, and community rooms.

During 1967 and 1968, most of the expansion and modernization program was aimed at updating the 1924 building to accommodate a cafeteria and various therapy departments. The project was completed and dedicated by the end of 1968.

In 1969 St. Elizabeth Hospital made an important advancement toward regional medical care with telephone monitoring of coronary and other intensive care patients hospitalized at outlying Waupaca, Clintonville, New London and Chilton hospitals. This addition provided optimum care while allowing patients to remain in their own community.

In the early 1970s, charges for services and room rates climbed and hospitals across the country struggled to provide services to meet the demands of patients and doctors. Capital investments were staggering for hospitals and no one could ignore the rising costs of health care. As a non-profit organization, St. Elizabeth Hospital and its board of trustees, made up of local business and professional people, remained dedicated to the hospital’s ability to move forward in new medical technology while keeping costs as low as possible.
Meeting the Needs of the Community

As St. Elizabeth celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1974, growth and the constant change required to meet the needs of a growing community were evident. The previous year’s $400,000 remodeling and relocation project was one example, including a new medical nursing unit, concentrated care unit and the relocation of the psychiatric ward.

By this time St. Elizabeth had evolved into a highly respected contemporary facility providing all the functions required for modern hospital care, including an outstanding medical intensive care unit and coronary care center, psychiatric unit, diagnostic facility and emergency room service.

In the mid 1970s, Joint Hospital Planning became a consideration in coordinating health care planning, cost containment, and unnecessary duplication of services.

Meetings involving representatives of the board of directors, medical staffs and administration of St. Elizabeth Hospital and Appleton Memorial Hospital were conducted on a regular basis. United Health Services Inc. (UHS) was formed in 1980 to do joint planning for the two hospitals and the partnership was viewed as a landmark statewide. When agreement could not be reached on how to cooperatively manage the two institutions, UHS was disbanded in 1982.

24-Hour Emergency Service

On September 16, 1971, St. Elizabeth Hospital opened its new 24-hour emergency department which was designed to serve all emergency medical care needs in Appleton. A special physicians unit directed by Dr. Thomas Loescher and comprised of 11 doctors alternated in providing emergency room service in addition to continuing their own private practices.

Dr. Fred Knoch, who came to St. Elizabeth in 1977, was the first physician in Northeast Wisconsin to serve a residency and establish a career specialty in emergency medicine. “The department expanded from a converted ambulance garage to one big room with six cubicles separated by curtains and finally to private examination rooms,” says Dr. Knoch. “We grew from 18 thousand patients the first year to over 28 thousand within 11 years. We recruited more physicians and became the first staff of...
residency-trained ER specialists in the area and created the first Paramedics Training Class in Wisconsin.”

Pioneers in Health Care

The tradition of St. Elizabeth Hospital has always been one of pioneering advances in health care. The hospital has consistently been on the cutting edge of medical advances. In 1968, St. Elizabeth became the first hospital in Wisconsin to use RhoGam (Rh Immune Globulin), a drug which eliminates problems associated with Rh negative mothers and their Rh positive babies. The first Tumor Registry began in 1957 as a data collection system providing lifetime follow-up for cancer patients. The hospital added a Medline terminal to its professional library in 1973, becoming one of the first hospitals in the state to offer such extensive literature search capabilities.

St. Elizabeth Hospital’s rehabilitation program was established in 1973 to serve patients with severe disabilities such as stroke, spinal cord or head injuries. It was later expanded to include rehabilitation of disabilities from Parkinson’s Disease, arthritis, multiple sclerosis and amputation. The program was the first in the Fox Valley area to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

In 1979, St. Elizabeth Hospital became the first hospital in Northeastern Wisconsin to implement a nutritional support team comprised of physicians, dietitians, nursing staff and pharmacists. In 1982, St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Pharmacy became the first and only hospital pharmacy in the Fox Valley to have 24-hour pharmacist coverage.

St. Elizabeth Hospital was not immune to the changes of over-regulation, costly technology, increasing consumer demand, and shrinking resources. The hospital struggled to find innovative ways to accomplish their mission of providing services to those people who needed them in a way they could afford.

By 1983, St. Elizabeth was a 332-bed hospital budgeted to operate at 68.2 percent of capacity. Its average daily rate was $327 and the average length of stay was 7.1 days. Patient services ranged from alcoholism treatment to microscopic neurosurgery, from biofeedback to home care. An advanced CT (computerized tomography) scanner was added to the hospital’s radiology services and an 18-million-electron volt linear accelerator provided sophisticated cancer treatment for 25 patients each day.

The radiology department acquired a six million electron volt linear accelerator in 1978. A $4.5 million expansion was completed in 1979, in which many hospital services were expanded and improved, including outpatient, laboratory, X-ray and emergency room.

Jeff Baldwin, Appleton, credits St. Elizabeth’s rehabilitation program with giving him back his life. In July of 1973, shortly after the program was established, Baldwin was involved in a car accident and was rushed to St. Elizabeth Hospital where he remained in a coma for 14 days. He suffered a severe head injury and several other injuries, including a dislocated right wrist.

“I remember coming to and realizing I was paralyzed on my right side,” says Baldwin. “I was in the hospital for 33 days and had to learn to read, write, walk and talk all over again. I was in physical therapy at St. E’s for a year and a half. Evie Wyngard, physical therapy assistant, took me under her wing and was a big part of my rehab. Even now, 26 years later I still try to get back to the hospital once or twice a year to see Evie. I’m lucky to be alive. It’s important to cherish life and go on with what you’ve got.”
Expanding the Hospitals' Services

Kathleen Mortell Rankin Hospitèl

The Kathleen Mortell Rankin Hospitèl, a joint project of the Appleton Junior Woman’s Club and St. Elizabeth Hospital, opened in November, 1983. It was named in memory of Kathleen M. Rankin, a community-minded woman who died of cancer in 1982 at the age of 34. The four-bedroom house located at 1310 S. Madison Street, offers an inexpensive, homey place of respite and comfort for those whose family members are patients at St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Heath Science Library

St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Health Science Library was selected Wisconsin Health Science Library of the Year by the Wisconsin Health Science Library Association in 1991. The library includes a main reading room; a creative learning center which contains audiovisual equipment, computer services, and hospital archives; a continuing education television viewing room for video cassettes and slides; and a library workroom and director’s office. The library is named in honor of Sister M. Kathleen Daniel, who served as Administrator of the hospital from 1960 to 1971. Dr. Francis M. Hauch, one of the founders of the original medical library, served as Physician Advisor to the library from 1967 until his retirement in 1985.

Creative Learning Center

In July 1991, the hospital’s Creative Learning Center was dedicated in memory of Dr. James W. Erchul who served on the Medical/Dental Staff of the hospital for 32 years and was one of the founders of the hospital’s School of Medical Technology and the Health Science Library. The School of Medical Technology was established in 1967 and provides the clinical phase of an intense course of study, culminating in a bachelor of science degree from affiliated universities throughout the state.
**Subacute Care Unit**

The Fox Valley’s first hospital-based subacute care unit opened in the 4-west wing of St. Elizabeth Hospital on June 30, 1997. The unit was named for Dr. Earle F. and Aimee McGrath. Their daughter, Helen McGrath, made a substantial gift to help underwrite the cost of establishing this unit. Dr. McGrath was the first intern to serve at St. Elizabeth Hospital from 1912 to 1913 and was a practicing physician in Appleton for 33 years. His surgical and X-ray equipment and personal library were donated to the hospital following his death in 1951.

Mrs. Aimee McGrath was a member of the St. Elizabeth Hospital Auxiliary and the first president of the Outagamie Medical Auxiliary. The 20-bed subacute care unit is operated and managed by Franciscan Care & Rehabilitation Center. The medicare-certified inpatient program of nursing care, therapies and other supportive services is designed for the patient who no longer requires hospital care, but is not yet well enough to return home. It complements hospital care by continuing treatment in a cost-effective environment.

**All in the Family**

Jerry Schink, Systems Coordinator at St. Elizabeth, was born at the hospital and grew up just six blocks away. “I can remember as a child helping my granddad who was the hospital’s boiler man,” says Schink. “We used a wheelbarrow to dump the old coal furnace clinkers into the ravine. The Schink name is strongly linked with St. Elizabeth. Between my grandfather, father, several uncles, cousins and myself, we total 307 years of service.”

In the 1930s maintenance tasks included electrical work, plumbing, building cabinets, scrubbing floors, washing windows, cutting grass, shoveling snow, garden work and helping care for the animals. The hospital’s two boilers were hand fired with coal and 23 tons were used every four days as the boiler men shoveled it into the hungry fire. The two boilers contained 40 flues, each of which had to be blown out with steam pressure. The boilers were cleaned on all three shifts and the ashes wheeled out. The hot water tubing of the two water heaters was removed every summer and painted with eison glass to keep scale from forming in the tank. Spring cleaning meant boiler repairs, replacing the grates, and remodeling or bridging the walls.

“My dad and uncles were good carpenters and maintenance men at the hospital,” says Schink, “and it was natural for their sons to follow in their footsteps. We grew up with that sense of service and loyalty to the hospital and its importance to the community.”

“There has always been a strong sense of family at St. Elizabeth,” says Schink. “Sister Kenneth Huelsing was a dietician and Director of Food and Nutrition at the hospital when I was shipped out as a Marine during the Korean war. I was 17 years old and when I left she placed a rosary in my hand and told me there was a special blessing on it and to always keep it with me. I still have it.”

Schink’s mother, Betty, was responsible for keeping the hospital chapel clean and as a young boy, Jerry often served Mass at the chapel and at Sacred Heart Catholic Church nearby. He was invited to serve Mass at St. Elizabeth Hospital’s 100th Anniversary Liturgy Service at Sacred Heart on November 10, 1998.
Intensive Care Unit

Judson E. Fowler, retired president and former owner of Appleton Supply Co., Inc. and his wife Mary Beth Fowler have been generous supporters of St. Elizabeth Hospital for many years. Mary Beth has been a member of the St. Elizabeth Hospital Community Foundation’s Board of Directors since 1994 and currently serves as its vice chair. She is a strong advocate of the Foundation’s planned giving program, and she and Jud have made bequests to St. Elizabeth Hospital. Appleton Supply Co., Inc. and the Fowlers have been major sponsors of the Foundation’s very successful annual women’s golf and luncheon benefit, which Mary Beth helped organize. In 1990, the Fowlers helped underwrite the construction of St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Helen G. Fowler Conference Center, named for Jud’s mother.

With all of the support and generosity they have exemplified throughout the years, however, the Fowlers most significant contribution to the community came in the spring of 1998, in the form of a new state-of-the-art Intensive Care Unit made possible by their leadership gift of $600,000.

St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit now located on the second floor of the hospital (2 South) is the first ICU in Wisconsin to use innovative Movable Critical Care Columns. These mobile equipment consoles, with more than 600 on-board accessories, allow medical personnel to quickly perform numerous procedures without having to leave the patient’s side. The user-friendly column design makes the equipment less obtrusive and allows the patient to easily sit up and get out of bed. Clinicians have full access, and can adapt the columns to meet the patients changing needs.
Otto L. Cox

Otto L. Cox, a native of Richland Center, Wisconsin, earned a degree in business administration and accounting from the University of Wisconsin-Superior and his master of arts in hospital and health care administration from the University of Iowa in Iowa City. He served as assistant administrator at Mercy Medical Center in Cedar Rapids and as lay administrator at New London Community Hospital before assuming the role of executive vice president of St. Elizabeth Hospital in 1975. In 1995, Cox was named president of Affinity when St. Elizabeth and Mercy Medical Center of Oshkosh affiliated, forming the Catholic mission-oriented regional health network. He was also involved in the merger between Network Health System and Affinity in 1998.

Cox retired January 1, 2000 after 25 years with various Affinity Health System entities. For most of his career he served as president of St. Elizabeth Hospital, a job he found both fulfilling and challenging.

“When you look back over the years, it’s the people in the everyday workplace and community who provide a positive influence, who encourage your potential and help shape who you become,” says Cox. “My life has been enriched by many people over the years and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve this community and St. Elizabeth Hospital.”
Francescan Sisters

As St. Elizabeth Hospital celebrates its 100th anniversary, four Wheaton Francescan Sisters, all of them retired, occupy a small section of the third floor of the hospital as their living quarters. Collectively they have provided 216 years of service to St. Elizabeth Hospital. They are women who have devoted their lives to caring for others, walking in the footsteps of the first four Sisters who came to Appleton to start a hospital so many years ago.

Sister Anne Dresang

Sister Anne Dresang, celebrated her 60th Jubilee as a Franciscan on October 20th, 1998. She remembers the exact date when she boarded the Northwestern 400 train in Appleton for St. Anthony’s Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. “It was April 18, 1938,” she says, “right smack in the middle of America’s Great Depression.”

Born in Mackville in 1918, she answered the call to serve God at the age of 20, received the habit of a Franciscan Sister on November 19, 1938, and following her investiture, assumed the name, Sister M. Anne Dresang.

She completed two years of religious preparation and graduated from Marquette University College of Nursing in 1946. Sister Anne became a seasoned nurse, moving wherever and whenever she was called to hospitals in Missouri, Wisconsin, Iowa and Colorado before finally coming home to St. Elizabeth Hospital in 1975. Sister Anne continues to serve as a volunteer at the hospital and helps staff the Patient Information Desk.

Sister Marlene Bemis

Sister Marlene Bemis was one of eleven children born on a farm in Florence County, Wisconsin, near the Michigan border. She knew at the age of fourteen she wanted to become a nun but her father refused to give his permission so she waited until she was 23 and free to make her own decision. Her investiture was November 21, 1951 in Wheaton, Illinois.
She graduated from St. Joseph Hospital School of Radiology, Milwaukee in 1948 and served as an X-ray technician at hospitals in Milwaukee and Racine and as manager of the X-ray department in Waterloo, Iowa. She joined the X-ray department at St. Elizabeth in 1965, where she would remain for the next 33 years. Sister Marlene is amazed at the technological advancements that have taken place in her chosen field. “It’s wonderfully exciting but it’s also important that we don’t allow machines to get in the way of a strong patient relationship.”

Sister Marlene works part-time at the hospital as a file clerk, volunteers at a local thrift store, and crochets afghans for the missions. “The years at St. Elizabeth Hospital have been good ones,” she says, “and Appleton is a fine place to live, the kind of place where when you meet someone on the street, even a stranger, you get a smile and a hello.”

**Sister Goretti McGlone**

As a young girl and one of eight children, Sister Goretti McGlone says she had her share of scrubbing floors on the family farm near Shiocton. The McGlone family eventually moved to Appleton and she graduated from St. Mary’s High School in Menasha in 1949. She became an aid in the pharmacy at St. Elizabeth Hospital and took on the added duty of cleaning the chapel.

Sister Goretti took her final vows in 1956, and attended the St. Louis College of Pharmacy in Missouri where she practiced before moving to Racine. Further assignments took her to

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*Above: Sister M. Anne Dresang, 1947.*
Above: Sister Raphael Nenninger serving communion to a patient in the 1980s.

St. Michael’s Hospital in the ghetto area of Milwaukee, Sacred Heart Orphanage in Pueblo, Colorado, and St. Francis Mission where she served as part time chaplain and pharmacist. In 1976 she entered the chaplaincy program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

It was while serving as a pharmacist at St. Mary’s Hospital in Green Bay, that a plan was formulated to turn the then vacant Sacred Heart Seminary in Oneida into a home for the elderly. Sister Goretti moved to Oneida in 1984 and accepted the challenge of creating apartments and an assisted living program in the empty convent space. The program was eventually expanded to St. John’s Parish, Menasha; St. Therese, Appleton; St. Vincent’s, Oshkosh; and Sts. Peter and Paul in Green Bay.

Sister Goretti came to St. Elizabeth Hospital as a pharmacist in 1985 and along with Pastor Wilbert Staudenmaier of Sacred Heart Church, established Keen-Ager Retirement Homes in Appleton and Menasha. Sister Goretti says, “My heart has always felt happiest when serving the poor or the elderly.”

She collects and delivers clothing to the needy in Kentucky and collects aluminum cans as a way of earning money to feed the poor.

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Sister Catherine Ann Weyenberg

Sister Catherine Ann Weyenberg was certain of two things as a young girl. She wanted to be a nurse and she wanted to be a nun. She was born and raised on a farm near Little Chute, one of seven children, and while in high school, worked as a nurse’s aide at St. Elizabeth Hospital.

She graduated from Notre Dame, St. Louis, Missouri in 1944, received her B.S. degree from the University of Marquette, Milwaukee in 1948, and her masters degree in nursing administration from the University of Washington, Seattle in 1958. Sister Catherine served as Director of Obstetrics, Supervisor of Medical and Surgical Floor and Pediatrics, Director of Nursing Services, and Assistant Administrator at hospitals in Milwaukee, Iowa, and Missouri before coming to St. Elizabeth Hospital.

She has witnessed many changes in the fifty years she served in the nursing profession. “We put in long hours and did everything, including washing walls. We worked hard and were often physically exhausted, but we didn’t have the same kind of stress that nurses have now. Health care has become so advanced and nurses are highly trained to meet so many more requirements. But what never changes is the commitment we make to the patient.”

Sister Catherine enjoys visiting patients at St. Elizabeth and serves as part time Sacristan and Eucharistic Minister for the hospital chapel. She also volunteers at the Community Clothes Closet, Inc. and the Thrift Shop of Fox Valley.

Sister Catherine Albers

Director of Pediatrics, 1948 – 1951
St. Elizabeth Hospital Board of Directors, 1984 – 1988

“I remember when we first established a nursery for premature babies and one of the preemies needed a total exchange transfusion. It was a new step-by-step process and I held the book so the doctor could refer to the proper procedure. We spent the entire night doing that transfusion.”
Sister Roseann Kleffner  

“I was raised on a farm and when I came to St. Elizabeth Hospital, the old barn, big garden and the apple trees made me feel right at home. I stayed for 24 years. It was common back in those days that when someone had hernia surgery, we placed a pillow or Jimmie under the knees to make them more comfortable. I’ll never forget the look on one man’s face when I asked him if he would like a Jimmie in his bed. ‘Sister’, he said, “I’m not sharing my bed. I paid for a private room!”

Sister James Teder  
Chapel, Information Desk, Mail Room, 1957 – 1967

“I loved working at St. Elizabeth Hospital. What I didn’t like was Wisconsin winters that lasted three-quarters of the year. My favorite memories are of the hospital chapel and the sense of purpose I had in caring for it. Betty Schink and Blanche Meyer provided excellent help.”

Sister Kathleen Daniel
Hospital Administrator, 1960 – 1971

Born November, 28 1903 in St. Louis, Missouri, she joined the Franciscan Sisters on April 19, 1927. She came to Appleton in 1931 and worked in the Business Office until 1933.

She was appointed Hospital Administrator of St. Elizabeth Hospital in 1960. During her administration in 1968 the south wing was built and the Health Science Library, now named in her honor, was developed. She worked with Dr. Francis Hauch and Dr. James W. Erchul in establishing this library. She left St. Elizabeth in 1971 to be succeeded by Mr. Wilfred Loebig as first lay administrator.

Sister Genevieve Jansen
Operating Room Supervisor, 1959 – 1967

“We’ve learned a lot about surgery over the years, knowledge we didn’t have back in the 50s. Our surgery department was an open room and doctors often came directly from their practice into surgery wearing street clothes. What we were lacking in equipment and sterile surroundings was compensated for by the skill of the surgeons. St. Elizabeth Hospital had some good ones and I had the privilege of working with them all, including Drs. Rankin, Giffin, Curtin, Chandler, and Mueller.”

Sister Raphael Nenninger:
Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics, 1962 – 1997

“I spent several years as an RN on the medical and surgical floor at St. Elizabeth and became known for my expertise in starting an IV. I eventually got transferred to pediatrics which was ironic because in training I couldn’t bear to give kids a shot. I loved caring for children and we sometimes had so many children in pediatrics that we didn’t know where to put them. I remember so vividly the day in 1980 when a newborn baby girl, all wrapped up in a blanket, was left at the doorstop of the hospital. We named her Elizabeth and kept her in pediatrics until she was placed in a foster home.”

Sister Mary Patrick Salm
Emergency Room/Out Patient Department, 1971 – 1979

“I lived at St. Elizabeth Hospital for a year when I was a young girl. I operated the switchboard, admitted patients and took them to their floor, and was in charge of the ambulance entrance. Years later I returned to St. Elizabeth to be close to my mother who was in a nursing home. When the hospital was being renovated, birds and bats often flew in through the open vents and seemed to come at you out of nowhere. We finally got smart and used our silk stockings to cover all the vents.”

Sister Leander Huelsing
Director of Food Service, 1969 – 1971

“The Sisters who founded St. Elizabeth Hospital struggled to provide nourishing meals for patients and so did we. We did not have the latest in kitchen equipment, no warming ovens to keep the already prepared food hot. What we used was a cranky old wood stove that was converted into a gas stove. We complained about the stove all the time and I remember one of the Sisters declaring that the stove would last as long as she would. How right she was. When her time came, she died at midnight and the stove blew up the following morning at 5 a.m.”
Sister Kenneth Huelsing
Director of Food Service, 1963 – 1969

“One of the big changes I witnessed as director of food service at St. Elizabeth was establishing a central kitchen rather than having to serve meals from individual floors. One of my favorite stories, however, had nothing to do with food. When Barbara Snowberger, who was a dietician, and I found out that the stained glass windows were going to be destroyed as part of the demolition of the chapel in 1924, we climbed the scaffolding and rescued the windows. Two of the windows are now in a prayer room of the hospital’s current chapel.”

Sister Anselma Micka
Director of Accounting, 1962 – 1981

Sister Anselma Micka joined the Wheaton Franciscans in 1942. In 1962, she was transferred to St. Elizabeth Hospital, and became a member of the accounting and payroll department.

She served as representative to the St. Elizabeth Auxiliary, and established a system of recording pledges and payments for the 1962 Capital Fund Drive which resulted in the building of the south wing. She was also a member of the hospital board of directors.

She was transferred to the Motherhouse in Wheaton in 1980 to serve as an accountant there. She joined her sister, Sister Mary Paul Micka at Wheaton.


Right: Sister Clementia, operating room supervisor, pictured in the operating room in circa 1952.
St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Strong Tradition of Nursing Care

From its very beginning St. Elizabeth Hospital has been home to a nursing staff whose work focuses principally on health and healing, and gifted practitioners with a respected tradition of uniting the body, mind, and spirit.

Mildred Hehne, who turned 106 on April 7, 1999, was a former Pediatric and OB nurse at St. Elizabeth Hospital. She died in February 2000 and will forever be linked to a community of nurses who have contributed to the hospital’s spirit of health and healing.

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A graduate of St. Joseph’s Hospital School of Nursing in Milwaukee, Mildred was stationed in Denver as a stateside Army nurse during World War I and then assigned to U.S. General Hospital #32, Chicago, and Waukesha Veterans Hospital #37 in Waukesha. In 1923 she returned to her hometown of Appleton, accepting a position at St. Elizabeth where she served 29 years before going into private nursing.

Mildred lived for many years with her sister, Laura, in a house on Alton Street near Lawrence University. When she turned 101, she moved to the Franciscan Care and Rehabilitation Center in Appleton. Mildred was known for her quick wit and straightforward sense of humor. When interviewed in 1998, at the age of 105, she remembered walking to the hospital to work, and taking care of Chief of Police Primm, a well known Appleton official who rented a room as living quarters at the hospital. When asked about the hospital’s history, some memories were vivid and others faded at the edges. But her sense of humor was strong as ever when she quipped, “Those days are gone over the hill. I should have kept notes.”

Jane A. Dengel, Appleton, knows it’s not unusual for nurses to have extended careers at St. Elizabeth Hospital. She began her nursing profession there on Armistice Day, 1946. She says, “I stayed for 40 years. All six of my children were born at St. Elizabeth, I’ve been a weekly volunteer on the rehab unit for the past 12 years, serve as a substitute Eucharistic Minister, and still stay in contact with some of my co-workers.”
Jane recalls the early years when there were 33 nuns working at St. Elizabeth. “I remember one in particular who was hard of hearing and never told anyone when she began wearing a hearing aid. We finally caught on and censored our conversations a little more carefully.”

Judy Marson, Appleton, joined St. Elizabeth’s nursing staff in 1970 because of the hospital’s strong tradition of excellent health care and quality nursing. She works as an RN in a combined Medical, Oncology, Orthopedic and Surgical unit.

“As a midwife I have the opportunity to educate and empower women,” she says. “Midwives provide prenatal and postnatal care, supervise the pregnancy, monitor and provide encouragement during labor, and assist the mother in giving birth. We offer a variety of helpful techniques to improve labor and birth. It’s a one-on-one, woman-to-woman connection and I love the bond that develops between mother and midwife. Giving birth is a natural event in women’s lives and we encourage fathers to play a major role. There’s nothing more moving than seeing a couple hold their baby for the first time.”

Maggie Hunt-Wilson, a certified nurse midwife at St. Elizabeth says, “I am exactly where I want to be. I have given birth to three children, have assisted in delivering close to 700 babies in my ten years as an RN in labor and delivery at St. Elizabeth, and have delivered 160 babies as a nurse midwife. I never get over the thrill. Birth is a powerful, amazing experience and it’s such an honor to be part of it.”

Hunt-Wilson became a certified nurse midwife in 1997 after earning a master’s degree in her profession from the University of Illinois in Chicago. She is associated with Affinity Medical Group and Affinity Health System and is one of three midwives practicing at St. Elizabeth Hospital.
A Caring Community of Physicians

Dr. Francis X. Van Lieshout, Appleton, who retired in 1998 after a 42-year medical career in the Fox Valley, has fond memories of serving on the medical staff at St. Elizabeth Hospital.

“Way back in the 1950s when I began my practice, and long before holistic medicine became the in thing, St. Elizabeth Hospital promoted compassionate health care based on the Judeo-Christian healing principles of treating the body, mind, and spirit. It’s one thing that never changed.

“The comprehensive health care we have today is astounding. Years ago a hospital was a place to go only if you were really sick or ready to die. Doctors didn’t have today’s equipment or advanced technology. We didn’t even have air conditioning in surgery back in the 50s. We were a smaller hospital then but what we did have was a strong sense of community. We knew the staff and patients by name as well as most of their families. I was able to honor my commitment to practice good medicine because of the skill and support of the Sisters and the nurses. We relied on one another as a team. More than once I knelt at the bedside to pray for one of my patients and it was not unusual to find nurses and Sisters doing the same.

“My practice was my life and my wife, Josephine, became my ‘Rock of Gibraltar’. She literally raised our seven kids. I consider availability a doctor’s most important strength. You expect him or her to be intelligent, but you have to be available to your patients. I always answered the telephone in the middle of the night, never turned a patient away regardless of whether they could or couldn’t pay, and was still making house calls the day I retired. That was my obligation. It’s what being a doctor is all about.”

Dr. James Veum, Appleton, sports a license plate for his car that says Hug Kids. It’s a philosophy he practiced as a pediatrician in the Fox Valley for 42 years before retiring in 1998.

He joined St. Elizabeth in 1954, shortly after the hospital’s pediatric department was established by Dr. Lloyd Williams. He remembers treating a variety of contagious childhood diseases, including small pox, measles and polio and their sometimes devastating side effects.

“To lose a child is something you never forget,” he says. “As a physician it makes you even more determined to work tirelessly as a dedicated and caring advocate for children. As one of only two pediatricians in the Valley, I averaged four or five house calls a night and 20 on the weekend. I didn’t see it as a hardship but as a way of offering yourself as a doctor. To hold a new born baby, to help children through their development years and watch them grow is a gift from God and over the years I’ve had a lot of gifts.”

Frank Portman of Hilbert, WI, observed his 59th birthday at St. Elizabeth Hospital, after spending 9 years as a patient following a car accident which left him paralyzed. Sister Mary Grace presented him with his birthday cake.
St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Healing Ministry

Because St. Elizabeth is a hospital with a religious emphasis, pastoral care has long been an essential component in meeting the spiritual needs of patients, families and employees. The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Theodore Kersten served as full-time chaplain in 1958. He offered daily Masses, two Sunday Masses and was on 24-hour call to administer the sacraments. Father Charles Brooks, who became the hospital’s first Director of Pastoral Care in 1972, says, “The early role of hospital chaplains was to anoint the sick and dying. We expanded that role to not only visiting patients but getting to know them and their families.” He served St. Elizabeth two separate times during the years of 1972 to 1979 and is pleased that the hospital has consistently maintained person-oriented care.

In the years Father Mike Koch spent at St. Elizabeth, 1976 to 1988, he saw the ministry expand from strictly clerical to one that includes lay men and women. He says, “It was a marvelous experience to stand at the threshold of such an important change, to become part of a community of healers.”

Father Jim Gilsoul joined the hospital as Priest-Chaplain in 1989, a job he relishes. “It is a healing ministry,” he says, “filled with the power of faith and prayer, rich with stories of life and death and healing. And because of that ministry I am privileged to witness everyday miracles. At St. Elizabeth we do more than just mend bones and perform surgery. We offer health care that affects the entire person and we accomplish it with a religious emphasis that is without the limitations of a regular hospital. The staff, no matter what their beliefs or religious preference, are extremely supportive and we work together for the good of each individual patient.”

Today, as in the past, St. Elizabeth Hospital continues its mission to serve those in need. Employees like Nancy Bouressa, a radiology technologist at St. Elizabeth, are valued for their skills and for their giving spirit. While on a mission in the Dominican Republic, sponsored by the Green Bay Diocese, Bouressa met Augusto Montero, the youngest in a family of 11 children. The 16-year-old was not expected to live more than a few years without needed surgery to correct a serious heart defect. With the help of Sister Babs, a Long Island, New York native who runs the Inn of the Good Samaritan in Santa Domingo, Bouressa asked Dr. Sandor Goldstein, a cardiac surgeon at St. Elizabeth, to perform the surgery. On June 19, 1999, Dr. Goldstein successfully replaced the boy’s mitral valve, installing a mechanical valve into the damaged chamber. Augusto lived with Bouressa during his recovery and her family took up a collection to buy him a bike. His prognosis is good and Bouressa plans to return to the Dominican Republic to visit him.

Top: Chaplain, Father Michael at St. Elizabeth Hospital in 1930. He was a member of the Order of the Precious Blood Congregation.

Bottom: Father Emil Schmidt and Bishop Mark Grellinger presiding at the 1949 St. Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Mass.
Providing Health and Spirituality for the Community

St. Elizabeth Hospital Community Foundation

St. Elizabeth Hospital Community Foundation was established in 1976 by a group of community-minded individuals in order to raise funds for the needs of the hospital. By 1956, the focus of the foundation’s efforts had broadened to include needy and worthy community organizations not affiliated with the hospital. The word community was added to the foundation’s name at that time. The mission of the St. Elizabeth Hospital Community Foundation is to provide much-needed funding for innovative health care programs and services to address the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of the people of the Fox Valley region. At the very heart of the foundation’s mission is its commitment to those in need.

What began in 1976 as a vision has today become an important resource for funding, not only for the needs within St. Elizabeth Hospital, but also for Franciscan Care & Rehabilitation Center, an affiliate through Affinity Health System, and for countless local non-profit organizations that have come to rely on support from the foundation for their many projects. Since 1986 the foundation has distributed nearly $1,000,000 to organizations in the Fox Valley area supporting programs in health care, emergency shelter, hunger relief, and health education.

The Changing Medical Community

With the increasing complexity of delivering and financing quality medical care, it was inevitable that St. Elizabeth Hospital would consider the advantages of collaboration. In 1995, St. Elizabeth joined with Oshkosh-based Mercy Medical Center to form Affinity Health System. The Franciscan Sisters of Wheaton, Illinois continued to own the assets of St. Elizabeth Hospital, while Ministry Health Care retained ownership of Mercy Medical Center, but Affinity assumed the responsibility of managing the two hospitals. The Affinity organization has now been expanded to include the Affinity Medical Group (formerly La Salle Clinic), Network Health Plan and Calumet Medical Center. When added to Franciscan Care & Rehabilitation Center and Occupational Health Systems of Wisconsin, Affinity has become the largest health care employer in its service area.

St. Elizabeth Hospital still maintains its own identity within the Affinity system, and provides
a number of services that make it a unique institution, including two hyperbaric oxygen chambers, the only ones in northeast Wisconsin. As the oldest fully-accredited hospital in the Fox Cities, it prides itself in its heritage.

“St. Elizabeth Hospital will continue to be a major component of an integrated Affinity Health System that will provide a continuum of quality health care,” says Otto Cox, recently retired President and CEO of Affinity.

“St. Elizabeth Hospital is dedicated to the commitment to deliver the most advanced health care services in keeping with the philosophy of upholding and respecting the sacredness, dignity, and worth of every person. As the health care industry continues to experience unprecedented change, St. Elizabeth continues to provide some of the highest quality, most technically advanced health care programs and services available.”

“The Sisters who gave their heart and soul to this hospital would be pleased today to see their mission and values carried out by dedicated lay people. St. Elizabeth Hospital will continue to be a major component of an integrated Affinity Health System that will provide a continuum of quality health care in the years to come. As we look back on the rich heritage and accomplishments of St. Elizabeth Hospital, we can take pride in our careful stewardship, in our mission of caring for people, one patient at a time. As we look forward, the Sisters, together with their lay partners, will continue their commitment to provide health and spiritual services in Northeast Wisconsin for another 100 years.”

Kevin E. Nolan

Kevin Nolan was named chief executive officer of Affinity Health System, the regional integrated health care network serving Oshkosh, Appleton and the greater Fox Valley area in March, 1999. As system CEO, Nolan coordinates strategic planning and direction of the organization, which includes St. Elizabeth Hospital, Franciscan Care & Rehabilitation Center, Mercy Medical Center, Calumet Medical Center, Affinity Medical Group and Network Health Plan.

Nolan has more than 25 years of experience in health care administration. Most recently, he was senior vice president with Catholic Healthcare Partners in Cincinnati and president/CEO of HM Health Services in Youngstown, Ohio. He oversaw the creation of the first integrated health care delivery network within the region through the combination of two acute care hospitals, two nursing homes, subacute and home care services and medical practices.

He has held executive leadership positions within health care organizations in Pennsylvania, New York, Arizona and Massachusetts.

“I was attracted to the opportunity at Affinity because of its potential,” says Nolan. “I have been part of systems similar to Affinity, and I understand the special challenges they present. I am also attracted to the mission of the organization and its sponsors.”

Nolan sees St. Elizabeth as a hospital whose longstanding hallmark is the integrity of care. “It is a hospital that has earned the respect of a community in which it is an integral part. Rather than a brick and mortar emphasis, the commitment here has always been people caring for people with a sense of compassion and genuine concern.”
On Tuesday, November 10, 1998, a liturgy service was held at Sacred Heart Catholic Church — the church that played an integral part in inviting the Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary to Appleton. The Most Reverend Robert J. Banks, Bishop of the Green Bay Diocese, presided at the 6 p.m. service. Rev. James M. Gilson, Chaplain, St. Elizabeth Hospital and Msgr. Brian Coleman, Administrator, Sacred Heart Parish served as Delegated Co-celebrants. General Co-celebrants included priests of the Appleton area and former priest chaplains of St. Elizabeth Hospital. Donald Gigure served as Deacon and Msgr. John H. Schuh as Master of Ceremonies. Music was offered by the Green Bay Diocesan Choir under the direction of Kathryn O’Connor.

Sister Mary Ellen McAllyse, OSF, Provincial Director Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Wheaton, Illinois, served as Lector. General Intercessions were presented by Otto Cox, President and CEO, Affinity Health System. Communion gifts were presented by Sister Marlene Bemis, Sister Anne Dresang, Sister Goretti McGlone, and Sister Catherine Ann Weyenberg; Wheaton Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Servers included Roman Woychik, Jerry Schink, Vernon Overesch, Joseph Grishaber, and Robert Schmidt. Hospitality duties were performed by Carleen Adserias, Administrative Assistant; Carol Jansen, Assistant to the CEO; James Streed, Vice President of Marketing; and Lois Wolfgram, Marketing Coordinator.

The liturgy service was followed by a reception at Riverview Country Club. Speakers included Otto Cox; Tim Hanna, Mayor of Appleton; Bill Loebig, President of Wheaton Franciscan Services; Sister Mary Ellen McAllyse, OSF; Bob Taylor, President of Wisconsin Hospital Association; Sister Rosemary Sabino, RSM, President and CEO, Catholic Health Association of Wisconsin; and Sister Goretti McGlone.

November 17, 1998, marked the beginning of the year-long Centennial celebration of St. Elizabeth Hospital. A liturgy for all Affinity employees was held in the hospital chapel, followed by a Centennial flag-raising ceremony and a St. Elizabeth Hospital Day in Appleton proclamation presentation by Mayor Tim Hanna.
Centennial pins were distributed to employees and banners commemorating the Centennial were placed in the employee parking lots and on Oneida, Fremont and Monroe Streets.

A Centennial theme float showcasing a model of the first hospital and a model of the present hospital was featured in Appleton’s annual Christmas and Flag Day Parades.

A special Centennial Room was created to display artifacts and memorabilia of the early years. Items on display are continually expanded and include a microscope dating back to the 1890s, an analytical balance from the 1920s, hospital bills from 1921 – $90 for surgery and a two-week stay, X-ray goggles that date back to the 1940s, a microscope and an electric pointer from the World War II era, and an electrocardiograph machine from the 1950s.

The link between St. Elizabeth Hospital, Affinity Medical Group and the Affinity Heart & Lung Center was dubbed Heritage Walk with its special displays of historical artifacts and medical staff photographs from 1929, 1959 and 1969.

The original six-foot granite cross that once graced the 1924 chapel and was put in storage during the hospital’s 1988 expansion became an integral part of the Centennial celebration. It is displayed in a place of honor on the lawn outside the Patient Registration and Patient Information lobbies and lit with floodlights at night. A plaque at its base carries the following inscription: This cross originally adorned the chapel of St. Elizabeth Hospital in 1924. It was removed in 1988 when the hospital was expanded and a modern chapel was built within the hospital walls. On November 17, 1998, the cross was placed at this location to commemorate the hospital’s 100th anniversary and to serve as a visible reminder of our commitment to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual health needs of those we serve.

A Centennial Quilt was created from cross-stitched squares depicting various departments of St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Special Centennial ads reflecting the history of St. Elizabeth Hospital were featured on the Millennium page of the Appleton Post-Crescent throughout the year. St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Centennial Radio Advertising Series won a Gold Award in the 16th annual Healthcare Advertising Awards, sponsored by HealthCare Marketing Report.

The Valentine’s Day Door/Wall Decorating Contest, incorporating both department and Centennial year themes drew 32 entries and special prizes were awarded.

Artist, Sheri Jo Posselt, Winneconne, was commissioned to paint a 544-square-foot mural, funded by the St. Elizabeth Hospital Foundation and Sister Anne Dresang, on the corridor wall that joins the Heart and Lung Center and St. Elizabeth Hospital. The richly colored mural depicts the history of the hospital and includes historical time lines as well as handwritten notations. The mural includes paintings of a statue of the hospital’s name sake, St. Elizabeth surrounded by pink roses, the first St. Elizabeth Hospital, images showing the changes in the building, and an aerial view of the present-day hospital.

Top: Bishop Robert J. Banks greets Lois Verbrick-Wolfgram (Co-Chairman of the Centennial Program) and others at the November 10th Mass.

Bottom, Left to Right: Enjoying the year-long Centennial celebration are Alice Stier (retired nurse), Sister Rosann Kleffner, RN Psychiatric supervisor, later first supervisor of newly organized Intensive Care Unit, Sister Ursula, Radiology supervisor, later Sister Superior Provincial of Franciscan Sisters, and Sister Mary Patrick Salm, Outpatient Unit in the 1980s. Seated is Sister Anne Dresang, retired nurse who now volunters at the hospital.
Acknowledgements

St. Elizabeth Hospital Superiors

1899–00 Sister Carola Lachnicht
1900–17 Sister Fidelis Mellin
1917–24 Sister Vita Klitsch
1924–30 Sister Baptista Freund
1930–36 Sister Kunegunda Knecht
1936–46 Sister Babpista Freund
1946–48 Sister Florina Klope
   (Elected Provincial, 1948)
1948–54 Sister Patricia Shields
1954–56 Sister Jovita Hayden
1956–60 Sister Salome Yahl
1960–63 Sister Estelle Francken
1963–67 Sister Kathleen Daniel
1967–69 Sister Ursula Siebert
1969–71 Sister Leander Huelsing
1971–75 Sister Miriam Reinsbach
1975–80 Sister Anne Dresang
1980–84 Sister Michaeline McGlone
1984–90 Sister Barbara DeWINDT
1990–94 Sister Anne Dresang
1994–97 Sister Catherine Ann Weyenberg
1997–Present Sister Anne Dresang

1980–99 Otto L. Cox
1999–Present Kevin E. Nolan

Directresses/Administrators

1899–00 Sister Carola Lachnicht
1900–17 Sister Fidelis Mellin
1917–24 Sister Vita Klitsch
1924–30 Sister Baptista Freund
1930–36 Sister Kunegunda Knecht
1936–46 Sister Babpista Freund
1946–48 Sister Florina Klope
   (Elected Provincial, 1948)
1948–54 Sister Patricia Shields
1954–56 Sister Jovita Hayden
1956–60 Sister Salome Yahl
1960–63 Sister Estelle Francken
1963–67 Sister Kathleen Daniel
1977–80 E. Scott Henley
1955 Dr. S. A. Konz, President
   Dr. W. S. Giffin, V.P.
   Dr. G. A. Behnke, Sec./Treas.
1956 Dr. W. S. Giffin, President
   Dr. L. B. McBain, V.P.
   Dr. W. A. Dafoe, Sec./Treas.
1957 Dr. L. B. McBain, President
   Dr. F. J. Rankin, V.P.
   Dr. E. N. Krueger, Sec./Treas.
1958 Dr. F. J. Rankin, President
   Dr. W. A. Adrians, V.P.
   Dr. W. H. Hale, Sec./Treas.
1959 Dr. W. A. Adrians, President
   Dr. E. N. Krueger, V.P.
   Dr. W. H. Hale, Sec./Treas.
1960 Dr. E. N. Krueger, President
   Dr. J. J. Young, V.P.
   Dr. F. Wright, Sec./Treas.
1961–62 Dr. J. E. Gmeiner, President
   Dr. F. M. Hauch, V.P.
   Dr. L. P. Williams, Sec./Treas.
1963–64 Dr. W. A. Dafoe, President
   Dr. L. P. Williams, V.P.
   Dr. R. S. Gage, Sec./Treas.
1965–66 Dr. F. M. Hauch, President
   Dr. B. J. Haas, Sec./Treas.
1967–68 Dr. R. S. Gage, President
   Dr. H. B. Danford, Sec./Treas.
1969–70 Dr. B. J. Haas, President
   Dr. P. C. Hodges, Sec./Treas.
1971–72 Dr. H. G. Danford, Chief of Staff
   Dr. W. B. Grubb, Sec./Treas.
1973–74 Dr. W. B. Grubb, Chief of Staff
   Dr. F. X. Van Lieshout,
   Sec./Treas.
1975–76 Dr. T. M. Loecher, Chief of Staff
   Dr. M. F. Kwaterski, Sec./Treas.
1977–78 Dr. J. W. Erchul, Chief of Staff
   Dr. M. F. Kwaterski, Sec./Treas.

Past Officers of the Medical Staff

1930 Dr. A. E. Rector, President
1931 Dr. J. B. MacLaren, President
1932 Dr. W. J. Frawley, President
1933 Dr. E. H. Brooks, President
1934 Dr. E. F. McGrath, President
1935 Dr. C. G. Maes, President
1936 Dr. G. J. Flanagan, President
1937 Dr. E. L. Bolton, President
1938 Dr. J. L. Benton, President
1939 Dr. W. H. Towne, President
1940 Dr. G. W. Carlson, President
1941 Dr. E. F. Mielke, President
1942 Dr. C. D. Neidhold, President
1943 Dr. W. A. Dehne, President
1944 Dr. M. E. Swanton, President
1945 Dr. G. L. Boyd, President
1946 Dr. W. C. Verbrick, President
1947 Dr. R. V. Landis, President
1948 Dr. D. M. Gallaher, President
1949 Dr. J. P. Skibba, President
   Dr. A. M. Bachhuber, V.P.
   Dr. F. J. Rankin, Sec./Treas.
1950 Dr. D. W. Curtin, President
   Dr. N. J. Knauf, V.P.
   Dr. J. J. Young, Sec./Treas.
1951 Dr. N. J. Knauf, President
   Dr. A. M. Bachhuber, V.P.
   Dr. F. M. Hauch, Sec./Treas.
1952 Dr. A. M. Bachhuber, President
   Dr. W. A. Adrians, V.P.
   Dr. P. M. Cunningham, Sec./Treas.
1953 Dr. E. J. Zeiss, President
   Dr. A. E. Bachhuber, V.P.
   Dr. H. T. Gross, Sec./Treas.
1954 Dr. A. E. Bachhuber, President
   Dr. S. A. Konz, V.P.
   Dr. G. A. French, Sec./Treas.
1955 Dr. S. A. Konz, President
   Dr. W. S. Giffin, V.P.
   Dr. G. A. Behnke, Sec./Treas.
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   Dr. W. A. Dafoe, Sec./Treas.
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   Dr. F. M. Hauch, V.P.
   Dr. L. P. Williams, Sec./Treas.
1963–64 Dr. W. A. Dafoe, President
   Dr. L. P. Williams, V.P.
   Dr. R. S. Gage, Sec./Treas.

Revised by-laws eliminates Vice President.
1979–80  Dr. M. F. Kwaterski, Chief of Staff
           Dr. C. J. Green, Sec./Treas.
           (Staff joined effective 5/27/80)
1980–81  Dr. R. R. Kinde, President
         Dr. J. W. Erchul, President-elect
         Dr. P. E. Pier, Sec./Treas.
1982–83  Dr. J. W. Erchul, President
         Dr. J. H. Burrows, President-elect;
         replaced by Dr. Chandler
         Dr. J. R. Lindstrom, Sec./Treas.
1984–85  Dr. W. W. Chandler, President
         Dr. H. G. Danford, President-elect
         Dr. J. R. Barkmeier, Sec./Treas.
1986–87  Dr. H. G. Danford, President
         Dr. T. A. Ryan, President-elect;
         replaced by Dr. B. W. Claypool
         in 1986
         Dr. C. H. Boren, Sec./Treas.
1988–89  Dr. B. W. Claypool, President
         Dr. C. E. Fenlon, President-elect
         Dr. H. A. Folb, Sec./Treas.
1990–91  Dr. C. E. Fenlon, President
         Dr. C. F. Dungar, President-elect
         Dr. T. J. Leonard, Sec./Treas.
1992–93  Dr. C. F. Dungar, President
         (deceased 4/20/93)
         Dr. T. A. Ryan, President-elect
         Dr. M. J. Stastny, Sec./Treas.
1994–95  Dr. T. A. Ryan, President
         Dr. J. R. Whiteside, President-elect
         Dr. U. Vaisman, Sec./Treas.
1995–96  Dr. J. R. Whiteside, President
         Dr. U. Vaisman, Sec./Treas.

Unified Medical Staff disbanded 9/96.
Medical Staff changed to Professional Management Division.

1996–Present  Dr. G. R. Stanis, Chairman,
Professional Division Board

- St. Elizabeth Hospital
  Community Foundation, Inc.
  Fiscal Year 2000 Board of Directors

  Mr. Robert J. Dusenberry, Chairperson
  Mrs. Mary Beth Fowler, Vice Chairperson
  Mrs. Kitty M. Jedwabny, Secretary
  Mr. Mathew J. Vanden Boom, Treasurer
  Mr. Kevin E. Nolan, President
  Mrs. Lisa N. Weiner, Director
  Ms. Jennifer L. Broden, Coordinator
  Mr. Stanley W. Baehman†
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  Mr. W. Terry Borchardt
  Mr. Otto L. Cox
  Dr. Raymon E. Darling
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  Mr. Peter M. Jansen
  Mr. Patrick H. Landreman
  Mr. John J. Russo†
  Mrs. Mary B. Schmidt
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  Mr. Philip R. Keller
  Sister Erna Kimminau†
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  Mr. Jack Lally
  Ms. Rochelle Lamm Wallach
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  Sister Teresa Maltby
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  Mr. William J. Plank, Jr.
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  Mr. David G. Voss, Jr.
  Dr. Charles C. Wallace*†
  Miss Margaret M. Walsh
  Mr. John S. Wells*†
  Ms. Charlotte Weiland
  Mr. Graham A. Werner
  Mrs. Kitty B. Wilbourne
  Mr. Dennis Wydeven
  Mr. Gus A. Zuehlke

* Deceased  † Former St. Elizabeth Hospital Community Foundation, Inc. Chairperson
Service to the poor

St. Elizabeth Hospital’s special mission is to bring its ministry of compassion and healing to the poor, the elderly and the medically underserved in our community. To that extent the hospital donates an average of $1,000,000 annually in free health care services to the underprivileged in our community.
Happy Birthday Elizabeth

Pardon me for being so familiar—but I feel I know you more as a down to earth person rather than a saint in heaven. And pardon me if I let my feelings about you be known.

When I think about Elizabeth, I think about her Goodnesses... and there are two strong ones that come to mind.

Firstly is the care those who work here show for their patients and their fellow workers. And, by care, I don’t mean the science of medicine or management or housekeeping or the thousand and one tasks that are all done so well here.

But, by care, I mean the human concern that those who work and volunteer at Elizabeth show to all those whom they encounter, and the deep down kindness that they educate others to show, as these others become part of Elizabeth.

Such compassion shows in their eyes and voices. Such compassion is wonderfully contagious. This is the first goodness I feel in Elizabeth.

And secondly, I dare say that Elizabeth shows her goodness in the amazing amount of equality displayed. Nobody is more special than anyone else here—yet everyone is most special.

Woe betide any doctor or manager or supervisor looking to lord it over anyone supposedly beneath them. It does not work here. Elizabeth does not tolerate arrogance.

What does work is working together as equals—partners in the art of caring. For anyone with that kind of power, Elizabeth has a powerful lesson to teach.

And so, after 100 years, Elizabeth, I wish you well.

I wish well to all those who are and will be a part of you—all those who are so caring and so special.

Happy Birthday, Elizabeth... and many happy returns.

– George R. Stanis, MD
Chairman, Professional Division Board (Medical Staff) at the Cornerstone Opening Ceremony on Wednesday, November 17, 1999
Written by Ellen Kort

Acknowledgements

WM Design – Appleton, Wisconsin
Greg Ashenbrenner, Image Studios, Inc. – Appleton, Wisconsin
AmeriPrint Graphics, Inc. – Neenah, Wisconsin

Centennial Planning Committee

Sister Anne Dresang, Co-Chairman
Lois Verbrick-Wolfram, Co-Chairman
Carleen Adserias, Mary Bayorgeon, Rev. James Gilsoul, Carol Jansen,
Ann Nienhaus, Pat Streim, Renee Trzebiatowski, Lisa Weiner, Evie Wyngard