THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA HOSPITAL

The First Seventy-Five Years
1917-1992

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER
Omaha, Nebraska
1994
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INTRODUCTION

This all began in the summer of 1991. I had been retired from the College of Medicine for four years when I received a copy of a memo to a fairly large group asking us to serve on a committee for the 75th Anniversary of the University of Nebraska Hospital and the University of Nebraska College of Nursing. Having elected to do so, I eventually ended up as chairman of the subcommittee on history. The other members of that committee were Alice Friedlander, retired Director of Volunteer Services; Kathy McConnell, President of the Hospital Auxiliary; Sharon Redding from the College of Nursing Alumni Association; Nancy Schneckloth, Assistant Professor College of Nursing and editor of the 70-year history of the College of Nursing; and Carol Wilson, retired Director of the Nursing Service. Among a number of other things, the committee’s major contribution was a three-paneled display depicting the histories of the Hospital and the College of Nursing.

Early on, it became apparent that there was very little documentation of the hospital’s history. Nancy Schneckloth had done the necessary research for the 70-year history of the College of Nursing and this only needed to be updated. My personal frustration which arose from attempts to provide a history of the hospital in the absence of adequate records or documentation led me to offer to research the necessary information and write a 75-year history.

I reviewed “The First Hundred Years”, the history of the College of Medicine, for information on the University Hospital and its reference list noted a number of potential documents which could be used. I reviewed every copy of the Medical Center’s internal publication, “The Pulse” later the “University of Nebraska Medical Center News” from the first publication in December 1953 through 1992 and, subsequently, 1993. At the time of my initial review, I made notes of what appeared to be potentially useful information. As might be expected, I subsequently had to return many times as needs arose which I had not initially anticipated.

Ms. Helen Yam, Archivist of the McGoogan Library, located a number of documents for me. I discovered the “Nurse Reporter” of the College of Nursing” and the “Communicator” of the hospital Nursing Service which provided information I had not found elsewhere. Ultimately, the recollection of individuals associated with the Medical Center now or in the past were a significant source of information.

This book is not meant to be a narrative history of the University Hospital, but it is a compilation of as much information as I could find in the three years I worked on it. I must point out that I have not labored diligently for 36 months but only for the four months of “winter” in each of the years 1991-92 through 1993-94 when I could not pursue my avocation of horticulture. A few areas are dealt with in great detail because
of personal knowledge and interest. I hope I have provided two things, a brief historical record of the University of Nebraska Hospital from 1917-1992 and a reference source for those who wish to pursue any particular area in greater detail. Any documents which I have been able to collect are now located in the archives of the McGoogan Library at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska. I feel this may be my most significant accomplishment since they were dispersed throughout the Medical Center and ultimately would have been lost as many documents already have been. I hope the reader will find this book informative even if not absorbing.

F.M.S.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to many individuals for the information contained in this history. I have tried to maintain a record so as to properly acknowledge everyone, but I live with the fear that someone who made a significant contribution has been left out. If so, I apologize and assure them that it was not deliberate.

As identified in the text, Carol Wilson is the author of the section on the Nursing Service since I certainly could not have provided the wealth of information and insight contained in that section. In addition, Carol provided summaries of information from the “Nurse Reporter” and other valuable bits of information without which this history would be even less complete than it is. My heartfelt thanks to Carol. I am indebted to Glenda Conley of Hospital Administration who served as an “administrative coordinator”, liaison officer and point person, and to Diana Hall who did the typing during this past year and kept up with the numerous revisions and changes. I am also grateful to the staff of Planning and Marketing who provided early typing support, and to the staff of the Neurosurgery Office who served as my in-house mail room to receive the various pieces of information which were submitted from throughout the campus. I want to thank Irene Klintberg of the Dean’s Office of the College of Medicine who knew who to call when I needed a source of information and frequently expedited my contacts. I certainly cannot forget the hospital record room staff who helped me find records of hospital statistics which appear throughout the body of the text.

I am especially grateful to Helen Yam, McGoogan Library Archivist, who located a number of documents which I never would have found, who kept watch over the material I had assembled during the three years and who has agreed to help me organize and file it for future reference.

In order to document this history, it was necessary to obtain copies of documents, i.e. bylaws, minutes of meetings, architectural plans, etc.; to talk with individuals who had direct knowledge of events in the past; to prevail on individuals to provide written histories of specific hospital services and in many other ways to rely upon the generosity of others to provide essential information. My thanks to the following who fall into these broad categories: Luann Andersen, Medical Staff Services; Mickey Bradshaw, Materials Support Services; Raymond Breed, Physical, Occupational and Rehabilitation Medicine; Ward Chambers, University Medical Associates; Robert Connor, Pharmacy; Dennis Cuka, Anesthesiology; Donald Dickmeyer, Facilities Management; Celeste Felix, Emergency Medical Services; Alice Friedlander, Volunteer Services; Vicki Hamm, Graduate Medical Education; Florence Hansen, Social Services; Edward Holyoke for significant historical insight; Michael Luethge, Respiratory Therapy; Merton Lundquist, Pastoral Care Ser-
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F.M.S.