

## OUR HISTORY

### **Pride in the Past ... A vision for the Future Celebrating 50 years of service 1958 - 2008**

Memorial Hospital's history began not with a 1955 groundbreaking or with a 1947 corporate charter, but decades earlier with the growing conviction among Belleville physicians and others that the city needed an additional hospital.

"We need new hospital facilities desperately," said Dr. Edmund Bechtold in 1920, in words which still ring with a sense of urgency and determination. "Our boys fought the Great War so that we could build a better world. Let's build it."

Within a few years, members of several Belleville Evangelical and Reformed churches (later the United Church of Christ) had embraced the hospital cause led by the Reverend Otto Pessel of St. Paul's who devised the sale of "bricks" as a fundraising plan. The bricks were actually sold by volunteers for \$1 each and pasted onto sheets. The sale of bricks netted \$4,000, which was invested and 20 years later was turned over, with interest, to the newly chartered hospital corporation.

Meanwhile, however, came the Crash in 1929 and interest in building an expensive new hospital waned. But by 1935 the area's physicians were again insisting that the need was critical.

"This matter is becoming serious," Dr. R.J. Joseph said. "Unless Belleville soon creates some new hospital facilities, any epidemic or public catastrophe would be disastrous."

These concerned doctors continued to meet over the next 10 years or more, and on August 4, 1947, their years of work began to bear fruit with the incorporation of the Protestant Hospital Builders Club. The founders were the Reverend B.J. Koehler, president; Oliver C. Joseph, vice president; W.A. Schickedanz, secretary/finance director; and Walter A. Keil, treasurer.

A fund drive that year raised \$400,000 in cash and pledges, and a second drive a year later added another \$200,000 to the total.

"With thrift and perseverance, we of the Belleville area can do anything we set out to do," said Schickedanz, reflecting on the group's determination.

By 1953, physicians of the area had enough confidence in the hospital's future to discuss the formation of a Medical Staff. Thirty-six doctors met at the Elk's club on August 4, and elected Dr. L.E. Tegtmeier staff president. Formal organization of the Medical Staff occurred April 2, 1958, re-electing Dr. Tegtmeier as medical staff president.

By 1953, Walt Marsh became chairman of the building committee and within two years the board, acting on his recommendations, voted to sign the building contracts. On December 4, 1955, five days after the contracts were signed, groundbreaking ceremonies were held.



The board took these decisive steps even though it had not raised all of the money needed to build the hospital. As the late Edward Kaufman, a board member and the hospital's first patient once said, "There comes a time when we must act on faith... to see the vision when reality is yet to come. We need a hospital. We will have a hospital."



Fundraising continued in earnest. Charles T. Meyer joined the group and co-chaired a \$1,000,000 campaign in 1956-57. As Meyer recalled, the need was acute; money was so short the board elected to eliminate the air conditioning from the plans, only to restore that option after the campaign succeeded.

During the campaign, Meyer and his co-chairman Frank E. Robinson, approached the late Bishop Albert Zuroweste of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Belleville, seeking his endorsement of the hospital project to avoid even the appearance of conflict with the Catholic community. Bishop Zuroweste responded with a gracious letter supporting Memorial. The letter was read at the campaign kick-off dinner held January 9, 1957, at Belleville Township High School West gym.

During the same campaign, George Ludwig of Belleville donated his Fairview Heights farm, valued at \$250,000 to the hospital. The farm occupied land now in the heart of Fairview Heights' commercial district. For a victory celebration later that year, Ludwig too modest to appear in person, sent a recorded message: "Each of us has to do what he can with what has been given to him. The widow who gives her mite is giving as much as a millionaire. When we give to our hospital, we are only returning to the Lord what he has given us."

Over 1,200 volunteers helped in that campaign. One of them was Ruth Kempf of Waterloo. Though she was then an emergency room nurse at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Belleville, Kempf was determined not only to do her part to see that the new hospital was built, but also to go to work there. She is now an Auxiliary volunteer at Memorial.

It was also in 1957, that a young hospital administrator from Fairfield, Illinois, was hired from a field of 400 applicants to head the Memorial staff. Taylor O. Braswell impressed the board with his eagerness and his willingness to embrace the vision of its founders.

"The hospital," he noted, "is not just brick and mortar. It was built as a result of a philosophy and a dream."

Braswell, whose name grew synonymous with Memorial Hospital over the years, served 29 ½ years as its chief executive officer before retiring in 1987.

Harry R. Maier, who served as executive vice president since 1977 to 1986 was named president and chief executive officer in 1986 – a position he held until his retirement in October 2006.

Mark J. Turner, who had served as Memorial's executive vice president and chief operating officer since 2004 was named to succeed Maier as president and CEO of the hospital and its related corporations.

In its almost 50-year history, Memorial has had just three chief executive officers – a distinction not many hospitals across the country can claim.

## **Opening and Dedication**

The official opening of Memorial Hospital the third week of May 1958 was a major event in Belleville history. The city's two papers carried articles and pictures daily, usually on the front page. The staff opened the new hospital to visitors the week prior to the dedication ceremonies. At total of 61,776 area residents toured the gleaming new facilities during that time led by Auxiliary guides.

Dedication ceremonies were held Sunday, May 18, 1958. Dr. Frank Eversull, a former board member and pastor emeritus of the First Presbyterian Church, summed up the prayers, hopes and convictions of the entire hospital community with these words: "From these halls will go forth renewed life and new life to the glory of God and the service of all mankind."

Board member Edward Kaufman was admitted the next day, Monday, May 19, the first of Memorial's patients. Eight more people were also admitted that day.

## **Voting Members**

The following year, the board devised the Participating Voter Member Plan, whereby area Protestant churches could agree to pledge \$10 per member over a five-year period and thus acquire permanent voting membership in the hospital corporation. Some 47 elected to participate, pledging as well, the support and commitment of the Protestant community to the success of the hospital and the excellence of its program.

## **Firsts**

In 1960, Memorial made its first stride in a long list of “firsts” among metro-east hospitals: the first Cobalt-60 radiation therapy unit for the treatment of cancer in the area opened at the hospital.

“It was very innovative at the time,” said Charles Meyer, who also noted the boundless enthusiasm the hospital family felt for its work. “We thought that we were Sloan-Kettering on the Mississippi.”

Other firsts in Memorial's history include:

- First formal Department of Anesthesia under the direction of an anesthesiologist;
- First Nuclear Medicine Department;
- First formal Department of Respiratory Care under the direction of a registered respiratory therapist;
- First Intensive Care Unit;
- First Pulmonary Laboratory
- First arteriography diagnostic equipment;
- First cardiovascular service and non-invasive blood flow;
- First Hyperbaric Medicine Department
- The Memorial Convalescent Center was purchased in 1964, thus becoming the first St. Clair County extended care facility owned and operated by a hospital. The Convalescent Center has 108 beds and is Medicare approved.
- First “FAST TRACK” service in its Emergency Department.
- First area hospital to acquire a 3 Tesla MRI – this technology is primarily used in research facilities and Memorial was one of just a handful of hospitals nationwide to acquire this technology.

The hospital pursued a policy of innovation not out of a competitive spirit but because at Memorial the patient really does come first.

## **Innovations/Accreditations**

Memorial has long recognized that the healthcare needs of area residents can best be served by offering a full spectrum of services in a variety of settings. In addition to providing the comprehensive services and programs of a full-service medical center, Memorial responds to area residents' healthcare needs by providing:

- A specialized Mammography unit dedicated to offering individualized attention to patients. The unit, located in a comfortable, private outpatient area, features state-of-the art, low-dose mammography equipment. Memorial's Mammography Center also provides stereotactic-guided breast biopsies, ultrasound guided breast biopsies, the R2 Image Checker and bone density testing. In early 2007, Memorial Mammography Centers became fully-digital and became a certified MammoPad facility – offering women ‘high-tech, soft-touch’ mammography.
- Sophisticated emergency medical services through Memorial's Emergency Department and the “Fast Track” service to treat less serious conditions not needing trauma-level care, such as cuts, sprains, minor fractures, colds, flu, sore throat, earache and back pain. Memorial's Emergency Department also has Glennon Care for Kids, pediatric urgent care from 2 p.m. to midnight – seven days a week.
- Serves at the EMS Resource/POD Hospital for Illinois Department of Public Health Region 4.
- Memorial's Sleep Disorders Center is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.
- Evaluation and treatment of patients with a wide variety of pain problems is done through Memorial Pain Management Center.
- Memorial Senior Care, an outpatient program designed to renew quality of life for adults age 60 and older who struggle with depression and anxiety issues.
- The most technologically-advanced Magnetic Resonance Imaging system available in the Belleville area enabling physicians to see inside the human body in ways never before possible. Memorial's MRI Center is accredited by the American College of Radiology (ACR).

- State-of-the-art imaging technology with PACS, a Picture Archiving and Communications Systems allowing physicians to view images from various hospital workstations, their offices – even from home.
- The addition of the M2A Capsule Endoscopy to Memorial's GI Lab, allowing physician's a non-invasive way to see the entire length of a patient's small intestine. Expansion of the GI Endoscopy Lab in October 2006 provides physicians, patients and their families with increased comfort and efficiency.
- Tastefully decorated Labor/Delivery/Recovery Suites where maternity patients can deliver their babies in a private, home-like environment, yet with the immediate back-up facilities and skilled personnel of a full-service medical center readily available.
- A broad range of medically-current outpatient and diagnostic treatment services. Memorial provides virtually all of its specialized diagnostic and treatment services on an outpatient basis to meet patients' needs for convenient and cost-effective services. Examples include the hospital's advanced Outpatient Surgery Department with its 50 private patient areas, a central nursing station, separate reception/registration/waiting areas, adjacent parking and a convenient drive-up entrance; complete innovative rehab services in the hospital's Physical Therapy Department and at close to home offices in Belleville and O'Fallon; and a comprehensive Cardiac Rehabilitation Program developed in cooperation with the YMCA of Southwest Illinois.
- A state-of-the-art Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory featuring the latest technology.
- A Palliative Care Program designed to provide the best quality of life possible for terminally-ill patients and their families.
- Center for Diabetic Education at Memorial, an outpatient diabetes education program that has earned the American Diabetes Association (ADA) Education Recognition Certificate.
- A complete range of home care services through Memorial's Home Care Service for homebound patients or patients making the transition from hospital to home.
- A commitment to expand on its health and wellness programs through the 1987 acquisition of Belleville Health and Sports Center, 1001 South 74th Street. A wide array of fitness and exercise programs are offered at Belleville Health and Sports Center, including NEW LEAF, a metabolic assessment and training program.
- Numerous health promotions and community education programs. Consistent with Memorial's historic commitment to provide programs that prevent illness and promote health, the hospital offers quality health programs such as smoking cessation and weight reduction, as well as a variety of community education programs dealing with medically-current topics. An affiliation between Memorial Hospital and the YMCA of Southwest Illinois allows both institutions to provide a variety of additional wellness programs to individuals and businesses of the community by being able to utilize facilities and the expertise of combined personnel. Southwest Illinois Health Ventures (SIHVI), an affiliated corporation jointly owns the YMCA on Seven Hills Road in O'Fallon.
- A commitment to the community to provide the latest cancer treatment service using the most advanced technology available at the Cancer Treatment Center, a partnership between Memorial and St. Elizabeth's hospitals. The Cancer Treatment Center, located in Swansea, is the only comprehensive cancer facility in Southwestern Illinois conveniently providing all outpatient cancer services needed under one roof.
- Convenient access to new imaging technology with the opening of the Southern Illinois P.E.T. Imaging Center in Swansea, a joint venture between Memorial and St. Elizabeth's hospitals. The Positive Emission Tomography (P.E.T.) scanner provides detailed internal images of the body at a molecular level to detect and evaluate cancer, detect heart disease and diagnose specific neurological disorders never before seen by other types of imaging.

The expansion of services to Memorial Healthcare Center in O'Fallon provides close-to-home access to Memorial's services. Memorial Healthcare Center provides general x-ray services, state-of-the-art CT scanning, MRI, and physical therapy at 800 East Highway 50, O'Fallon

