



MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

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Then and Now

As part of our hospital's 100-year anniversary, we are taking a look at Then and Now by highlighting a hospital associate who has been a valuable part of our history in each issue of The Pulse.



Rose Friess, commonly known as "Mama Rose," has been brightening the hallways of St. Mary's Hospital for 44 years. She began at the old hospital location in 1968 as a nurse tech. "Back then, it was like coming to work and caring for your family," said Rose, whose sidekick in those days was Mamie Mason. The two worked as a team caring for pediatric patients and the elderly. "We made a dollar an hour when we started," said Rose. "It wasn't about the money; it was about caring for people."

Over the years, Rose has seen the hospital grow in many ways. She is proud to have dug one of the first shovels of dirt for the foundation of the current hospital building. "We all made the move from the old hospital, and believe it or not, we were all sad," said Rose. "We knew it would be great for St. Mary's Hospital, but it was heartbreaking to leave it and see it being torn down." She now reflects on how rewarding it was to be a part of the transition.

Although Rose has made many memories while working in every department of St. Mary's, except for OB, her most memorable was the time she assisted Dr. Roache in saving a baby's life. "It was the most frightening thing I've ever dealt with," said Rose. While caring for a baby in a croup tent, Rose says, "the baby got real critical, and we didn't have a team to call back then like we do now." Dr. Roache calmly told her, "Rose, we are going to do surgery right here and right now and you are going to help me." Rose followed his lead and got a crash course in tracheotomies that day as she helped save the baby. "I actually still know the family," said Rose, "and I'm happy to say the patient is still doing great."

More than 24 years ago, Rose transitioned from a nurse tech to a physical therapy tech - a job offer she turned down a few times. "Well, I'll give it my best shot," Rose recalled. Now, more than two decades later, Rose continues in the role. "It's so rewarding to see a stroke patient who couldn't walk get out of bed and walk again...it fills my heart with joy." And she added, "I'm thankful God has given me the strength to help others."

Outside of the hospital, Rose spends time helping elderly people from her church. She's also an avid gardener and likes to ride her bicycle. But, spending time with her family is always top on her list.