

LESSON IN HISTORY

The growth of Clara Barton Hospital has much to teach us

Wise men know their history – we’ve all heard it. We know the steps to avoid the past – but, sometimes, we want to repeat the past. Especially at Clara Barton Hospital and Clinics.

The history of Clara Barton Hospital has much to teach us about cooperation, generosity, and loyalty. The past and current administrators can attest to the good times, and the not-so-good times throughout the growth of the hospital.



I.C. “Ike” Walter

The very first administrator of what was formerly known as Hoisington Lutheran Hospital, I.C. “Ike” Walter, of Hoisington, remembers the shoe-string budget of the hospital when it opened, “I had one of everything – one treatment room, one office, one of everything.” Walter even did double duty as an x-ray technician to help cover shifts, because they didn’t have enough people.

“Administration is quite different now than it was then,” Walter states. And he would know. After serving in World War II, Walter went to the University of Nebraska, majoring in economics. After college, he began as the administrator at Hoisington Lutheran Hospital in 1951. That’s 63 years of being involved at the hospital, either as administrator, or on the Hospital Board of Directors, or, later, on the Foundation Board of Trustees; loyalty to this community and the hospital is deep-rooted in Walter, who believes, “God gave me the gift to help my community. That’s the reason I do it: I enjoy it.”

The growth currently going on at Clara Barton Hospital is important, as growth has been vital to the hospital throughout its tenure in Hoising-

ton. “The Hospital is the community. The community is the Hospital,” Walter explains. “Without the Hospital, the community would not grow the way it does. They rely on each other and grow together.”



Angie Deutsch

Angie Deutsch, another former administrator at Hoisington Lutheran Hospital, agrees, “Growth is the key to a quality rural hospital. Good medical services and good schools are key to bringing people into a community.”

Deutsch started at Clara Barton Hospital as a staff nurse in 1954, becoming administrator in 1969, and serving in that capacity until 1990, seeing Hoisington Lutheran Hospital through its name change to Clara Barton Hospital and the creation of Clara Barton Hospital Foundation.

The hospital made the change to include the entire community, instead of focusing on one religious group. Deutsch, as administrator, and Walter, as Hospital Board President, realized the need to rally the cooperation of the entire community.

“Gaining the support of the entire community was the goal – that mission is complete,” Walter explains. “It was a difficult task. We went to everyone.” Walter considers the change to Clara Barton and the creation of the Foundation as his top two accomplishments.

Deutsch remembers the mindset of the time, “The early nineties were all about nip and tuck – we had to cut costs and raise revenues. The community joined together, realizing the necessity of the hospital. The Foundation has really taken off – more than we could have ever dreamt.”

The community and the hospital working together to grow

together is a thread found throughout the history of Clara Barton. Deutsch was the administrator during different growing periods: the renovation of the ICU and medical records and addition of the dietary wing, in 1973; the addition of physical therapy, in 1976; and the clinic on 10th Street renovation and the creation of a substance abuse unit, in 1982.

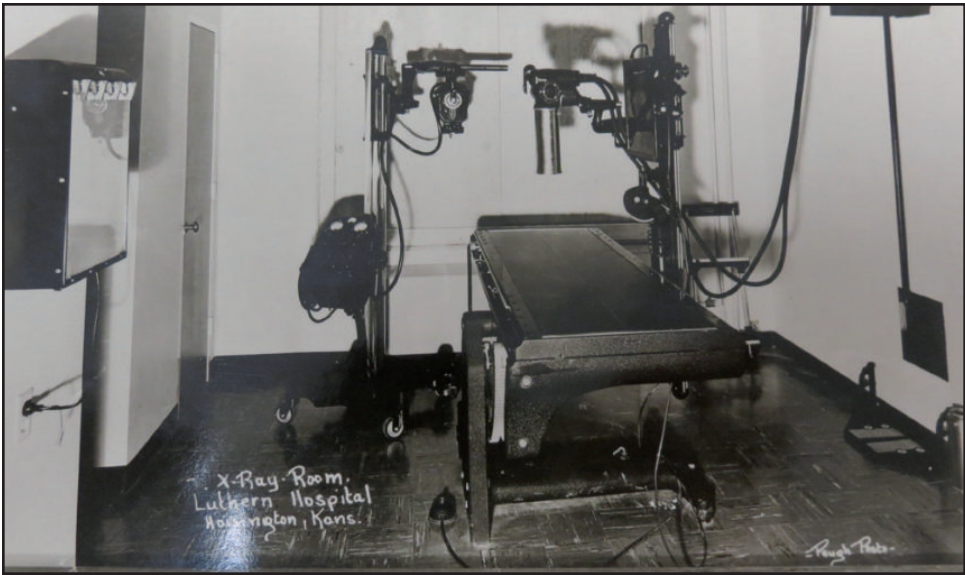
“People understand the importance of their local hospital,” explains Deutsch. “They pull together for the benefit of all. I’m not surprised that they are doing it again with this expansion project.”

Clara Barton opened the doors on its new Therapy Services department in October and the in-house laundry facility was fully operational in December, after some renovation to connect the existing hospital hallway to the new addition. The billing staff, that had previously been located in the Barton County Annex building, has been in the remodeled space since early spring.

“We’re excited to have the construction complete and patients being served in the new addition,” enthuses Jim Blackwell, current president and CEO of Clara Barton Hospital. “The previous administrations and staff have set the bar for legacy of quality care – we are happy to continue with that tradition.” The expansion project is a result of the needs of the community changing to reflect the aging population, and an increased need for outpatient services.

“A hospital stay used to average 8 days – now it averages 8 hours,” quips Walter. The change from inpatient to outpatient care has been gradual, thanks to the creation of assisted living facilities and newer technologies.

“Clara Barton continues to offer quality care, individualized care,” states Blackwell. “That’s one thing that has never changed, as Hoisington Lutheran Hospital or Clara Barton Hospital. I’m glad to be a part of that legacy and give back to this community that has supported the hospital for so long.”



HISTORY – radiology beginning, then, and now: The radiology department has had many changes, because the technological innovation in the field of imaging is constant. Shown is the radiology department in 1950, in the 80s, and in 2014.



HISTORY – surgery beginning, surgery then, and surgery now: Pictured is the surgery department at the hospital, in 1950, in the 80s or 90s, and in 2014. Much has changed, but one thing has remained constant: the personalized care provided.

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