



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.



There is no question that it is “the people and what we do here” that has kept Eldonna Schrader engaged since she first came to work 31 years ago in the Imaging Department at the old St. Mary’s Hospital. “Things have really changed,” said Eldonna. “When I came for the interview, I remember thinking to myself, ‘This is a hospital?’”

Eldonna was hired as a radiology assistant and did just about everything within the department. “We would transport patients, provide patient care and even process film in the dark room. We stocked all of the dark room chemicals,” she said. “When we processed films, we’d mark images with a ‘flash card’ for patient information. Then, all the forms were typed with carbons. Now, everything is digital and computerized.”

The old hospital was “something out of a horror movie, complete with a creepy elevator,” Eldonna laughed. “It never lined up with the floors when it stopped and created a challenge when transporting patients in wheelchairs.”

Today, Eldonna is the department’s support staff lead. She schedules non-technical staff, manages their work flow and does reviews. “Our work space changed, too” she added. “My office area now used to be where the file room is located and we shared a waiting room with the Laboratory.”

Imaging’s filing system in the old hospital used 14 x 17 envelopes with patient names on the outside and kept in a room outside of the Emergency Room (ER) or on the other side of the building. “When we moved into this building in 1984, we suddenly had so much space. It was amazing,” she said. “We began color coding files because we had these new electronic shelves. It didn’t take long to ultimately weigh down the shelves.”

Eldonna grew up in Ohio and arrived here via Texas, having relocated in 1980 with her former husband, a county native. A sister-in-law who was a nurse in the ER encouraged Eldonna to apply. “This is home,” she said. “I’ve never wanted to work elsewhere. I’ve been perfectly happy here.”