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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.

"That cap would always fall off my head right onto a patient's bed," Laura Drury said as she pointed to the white nurse cap everyone wore in her nursing school graduation photo.

Going from the traditional white dress, hose and starched cap to the comfort of scrubs worn today is one among many changes Laura has experienced during 29 years at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. What hasn't changed is her desire to make a difference in a patient's life. "That's why I'm still here," she affirmed.

Being a registered nurse wasn't Laura's plan. She intended to teach American history. "My mom convinced me to study nursing so I'd have a 'fall-back' career," she said. Instead, she fell in love with nursing and never looked back.

In 1983, Laura started working nights on Peabody 2 in the old St. Mary's Hospital. Over time, she has worked every shift or combination of hours, including job sharing for a year with day charge nurse Terry Evans. Now working PRN to have more time with her youngest of six children, she recalled when she started and how working nights could be tough because doctors weren't at the hospital. "Having the hospitalists now is really great," said Laura.

She still recalls the exact moment the new hospital began operating because she "was the receiving nurse on C unit and took in the very first ER admission on the medical floor. I'll never forget that," she said, adding how she has always loved caring for the medical patients. Today she works in Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics.

Laura's toughest challenge was adapting to Ruby, our electronic health record system. "Learning that almost did me in," she quipped. As for other changes along the way Laura said, "We used to do all the drug calculations by hand, started the pre-op work the night before, took all of a patient's vitals, and we even used glass bottles for IVs."

Laura fondly remembers Mrs. Lane, Joan Miller and Barbara Stepura, having had each as a nursing supervisor. "I've always loved the people. It's been such a privilege working here," she said. "It's a great place."

