



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.



At one time, Tim Abell in Plant Operations knew every single person who worked at the hospital and exactly what vehicle they drove. "Everyone knew each other back then," said Tim, who started as a weekend security guard in January 1984, shortly before moving to the "new" St. Mary's Hospital. "It was a smaller place back then. We had one security guard who worked weekdays from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. That was it. I worked the same shift on weekends."

Tim became security supervisor soon after the move. During his 14 years with security, he helped grow the staff to nine people and three shifts for 24-hour coverage. Tim and several co-workers attended the public safety training facility in LaPlata, Md., the same as recruits within the Sheriff's Department.

It was 1984 when Tim interviewed with Mike Kesting, then the director of security. Tim remembers that day vividly. There was a significant snowstorm in the area for several days prior to Tim's interview and the hospital's maintenance crew had been working 36 hours straight to maintain access and keep parking spots clear. "When I walked into security in the morning, John Williams was asleep on the couch in Mike's office. He hadn't been home since the storm hit." During Tim's interview, John rolled over and told Tim and Mike to "tone it down." Mike offered Tim a position on the spot. Tim has also been involved in some way with every expansion and structural change in the "new" building ever since, relocating to the maintenance department in 1998.

The two-time SPIRIT [formerly Care] Award recipient said, "It's the people that make St. Mary's. One of the main reasons I've stayed is because of the people. Within 'plant' we may sometimes argue among ourselves but we really enjoy working together and that makes a big difference."

Tim remembers a time when the pace was slower than present day. "Maintenance started preparations for the hospital picnic early and had the time to slow roast a whole pig," he said. He also recalled the tradition of several people from different departments getting together annually to craft the decorations used to decorate the hospital for the holidays. In maintenance, "sometimes we would scald oysters in the shop and have them for lunch." Word soon got out and Peter Lambert, hospital administrator at the time, would join them for the meal.

"It's all about the people," said Tim. His wife, Maureen, who works in Patient Registration, must agree. She received her 25-year service award in May 2012.