

'We did it!'

Employees make Move Day a Success

Opal Glenn, age 66, and the first patient to occupy a room in the new University Hospital, relished the view of North Campus from her sixth floor window and the attention she received from photographers.

Jenny James, director of Surgical Nursing, surveyed empty rooms after the last Medical/Surgical patient moved and savored a moment to reminisce about Old Main. "I feel like I'm leaving a grand old lady," she said, "who belongs to the past. Yet there are so many good memories these walls will hold."

And John Forsyth, Hospitals executive director, noted, "There's an electricity in the air—a different kind of excitement. This just shows what two years of planning for a one-day event will do. Employees, I'm sure, are tired, but you wouldn't recognize it. Everyone performed as a team."

On Move Day, Feb. 14, in just five hours, 403 patients were wheeled through the glassed-in passageway connecting the old hospital with the new, a journey of less than a quarter of a mile, but one which represented the efforts of hundreds of employees, including 200 Move Day volunteers.

"Patients are coming by at the rate of one a minute," said Gary Calhoun, associate director of M/W/H and the Psychiatric Hospitals, who acted as unofficial "counter" at the intersection between Main and the old Outpatient Building. "I was just assigned here, but it was a great stroke of luck," he said of his "bird's-eye view" seat. He cheerfully announced to each patient and the employees transporting them which number they held in the procession. Some patients waved, a few solemnly repeated the number to use in future lottery plays, some gave a "thumbs up," and some, like one middle-aged woman with a giant Easter bunny dangling over her bed, simply smiled.

"I haven't gotten bored yet," said patient transporter Martha Ware, "even though I've pushed 14 patients and we follow the same path every time. One



"She was tickled pink to be the first patient to move," said Opal Glenn's nurses, Mary Proctor (left) and Karen Jacobus. Glenn, an Intensive Care patient from Detroit, had been feeling down after several months in the old hospital, but perked up, her nurses said, when she saw her shining new room and the view of North Campus from her window.

lady had 12 bouquets of flowers—we had to use four stretchers and wheelchairs to transport her and her flower shop. And I had to ask another patient to take down her balloons because I couldn't see where I was going. But the expression on patients' faces when they reach their new rooms is worth it."

In the midst of ringing telephones and urgent questions from staff,

Mayble Craig, director of Medical Nursing and chairman of the Patient Move Task Force, looked to the future. "I'm looking forward, after the move, to seeing how the new equipment and convenience features of the new hospital affect our nursing—and our patients," she said. "The planning that went into that place is going to result in simple improvements that mean so much to nurses and the care they can deliver. Little details like getting food to patients while it's still hot, computers to keep track of information, phones by each bedside so patients don't have to wait 10 deep in the hall and hot showers in the rooms... When patients are more comfortable, nurses are more comfortable, too."

Esther Archambeau, the last Medical/Surgical patient to leave the Hospital, wholeheartedly agreed, though she admitted she was more nervous about the media attention and her interview with TV reporter Tom Marshall than she had been about her knee surgery.

"I was here 53 years ago for back surgery," she said, "and I'm anxious to see what the new place is like." Leaving a totally empty ward behind her, Archambeau smiled as the nurses on 5th floor AGH applauded her arrival. "I really like all these windows," she said. "This doesn't look anything like the hospital I just left. I'm just glad my stay here was delayed so I got to see this happen. You have a beautiful hospital here and a lot to be proud of."

"We were surprised. After all that planning, the one thing we didn't plan for was being so far ahead of schedule."

said Jenny James. "We got to some floors, in fact, before they were ready—one of the units hadn't even packed up their patients yet. It worked; everything went smoothly because the administrative team coordinated it and everyone did their part."

The patient move was the most visible symbol of an intricate, interdependent transfer of boxes, equipment, records, paper and employees, that began in mid-November and will continue through mid-March. John Gilgallon, assistant activation administrator, offered some statistics. "Beginning Thursday before the patient move, we carried approximately 480 truckloads of equipment—six loads an hour, 150 boxes per load," he said. "By March, when everything will have been moved, we'll have used a total of 120,000 boxes. The hardest item to move was a smack blood analyzer, a computerized piece of equipment with hundreds of feet of glass tubing. For Medical Records, we moved 400,000 volumes, and it took 23 hours."

"I'm proud of how everyone has cooperated throughout a very trying period," said John Forsyth. "Employees were 100 percent behind the leadership on this move. They volunteered to work on major tasks outside their usual job descriptions, and they worked together. I hope that employees can carry the positive attitudes, the enthusiasm they showed to patients and the public and the camaraderie they shared with each other, into the new building and on through the years ahead. That's what I mean when I talk about electricity, a momentum for the future."



The last surgical patient to leave Old Main, Esther Archambeau was accompanied by transporters and reporters. "I was more nervous about my interview with Channel 4 than I was about my surgery," she said. "I'm glad my stay here was delayed so I could see the new hospital—it's beautiful."