



The *Great* Canadian
Catholic Hospital History Project

Documenting the legacy and contribution of the
Congregations of Religious Women in Canada,
their mission in health care, and the founding and operation of Catholic hospitals.



Projet de la *Grande* Histoire
des hôpitaux catholiques au Canada

Retracer l'héritage et la contribution des
congrégations de religieuses au Canada,
leur mission en matière de soins de santé ainsi que la fondation et l'exploitation des hôpitaux catholiques.

**Great Beginnings
The First 50 Years of Caring at
Hotel Dieu Hospital
St. Catharines**

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St. Joseph Region Archives

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Great Beginnings

The First
50 Years of
Caring at
Hotel Dieu
Hospital
St. Catharines

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Hotel Dieu Hospital, St. Catharines
gratefully acknowledges
the generous support
of



*The Diocese of
St. Catharines*



Acknowledgements

Hotel Dieu Hospital extends its deep appreciation to

Kathryn Korchok

who wrote and assisted with the research for this 50th Anniversary book.

Thanks also to the following people for help with Great Beginnings: Sister Sheila Boase, Louis J. Cahill, Sister Patricia Cuddihy, Sister Louise Dillon, Robert Edgar, Sister Loretta Gaffney, Jan Kasperski, Irene Langley, Rick Mauro, Darrell Neufeld, Lyn Russo, Danté Sicoli, Bill Towill, George Upper, Bob Tymczyszyn, Andrew Klapatiuk, Denis Cahill; to The St. Catharines Standard and the St. Catharines Museum for the use of archival photographs.

A special thank you to all those who offered photographs, documents, correspondence and other material for use in this book, and those who were personally interviewed. Space, unfortunately, does not allow us to name all these generous and co-operative people who have made this book possible, but we are indebted to all. We want to recognize and congratulate each and every member of the present and former staff and the many volunteers for their contribution to the ongoing betterment of Hotel Dieu Hospital and to the people we have cared for during the past 50 years.

Preface

Our goal in writing *Great Beginnings* was to create an attractive, entertaining, commemorative book that highlights the major developments and achievements of Hotel Dieu Hospital. Our greatest challenge was distilling vast amounts of information into an easily-read book that would still convey the deep sense of mission and dedication of the many individuals who contributed to the development and growth of Hotel Dieu Hospital, St. Catharines.

While we have attempted to be as thorough as possible, it was simply impossible to include numerous detailed facts and background and still meet our goal of keeping the publication to 64 pages. For those looking for a more detailed account of the early history, copies of our publication, *The Hotel Dieu: from the dream in 1944 to the end of an era in 1980*, are still available. We are indebted to the writers of this book, which served as a key resource for *Great Beginnings*, and to the many people who shared their interesting stories with us.

We hope you enjoy reading this very special book as much as we enjoyed producing it.

The Book Committee



Congratulatory Messages



The 50th anniversary of the founding of Hotel Dieu Hospital in St. Catharines is an auspicious occasion for celebration—a time to thank God for His blessings on this health care facility and to thank the Sisters, the board members, the medical staff and all who are associ-

ated with this wonderful institution. The people of St. Catharines and the Niagara Region have benefited immensely from the services which the hospital has rendered and where care and compassion, expertise and efficiency have made the healing ministry of Christ a reality in our community.

(Most Rev.) **John A. O'Mara, D.D.**
Bishop of St. Catharines



We offer congratulations and prayers of thanksgiving for all who have served the mission of Hotel Dieu, St. Catharines since 1948. Many, from all walks of life, have shared the responsibility for what has been accomplished. The newborn, the sick and their loved ones have been well served with love, care and compassion. Courage, faith and hope inspired our past, and encourage us and our collaborators for future challenges. God bless our continuing journey.

Sister Anne Russell, R.H.S.J.
Provincial Superior, St. Joseph Province
Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph



The historic milestone of 50 years of service is an opportunity to recognize and thank all those who have contributed their time, talents and resources to making Hotel Dieu such a special part of our community. We pay a special tribute to the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, who, half a century ago, founded Hotel Dieu out of a spirit of compassion for those in need. Their vision, hard work and dedication, so wonderfully described in the following pages, continues to inspire all of us fortunate enough to be associated with this great institution.

Sean Jackson, Chair
Board of Trustees



On behalf of the Regional Municipality of Niagara and all of our citizens, we extend heartfelt congratulations on Hotel Dieu Hospital's 50th anniversary. Many of our citizens, from Grimsby to Fort Erie, have benefited from the services that Hotel Dieu has provided. As we look back on the past 50 years, we do so with much pride and a sincere appreciation for the exceptional care and dedication you have given Niagara.

Debbie M. Zimmerman, Chair
Regional Municipality of Niagara



The City of St. Catharines is proud of its long and productive involvement with Hotel Dieu Hospital. From humble beginnings as a small maternity hospital in 1948, to its current role as an acute care centre of excellence, Hotel Dieu has provided 50 years of quality, compassionate care not only to the citizens of St. Catharines but to the residents of, and visitors to, the Niagara Peninsula. On behalf of my colleagues on Council and the citizens of our Garden City of Canada, I commend the many, many, caring and thoughtful people who have contributed to the success of our Hotel Dieu Hospital.

Timothy H. Rigby, Mayor
City of St. Catharines



On behalf of the residents of the City of Thorold, I would like to extend our congratulations to the Hotel Dieu Hospital on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of serving our community. The Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph of the Hotel Dieu of St. Catharines should be proud of their success and growth over the first half century. We wish you continued success in the future.

Tim Kenny, Mayor
City of Thorold



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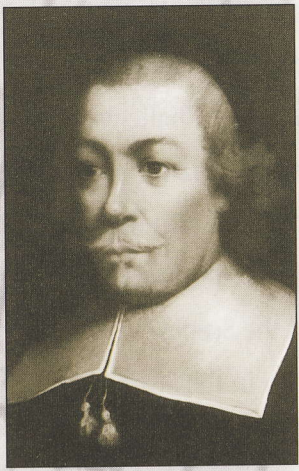
Medical Advisory Committee - 1998

Dr. Lawrence Lam, Anaesthesia; Dr. Dennis Nazar, Diagnostic Imaging; Dr. Valerie Bayley, Family Physicians; Dr. Fraser MacKay, Emergency Services; Dr. Keith Oliveira, Laboratory Medicine; Dr. Henry DeSouza, Chief of Medical Services; Dr. Ronald Casselman, Acting Chief of Surgical Services; Dr. Walter Romatowski, Medical Staff President; Dr. Gerald Scaife, Medical Staff Vice-President; Dr. Santina Malaguti, Medical Staff Secretary/Treasurer and Dr. John Luce, Chief of Staff.



Hotel Dieu Hospital, St. Catharines Board of Trustees - 1998

Back row, from the left, St. Catharines Mayor Tim Rigby, Dr. John Luce, Mr. Patrick J. Darte, Mr. Max Kaminsky, Mr. James Fife, Bishop John O'Mara. Second row, from the left, Mrs. Bernice Pearson, Dr. Walter Romatowski, Mr. Wasi Naz, Mr. Peter Horne, Mr. Joe O'Brien, Executive Director Mr. Frank Vetrano, Mrs. Mary Britt. Front row, from the left, Sister Kathleen Keevil, RHSJ; Mrs. Eleanor Lancaster, Second Vice-Chair; Sean Jackson, Chair; Tom Quinlan, First Vice-Chair; Sister Patricia Cuddihy, RHSJ and Sister Evelyn Leonard, RHSJ. Absent are Mr. Michael Carty, Mr. Harry Daniel, Thorold Councillor James Handley, Mr. Ian Hennessy, Mr. David Jukes, Mr. Ivan Kaye, Trustee Emeritus; Thorold Mayor Tim Kenny, Mr. Michael Plentai, Sister Ferne Rideout, RHSJ; Dr. Gerald Scaife, Mrs. Joan Smith and Mr. George Stauffer, Honorary Chairman.



Jerome Le Royer



Marie de la Ferre



Jeanne Mance

Jerome Le Royer de la Dauversière blesses Judith de Bresoles as she departs for Canada in 1659 to serve as the first Superior of the Hotel Dieu Hospital, Montreal. Marguerite Bourgeoy stands behind Jerome and Jeanne Mance stands in front.

The Roots of the Hotel Dieu

The roots of the St. Catharines Hotel Dieu Hospital stretch back in time to 1630, and the religious vision of a 33-year-old Frenchman, Jerome Le Royer de la Dauversière. While deep in prayer, de la Dauversière felt God directing him to fulfil an ambitious plan — to found a congregation of Religious Hospitallers honouring St. Joseph and the Holy Family, to colonize the Island of Montreal in the New World, and to establish a hospital there.

Despite overwhelming odds, he succeeded with the help of several prominent women who devoted their money and time to his vision. One of these women was Marie de la Ferre, a prominent socialite who, at age 42, entered the religious life and helped form the Congregation of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph in 1636. She was elected as its first Superior.

Madame de Bullion, the wealthy widow of the Superintendent of Finances for King Louis XIII anonymously provided the money to build a hospital on the Island of Montreal (then called Ville Marie). Another prosperous woman, Jeanne Mance, left her comfortable life to run the hospital and, in 1642, founded the first Hotel Dieu of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph in Canada and became the first Catholic lay nurse in North America. Mance recruited three Religious Hospitallers and several other colonists, who, along with Marguerite Bourgeoys, foundress of the Congregation of Notre Dame, helped settle the new community. Unfortunately, la Dauversière did not live long enough to see

the final part of the mission completed. He died on November 6, 1659, just as the first three Hospitallers were arriving at Ville Marie to begin fulfilling the dream.

In 1845, several French-speaking Hospitallers established a Hotel Dieu Hospital in the Loyalist stronghold of Kingston, Ontario. In 1888, a Hotel Dieu was opened in Windsor and another in Cornwall in 1897. St. Catharines would become part of this tradition, but not for another 51 years.

We, the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, are called to live the liberty of the children of God as women of faith incarnating Christ's tender compassion in serving His members, especially the poor, the sick and the most needy in union of charity.





Senator J. Joseph Bench, a St. Catharines lawyer who gained national prominence, was an ardent supporter of establishing a second hospital for the city. His death at age 42, one year before the original Maternity Hospital opened, shocked the community.

James Cardinal McGuigan was instrumental in the development of the Hotel Dieu Hospital, offering financial, organizational and spiritual aid to the founding Sisters.

Courtesy of the R. C. Archdiocese of Toronto



A great friend of Senator Bench, the Right Reverend Michael Cullinane's outstanding leadership made him a natural choice to spearhead the movement for Hotel Dieu Hospital.



Laying the Groundwork

By 1944, the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph were well established with a number of hospitals in Canada and the upper United States. The city of St. Catharines was experiencing the benefits and frustrations of the post-Second World War boom — from industrial expansion and a population explosion to the companion problems of housing shortages and inadequate health care facilities to meet growing community demands. The St. Catharines General Hospital had served the local population well since 1865, but was becoming increasingly overcrowded.

Senator J. Joseph Bench, a prominent Canadian lawyer, and Dean Michael Cullinane, pastor of St. Catherine of Alexandria Church and Dean of the Niagara Deanery of the Catholic Church, formed a team to establish a second hospital for the city, one that would reflect its large Catholic population. They sought the advice and permission of Toronto's Archbishop James Cardinal McGuigan, who wanted to establish a diocese in the Niagara area. One of the requisites was the founding of a Catholic school or hospital, so he was enthusiastic.

Because of their excellent credentials, Dean Cullinane asked Kingston's Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph to help plan, build and run the new hospital. The Order sent a group of Sisters to St. Catharines in the fall of 1944 to investigate the idea. During their visit, local physician Dr. Dean Macdonald, son of the mayor, Dr. William J. Macdonald, hosted the first official meeting to discuss a

second hospital for St. Catharines, and the wheels began to turn. Eleven months later, Archbishop McGuigan committed \$250,000 to build a 100-bed hospital in St. Catharines and the Hospitallers community in Kingston voted to accept the mission and gave their official approval on September 27, 1945, one year after first being approached by Dean Cullinane.

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Hotel Dieu's founding Sisters – Mother Mary Immaculate Kennedy RHSJ (seated), with Sister Veronica Callaghan RHSJ (left), and Sister St. Catherine Brennan RHSJ.



Dean Michael Cullinane



Mother Mary Immaculate and Sister St. Catherine arrive in St. Catharines on October 7, 1945. Removing their luggage from the car is Dean Michael Cullinane. The scene is near the site of the present-day Centennial Library on Church Street. Sister Callaghan took the photograph.

Accepting the Challenge

Who would take on this immense challenge? The Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph had plenty of volunteers, but the Order voted on their candidates and elected three experienced Sisters to help turn this ambitious plan into reality.

Sister Mary Immaculate, born in 1893 as Sarah Kathleen Kennedy, was a 52-year-old nun who had been Bursar's Assistant, Bursar, Director of the School of Nursing and Operating Room Supervisor at Kingston's Hotel Dieu Hospital. She was named Superior of the new community and would become the hospital's first administrator. Sister St. Catherine Brennan was a 44-year-old teacher, registered nurse and laboratory technologist who had been Chief Laboratory Technologist at the Kingston Hotel Dieu for 15 years. She would serve as the hospital's Bursar. Sister Veronica Callaghan, a 33-year-old registered nurse, was the Night Supervisor and X-ray Technician at Kingston who had also supervised the Maternity Unit for seven years. She was the third member of the team.

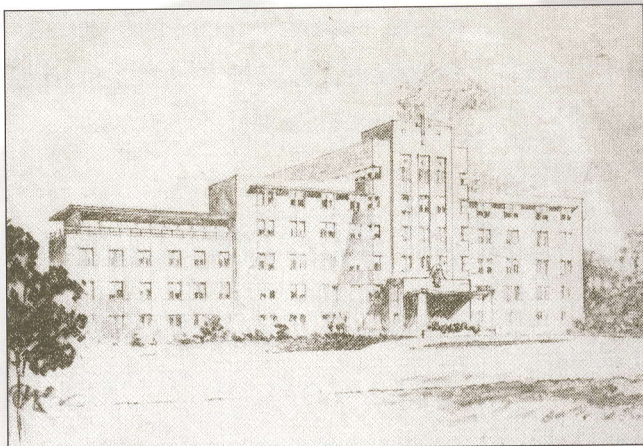
The trio visited St. Catharines on October 7, 1945, a lovely fall day. When they arrived a month later to begin their work in earnest, a blinding snowstorm marked the occasion and may have foreshadowed the difficult task ahead. Their first setback occurred during talks about the proposed hospital, when representatives from the Pigott Construction Company insisted a 100-bed hospital could not be built for less than \$500,000 — twice the amount pledged by Archbishop McGuigan.

The Sisters, with Senator Bench's support, were firm in their resolve to build a 100-bed facility. They returned to Kingston to await the Archbishop's decision on how, and if, the project should proceed. Ten long days passed. Finally, in the second week of December 1945, the Archbishop telephoned. What would he say?

The trio visited St. Catharines on October 7, 1945. When they arrived a month later to begin their work in earnest, a blinding snowstorm marked the occasion and may have foreshadowed the difficult task ahead. Their first setback was the rising cost of building a 100-bed hospital.



Sketch of the original plan for Hotel Dieu as it appeared in the St. Catharines Standard — a five-storey, modern hospital. The plan was later altered, removing the left wing and the roof-top garden.



Architect
Chester C. Woods

The property on which the Leonard St. John apartments stood was donated by John Conroy to make room for Hotel Dieu Hospital.



Brad LaFrance, Hotel Dieu's Director of Environmental Services, examines 1946 preliminary architectural drawings of Hotel Dieu Hospital by Chester Woods.

Courtesy of the St. Catharines Museum, Blueprint 4020.



The Original Plans

The news was mixed. The Sisters could proceed with plans for a 100-bed hospital, but the Archbishop would only commit \$250,000 (half of which would be a loan, the other half a gift) as originally promised. The Sisters would have to find the extra funding themselves.

Senator Bench organized a citizens' group to help raise the money. They also sponsored an American research team to study the local hospital situation. The report from the Greater Cleveland General Hospital Foundation concluded it would be a mistake to pour more money into the St. Catharines General Hospital, and recommended building a second hospital, preferably a Catholic facility to reflect the city's substantial (46 per cent) Catholic population. Their findings simply confirmed all previous efforts.

In the meantime, Dean Cullinane was scouting a possible hospital site. A few months earlier, he had asked John Conroy, owner of the Conroy Manufacturing Company, if he'd consider selling his property on Ontario Street. Mr. Conroy made an interesting counter-offer. He wouldn't sell it, but he would donate it — on the condition that the new hospital could be built by 1950.

Encouraged, the Sisters told the construction company to begin drawing the plans and apply for the necessary building permits. On January 20, 1946, they presented their petition for incorporation to the Ontario Legislature and in February, the building plans were submitted to the City of St. Catharines. The plans showed a 100-bed

facility with administration, kitchen, dining room services, operating rooms and all other ancillary facilities designed large enough to accommodate a possible expansion of 50 per cent. With an eye to the future, the work seemed to be underway. But it would still take seven more years before the dream would metamorphose into actual brick, mortar and glass.

En route to Kingston in 1945, Dean Cullinane stopped in Oshawa where he met John Conroy in a hotel lobby. Their conversation proved fruitful when the St. Catharines businessman offered to donate the land on which a new hospital would be built.





Monsignor Alfred E. McQuillen took an active role in the creation of Hotel Dieu Hospital, St. Catharines. It was at his urging that the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph decided to start on the smaller scale of a maternity hospital.



An outstanding community and business leader, Harry J. Carmichael served as Hotel Dieu Hospital's first Advisory Board Chairman, a position he held until 1968. The Carmichael Wing was named in his honour, and in recognition of his strong leadership and impressive accomplishments throughout his involvement.



The Long and Winding Road

Most of 1946 was dominated by legal procedures, zoning discrepancies, building regulations, financing, planning, revisions and acquiring property. It would take six months for the city of St. Catharines to finally issue the building permit (on August 15, 1946), and the Sisters grew frustrated with the bureaucracy. Project delays and rising costs became added burdens.

In November, Dean Cullinane was transferred to St. Cecilia's Parish in Toronto and more than 1,000 well-wishers attended his farewell gathering, paying tribute to the man who helped spearhead the hospital drive. His successor, Dean Alfred E. McQuillan, embraced the hospital project but would steer it in a new direction.

As plans for a second hospital became public knowledge, opposition arose from some local citizens and supporters of the General Hospital's own expansion bid. The community would be divided on this controversial issue for many years to come.

In December, Senator Bench tried to heal the rift by forming a citizens' Advisory Board. The group was composed of Catholic and non-Catholic members in an effort to reflect a non-denominational image, gain wider public support and co-operate with the General Hospital. With his national stature, political connections and financial know-how, Harry Carmichael, president of McKinnon Industries, and later vice president and general manager of General Motors Canada, was elected chairman of the Advisory Board, a position he held until 1968. His

influence was felt immediately as he organized council submissions, joint meetings with the General Hospital Board of Governors and community presentations — preparation for the upcoming fight for public funding.

*Influential
businessman
Harry Carmichael
was elected
chairman of the
Advisory Board, and
worked hard to
ensure the Hotel
Dieu was ready to
win the public's con-
fidence, clear the
political hurdles and
become a reality.*





Hamilton K. Woodruff had the Woodruff Mansion built for his wife between 1904 and 1906. Mr. Woodruff (1857 - 1932) was St. Catharines Deputy Registrar and a member of the local Water Works Commission for 32 years. He was renowned for his philanthropic support of local youth.



Woodruff Mansion,
168 Ontario Street.

The Birth of the Maternity Hospital

The Sisters were starting to worry whether the hospital would ever come to fruition. With so many roadblocks and delays, Dean McQuillan suggested they start small and asked the Sisters to consider founding a maternity hospital first. That would give them a chance to earn a living, become part of the community and establish their reputation.

Mother Mary Immaculate Kennedy, Sister St. Catherine Brennan and Sister Veronica Callaghan had come so far, and worked so hard. They refused to abandon their dream, and found it difficult to compromise on the original plan for a full-scale, modern 100-bed hospital. They had recently taken up residence in the Dawson home (located where the Hotel Dieu's emergency driveway is now) and they certainly couldn't imagine caring for patients there. The building was too small and run down, and needed extensive upgrading.

But delays and disappointments wore down their resolve and the Sisters reached a decision. If they could acquire a suitable location for the maternity hospital, such as the Woodruff Mansion across the street, they would agree. Delighted, Dean McQuillan and Senator Bench worked behind the scenes as the Sisters attended a summer retreat in Kingston.

The day the retreat was over, the Sisters received a message — return to St. Catharines. Your key to the Woodruff Mansion is waiting. Thrilled, the trio hurried back to the city to inspect their new property,

running from room to room and envisioning the renovations that would turn this lovely home into an efficient, comfortable and charming maternity unit. Even though the hospital project had been scaled down, the Sisters were enthusiastic. At least now they could start providing medical care for people, and that was a positive step forward.

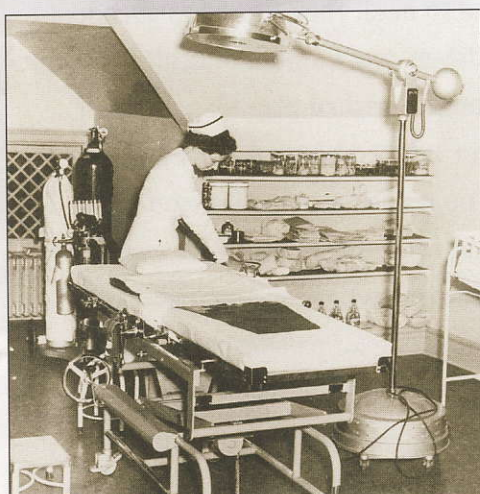
"It was exciting dashing through the four storeys of that building finding a place for the delivery room, a labour room, utility and sterilizing room, laboratory, office, kitchen, staff dining room, laundry, nursery and, of course, the patients, who would all be located on the second floor," Mother Mary Immaculate later recalled. "Mrs. Woodruff's master bedroom would accommodate eight ward beds."

On September 15, 1947, the sale of the Woodruff property was official. At long last, the Sisters' efforts in establishing a second hospital in St. Catharines were beginning to see the light of day. Sadly, Senator Bench died on December 9, 1947 without seeing the culmination of his dreams and efforts. He was only 42 years old, had been married less than two years and had just become a father two months earlier. The partner who conceived the project with Dean Cullinane would be missed.





The Maternity Hospital's first lay nurse, Mary Sweeney Woods, holds the hospital's first baby girl, Terry Kirkpatrick, born to Mrs. Anne Kirkpatrick.



The Maternity Hospital's operating and delivery room was located on the third floor of the renovated Woodruff Mansion.



Dr. Hugh Langley and infant son John with Sister St. Catherine Brennan and Sister Veronica Callaghan.

Behind the Scenes

From the purchase date to its official opening 13 months later, on October 3, 1948, the Sisters worked feverishly to prepare the 29-bed Maternity Hospital for its first patients.

The Woodruff Mansion was well-suited to its new purpose, and the cost to renovate and equip the building was reasonable, about \$125,000. One of the biggest expenses, at \$25,000, was the installation of an outside elevator and a dumb-waiter to transport food trays from the kitchen to the patients' rooms. The plan was to eventually have all the equipment moved to the new Hotel Dieu Hospital once it was built. The Maternity Hospital was the starting point.

The hospital's first patient was Mrs. John Coon of Henrietta Street. Sister Callaghan and Dr. Gwen Weaver delivered the first baby, John Kenneth Cowling, on October 6, 1948, to Margaret Cowling. The first baby girl was Terry Kirkpatrick, born October 8, 1948, to Anne Kirkpatrick. About 70 new babies arrived each month. But sometimes, as many as 130 babies a month kept the bassinets full and the nursing staff hopping.

One day, the Maternity Hospital was jammed with patients. All the beds were full, extra cots in the corridors were occupied, and even a cot in the doctors' lounge had a patient in it. A very expectant mother showed up at the front door, but there was no room for her. Sister Callaghan, in her kindness, offered the woman a chair in which to sit and another on which to rest her tired feet. But the chair arrangement didn't last long — she

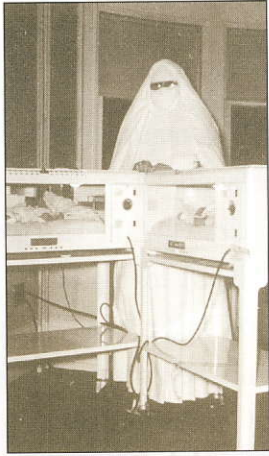
gave birth before any of the others who had been waiting.

Another time, a woman was in the advanced stages of labour when the doctor arrived, smoking a cigarette. The lady gasped, "oh, doctor, what I'd give for a puff." Whereupon the good doctor handed her his cigarette, so she could have a smoke before delivering her baby. How times have changed!

One Christmas Eve, a mother was in labour and the Sisters on duty wanted to attend Midnight Mass, but were loathe to leave her. They finally implored her to wait, and went to attend the church service. The woman reported later, "I obliged, and gave birth to my daughter at 1:15 in the morning with both nuns present. They wanted to name her Carol, but I decided on Christine, in honour of the occasion."

Many of its patients recalled the Maternity Hospital with fondness, and Sister Callaghan with extra affection, comparing her to an angel. She was like a mother to everyone, a caring and kind soul who exemplified the spirit of the Religious Hospitallers and their work, a spirit that carried on when the Hotel Dieu was finally opened and all maternity care transferred across the street. In its five years of existence, nearly 5,000 babies were born in the former Woodruff Mansion-turned-Maternity Hospital.





Sister St. Catherine and her beloved preemies.



First patients of the Maternity Hospital, October 1948.



Sister Margaret Mary, August 1951, in the kitchen she so competently ran.



Third-year nursing student, Doreen Corbin, tends to newborns in 1951.

A Beacon in the Storm

Meanwhile, Harry Carmichael prepared the Hotel Dieu's submission to St. Catharines city council to receive public funding. The Standard endorsed the General's expansion proposal and opposed the Hotel Dieu's building plans. The community was torn and municipal council decided to resolve the issue with a city-wide referendum on January 1, 1949.

That day brought one of the worst snowstorms of the winter and, much to everyone's surprise, a large voter turnout at the polls. Mother Mary Immaculate and the other Religious Hospitallers were huddled around a radio (borrowed from one of the patients), awaiting the results. Before the outcome was broadcast, Harry Carmichael heard the verdict at election headquarters. Knowing how anxious the Sisters were for the news, he braved the elements and headed for the maternity building. With snow swirling outside and the warmth of the hospital blasting his face as he opened the door, he burst in with the announcement, "victory is ours!"

In fact, victory was assured all around because the electorate voted to publicly support both hospital ventures and an editorial in the Monday, January 3 edition of The Standard applauded the community in passing both by-laws.

When the euphoria passed, reality set in. Two years had passed since discussions for a second hospital had first surfaced, and costs had risen dramatically. What had started as a \$250,000 dream turned into a \$500,000

quote. By 1949, the price tag had reached \$2.5 million, and community fund-raising began in earnest.

Reprint of Standard Editorial - January 1949

A FINE RECORD

Under paralyzing weather conditions on Saturday, New Year's Day, the ratepayers of St. Catharines established a new record which will stand for a long time, and it is doubtful if such a record could be equalled by any other city of similar size in Canada. Having regard to the weather, St. Catharines carried two large and important hospital money bylaws. If only one project had been presented, it would have been highly creditable in way of public spirit to have given approval, but to have carried two, one for the rehabilitation of the General Hospital and one for the building of the new Hotel Dieu, is indeed something very notable in the history of this community. It is a reflection of a civic conscience of the highest order; a reflection of the will of St. Catharines people to guarantee the necessary things for progress, and a reflection, too, of loyalty to the community and its due welfare.

Naturally, this public spirit referred to required regimentation and presentation of the facts. It required high organization ability on the part of the sponsors of both projects. And with the weather descending as it did to blanket the city and block the roads, there was the requirement of valiant courage and persistence all during the long storm hours to get the vote out. Well, they did it and it was a grand day's work for St. Catharines, one of the biggest things in municipal election history. Congratulations are in order for every hospital worker, and there is no doubt whatever that the high promise of hospital service in the years to come will be fully implemented. And that means a tremendous lot to the community health.

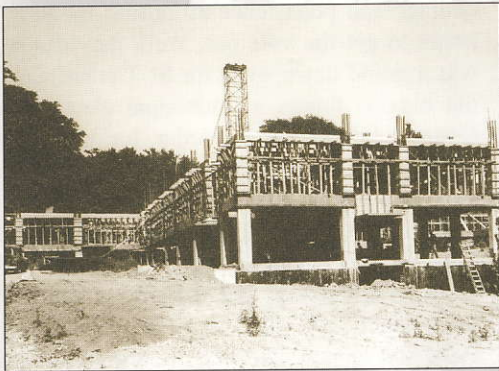
It is difficult to put the proper stress on the importance of the two hospital measures. Posterity, indeed, will benefit, and the community as a whole will be outstanding for the services to be rendered here by the two institutions, the General Hospital and the Hotel Dieu.



A steel shortage slowed construction of the hospital, but by August 1951, that had been overcome and the completion goal was the end of 1952.



James Cardinal McGuigan lays the cornerstone of Hotel Dieu Hospital, May 18, 1952.



Hostel of God

The United Hospitals Campaign Week of November 1949, kicked off the official public fund-raising drive to finance construction costs for both hospitals. The goal was \$635,000. Community support was enthusiastic and, after only one week, the drive was halfway to its goal. More than 2,000 individual and corporate donors responded — even the students of St. Catharines Collegiate got into the act with a Hallway of Dimes promotion, encouraging anyone who entered the school to add to the winding trail of coins in the corridors. When the campaign ended, the tally was \$755,901.

By July, 1950, construction of the Hotel Dieu began. The Ontario Construction Company's tender of \$43,754 was accepted for excavating and laying the foundation, and the Moir Construction Company was awarded the building contract for an estimated cost of \$772,000.

The Advisory Board launched another fund-raising drive in April, 1952, to raise money for hospital furnishings and equipment. The successful campaign brought in \$331,798.

The cornerstone was laid on Sunday, May 18, 1952. The date marked the anniversary of Jeanne Mance's arrival in Montreal 310 years earlier, linking the past with the present. Cardinal McGuigan, who had originally given his permission to build a hospital founded on religious principles, addressed more than 1,000 people in attendance.

"While the church is primarily concerned with the soul of man, it is keenly interested in the body physical, also," he said,

reminding them that the translation of the hospital's name meant Hostel of God. Placing the cornerstone, in which a box of mementoes was sealed for posterity, he praised the founders of the hospital, including the Sisters, Senator Bench and Michael Cullinane, who had become a Monsignor.

Unfortunately, Monsignor Cullinane died on March 27, 1953, six months before the official opening of the hospital. Neither men involved in spearheading the project lived to see its completion.

Contents of the Cornerstone Box

One of each of the Canadian Coins presently in circulation consisting of Silver Dollar, Fifty Cent Piece, Twenty-Five Cent Piece, Ten Cent Piece, Five Cent Piece and One Cent Piece.

Copy of the Evening Standard, Saturday, May 17th, 1952.

History of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph of Hotel Dieu, and Souvenir of the First Centenary in 1945 of the Hotel Dieu Hospital at Kingston, Ontario.

Pamphlet used in the campaign for the approval by the voters of the City of St. Catharines of the Hospital By-law.

Pamphlet used in the United Hospitals Campaign.

Copies of By-laws and Agreements between the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph and the City of St. Catharines and the County of Lincoln.

Report of the Hotel Dieu Maternity Hospital.

Photograph of the Hotel Dieu Maternity Hospital.

Two photographs of the Hotel Dieu Hospital.

Copy of the programme of today's proceedings.

Religious articles.

Names of the original members of the advisory board.

List of important dates in the organization of the Hotel Dieu Hospital in St. Catharines.





Hotel Dieu Hospital is officially opened on September 10, 1953, a beautiful late summer day.



George Stauffer, left, chairman of the building committee, presents the official ribbon-cutting scissors to Federal Health Minister Paul Martin Sr.



The opening-day crowd filled the hospital's front lawn.



James Cardinal McGuigan arriving at Hotel Dieu Hospital for the official opening ceremonies and blessing of the building, the 20th Hotel Dieu Hospital in Canada.



The Hospital Opens at Last

It was a perfect day for a celebration. On a pleasant, late summer afternoon of September 10, 1953, federal health minister Paul Martin cut the ribbon to officially open the 125-bed Hotel Dieu Hospital of St. Catharines. Ontario's health minister Dr. McKinnon Phillips delivered the main address, effectively giving the province's stamp of approval to the hospital. It had been more than nine years since the Religious Hospitallers were first asked to consider taking this mission. Nine years of love, toil, energy and passion had been expended and now, the dream had come true.

The building was constructed on a 10-floor plan, with six levels visible from the front entrance on Ontario Street and the other four levels at the rear stepped down the hillside towards the old Welland Canal section of the Twelve Mile Creek. The hospital facilities not only included a chapel, but a clergy room for representatives of all faiths. This had been the brainchild of Mother Mary Immaculate, ahead of her time with her inclusive thinking.

The hospital staff included 10 Sisters and 65 lay nurses. The first medical patient was Father William O'Brien, assistant priest at St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish, and the first surgical patient was Sister St. Margaret Mary Hunt.

Six days after the official opening ceremonies, the patients of the Maternity Hospital — 24 mothers and 27 babies — were transferred across the street to the new building under the watchful care of the local

fire department, ambulance attendants and orderlies and supervised, naturally, by Mother Mary Immaculate. The last baby born at the Maternity Hospital was Cathy Darte, daughter of Mary Darte. The last patient to leave was Audrey Ash with her daughter Ruth Ann, delivered by Caesarian section on September 14, 1953 by Dr. Wood. The first baby born in the new Hotel Dieu Hospital was a son to Mary Davidson. In delivering the child, Dr. D. A. E. Conley marked the beginning of a new era in hospital care and closed the chapter on the Maternity Hospital and its unique contribution to the city's life and history.

Hotel Dieu Advisory Board

1953

Chairman - H.J. Carmichael, C.M.G.

Vice Chairman - H.G. Fox, Q.C., Litt. D.

Secretary - Doran Hallett

Rt. Rev. A.E. McQuillen, D.P.V.F.

Mayor A.C. John Franklin

George A. Stauffer

Frank S. Murphy

J.L.G. Keogh, Q.C.

J.W. Primeau

Harry F. Quinlan M.D.

Cecil Secord

Miss Ina Larkin

Leonard Leo

Miss Loretta Sneath

Rev. Mother Superior Mary Immaculate

Rev. Sister Elizabeth Gravelle

Rev. Sister Veronica Callaghan





**Mother Mary
Immaculate in her
office at the Maternity
Hospital, 1951.**



**A portrait of Mother
Mary Immaculate**



The Amazing Mother Mary

Mother Mary Immaculate was more than a driving force behind the creation and establishment of the Hotel Dieu Hospital. During her tenure in St. Catharines from 1945 to her transfer back to Kingston in August 1955, she was the Hotel Dieu's spiritual centre and its hands-on director. She directly oversaw details of the work over and above her usual administrative and supervisory duties at the Maternity Hospital, in addition to the extensive planning and decision-making for the new hospital-to-be.

All during construction, she acted as overseer of the work. Many staff and residents of the area remember seeing Mother Mary in her black habit, regularly walking the scaffolding high in the air to check on the building's progress. Every Friday afternoon, she met with the construction foreman and toured the site, comparing the list of the planned work for the week with the actual accomplishments. She learned building theory and construction terminology and conversed fluently with the experts, earning their respect and admiration.

In fact, she put so much work into the project that in July 1952, at the height of construction, Mother Mary collapsed from exhaustion while crossing Ontario Street between the Maternity Hospital and the construction site. She was taken to Kingston, where she was forced to recuperate. But it was not long before this amazing woman was back on the scene, memorizing every inch of the new building. That knowledge was put to good use just two days after the maternity patients were transferred to the new facility. Someone spotted smoke pouring from a basement window, and alerted the city's fire department. As the fire trucks screeched their arrival, Mother Mary crawled on hands and

knees to point out the source of the fire — an overloaded incinerator. The hospital suffered only minor damage, due to her knowledge of every brick and nail.

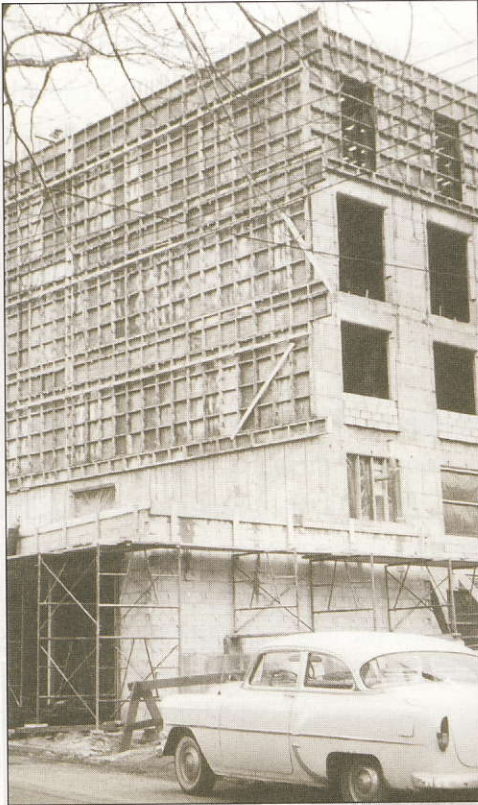
Another time, water began dripping through the ceiling of the records room. While a group of maintenance men poured over blueprints to figure out the problem, Mother Mary marched into the room to inform them that the toilet in room 202 was leaking and they better hurry and fix it.

By 1954, the hospital and its staff were settling into a routine. But Mother Mary still had a project she insisted be finished. She wanted the hospital's emergency power generator installed, but no-one seemed to sense any urgency in completing that assignment. Mother Mary pushed and prodded until the task was finished, on October 14.

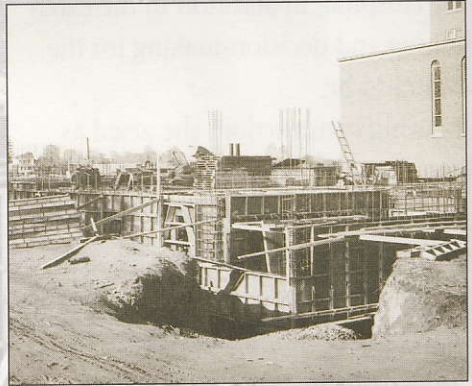
The very next day, Hurricane Hazel ripped through the Niagara Peninsula, sending livestock and barns flying and destroying buildings and property all over the city. Roads were flooded and travel was difficult, if not impossible.

George Stauffer, a hospital board member, was returning from a meeting in Toronto and drove down Ontario Street with great trepidation, fearful of what he'd find. As he neared the intersection at Welland Avenue, he saw the Hotel Dieu blazing with lights and bustling with normal activity, a calm in the raging storm. The surrounding neighbourhoods were pitch black and in chaos. When he rushed into the building to find Mother Mary, he asked how she could have predicted this violent storm, making sure the emergency equipment was in place just a day earlier. Sister answered with her typical words of wisdom, "God helps those who help themselves."





The new wing starts to rise.



The new wing of Hotel Dieu, which was officially opened January 30, 1962, provided an additional 54,000 square feet of space.



Attending the official opening of the C-wing were (left to right) Bishop McCarthy, Mr. Carmichael, Father Fullerton, John Smith, a former Mayor and Msgr. John O'Mara.

We Need More Room

The Hotel Dieu soon outpaced its own success. In the spring of 1955, the number of admissions in the maternity and obstetrical departments started to climb, and many new doctors came to St. Catharines to work. By 1959, the introduction of OHIP, the government-sponsored provincial hospital insurance plan, put an extra burden on hospital staff and services when more people flocked for treatment. The population was booming and a report recommended the Hotel Dieu add another 125 beds and the General 150 beds to meet the needs of the growing community.

The local council of the Religious Hospitallers wrote to the Ministry of Health in early 1959, asking for money to expand. They received approval four months later.

In February, 1960, Dr. William Deadman, chief pathologist of the Hamilton General Hospital, announced the Hotel Dieu would house a new 18-month laboratory technologists training program. The planned expansion would meet the hospital's growing role in the medical community too.

"Our new hospital was only seven years old, but we already needed more room to meet the growing need for hospital care," recalled Sister Loretta Gaffney. "I was so relieved when the project was approved and I knew that the overcrowding would soon be a thing of the past."

Construction began that spring and was finished in less than 18 months. The expansion cost \$1.5 million, including a five-storey addition and renovations to the original structure. Mayor Ivan Buchanan snipped the

ribbon to officially open the new wing on January 30, 1962 (in 1968, it would be named the Carmichael Wing in honor of the Advisory Board's first chairman). On the day of the dedication, Mother Mary Immaculate was among the invited guests of honour, witnessing how the original dream of a Catholic hospital had been realized, flourished and grown. Her death 20 years later, on March 17, 1982, would represent the passing of an icon.

But at the beginning of the '60s, the upgraded and updated hospital ushered in a new era of health care, where specialization set the tone and costs inched higher and higher.

*With its modern
equipment and
expert staff, the Hotel
Dieu Hospital was
ready to
"cure sometimes,
help often and to
console always."*

— Harry J. Carmichael,
January 1962





Dr. Harold G. Fox was a charter member of the Hotel Dieu Advisory Board and served as Chairman from 1968 until his death in 1970.



Dispatchers Rich Chandler and Terry Hounshan at the ambulance dispatch desk, 1979.



Dr. Youngusband with two nurses in the Intensive and Coronary Care Unit opened in 1971. It was named the Dr. Harold G. Fox Memorial Unit in honour of his selfless contribution to Hotel Dieu Hospital.



Dr. James M. Brown was the first Director of the Intensive and Coronary Care Unit.

How We Grew

Prosperity reigned from 1962 to 1972, and while the Generation Gap was the catch phrase of the day, the hospital's family spirit and caring environment remained strong and steady. During this time of social change, the Hotel Dieu marked its development with several important milestones.

Father Mervin Fernbach became the hospital's first resident chaplain in July 1963. Eight years later, the Hotel Dieu's Catholic tradition was enhanced when a pastoral services department opened under the directorship of Sister Mary Ann Higgins. The department exemplified the hospital's wholistic philosophy of total care for its patients and gave the Sisters a strong presence even as their numbers diminished in later years.

On the programming front, computerization, which had been introduced in 1960, grew rapidly. In 1969, the Dieu was one of the first hospitals in Ontario to adopt audiometric testing to discover hearing problems in infants. In 1970, ambulance services for the region were transferred from the fire departments to the Hotel Dieu. The Intensive and Coronary Care Unit was opened on September 9, 1971 and dedicated to the memory of Dr. Harold G. Fox, an original Advisory Board member.

On the labour front, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) was certified as the bargaining agent for 250 of the staff in 1969. Local 1097 included nursing assistants, maintenance workers, kitchen staff and orderlies, but excluded

office workers and registered nurses.

On the regional front, the Niagara Peninsula Hospital Planning Council's 1971 Role Study Report suggested more centralized services. At a time when the Hotel Dieu's new Intensive and Coronary Care Unit was ready to open and its pediatrics ward had just been expanded, the recommendation to house obstetrics, coronary and intensive care at the General was not well received. But most important, the report attacked the very foundations on which the Hotel Dieu was built — the maternity unit — and the Religious Hospitallers were understandably upset.

This controversial report was the start of a trend to turn the two St. Catharines hospitals into facilities providing specialized, but separate types of care. The decade may have epitomized the age of free spirits, but that time was over.

“We still had a nun on each floor, and there was a tremendous loyalty from the lay staff. A family spirit was strong at the Dieu.”

— Dr. Daniel Evans
Chief of Staff





Callie Bench, first auxiliary president.

The Hotel Dieu Hospital Auxiliary celebrated 25 years of service with an anniversary dinner in 1975. From the left are Kathleen Butcher, a founding member; Helen Stewart, president; Sister Mary Immaculate, first Superior Administrator; Catherine Kehoe, past president, and Esther Boase, a founding member and first treasurer.



A new car raffle was a highlight of the Auxiliary's 1956 Fiesta. From the left are Sister Mary Immaculate, Mrs. H.J. Carmichael, convenor of tickets; Sister Jordan, Superior and Miss Loretta Sneath, Auxiliary president and Fiesta convenor.



Mrs. V. Snider, centre, offers a cup of tea to one of the young people at the Capping Ceremony for Candystrippers on May 15, 1966.



Auxiliary member Shirley Novak, left, with Hotel Dieu employee Sharon Andrews at the Auxiliary's lottery booth. The lottery annually raises thousands of dollars for medical equipment.

Time Well Spent

Since its humble beginnings in the late '40s, the Hotel Dieu Hospital Auxiliary has played a key role in fund-raising, community awareness and public involvement. It has collected more than \$1.4 million for hospital equipment, furnishings and services, and devoted countless hours to helping the hospital.

The Auxiliary was originally a sewing group who helped the Religious Hospitallers even before the Maternity Hospital opened. Its first meeting, a garden party at the home of Callie Bench, raised \$1,000 for the hospital building fund and set the tone for future fund-raising efforts. Senator Bench's widow was named the Auxiliary's first president and became as involved in hospital development as had her late husband. The Auxiliary was formally organized in 1950 with 259 members in its startup year, and the Thorold branch of the women's Auxiliary was formed in 1958 with Frances McKenny as its first president.

The Auxiliary adopted the Jeanne Mance crest as its symbol, and volunteers wore cherry red smocks with the double-blue insignia. The first headquarters was in the basement of the Maternity Hospital, where women sewed linens and gowns for expectant mothers.

Over the years, the Auxiliary organized many different committees but the most popular was the Baby Alumni. New mothers enrolled their children for \$1, which entitled them to a certificate and regular birthday cards. Over the years, more than 5,000 babies

were enrolled in the Alumni program and a special anniversary on June 20, 1998 commemorated its success. More than 700 people patiently waited on that sweltering summer day to tour the old Woodruff Mansion and an authentic recreation of the third-floor delivery room.

From 1952 to 1964, the Auxiliary ran an annual Fiesta, a fund-raiser that defined the group's commitment. During the 1962 fund-raising campaign, the Auxiliary raised enough money to completely furnish the hospital's recovery room.

In 1965, the Auxiliary established the Candystripers for girls and boys ranging in age from 14-20. They were trained by the Religious Hospitallers in basic patient care and were an integral part of the volunteer base. They started with 25 members and within a year had tripled. But the spirit of youth volunteerism eventually fell out of fashion and by October, 1983, Candystripers were a thing of the past.

However, there still remains a strong core of 52 Auxiliary members and nearly 200 volunteers who devote more than 15,500 hours of time each year to hospital causes. Along with hundreds of other volunteers and donors from community groups, social organizations and service clubs who help the Hotel Dieu, they know their time and money is well spent. People from all walks of life typically give more than 8,000 gifts to the hospital each year, totalling well over \$750,000.





The children's ward receives a TV set, donated by the utility group of the Hospital Auxiliary.



Sister Currier puts the finishing touch on the cake for the staff tea to celebrate the Hospital's 25th Anniversary in 1973. Admiring the creation are Sister Dolores Kane, CEO (left) and Sister Higgins.



The three founding Sisters of Hotel Dieu Hospital chat with Frederick Bajc, a long-service employee, at the 25th Anniversary dinner. From the left are Sister St. Catherine, (then of New London, Wis.) Veronica Callaghan (then of Ottawa) and Sister Mary Immaculate (then of Cornwall).

The Tarnished Silver Jubilee

Although 1973 should have been a time of pride and celebration, the 25th anniversary of the Hotel Dieu was overshadowed by sadness. After 10 years of growth and prosperity, the tide turned. Rumours of transferring obstetrics to the General were rife, fueled by declining birth rates and the health ministry's mission to merge community health care services and slash hospital budgets across the province.

Ministry guidelines stated if a hospital did not have at least 2,000 deliveries annually, maternity services should be centralized in one facility. The Hotel Dieu normally had numbered about 1,500 births a year while the General recorded about 2,000. By the early '70s, the total for both hospitals together was below 2,000. The future for obstetrics at the Hotel Dieu looked grim.

The hospital managed some cost savings through streamlining, reduced work week hours and other budget adjustments. But they could do nothing about the declining birth rate, and a controversial hospital study supported the ministry's recommendation to transfer all obstetrics to the General. The unpopular report smoothed some ruffled feathers when it suggested centralizing urology at the Hotel Dieu, a move which proved to be a financial lifesaver and one which kept the intensive care and coronary care units and emergency departments active and the hospital viable.

Despite much opposition, the ministry shut down the Hotel Dieu's maternity unit in September, 1973. Nurse Kay Blakely was

cleaning the empty bassinets after the last baby left. Alone in the room filled only with memories, she broke down. "I just cried my eyes out," she recalled. Her heartfelt reaction typified the irony of the occasion — the hospital celebrated its silver jubilee at the same time its doors closed on its very heritage and beginnings.



The dialysis unit, a satellite unit of St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, was officially opened on January 29, 1975. Celebrating the occasion, from left to right, are Harry J. Carmichael, George Stauffer, John Pennachetti and Tom Quinlan.



Harry Carmichael snips the ribbon to officially open the dialysis unit in 1975 while Regional Chairman John Campbell, left and Sister Rosalia Cobey, Provincial Superior and Carey Robinson, executive director of the St. Catharines General Hospital, look on.



Administrator Sister Elizabeth McPherson and Lion Harold Sandercott examine the slit microscope, just one of the many pieces of equipment sponsored by the Lions Club for the hospital's eye clinic.



New Directions

For many at the Hotel Dieu, work was a labour of love. Now, with the maternity section gone, it felt like the heart and soul of the hospital had been lost. The question was whispered through the corridors — where do we go from here?

The new vocabulary told part of the story. Talk about restraint, streamlining and centralization were as common as discussions about patients, drug dosages and hospital food. The Sisters, who helped found the maternity section, and hospital administrators, who had fought to retain that part of Hotel Dieu's heritage, were faced with an unknown future.

"Our Order had endured more than three centuries and we knew we had to change with the times, to adjust our services to reflect the changing needs of the community," recalled Sister Ferne Rideout.

And so, armed with new resolve, hospital staff were determined to continue the original mission of the Religious Hospitallers in new ways. One of the Hotel Dieu's most successful new programs was its kidney dialysis centre, which accepted its first patients in November 1974 and was a satellite unit of St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton. Hotel Dieu doctors and their patients knew that traveling 45 minutes to another city for dialysis treatment simply added more stress and fatigue to their lives. Doctors also discovered that at-home dialysis produced better results and happier patients. At-home care also cut hospital costs, a real concern in the age of restraint. The new

dialysis unit answered all of these concerns.

"Our St. Catharines Hotel Dieu didn't deliver babies anymore, but we were taking on a whole new and equally important special type of care through our new dialysis unit," said Sister Rideout.

The hospital's eye clinic also opened the same year. In the past, patients who needed cataract surgery faced a cumbersome, multi-day stay in the hospital. The procedure was unpleasant and uncomfortable because the patient's head had to be sandbagged to hold it in place. But surgical advancements transformed this operation into a gentler and simpler day procedure.

The local Lions Club made the eye clinic their pet project, raising funds and buying equipment for the unit. Over the years, financial support from the Lions' International Foundation also helped keep the eye clinic on the leading edge, and traditional events like the Lions' annual steak dinner fund-raisers have kept community awareness and involvement high.

These departments exemplified a shift in philosophy and new approach to health care — the era of "all things for all people" became the era of "special things for special people." It was survival of the relevant. What else would the future bring?





Hotel Dieu Hospital acquired this residence at 10 Adams Street from Dr. Oscar Stahl to establish a male detoxification centre. The centre officially opened on July 27, 1975.



Sister Audrey Mantle, who rescued Dr. Robert Merritt.



Sister Elizabeth McPherson, administrator when the detoxification program began.



Dr. Robert Merritt



Clean and Sober

The story starts in 1947 with the first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in St. Catharines, conducted by Dr. Clifford Healey, a friend and colleague of Dr. Bob Smith of Akron, Ohio. Dr. Smith was one of the original founders of AA, establishing the prototype AA in-hospital treatment program in St. Mary's Hospital.

While the program was successful and medical advancements evolved rapidly over the years, certain taboos and stereotypes about alcoholism lingered. Even in 1970, a patient could not be admitted to hospital for alcoholism. A patient could only be admitted for gastroenteritis, flu, dehydration, depression or other ailment couched in more acceptable terms.

This was a challenge for doctors, but especially for Dr. Robert Merritt, who was himself an alcoholic. He was having so much trouble with his own personal challenges that he landed in jail one night, thrown into the local drunk tank. Luckily for the doctor, Sister Audrey Mantle rescued him and sent him to a treatment centre in Texas to begin his own recovery.

Dr. Healey encouraged his colleague to help other alcoholics, knowing they would relate to one another. Dr. Merritt asked the hospital's administrator, Sister Elizabeth McPherson, if the Hotel Dieu could start admitting alcoholics. By 1958, the World Health Organization, the Canadian Medical Association and the American Medical Association had recognized alcoholism as a disease and Dr. Merritt believed the hospital should be truthful about the issue and start talking about it openly and realistically.

"We don't want three beds behind the furnace" he told her, insisting that alcoholic patients be given suitable care. Sister McPherson agreed, on the condition that two AA members stay with each alcoholic admitted to the hospital, ensuring the safety of

other patients and staff and providing support for the recovering alcoholics.

In the spring of 1974, the hospital began admitting alcoholics. Since the direct treatment of sick alcoholics was a new experience, the nurses were anxious to know how to treat them properly, and Sister McPherson soon realized everyone would have to become better educated about the disease. The Hotel Dieu began conducting on-site AA meetings and the nurses were required to attend as part of their in-service training and orientation. Hotel Dieu became the only hospital in the world that had such a requirement of its nurses.

The first AA meeting at Hotel Dieu was held on August 11, 1974 in a first-floor room. Unfortunately, Dr. Merritt had a relapse and missed the meeting. But he, like many of his patients, eventually turned his life around and helped establish a residential detoxification centre for recovering alcoholics and other substance abusers. The hospital purchased the former home of Dr. Oscar Stahl at 10 Adams Street, practically next door to the hospital — close enough for medical care but separate enough to provide a quiet, safe and homelike place of recovery. Bishop McCarthy blessed the new 18-bed facility when it opened on July 27, 1975, with Keith Hornibrook as its first director.

The program, which provides support to clients who are intoxicated, in withdrawal or in crisis, became a model for other hospitals and attracted patients from across the province.

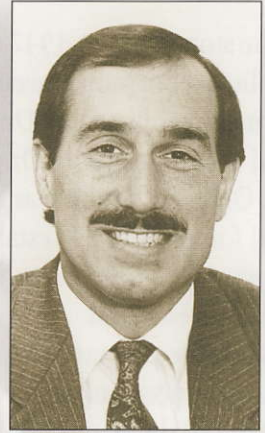
"You can talk a person out of convulsions and DTs," explained Dr. Merritt, who says the best medicine for a recovering alcoholic is not necessarily medicine. "Mutual support is very important. There is nothing that leads to success like the love of one drunk for another."



Frank Vetrano, Executive Director (front left), enjoys the 1980 Auxiliary Poinsettia Tea with, from left to right, Sister MacPherson, Mrs. W.F. Butcher, Mrs. G.D. Stewart, Mrs. G.O. Darte, Mrs. C. Bench, Mrs. J. Birdgeneau, Mrs. A.J. Gavard, Mrs. W.H. Tracey and Mrs. G. Prindiville.



Frieda Schoellkopf, Director of Housekeeping and Jim Kish, Director of Plant and Maintenance, chat at a staff tea in celebration of the 30 years since the opening of the Maternity Hospital in 1948.



Frank Vetrano has served as Executive Director of Hotel Dieu Hospital since 1980. Appointed at age 29, he was the first lay administrator of the hospital since its inception. A graduate of the University of Toronto with degrees in Hospital Administration and Medical Science, Mr. Vetrano also completed a Master of Science Degree in Medicine at McMaster Medical School.



Frank Vetrano with Sister Shirley Hanson and Millie McPherson at the 1984 Bi-Centennial Christmas Tea.

End of an Era

While some new programs and clinics had opened to better serve people in Niagara, hospitals were forced to find new ways of saving money. The health ministry's budget cutbacks clashed with rising salaries, rising costs and rising expectations. People wanted more for their health care dollars, but there were fewer and fewer dollars. The ministry continued to recommend closing hospital beds throughout the province, and the Sisters and administrators opposed such drastic measures. They weren't always successful. In 1975, the hospital closed 10 beds, a compromise after the ministry wanted 28 beds eliminated.

As the '80s dawned, health care dollars shrank even more. Hospital staff tried to maintain high levels of patient care as resources dwindled and threats of layoffs loomed. They tried new ways of meeting their goals, such as reducing the length of hospital stays, and increasing the number and types of diagnostic and treatment procedures which could be performed on an out-patient basis. But in the end, hospital staff simply couldn't make ends meet. Finally, hospital administrators looked to the past for ideas, and reluctantly decided that community fund-raising was the only answer to their money woes. It was something they had not done since the early '50s when optimistically preparing for the new hospital opening. This time, the decision was reached out of desperation.

The Religious Hospitallers faced another dilemma. They were gradually losing members through death and illness and weren't attracting as many younger women to the Order. Sister McPherson's term as hospital administrator was coming to a close, and the Sisters were having trouble recruiting

qualified candidates to take on the job. The hospital had always been guided by a member of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph Congregation, starting with Mother Mary Immaculate in 1948 when the Maternity Hospital opened its doors. But the times were changing and, after much soul-searching, the Order decided to hire a lay administrator to take over the helm of the Hotel Dieu.

During extensive searching and interviewing, the hiring committee found a young man who had served as Assistant Administrator of York County Hospital in Newmarket for four years. Frank Vetrano came highly recommended, but in the Sisters' eyes, it was a difficult choice. He was only 29, he was not a member of the Order, and he would certainly be a break from tradition.

"You had no idea the concern this caused for Sister McPherson and Sister Higgins," said Bob Edgar, a local lawyer, who was then chair of the lay advisory board and a member of the hiring committee. "But I said he's ready, he's qualified, he can do the job. It took a little coaxing, but we proved to be right."

On August 30, 1980, the Sisters announced that Mr. Vetrano would become the first lay administrator of the Hotel Dieu Hospital in St. Catharines. Sister McPherson was the last Religious Hospitaller to act as hospital administrator, and changes throughout the entire administrative organization reflected the Sisters' declining numbers. Though they became less evident in a physical way in the day-to-day workings of the hospital, their influence remained. The hospital was founded on a philosophy of progressive health care integrated with Christian values, and that would never change.





Hotel Dieu's oncology unit has been visited by many dignitaries over the years, including Hal Jackman, who was Lieutenant Governor when he visited in 1993.



Muggs Klassen tends to an oncology patient in this early '90s photo.



Dr. Brian Findlay (right) and John Pearson, then vice-chair of the Board of Trustees, at the 10th anniversary of the opening of the oncology unit.



Dr. Martin Samosh examines a CAT scan.

Cancer Care Comes Home

In all the turmoil over money woes, hospital staff never lost sight of their biggest challenge — battling disease and illness. And cancer was the toughest illness of all.

In 1979, Dr. Daniel Evans was Hotel Dieu's chief of surgery. "I was so fed up with cancer patients having to leave Niagara for their care, so I kept bugging the people at Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. Don't you have a young guy there who'd be interested in practicing oncology in Niagara?" Dr. Evans kept asking. "Cancer treatment is stressful enough without worrying about travel, too."

Eventually the persistence of Dr. Evans and others like Drs. Robert Merritt, Andrew Donnelly and Ian McMillan paid off when Dr. Brian Findlay relocated from Toronto to help establish the city's first, and only, oncology clinic. "When you're dealing with serious illness and its complications, it's always better to treat people close to home," said Dr. Findlay, who shared the doctors' philosophy and was dedicated to making a difference in people's lives.

Dr. Findlay, of course, expected to start work right away. There were patients, there were doctors and there was a great need for a cancer clinic. There was just one problem. There was no room in the hospital to set up a clinic. Executive Director Frank Vetrano agreed to transform the hospital's formal boardroom into a working clinic, complete with examination rooms, a chemotherapy treatment area and a reception space. The Hotel Dieu Oncology Clinic opened in February 1985 to serve the people of Niagara.

It specialized in chemotherapy — treatment of cancer with drugs — in combination with counselling, relaxation therapy and stress management.

Once the clinic was set up, patients flocked for treatment. In its first year, more than 400 new patients visited the clinic, which was expanded and renovated through generous donations in 1995. By 1997-98, more than 10,000 patients were being seen annually.

"There was a floodgate after the clinic got established," recalled Dr. Martin Samosh, a hematology specialist who joined the clinic staff in 1988 as one of a team of professionals — oncologists, hematologists, specialized nurses, consulting radiation oncologists, palliative care physicians and nurses, social workers, pastoral services staff, dieticians, pharmacists, physiotherapists — who work with the Canadian Cancer Society and hospital volunteers to help patients and their families maintain the best quality of life possible.

The unit conducts clinical trials and contributes to cancer studies and research as part of Cancer Care Ontario, a province-wide network dedicated to the latest and most progressive cancer treatments, and the National Cancer Institute of Canada.

And as part of the clinic's unofficial philosophy that laughter is the best medicine and music is "soul" food, entertainers Rich Little, Shirley Jones and Engelbert Humperdink have all performed benefit concerts to help raise money for the clinic, keeping cancer care at home.





Norma Medulun at the opening of Branscombe House, May 9, 1996.



Mildred and Frank Branscombe accept a token of appreciation from Hotel Dieu Hospital Trustee Jean Johnston for their generous support of Hotel Dieu over many years. Branscombe House was named in their honour.



Norma Medulun, centre, accepts Branscombe House donations from Sheryl Hoshizaki, left, president of the Federation of Women Teachers' Association of Ontario and Karen Saylor of the Lincoln Women Teachers Association.

A Design for Sobriety

Alcoholism and drug abuse are not male-only diseases. Until the mid-1980s, however, women battling addiction had few options. In 1985, their cries for help were answered when Hotel Dieu opened Ontario's first women-only detox centre, providing a safe haven for support and treatment.

Initially, women were housed on the second floor of the men's detox centre, but the co-ed environment just didn't work. The Hotel Dieu created a separate five-bed treatment house for women at 98 Yates Street, in the same neighbourhood as the male detox centre. The response from women needing help was so overwhelming, and the house so tiny and cramped, that the search was soon on for bigger and better facilities.

Three years later, the home at 6 Adams Street (next door to the male detox centre) opened as a treatment facility for women. In May 1989, when Norma Medulun arrived as manager, the female residents established a standard routine which included one-on-one counselling, support group sessions, AA meetings as well as regular meals and household chores. The women benefitted from having responsibilities, connecting with other people in a social and homelike atmosphere, and knowing their safety was assured. In 1992, Norma took over the men's program which soon adopted the same type of household routine as the women, giving the males a greater sense of personal responsibility.

In 1993, a self-directed women's support group evolved to provide mutual support, a forum for shared experiences and motivation to change. But it wasn't enough because

women in recovery weren't receiving a full range of treatment. There was a discharge plan and a transition/recovery home for men but not for women, who had an especially difficult time moving right back into their homes and community. This was the missing link in the recovery picture for women.

The Hotel Dieu eyed the home at 4 Adams Street, next door to the women's detox centre, as the perfect location for a women's transition house. "This was our opportunity to provide additional care for women in Niagara," said Ms. Medulun. "A hallmark of addiction is isolation, and this recovery home would eliminate that sense of being alone. Women needed to learn new social skills and discover ways to cope with life without using alcohol or drugs."

The former private home was a designer showcase home for AIDS Niagara. After its initial sprucing up, the Hotel Dieu received a \$50,000 gift from the Niagara Falls-based Branscombe Family Foundation to renovate it. When it was finished in 1996, Branscombe House accommodated up to six women with their children. One of Branscombe House's unique features is its mother-child suite, giving women and their children much-needed time together.

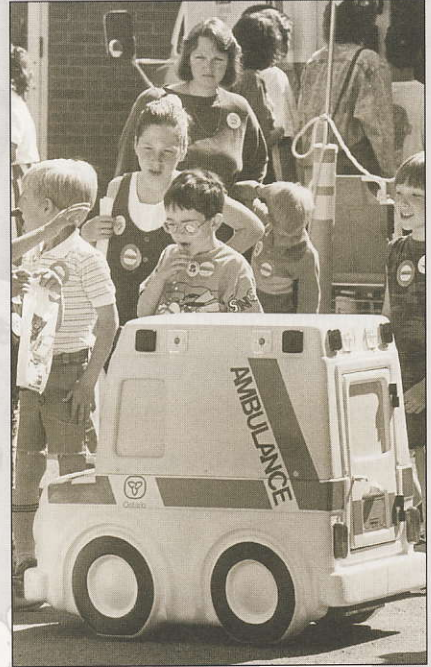
"Branscombe House has seen many happy family reunions," said Ms. Medulun. "Women can still parent in a supportive environment and know that being a mother is not a barrier to good treatment. We've had some really nice recoveries. One woman even planted tulip bulbs as her legacy to Branscombe House."



Hotel Dieu held a number of "Kids Safety Days" in the early '90s. Hotel Dieu nurses and police, fire, and ambulance representatives were on hand to teach children safety tips.



Children with developmental challenges learn best in their own environments.



Adam Kane enjoys the stimulation of the Snoezelen Room during the official opening in 1995.



For the Children

By the mid-'80s, even though the Hotel Dieu no longer had a maternity ward or pediatrics department, caring for children was still important. In 1986, the hospital convinced the provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services that families in Niagara who had to travel to Hamilton's Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals for assessment of their children with special needs could be cared for closer to home.

"The community was asking for something that was more family-focused and responsive," noted Michael Chupik, manager of the Children's Developmental Assessment Service (CDAS), a program that identifies developmental delays or handicaps in children, newborn to age 18, and designs individual plans to help educate and support those children and their families.

The CDAS philosophy of early intervention made this program successful, and spawned the Autism Consultation Service, a program designed to enhance the quality of life for children with autism and their families.

"Both of these services don't just look at body parts," Mr. Chupik said. "We take a wholistic view and focus on enhancing children's lives."

A true reflection of that approach is CDAS's Snoezelen Room, a safe haven in which children with disabilities can be themselves. Opened in July of 1995, it gives developmentally-challenged children a sensory-rich playground where movement, lights, colours, sounds, music, textures and shapes invite exploration, learning and relaxation. And it's fun. A four-foot bubble tank surrounded by mirrors, a bouncy ball pool,

streamers and hop-scotch squares all integrate play with learning. The atmosphere gives families a chance to bond, to relax together, to spend time with each other without pressure.

Chris is a Snoezelen Room devotee. He doesn't talk and has little muscle control, so he has to be carried into the room. But when he reclines in a softly lit ball pool and gazes at the moon, stars and rocket ship projected on the wall, the smile on his face speaks volumes.

"Chris is very relaxed and content when he's here," said his caregiver Bill Low, a retired schoolteacher and volunteer for the St. Catharines Association for Community Living. "He's confined to his wheelchair all day, so being out and doing something different is very important for Chris. It's a wonderful facility."

Snoezelen, a combination of the Dutch words for "sniff" and "doze", was developed in Holland in the 1960s and has since spread worldwide. While the focus in other Snoezelen centres may be on therapy, the Hotel Dieu philosophy is based on providing leisure time and fun for kids who can't participate in mainstream recreational activities.

"This gives parents and their children the chance to spend quality time together in a soothing and stimulating environment," Mr. Chupik said. "It really does something in terms of the quality of communication, and strengthening the relationship through touching and expression."

The Snoezelen Room was sponsored with a \$29,400 grant from Ronald McDonald Children's Charities of Canada and \$5,000 raised from the 1994 McHappy Day.



The current community of Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph of the Hotel Dieu of St. Catharines, Sister Jackie DesRoches, Sister Louise Dillon and Sister Patricia Cuddihy.



The Pastoral Services team, from the left, Don Parr, Sister Louise Dillon, Ken MacLeod and Hubert Schulz.



Father Michael Chigar, Hotel Dieu's chaplain from 1975 to 1984, was the inspiration for the hospital's annual outstanding employee award.



Established in 1971, Pastoral Services adds a special dimension to care at Hotel Dieu Hospital.

Healing Body, Mind and Spirit

In a cosy room off the hospital chapel, soft lighting, soothing music and comfortable furnishings allow for contemplation, respite and solace.

This is where Sister Louise Dillon blends a modern approach to patient and family care with traditional values. The pastoral services department celebrated 25 years of service in 1996, and while the spiritual needs of hospital patients hasn't diminished, there are fewer Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph available for this important ministry. Sister Louise, who became pastoral services manager in 1992, relies on the pastoral staff and a dedicated team of volunteers to continue the healing ministry to families and staff.

When the pastoral services department was established in 1971, the staff included a Religious Hospitaller as co-ordinator, a resident chaplain and another Religious Hospitaller as a volunteer Sister Visitor. They were guided by the philosophy of Matthew 25:36, "I was sick and you visited me." Today, the staff includes a Religious Hospitaller as manager, three part-time lay pastoral associates, 13 eucharistic ministers who administer holy communion to patients requesting it, and two volunteers who help with the office work. The clergy, from various religious denominations across the region, help provide spiritual and religious solace.

"Our pastoral staff of both religious and lay men and women provide an ecumenical approach," says Sister Louise. "We have a profound respect and sensitivity for the religious and cultural diversity of the patients we serve. And our volunteers are essential in comple-

menting the work of the pastoral staff, providing tender and compassionate care to all who come to our door."

The hospital chapel is open each day for reflection and prayer, and mass is celebrated three times during the week and every Sunday. Although the hospital does not have a resident Roman Catholic chaplain, active and retired priests from the area give generously of their time and help in the sacramental ministry.

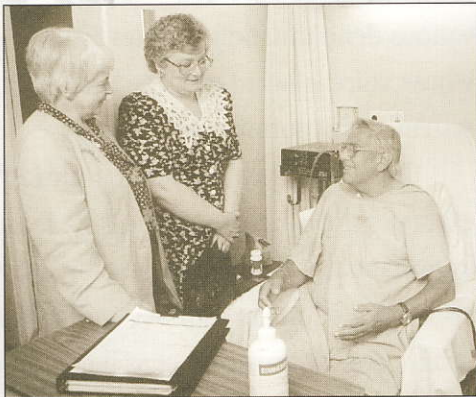
"We could not begin to maintain our excellent spiritual and religious care without the continued support of the Roman Catholic priests of the diocese, and the many clergy of various denominations," notes Sister Louise, whose voice is heard over the hospital P.A. system every morning with a prayer.

The Hotel Dieu's pastoral philosophy expresses the belief that spirituality is an important aspect of health care, by individuals in their efforts to improve and nurture health, and by the hospital as it continues developing a wholistic approach which meets the needs of body, mind and spirit in the understanding that spiritual healing can be a forerunner to emotional and physical healing. Sister Louise says the mission and purpose of pastoral care is to be with patients in their recovery and journey with them if complete recovery is not possible.

"We strive to help people find meaning even in their suffering," says Sister Louise. "Our goal is to help people find hope in a new way. The spirit and mission of the Hotel Dieu is alive and well today."



The Honorable Ruth Grier, Minister of Health, left, and Christel Haeck, MPP, St. Catharines-Brock, visit with dialysis patient Jack Leake, who helped convince the government to fund the dialysis clinic expansion.



Dr. Jack Luce, Chief of Staff, presents Dr. Robert Manning with a plaque in honour of his contribution to dialysis care.



Celebrating the 1994 opening of the L.B. Herzog Dialysis Centre, from left, Gail Guertin, Hotel Dieu Hospital Auxiliary; Robert S.K. Welch, Chair of the L.B. Herzog Foundation; Dr. Arthur Shimizu, Chief of Nephrology; Christel Haeck, MPP, St. Catharines-Brock and Lena Kisiel, pre-dialysis manager.



Dr. Anthony Broski with former dialysis patient, Kim Kozub who underwent a kidney transplant in 1998. Her father, Ron, was the donor.

Heart, Soul and Kidneys

Jack Leake is a kidney dialysis patient with a cause. He spends six hours, three times a week, waiting and watching as his blood is pumped through a dialysis machine, making it safe, clean and free of life-threatening toxins. It's a device that has saved his life.

Mr. Leake himself is a life-saver. As a tireless campaigner for patients' rights, a member of the hospital's renal education committee, a political lobbyist and fund-raiser, Mr. Leake was a catalyst in upgrading the Hotel Dieu's dialysis centre, making it available to more people in the community who needed help.

"The old dialysis centre just wasn't acceptable," said Mr. Leake in his no-nonsense style. "It was cramped and crowded. We needed something where we could feel more comfortable. And we just couldn't wait because there were more and more people who needed dialysis."

Since the dialysis unit opened in 1974, originally as a satellite operation of St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, the number of dialysis patients increased yearly. Becoming an independent unit in 1977-78, the clinic was in dire need of upgrading by the mid-'80s. Mr. Leake, whose kidneys failed suddenly in 1988, led the fight for funding to expand the dialysis facilities. Each dialysis procedure is tiring, but Mr. Leake seemed to have energy to spare — enough energy to carry on a campaign for more equipment, bigger and better facilities and expanded treatment in the hospital and for patients at home. But for Mr. Leake and patients like him, the effort was worth it.

"It all started with letters and phone calls," he said. "It took a few years but finally,

we convinced the government to fork out the cash."

In 1994, the Hotel Dieu's dialysis centre underwent a massive upgrade and renovation. With a \$1 million grant from the provincial health ministry, \$250,000 from the Leonard B. Herzog Memorial Foundation and \$250,000 from public and hospital auxiliary donations, the reconstruction boosted the number of outpatient dialysis units from 12 to 16, and increased the number of beds for patients needing specialized kidney treatment from seven to 10.

The open-concept design of the hemodialysis unit included a treatment room, isolation facilities, 12 new hemodialysis machines, technicians' work area and storage facilities. The peritoneal dialysis unit was renovated to provide a training area and clinic facilities for the increasing number of patients who managed their dialysis at home. The unit was re-opened as the L.B. Herzog Dialysis Centre.

In 1997, the centre completed the second phase of its expansion with a \$100,000 upgrade that included new stations for progressive care and self-care patients.

Specially-trained nursing staff, dialysis technicians and dialysis physicians (or nephrologists) are supplemented by pastoral care staff, social workers, dieticians, pharmacists, clerks and health care aides who all work closely with patients and their families in education and treatment. With only one cure for kidney failure — organ transplants — the L.B. Herzog Dialysis Centre is their lifeline.





Dr. Heime Geffen established the palliative care clinic in Hotel Dieu's oncology department.



The original palliative care team, from the left, Dr. Brian Kerley, Donna Schollenberg, Social Worker; Donna Newman, Registered Practical Nurse; Colleen Bredin, Inpatient Palliative Care Manager and Shirley Cripps, Registered Nurse.



Sean Jackson, Chair of the Board of Trustees, greets Diana Fowler LeBlanc, wife of Governor General Romeo LeBlanc and Patron of the Canadian Palliative Care Association, at the 1996 opening of the Palliative Care Unit.



Tender Mercies

Compassionate care for the dying has always been part of the Religious Hospitallers' tradition. So, when Dr. Brian Kerley and nurses Colleen Bredin and Kristyn Wilson-Schram said Niagara needed a palliative care unit, their proposal received the immediate blessing of Hotel Dieu doctors, administrators and Sisters.

"We knew there was a need for specialized care for people with a terminal illness who were suffering physically, emotionally and spiritually," said Dr. Kerley. "It was an idea whose time had come, and an idea as old as the Hospitallers' mission."

By the '80s, cancer care had become one of the Hotel Dieu's specialties. Dr. Kerley realized how much frustration terminally-ill patients were experiencing and how much trouble they had coping with their pain, especially in the closing days and weeks of their lives. He was busy running his own family practice, but he felt he had to do more to help people.

Dr. Heime Geffen, another St. Catharines family physician, had also recognized the need for a formal palliative care program. With encouragement and education from Hamilton physician and palliative care pioneer Dr. Liz Latimer, he and Dr. Kerley received specialized training and began to consult in palliative care as part of their practices.

Dr. Geffen eventually established an out-patient Palliative Care Clinic in the Oncology area of Hotel Dieu Hospital, providing weekly pain and symptom management clinics. Soon after, under the guidance of Kristyn Wilson-Schram, the hospital created a palliative care team that included specialized physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, pastoral care staff, dietary specialists, physiotherapists, staff from Community Care Access Centre and volunteers.

Knowing that many patients prefer to be

in their own homes managing their own illness, the program grew to include community-based care. In 1994, Colleen Bredin helped form the Niagara Regional Palliative Pain and Symptom Management Service, whose staff worked with community experts from the Community Care Access Centre, Victorian Order of Nurses and Hospice Niagara to help patients and their families cope with the transitional time between life and death.

But something was still missing.

In 1996, the team recommended more extensive care that would include a specially-trained nursing team, working in a more home-like section of the hospital. There, patients could learn to control their pain and symptoms and address their psychosocial and spiritual needs. The idea won quick approval and a new 11-bed palliative care unit opened within months. Since then, it has led the way in becoming a teaching and research centre, while fulfilling the hospital's mission of wholistic care.

"Our Sisters have always had compassionate care for people who are dying," said Sister Louise Dillon, who manages the Hotel Dieu's pastoral care department, an integral part of the palliative care team. "We're there to be a caring presence, to hear what's on the patient's mind and not necessarily what's on their charts."

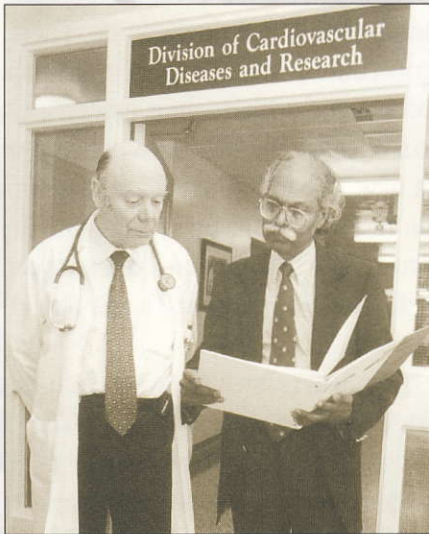
That's the approach of Dr. Kerley, who says he often sees patients at their best, when they are facing their "worst" moments.

Those times can be fulfilling, as patients prepare for the close of their personal journeys. And that often brings out the best in palliative care staff, too. Sister Louise remembered one patient whose family was unable to be with their loved one. A nurse held the dying woman's hand, and as she passed from this world to the next, the last voice she heard was her nurse singing softly, *Amazing Grace*.

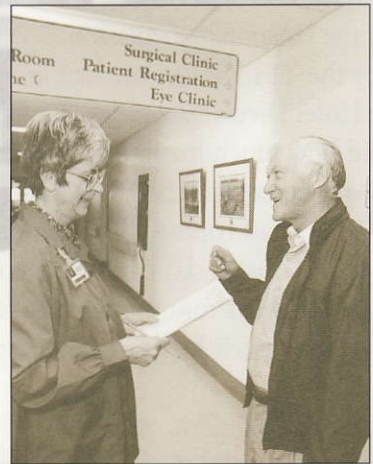




Modern surgical procedures help patients recover more quickly.



Dr. Peter Bolli and Dr. Peter Fernandez at the hospital's cardiovascular risk factor clinic, opened in December 1997. The clinic is part of a partnership project with the University of Western Ontario, London and McMaster University, Hamilton.



More than 6,000 patients visit the pre-admission clinic annually to meet with a nurse and prepare for their stay. Volunteer Gloria Koppers welcomes a patient to the clinic.



The Diabetes Education Centre helps thousands of Niagarans develop a positive attitude about managing their condition.

An Ounce of Prevention

A hospital cares for the sick, but preventing illness is an essential ingredient in the wellness recipe. In the late '80s and throughout the '90s, the Hotel Dieu developed programs that combined education, research and prevention with treatment, allowing people to have greater control and independence in their lives.

Working with doctors and scientists at two renowned teaching centres, the University of Western Ontario and McMaster University, Hotel Dieu created its division of Cardiovascular Diseases and Research, with a Clinical Teaching Unit to complement the program and train medical students, residents and interns.

"A critical factor in preventing and managing heart disease is early identification of its risk factors — hypertension, high cholesterol levels, smoking, obesity," said Dr. Peter Fernandez, head of the program. "It's better to steer people in the right direction early than treat them later for a heart attack."

A regional Diabetes Education Centre was established in 1987 to help improve the quality of life for more than 3,500 people with diabetes in Niagara. The diabetes program includes satellite services in Grimsby, Welland, Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Niagara Falls. Each year, the Centre holds a symposium for the medical community.

A team of nurses, dieticians and other health care professionals conducts ongoing education programs, counselling and follow-up sessions for patients. "It's all about meeting other people who have diabetes and

learning about living with it in a healthy and safe manner," said Cathy Lanteigne, manager of the centre.

The shift from lengthy hospital stays to day surgery has also been part of the new focus, not only reducing health care costs but improving recovery of patients. A pre-admission clinic, opened in 1995, gives patients the opportunity to have assessments, tests and other medical workups prepared in advance of surgery, but not requiring patients to stay in hospital. Technical advances, like laproscopic surgery, have also made life easier for patients, reducing hospital stays and reducing stress.

"If we can keep you out of the hospital, you'll enjoy your life more," said Executive Director Frank Vetrano. "Patients are always happier sleeping in their own beds, and eating meals at home. This allows us to bear witness to our mission and make resources available for new treatments to address more of the unmet needs in Niagara."

To cap its wellness efforts, the Hotel Dieu became a completely smoke-free zone in October 1996. An outdoor smoking area was closed for good and smoking was prohibited within nine metres of the hospital. As the site of the regional cancer clinic, the smoking ban endorses the Hotel Dieu's commitment to disease prevention and is a visible symbol for health.





Volunteers, retirees and staff wave the flag for Hotel Dieu Hospital before a 1997 public meeting to protest the proposed closure of the hospital.

A 1994 rally in front of Hotel Dieu Hospital to protest the proposed closure of the hospital's emergency department.



Despite the bitter cold, hundreds lined up in February 1997 to tell the Niagara District Health Council's Hospital Restructuring Sub-Committee that they wanted Hotel Dieu Hospital to stay open.

The More Things Change

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Although in a constant state of evolution, health care and the way it's delivered remain one of the public's top concerns. It was that way in 1948, and it's still that way in 1998, the 50th year of the Hotel Dieu. What people want in 1998 is the same as what people wanted in 1948 — quality health care, caring physicians and nurses, commitment to physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

Ironically, some of the other controversial hospital issues that began in the 1940s are still hot topics as the new millennium approaches. Questioning the need for more than one hospital in St. Catharines, centralizing services and programs, managing rising health costs, mergers and cutbacks have all been emotional issues for the community then and now. The battle lines that were drawn in 1948 have never really diminished.

For the Hotel Dieu, the pivotal point in the '90s controversy came in 1994 when the Resource Planning Group was commissioned to assess the local health care scene. Its surprising recommendation — closing the Hotel Dieu's emergency department — was the catalyst for a revival of community protest and bitter debate on health care. Public rallies, petitions and letter writing campaigns punctuated the discord between the hospital and the consulting group. But in the end, a bigger threat loomed and made this issue seem minuscule by comparison.

In 1995, the provincial government formed its own restructuring commission, whose sweeping changes across the province caused widespread emotional turmoil. It was a Goliath to the Hotel Dieu's David, and many wondered who would win this modern-day battle. By 1996, the Niagara District Health Council's Hospital

Restructuring Sub-committee recommended closing the Hotel Dieu and transferring services to the St. Catharines General Hospital.

"We pulled out all the stops," said Executive Director Frank Vetrano, in launching another wave of public protest. Even retired Hotel Dieu nurses got into the act, and helped galvanize public support by setting up information booths and displays in shopping malls, and taking the issue to the people. More than 55,000 signatures in support of the Hotel Dieu were testament to the public's loyalty to this venerable institution.

"The community wanted the Hotel Dieu, and were prepared to fight for it," added Mr. Vetrano. "This was a strong vote of confidence and validated the role of Hotel Dieu for now and the future."

In April, 1998 there was a turnaround and the Niagara District Health Council recommended a continuing role for the Hotel Dieu. It also suggested any centralized governing board for Niagara hospitals would have to pay heed to the Hotel Dieu's unique philosophy and vision. Another era, another victory. Once again, the Hotel Dieu was prepared to take on the challenges of the future, and, in May, submitted a proposal stressing its willingness to take on new challenges and expand its regional role to serve the people of Niagara.

"We're reaching out to the people in the community right across Niagara, just like we did years ago," said Sister Patricia Cuddihy, the Sister Liaison between the Hotel Dieu and the Religious Hospitaliers Health System Office in Kingston. "We're spreading our care, extending our helping hands and hearts, continuing our mission. The future is an extension of our past. That's what makes this hospital so special."



From Maternity to Eternity

The spirit of the Religious Hospitallers is alive and well at the Hotel Dieu. A hospital is the scene of many dramas, life and death struggles, joys and sorrows. And the Sisters have been a part of those dramas and everyday moments for 50 years. They, and the embodiment of their caring tradition through lay health care providers, volunteers, nurses, doctors, administrators and other caregivers, will continue to be part of the Hotel Dieu story as it unfolds in the future.

The Hotel Dieu began as a Maternity Hospital in 1948. More than 5,000 babies saw their first glimpse of life in the former Woodruff Mansion, a converted home which became a symbol of caring, of giving, of hope and happiness and the beginnings of many life journeys. The Maternity Hospital was a place of many memories, a place where the original dream of a community hospital came true and flourished, adapted to changes, rebounded from adversity, and remained a strong beacon in the health care storm.

As we celebrate 50 years of caring and approach the new millennium, the Hotel Dieu will continue to be part of this community and an important part of the health and lives of people in Niagara. Now, there is a new dream.

We're optimistic that the Woodruff Mansion/Maternity Hospital can become a hospice – a place of caring, of giving, of hope and happiness for people whose life journeys are coming to an end. While they are also places of tender sadness, hospices offer dignity, comfort, safety and a homelike sense of

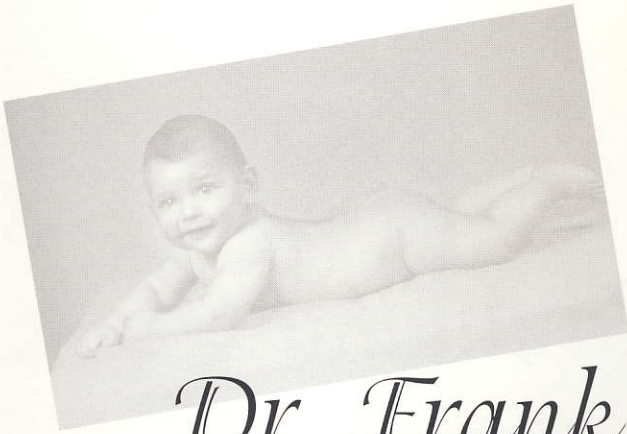
peace when it is most needed. It's important to make this dream happen because the Hotel Dieu embodies a caring spirit, going the extra mile for someone in need, taking more time and giving from the heart.

As we make this, and other dreams come true, we try to honor the people — Mother Mary Immaculate, Senator Bench, Dean Cullinane, Harry Carmichael — and the values they exemplified by establishing the Hotel Dieu and a tradition of caring we hope to continue for many years to come. It's our duty to live up to those who came before us, and to set the path for those who follow.

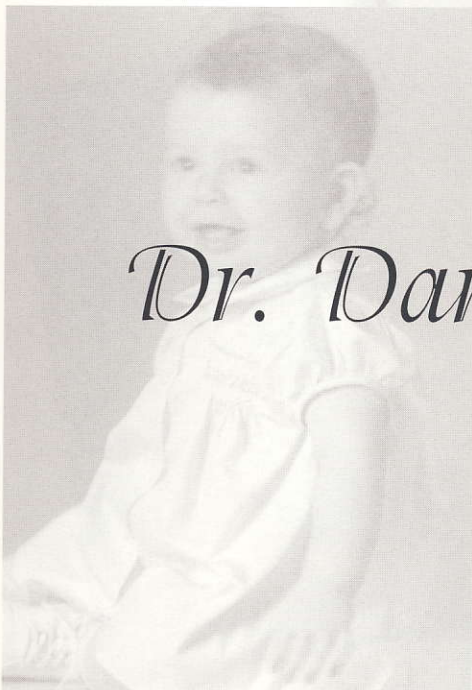
*From the original
Maternity Hospital to
today's highly
specialized
health-care facility,
Hotel Dieu has never
lost sight of the
Religious
Hospitallers' mission,
sense of dedication
and commitment to
serve.*



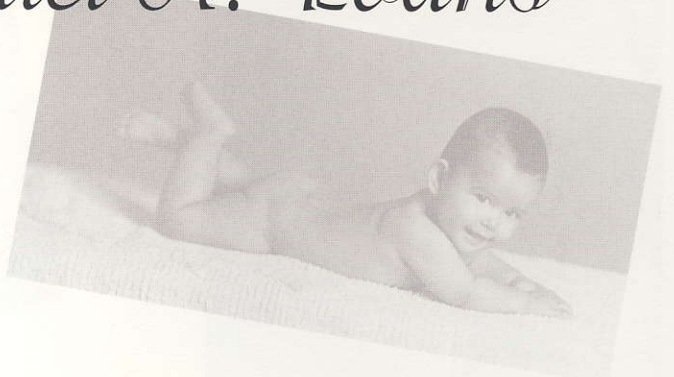
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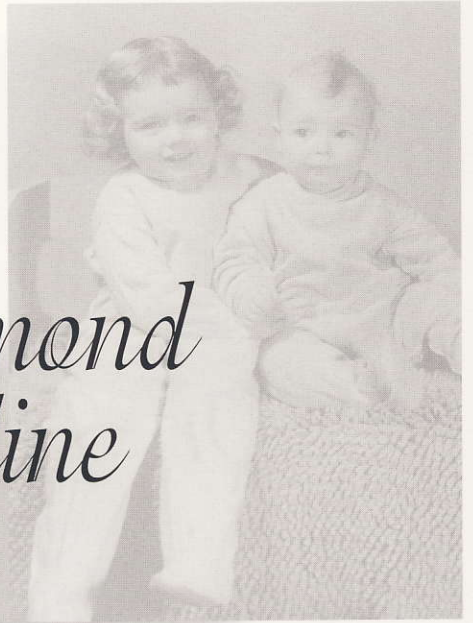
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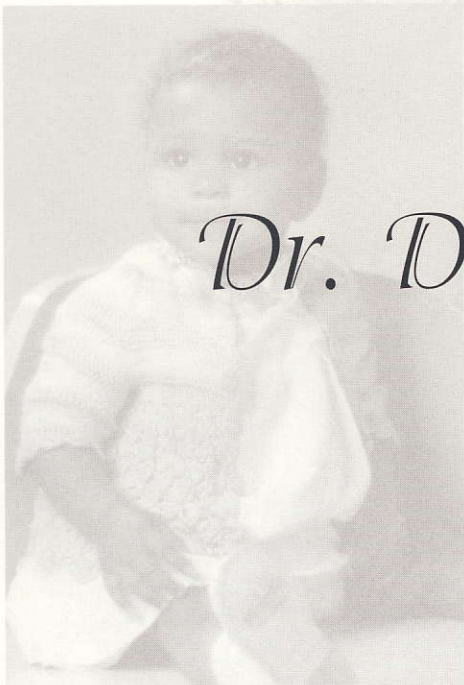
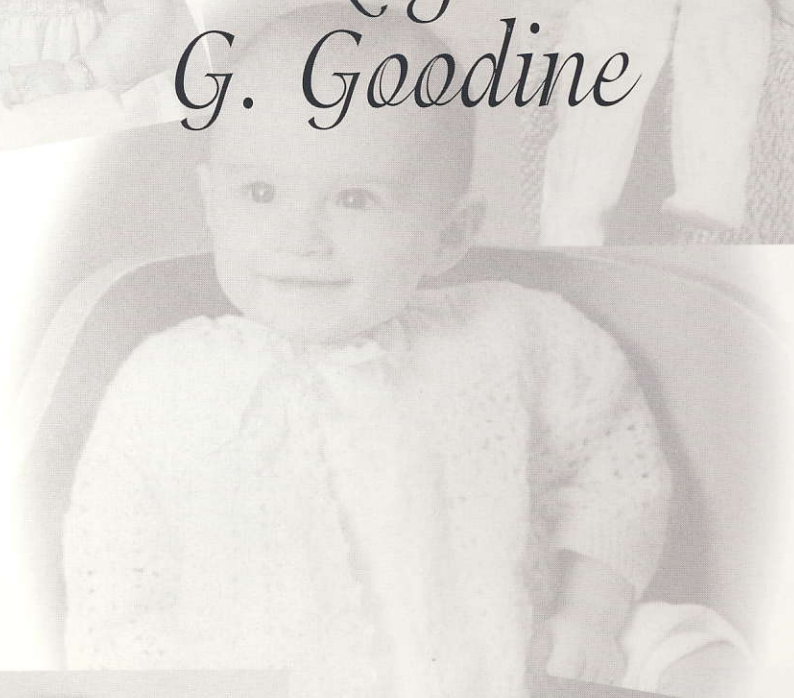
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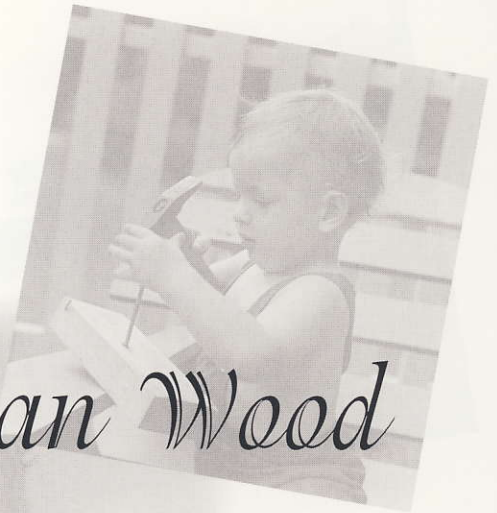
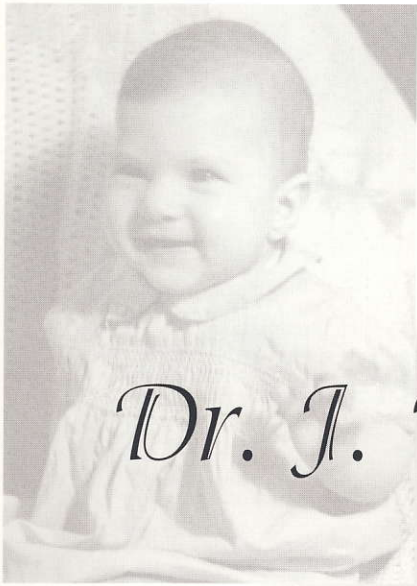


*Dr. Raymond
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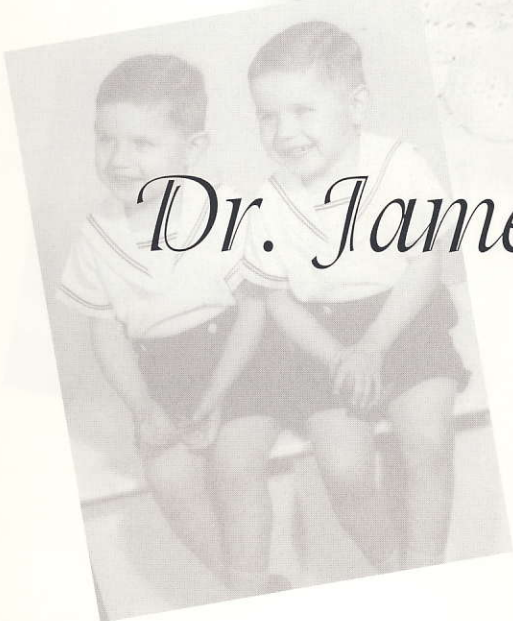


Dr. D. Earl Hunt

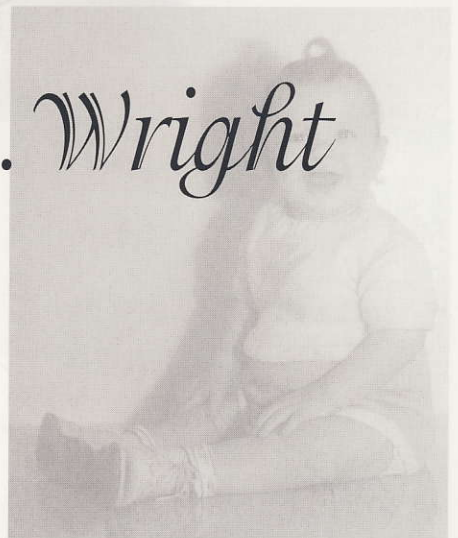
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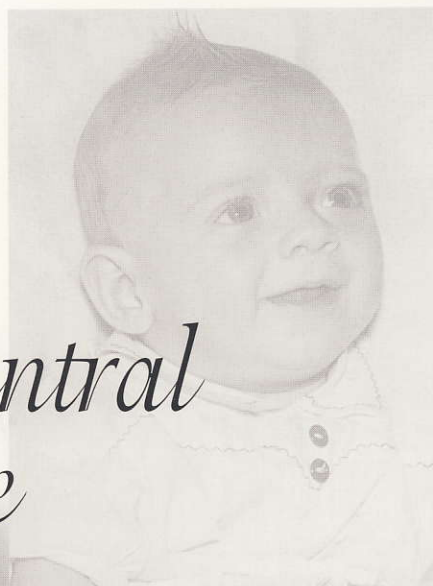
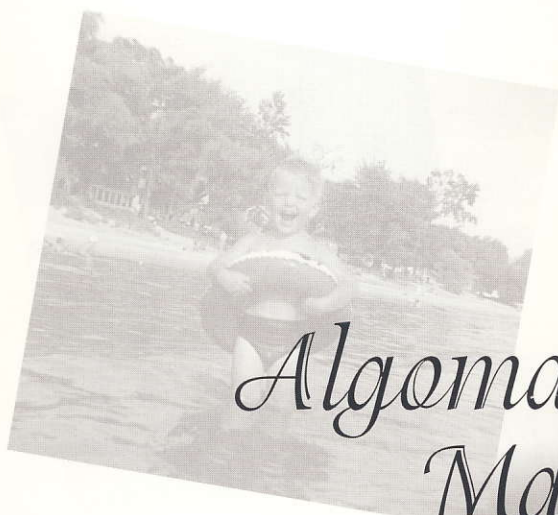
Dr. J. Norman Wood



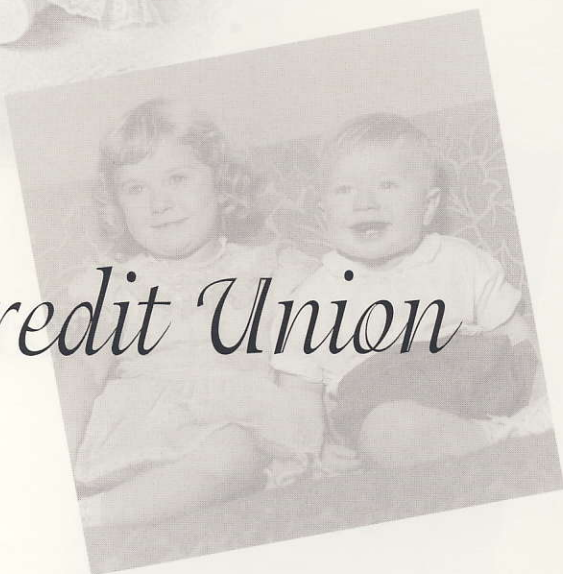
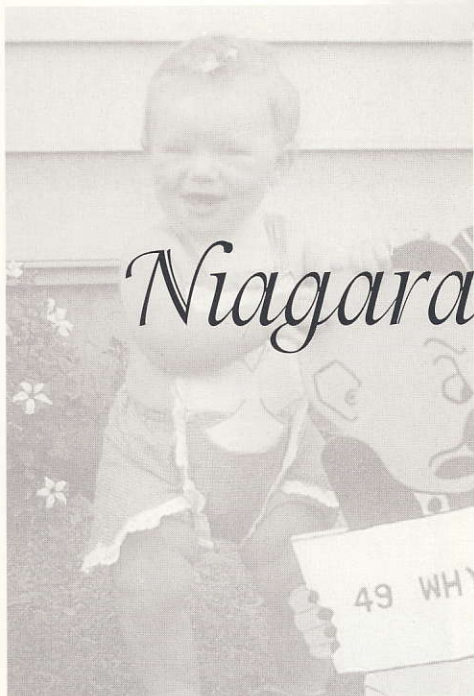
Dr. James A. Wright



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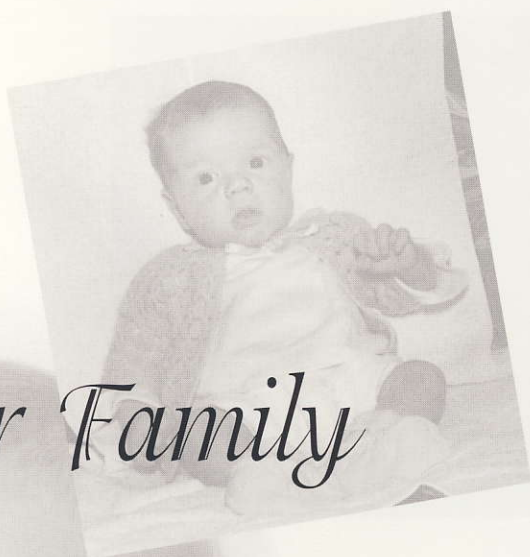


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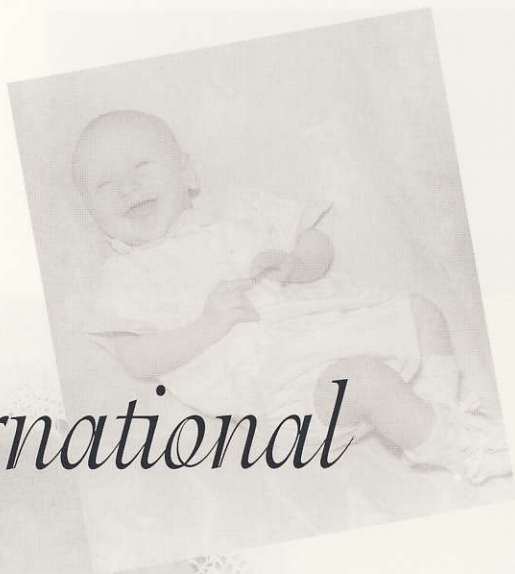
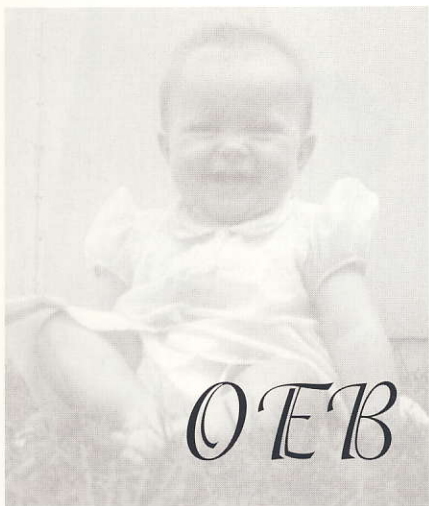
The Nazar Family

*Ontario
Nurses
Association
Local 32*

*Canadian
Union of
Public
Employees
Local 1097*



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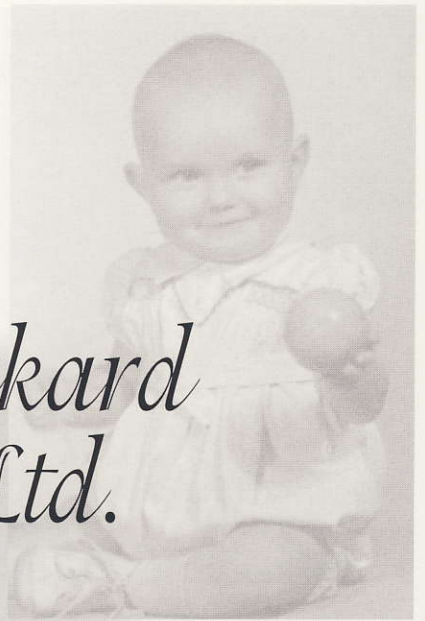
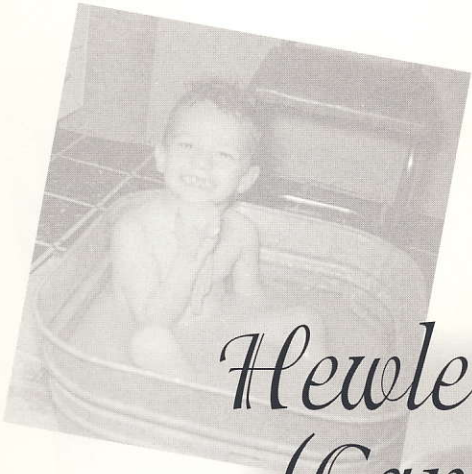
OEB International



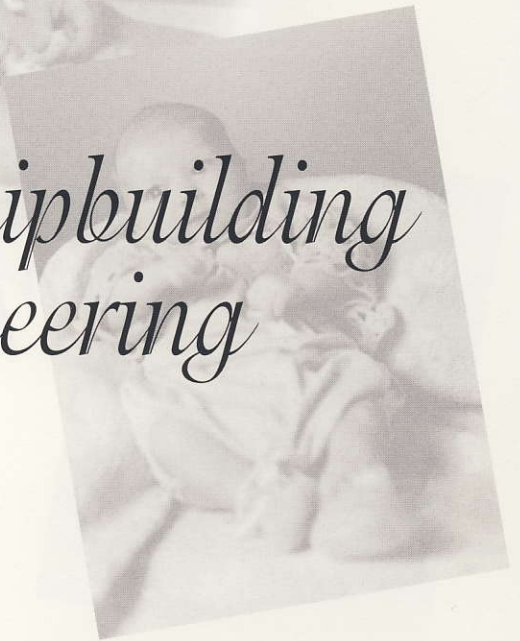
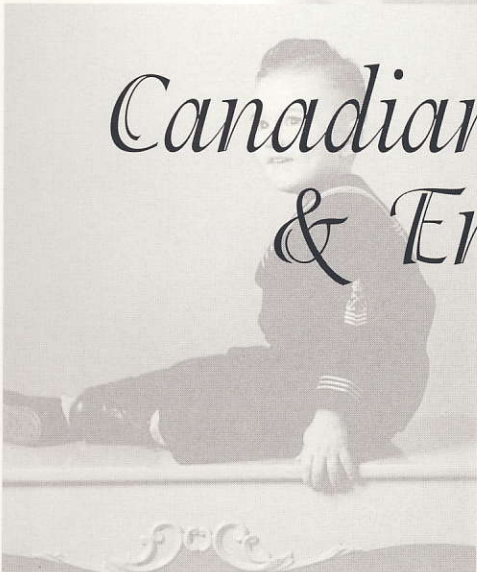
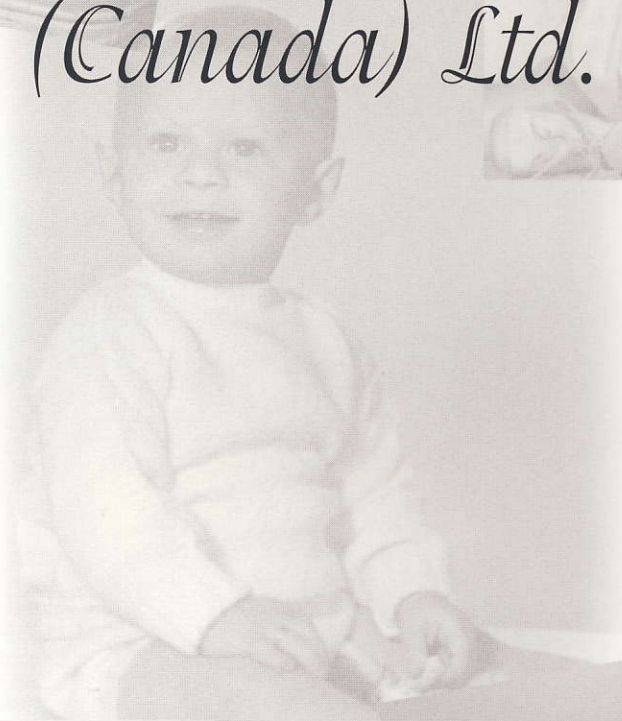
*The Toronto - Dominion
Bank*



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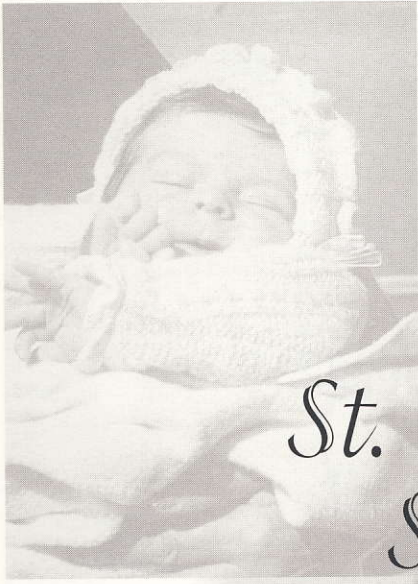
*Hewlett Packard
(Canada) Ltd.*



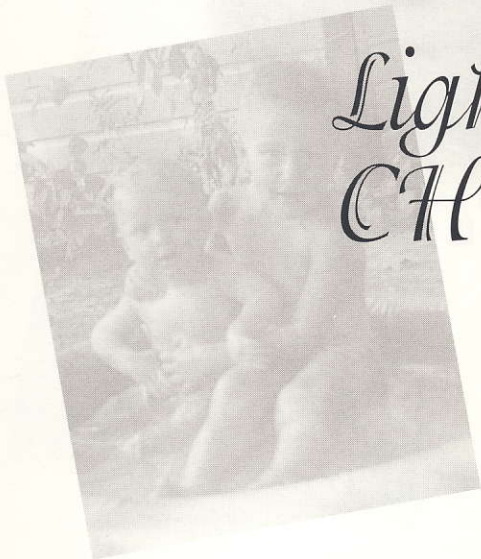
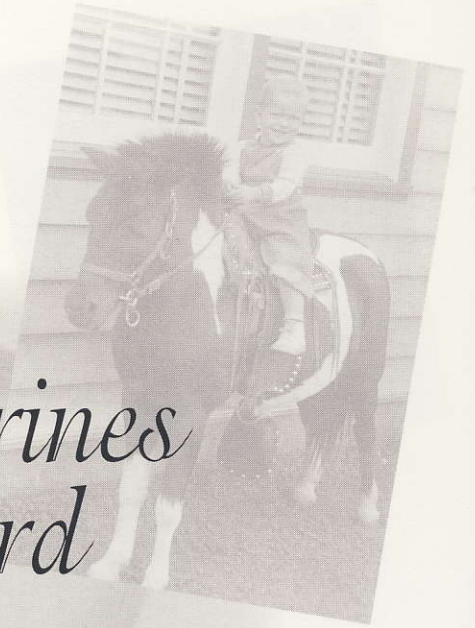
*Canadian Shipbuilding
& Engineering*

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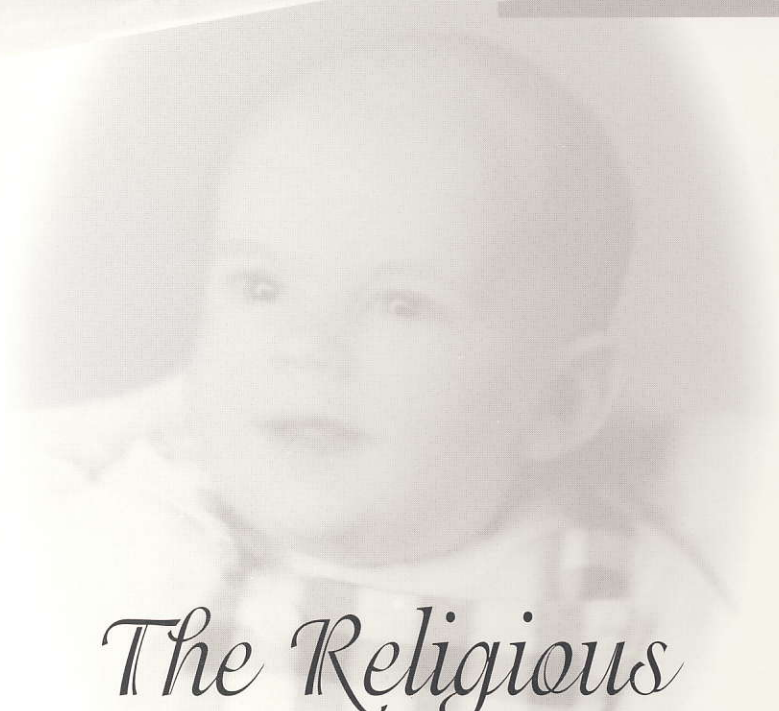
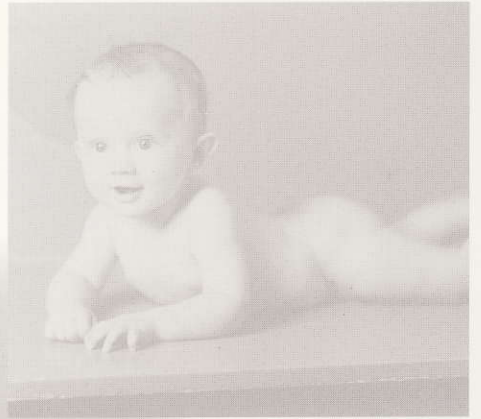
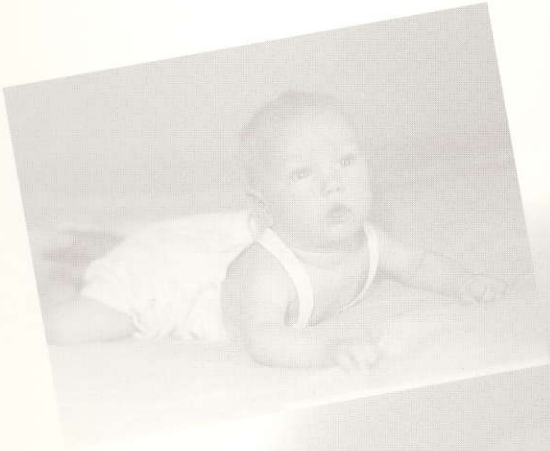
*The
St. Catharines
Standard*



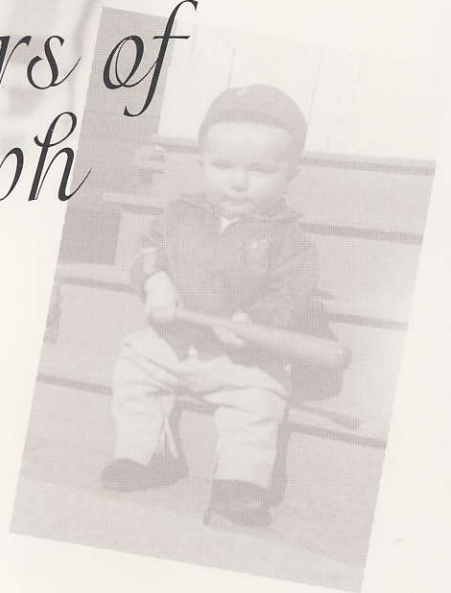
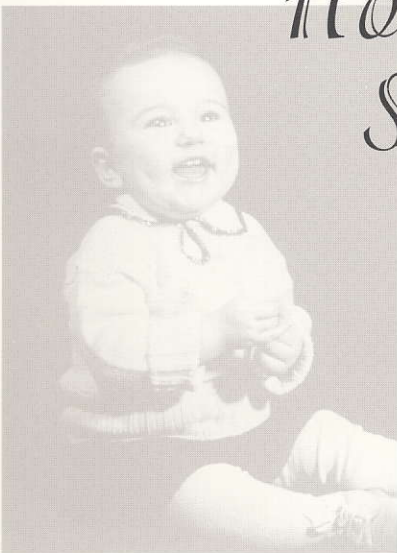
*Light 105.7
CHRE-FM*

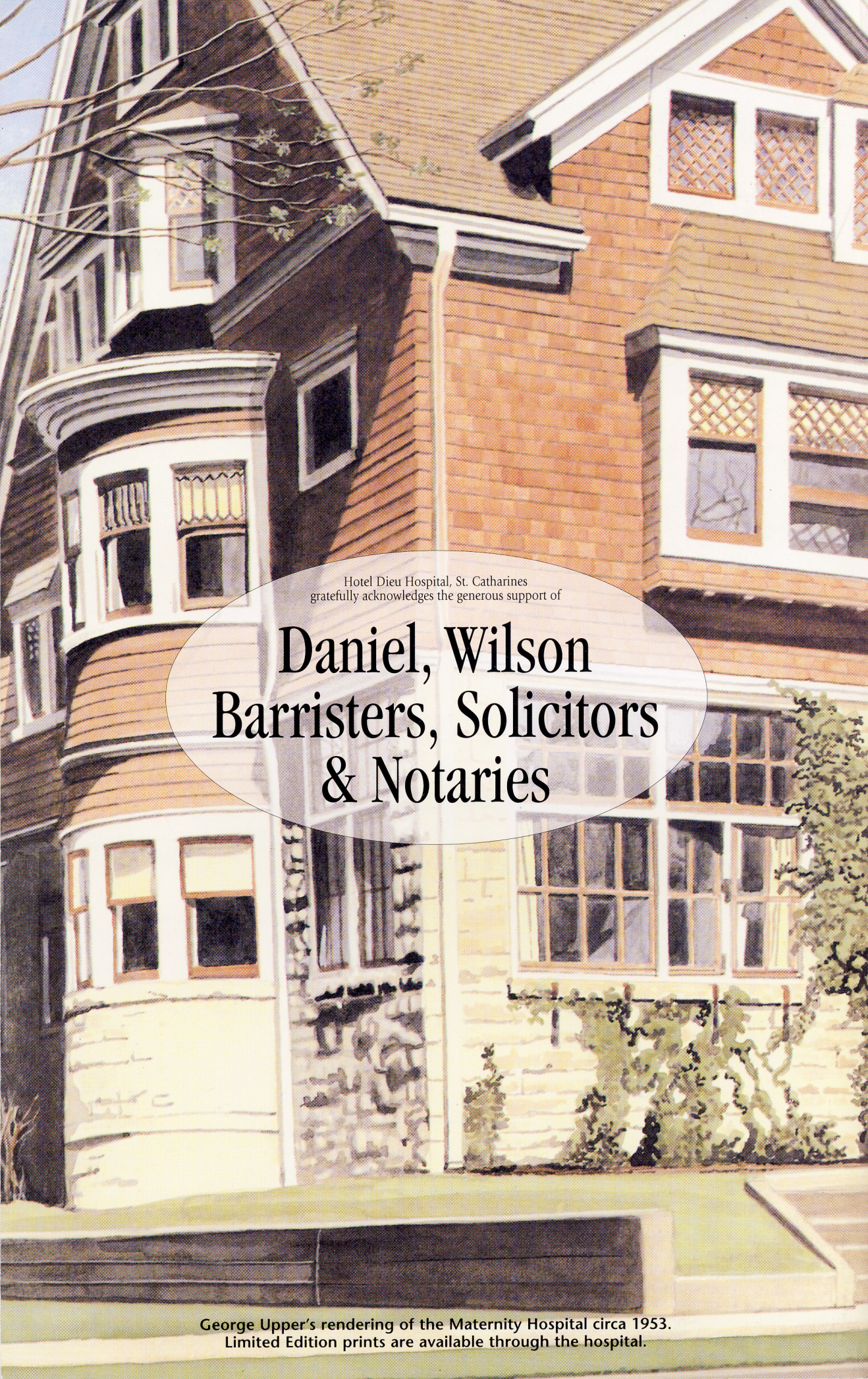


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George Upper's rendering of the Maternity Hospital circa 1953.
Limited Edition prints are available through the hospital.