



Assemblymember John Laird,
Dominican board member Stephanie Harkness,
Dominican President Sister Julie Hyer

Not Anywhere Near Retirement

Hospitals - Dominican Hospital MCP 9 19 06

At 65, Dominican Hospital More Vital Than Ever

by Sarah Weston

On Thursday, Sept. 14, Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital marked the anniversary of 65 years of operation in Santa Cruz. The day included a joint benediction by bishop Sylvester Ryan, bishop of the Diocese of Monterey, and Rabbi Richard Litvak of Temple Beth El in Aptos. There were also testimonials by Sisters of the Adrian Dominican order and presentations from numerous civic leaders. An afternoon barbecue held at both the main hospital and the Dominican Rehabilitation Services facility on Frederick Street drew several hundred hospital employees.

Dominican Hospital traces its origins to Sept. 14, 1941, when five Catholic Adrian Dominican Sisters from Michigan re-opened the doors of Hanley Hospital on West Cliff Drive, renaming the modest facility Sisters Hospital.

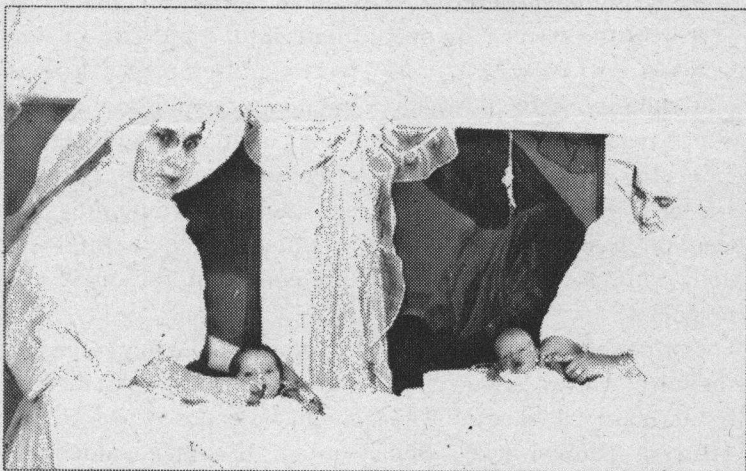
According to Martina O'Sullivan, Director for Community Engagement at Dominican, Sept. 14 is also a Catholic feast day, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. It was that day from which Mission Santa Cruz drew its name. O'Sullivan added that the Adrian Dominican sisters have always felt a special con-

nection with the people of Santa Cruz County.

The Sisters had been invited to the West Coast at the beginning of World War II to help

From Small to Big In a Half Century

Sisters Hospital outgrew its 28 beds by 1949, and an additional 49-bed facility, Domini-



In 1949, the Adrian Sisters purchased their second hospital. They intended to simply rename the facility Dominican Hospital, however the previous owners of the three-story building on Soquel Avenue had etched the concrete above the entrance with "Santa Cruz." Instead of replacing the entrance, the new acquisition was named Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital. Pictured above: Sr. Anne Herring (L) and Sr. Georgeanne Duggan (R).

restore hospital services in the area, having purchased the Hanley facility for a modest price.

However, the shuttered building was in a deplorable state. According to one of the founding sisters in an interview before her death, Sister Georgeanne Duggan, the sisters found the former private hospital in disarray, like "someone had rung a bell and everyone left."

can Santa Cruz Hospital, was purchased on Soquel Avenue on the site of the current Branciforte Plaza. The names of the babies born — height of the Baby Boom in the County — remain on the Plaza's walls.

Then on Dec. 26, 1967, a new 150-bed hospital opened at the present Soquel Drive campus.

Just as significant, in 1988

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Dominican Hospital joined Catholic Healthcare West, which with more than 40 hospitals is the largest not-for-profit system in the West. Dominican also operates Dominican Oaks, a residential facility for more than 225 seniors. The Adrian Dominicans also sponsor three hospitals campused in Nevada.

Of the Sisters to travel to the West Coast during the early years, Sister Anne Herring, a former Dominican administrator, today lives at Dominican Oaks. Herring arrived in 1945. She recalls that the sisters worked tirelessly for decades to keep up with the

demand for services, from treating emergency room patients to attending surgeries and delivering babies.

A Plucky Group

Among those who brought proclamations and offered perspectives on Dominican's role in the community over the past 65 years were Assemblymember John Laird, Santa Cruz Mayor Cynthia Matthews, Watsonville Mayor Antonio Rivas and Fifth District Supervisor Mark Stone. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger also sent a letter of commendation. Sister Donna Markham, prioress general of the Dominican Sisters of Adrian, commented that the Adrian Dominicans had always

been a "plucky" group. Its nearly 1,000 members serve around the world as educators, health care workers, administrators, lawyers, social workers and in other professions.

"[The Adrian Dominicans] have women in every imaginable field in many countries," said O'Sullivan. "The thing I heard over and over again [at the anniversary celebration] was about their compassion and commitment."

O'Sullivan said that the biggest challenge for Dominican is continuing its mission of being the full service hospital for Santa Cruz County. A program established in partnership with the Rotary Clubs of Santa Cruz called RotaCare provides a free weekly clinic to more

than 500 people a year in Live Oak.

Dominican also runs a KidSmart program which provides free vision, hearing and scoliosis screenings for thousands of students in both public and private schools in the area.

Dominican President Sister Julie Hyer noted in a press release that the anniversary celebration was intended both as an expression of thanks and a reaffirmation of the hospital's mission.

"At Dominican Hospital we are grateful for the past 65 years, and we are looking to the future," she said. "We will continue to be a part of and collaborate with our community. We are committed to being there to serve the people of Santa Cruz." ■