

Alton Memorial Nurse retires: For Judy Roth, nursing was its own reward

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ALTON – Many nurses have a pretty good reason for why they became a nurse. **Judy Roth** has the best reason of all: She can't tell you any specific reason other than that she just always wanted to be a nurse.

“I just always wanted to help people,” says Judy, who retired Aug. 3 after 41 years of doing just that for Alton Memorial Hospital. “As far as any role models I had, I didn’t really know any nurses so I guess it would have to be someone like (television doctors) Dr. Kildare and Ben Casey.”

That innate sense of wanting to help was all the motivation Judy has needed since starting out as a candy striper at Marshall Browning Hospital in her native *DuQuoin, Ill.* The 1968 DuQuoin Township High School graduate then earned her nursing diploma from the **DePaul Hospital School of Nursing** in 1971. The *Templin Scholarship Fund* made it possible to complete a BSN in 1993 and an MSN in 2007 from McKendree University.

Judy worked at DePaul for three years (when it was still on Kingshighway in St. Louis) before coming to AMH in January 1974.

“I interviewed both here and at St. Joseph’s Hospital, and I really thought I would end up at St. Joe’s since that was a sister hospital to DePaul,” Judy said. “Virginia Cramblet (AMH director of Nursing for almost 35 years) interviewed me and I remember really loving the atmosphere at Alton Memorial right away.”

The feeling was mutual. Judy started on First Medical and spent time as an evening and midnight supervisor. At that time, the supervisors covered the pharmacy and the Emergency Room.

“When I had ER orientation, they started pulling me over to the ER in the daytime and I really enjoyed it,” she said. “I eventually transferred there. I was a staff nurse there for about 10 years and became manager in 1987.”

Judy remained the ER manager until 1998 when a new chapter of her nursing career started. She worked in all three ER locations.

“Jan King was in charge of the Parish Nurse program and had contacted me about that in 1994, but we opened the new ER that year so it wasn’t time yet,” Judy said. “I started out in a part-time parish nurse position and also helped Pam Herzon as a community schools educator in 1998.”

Judy ended up spending her last 17 years as a parish/faith community nurse, serving the **United Methodist Village** from its beginning in 1998 until just a couple years ago. She was also the parish nurse for the **Episcopal Parish of Alton**, which includes **St. Paul’s Episcopal** in Downtown Alton and **Trinity Chapel** in North Alton; and **Upper Alton Baptist Church**.

“You really have time to develop some wonderful relationships as a parish nurse,” Judy says. “It’s more of a holistic approach, but having a critical care background is very important. It’s certainly something that came in handy many times.”

Judy is looking forward to not having to set an alarm, more time to travel and do some camping with her husband, Jim, and their dog Jack (English Setter), as well as work in her garden.

“I can also travel down to DuQuoin more to visit my mom (91-year-old Norma Lee Martin), who still volunteers at Marshall Browning Hospital,” she said. “Really, I’ve had a perfect career. Nursing was a good fit for me.”

No one would disagree.

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