

Expansion
in the
post-war era.

CHAPTER SEVEN



EXCELLENCE

“Do all the good you can ...”

— John Wesley

THE END OF WORLD WAR II HELD GREAT PROMISE. PATIENTS ARRIVED in record numbers. Plans took shape for an extensive new facility: the Mayo Building. Saint Marys Hospital prepared for an increased workload. “Only the downtown hospitals ... flawed the hopeful Rochester medical center picture.”

“Downtown” hospital care has a story that is distinct from and complementary to the relationship between Saint Marys and Mayo Clinic. Starting in the early 1900s, Saint Marys could not meet all demands, even with frequent expansion. In addition, patients needed a place to recover after surgery and their families needed lodging.

Rochester businessman John Kahler stepped forward. In 1907, he opened a remodeled house near the Mayos’ office. A newspaper reported: “The institution has the novel aspect of being a home, a hospital, a sanitarium and an infirmary, all in one.”

For the next 47 years, the Kahler Corporation developed a network of hotels and hospitals, along with other amenities, to serve patients and visitors. At the dedication of the Kahler Hotel in 1921, Dr. William J. Mayo praised John Kahler: “He had the vision, the ability, to see and think and act. He has made possible the Clinic expansion.”

With changes in medical technology and economics after World War II, however, the Kahler Corporation turned exclusively to hospitality. The search began for a new model of downtown hospital care.

On January 1, 1954, Rochester Methodist Hospital came into being. Like Saint Marys, it was a not-for-profit organization founded by faith-based activists who worked with Mayo physicians. Harry Blackmun, J.D., Mayo Clinic attorney, future justice of the United States Supreme Court and a prominent Methodist, wrote the articles of incorporation.

Unlike Saint Marys, the new hospital was not part of a church hierarchy. It was a stand-alone initia-

The Kahler Hotel included hospital facilities.



Early days of
open-heart surgery.

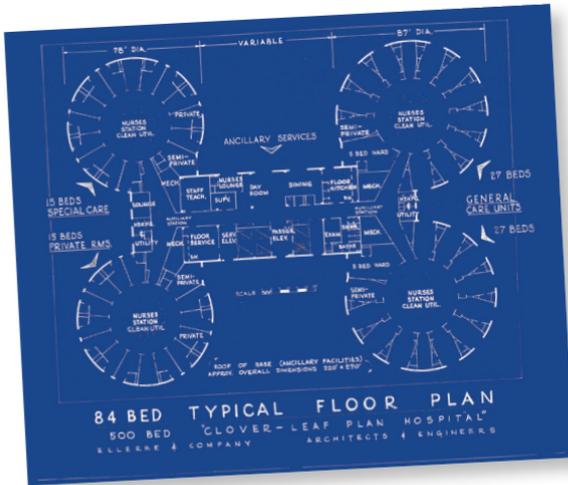
tive, which compelled innovation. For a dozen years, the staff worked in Kahler facilities constructed decades before. But from the start, they were committed to developing the best methods.

Later generations would talk about “Six Sigma” and “Quality Planning.” For Rochester Methodist Hospital, the mantra was “Dedicated to Excellence.”

In 1955, the hospital earned global acclaim when John Kirklin, M.D., pioneered open-heart surgery with a heart-lung bypass machine. The pharmacy created the unit dose of dispensing medication, setting a new standard for the medical profession. Recognizing the unique ministry of hospital chaplains, Rochester Methodist established a nationally renowned training program for clergy.

Befitting its name, Rochester Methodist Hospital engaged the community. It started a community-based board of directors and auxiliary, later adopted by Saint Marys. While Mayo Clinic and Saint Marys passively accepted gifts, most often for charity care, Rochester Methodist took a proactive approach: setting a vision,





The radial nursing unit at Rochester Methodist Hospital was a major innovation.

stating a case and seeking support, which defines philanthropy at Mayo Clinic today.

Rochester Methodist also pioneered the respectful way that new management works

with established employees ... a spirit that proved essential many times over in the coming years. Rochester Methodist set a bold new path, but welcomed the skills and dedication of former Kahler staff. The revitalized Methodist-Kahler School of Nursing looked ahead while honoring roots of nursing education that went back to 1918.

In 1957, leaders began studying the concept of a radial nursing unit, with a central desk encircled by patient rooms. A prototype nicknamed “the silo” proved its effectiveness. The radial unit became a highlight of the hospital’s new building, which opened in 1966, and inspired architects for years to come.

But with progress came sacrifice. Ironically, studies showed the best location for the new building was the site of First Methodist Church, the very congrega-

tion that was most deeply involved with the hospital. The congregation gave up their home for a state-of-the-art medical facility and resettled across town as Christ United Methodist Church.

More than 10,000 people thronged to the open house for Rochester Methodist Hospital. Its wide doors opened a new era ... programs in nutrition education ... car seats to give newborn babies a safe ride home ... “Come and See” activities to welcome school children ... the Life Run, an early effort to promote fitness ... the first FDA-approved artificial hip joint ... and Charter House, a new concept in retirement living.

Like Saint Marys, with its Franciscan tradition, Rochester Methodist Hospital was open to people from all walks of life. It took root and flourished with the values of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who said: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the souls you can, for as long as you ever can.”

The staff at Rochester Methodist Hospital combined technical skills and compassionate care.



Computers
changed the
practice of
medicine in
the 1960s.



ENDNOTES

- Page 49 “Only the downtown hospitals ...” is found in **Holmes, W: *Dedicated to Excellence – The Rochester Methodist Hospital Story***. Rochester, Minnesota: Privately printed, 1984; revised, 1987, p. 44.
- Page 49: The 1907 newspaper article is quoted in **Holmes, p. 41**.
- Page 50: Dr. Will Mayo’s speech praising John Kahler at the 1921 dedication of the Kahler Hotel is quoted in ***The Kahler Grand Hotel***. Privately printed, no date, p. 1.
- Pages 51-53: Milestone accomplishments of Rochester Methodist Hospital are featured in text, artifacts and film in the exhibit, ***Dedicated to Excellence: Rochester Methodist Hospital***. Lobby of the George M. Eisenberg Building, **Methodist Campus of Mayo Clinic Hospital — Rochester, Rochester, Minnesota**.
- Page 53 “Do all the good you can ...” is a saying widely attributed to John Wesley, founder of Methodism, in many print and online sources; wording varies (“souls” vs. “people,” etc.).

