

Betty Faye looks back on long career at Sullivan County Health Care

By MELISSA LAFLAMME
Staff Writer

UNITY — Even from the start of high school Betty Faye had an interest in the health care field. But her life hadn't quite headed that direction.

Before beginning a fresh start, Faye was employed in secretarial jobs, as an office manager, a travel agent, and at one time an employee of Northwest airlines.

It was a friend who suggested Faye take time for school and enroll in the certified nurse's assistant program at New Hampshire Community Technical College in Claremont.

"It's always been there. I've always gravitated toward the health field. I'm just a nurturing person," she said. "This was an opportunity to give it a try."

Registered Nurse

Soon she was headed back to become a licensed practical nurse and then a registered nurse. And despite the positions she had held and the places she had been employed, Faye believed the Sullivan County Nursing Home in Unity was where she wanted to be.

"I came back because I just love the facility. It's like a mother when you start out some place," she said.

As a CNA she felt a connection with her patients that made her job enjoyable, but with a late start in the field and in her mid 30's the job was wearing on her body.

"Hands on patient care is wonderful - it was a little too much for me physically," she said. "The CNA was a very different job, it was hard work."

Learned about Patients

It was patient care that Faye gained from the most. In these times she learned about her patients and the lives and often became their family.

"Some residents don't have a lot of visitors so you are their family. I became very close to a lot of them," she said. "I had a lot of residents who were alert and fun and it was great. You get to know their families and you're part of them. I thoroughly enjoyed the job."

From unit manager to day shift supervisor to the director of nurses, Faye was able to experience nursing from each angle. But it was the supervision position that she connected to.

"I got to know all the residents, I got to know all the staff," she said.

Shifted from LPN Position

As she shifted from an LPN position to an RN, Faye left the field to focus on school. Her

first year in the program she said was easy and covered material she was familiar with from her practical nursing program. The second year was where it got tough, but she credits her late husband for some of her success.

"I had a great husband, he was a lot of help," Faye said. "I went back (to school) full time. I didn't work at all." He encouraged me. You had to really, really study.

And hit the books she did, leading her into the National Honor Society.

"You had to really, really study," she said, pointing out that each night when dinner was finished she would head upstairs and study for almost five hours. "I lost a lot of family time, but my husband would put the kids to bed."

Even with more than 30 years in the health care field she feels being a nurse is fearsome.

Very Scary Job

"Nursing is very scary, it is a very scary job if you stop and think because you have someone's life in your hands. You're really responsible for that person. People don't really realize the responsibility they carry," she said.

Of her retirement Faye said it was her time to leave.

"I started to feel like it was time for me to turn over the reigns to a younger person. There's been so many changes in the regulations and the paperwork - a lot of change in personnel," she said. "I just felt before things were in turmoil. I feel that things have settled down. I can leave and feel that every-thing is in good hands. Change is very good and it's time for me to change."

Made Many Friends

In her employment at the Sullivan County Nursing Home, now Sullivan County Health Care, Faye made friends with her fellow nurses who, like her, have remained at the facility for years.

"There's a lot of people that have been there for a lot of years," she said. "It's better to have someone who has been there for a long time whose known the residents when they walk in the door from day one."

Her time to herself isn't set in stone. But she plans to cover on a per diem basis while other nurses are on vacation.

"I'm just going day by day," she said Faye. "I haven't cut the umbilical cord completely."

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