

Unburying the Past

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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It was an unexpected find: during the construction and renovation of the lobby and entrance at OSF HealthCare St. Mary Medical Center in Galesburg, Illinois, a time capsule was discovered, buried behind a plaque that hung on the lobby wall. It had been placed there 43 years ago – October 30, 1974 to be exact – and forgotten.

The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis were called to Galesburg in 1907, and began providing care to the community at the current location on Seminary Street on November 17, 1974.

SOT Roxanna Crosser – CEO Western Region, OSF HealthCare

(What went through my mind is just thinking of what was occurring at that particular time and so you just kind of wonder what's going to be in this particular box and the memories of what was occurring 43 years ago or 45 years ago when they were developing this particular spot and truly how exciting that is to really go into the history of our Sisters and really understand what they were going through at that particular time :27)

V/O: When opened, the sealed copper box contained a treasure trove of memories. Among the items inside were two 1974 pennies; prayer and holy cards; a metal Rosary with a rose carved bead; and notes from 10 Sisters of The Third Order of St. Francis, including one from Sister Mary Jane Dawson, who was on hand for the unveiling. Sister Mary Jane remembers writing the note by hand after taking a class in calligraphy!

In 1974, John Meek worked on the hospital construction crew during college. He still works for Felmley-Dickerson, the original contractor, but he is now the president of the company. Seeing the contents from the time capsule brought back memories.

SOT John Meek, President, Felmley-Dickerson Company

(I was so excited because when I was contacted they sent a picture of the cardboard, I knew Byron, and I knew Bill Wills and they were friends and they were the bosses here they were the guys that I reported to, I was just so excited because it meant so much. The nuns that wrote the notes and so forth they were real active around here because they come out from downtown where the old Hospital was and they would come out we'd have walk-throughs and so forth and talked all the nuns and I just meant so much to see them and to see the rosary and so forth. A whole lot of positive memories :39)

V/O: While all of the originals from the 1974 box will be safely stored in the archives at the Sisters' Motherhouse in East Peoria, Illinois, a new time capsule will be placed back into the wall, replacing the previous one. Included will be two 2017 pennies, a San Damiano Crucifix, a prayer card with a quote from the Sisters' Foundress, Mother France Krasse, OSF, a Blessed medal of St. Francis of Assisi that came from Assisi along with a medal of the Blessed Mother, patron of St. Mary Medical Center. Also included will be a number of photos and other memories.

Construction on the \$2.2 million project began in May of 2017. During that time patients, families and visitors had to navigate an ever-changing maze to get to their destination, knowing the short term disruption would be worth it.

SOT Roxanna Crosser – CEO Western Region, OSF HealthCare

(I believe our main entrance really speaks loudly about the investments that we're making within our community. I consider it the gateway on our healthcare system and how we want to have a home and with this new entry I think we can do that :18)

Other construction projects are still in progress at OSF St. Mary, including a \$20-million surgery, lab, and outpatient center, a second floor renovation for surgical patients, with planning for a new Family Birthing Center underway.