

# **Sister Elizabeth Anne Corcoran, RSM, was face of Mercy Medical Center**

Sister Elizabeth Anne Corcoran, who was born at what is now Mercy Medical Center, received a portion of her education there and over nearly six decades of service became a face of the institution, died Dec. 5 at Stella Maris Hospice in Timonium.

A Sister of Mercy for more than 65 years, she was 88 years old. Sister Elizabeth Anne received her nursing degree from Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in 1951; worked at Mercy Hospital from 1955 to 1958 as a floor nurse, instructor and supervisor; and after a stint in Atlanta returned to Baltimore for good in 1965.

Over the last 63 years, Sister Elizabeth Anne served as assistant director of nursing, 1965-75; director of nursing, 1975-87; vice president of nursing; 1987-89; and then assistant to the president for hospitality. All the while, she resided at the hospital at the heart of Baltimore as it changed names and grew substantially.

“She didn’t ever really retire,” said Sister Helen Amos, executive chair of the Mercy Board of Trustees. “Up until she had a final bout of illness around Labor Day, she did what she could. She felt a protectiveness of the whole organization. She felt that, ‘If this going to be a hospitable place, that’s my duty.’

“She had a genuine interest in people, and a commitment to the mission of hospitality. As the hospital grew around her, her focus on that central mission allowed her to do whatever was called for. It wasn’t about her, it was about the mission. The sign on the door says ‘The Sisters of Mercy Welcome You.’ She personified that.”

Both Mercy Medical Center and service were in her blood. According to an obituary provided by the hospital, she was the niece of Sister Mary Veronica, former head administrator of Mercy Hospital, 1936-41 and 1947-53. Among her seven siblings

was the late Sister Mary Neil Corcoran, director of the Esperanza Center in Fells Point from 1990 to 2002.

Her cousins include Mark R. Fetting, former CEO of Legg Mason and a longtime member of Mercy's Board of Trustees.

"Our family has served Mercy Hospital for four generations as trustees and staff members," Fetting said in the obituary prepared by the hospital. "Sister Elizabeth Anne became the true champion of us all. Her devotion to Mercy and its patients has inspired so many and her wit brought joy to all."

She attended the parish school at Ss. Philip and James, and Mount St. Agnes High School in Mount Washington. In addition to being a registered nurse, she earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Mount St. Agnes College, and in 1979 a master's in healthcare administration from the University of Notre Dame.

In December 2010, Mercy President and CEO Tom Mullen named "The Corcoran Café" in the new Mary Catherine Bunting Center in honor of Sister Elizabeth Anne.

"Sister Elizabeth Anne embodied the mission and values of the Sisters of Mercy and was an extraordinary role model for all of us," Mullen said in the hospital's obituary. "She taught us to welcome patients, families and visitors with courtesy, respect and compassion. In her heart, she was always a nurse and inspired young nurses. ... She was an Irish blessing to me."

He noted her love of "St. Patrick's Day, Irish Coffee and hosting annual lunches for her Mercy friends."

Sister Helen, who noted Sister Elizabeth Anne's "friendship and working relationship" with her mentor, Sister Mary Thomas, former president of the hospital, and the institutional knowledge that came from keeping in touch with retired nurses and physicians.

"She was irresistibly friendly," Sister Helen said. "You just couldn't help but feel at ease around her."

She was known as the "Queen of Hospitality," and, according to a former employee

of the hospital, simply as “E.A.”

“She was very much a revered, grandmotherly figure,” said Kevin Parks, who worked at Mercy Medical Center for 26 years before becoming visual journalist for the Review in 2016. “She always asked what my three kids were up to. That didn’t change when I visited her at Stella Maris. The first question she asked was, ‘How are your kids?’ Her smile and kindness were evident to the end.”

Visitation will be held at Mercy Medical Center’s McAuley Chapel Dec. 10, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. On Dec. 11, viewing will be at Stella Maris Chapel in Timonium at 9 a.m., with a funeral Mass at 10 a.m.

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