

1942 Norma Ellen Knox (Anderson)

I am a graduate (1942) of the University of Minnesota, School of Nursing. I am honored to be associated with such a prestigious school where I worked with luminaries, such as Katherine Densford, Dean of the School of Nursing for nearly 30 years and Dr. Cecil .I. Watson, expert on disorders of the liver and Chief of the University of Minnesota School of Medicine, Dr. Watson also treated my mother for cirrhosis of the liver, caused by repeated bouts of hepatitis, over the last five years of her life in the 1930s, pre-antibiotics. I also worked with Dr. Owen H. Wangenstein, who for 37 years was chief of surgery at the University of Minnesota, School of Medicine and was doing heart and complicated abdominal surgeries much before they were commonly performed, I also worked with Sister' (Elizabeth) Kenny, who treated millions of polio victims throughout the world

I personally applied hot packs and cared for a child whom she had removed from an iron lung. As three year students in-house, we worked 8 hour shifts plus doing our academic studies, many of which were taught by the faculty of the School of Medicine. As junior and senior students, we were the staff on the 3-11 an 11-7 shifts, only covered by RN supervisors. We didn't learn the technical skills, which nursing students now learn, but we cared for post-operative and intensive care patients on the general floors, without the benefit of separate departments. We were taught by excellent nurses; along-side learning nursing skills, we were expected to make observation and report promptly. We gave caring and thorough bedside care. We studied together and had interesting demonstrations, such as acting out a baby being born and setting up an isolation unit outside my dorm room.

My living conditions in Powell Hall were a joy. I had never had a room or even a bed to myself until I started training. I came from a family often childr'en on a farm in Northern Minnesota. I made life-long friends - several of us stayed in touch and had reunions until this past year. There are only two of us left alive now. We are widowed; one classmate had several strokes and ensuing dementia, so we have lost touch with her. The others were five year students, but we spent three years together in the hospital and not one ever made me feel inferior there were no class distinctions. The food was good and we had many social activities, including quarterly dances. They were very dressy affairs with ball gowns and wonderful 1940s swing music.

After graduating and moving to the West Coast, my nursing education and experience, was met with complete confidence by hiring institutions when I applied for work and stated that I was educated at the University Of Minnesota School Of Nursing.

Thank you for my many memories