



A family Affair: The ‘Porter Sisters’ celebrate a cumulative 124 years of work at LMH

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Langley Memorial has a reputation for being a “family” hospital. And indeed, this is what it has been to the McKay family.

The McKay family has worked at Langley Memorial Hospital for two generations and a cumulative of 124 years.

Bruce McKay joined Langley Memorial in 1975 as an orderly when he moved to Langley with his wife, Jackie, and their four daughters. Langley Memorial was, at the time, a small but friendly little ‘hospital on the hill.’

Orderlies were very important in hospitals and helped nurses perform primary patient care duties such as feeding, grooming, bathing, shaving and dressing. They also assisted patients with their communication and mobilization needs.

Bruce worked in orthopedics and renal and was known for making his patients feel comfortable, most especially male patients who were often relieved to have a man with whom they could share their concerns.

The hospital restructured in 1988, and Bruce was the first male Licensed Practical Nurse to work on 2 North when the unit opened. He retired from Langley Memorial in 1996 after 21 years of service.

His eldest daughter Kelly Mackenzie joined the hospital in 1977, working in the laundry. During her career at Langley Memorial, she also worked in dietary and portering. She retired in 2015 after 38 years of service to the hospital.

Korreen Magee started as a porter in the X-ray department in 1980. She retired in 2018, having worked at the hospital, like her sister, for 38 years.

And finally, Kris joined the hospital in 1991 as a clerk in the X-ray department and has worked in various hospital departments such as housekeeping, laundry, dietary, and, finally, portering. Kris has worked at Langley Memorial for 31 years and continues to do so, keeping the family flag flying.

The second youngest daughter Kathy is the only daughter not to have worked at the hospital; however, she, like all her sisters except for Korreen, had her children at Langley Memorial.

“We would show up in the maternity ward together when a sister had a baby, and the staff would look at us curiously and then realize we were all sisters,” says Korreen.

“At one time, we were all portering at the same time and became known as the Porter Sisters. It was even a question in a pediatric staff quiz one year – ‘Who are the Porter Sisters?’” she chuckles.



Korreen describes Langley Memorial as her second home. She played on the baseball team, often helped with the float build for the Langley Parade and always participated in the bed race.

“I have many good friends from Langley Memorial,” she says. “I never had a reason to leave, and I lived 15 minutes away.”

Explaining her role in the hospital as a porter, Korreen says, “My job was to support the nurses and advocate for my patients while I transported them in the hospital. We would spend ten or more minutes with a patient, which is a lot of time in a hospital.

“In conversation, we would gather important information to pass on to the medical staff. Patients were sometimes anxious or concerned; we could help smooth things

over. We got to know the repeat patients very well, and of course, it was always sad when we lost them.”

The most significant change Korreen witnessed in the hospital was the introduction of the first Ultrasound in 1988 and the first CT Scanner in 1993.

“It was a huge change from the old diagnostic imaging tests. Less invasive, more accurate and much quicker,” says Korreen.

Some of Korreen’s warmest memories of working at the hospital were when she and her husband Brian – who worked in maintenance at the hospital and whom she met on the hospital baseball team – adopted their daughter from China.

“I got so many unexpected gifts and cards from people I worked with. The support warmed my heart,” she says.

The hospital is a witness to cycles of birth and death.

When Bruce McKay’s wife of 65 years died at age 85, he was heartbroken. Seven months later, Bruce, 86, died too. Bruce and Jackie both spent their final days at Langley’s Hospice surrounded by the “Porter sisters” and their family and community.

Bruce McKay (1937 - 2023) loved his job, his family and his wife. In fact, Bruce McKay loved people, and his job was people focused. When he died, the outpouring of affection reflected his kindness and warmth and the community in which he worked.



“Bruce was a legend at Langley Memorial. We all have great stories of him and had so much fun working with him,” wrote Rhonda Veldoen.



“When I came to Langley Memorial in 1981, there was Bruce. He was always so supportive of the patients and the staff. Always willing to help. I’ll cherish my memories of him,” wrote Penny Weller.