



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Icon in Pike County Healthcare Set to Retire

Mary Alice Cisco has been helping care for the community for 64 years

WAVERLY, OH (Nov. 22, 2021) – Try walking through the halls of Adena Pike Medical Center with Mary Alice Cisco without anyone passing by, flashing a big smile and tossing out some variation of, “Hey, Mary Alice, how’ve you been?”

Odds are, you can’t do it. After all, Mary Alice has been an integral part of that hospital since before its doors opened in December of 1958. When her tenure at APMC officially ends with her retirement at the end of this year, it will have been 64 years since she first applied to help care for the residents of Pike County.

The 95-year-old native of Jeffersonville, Indiana, began her journey to a healthcare career during World War II when she pursued training in the Cadet Nurse Corps. She didn’t quite finish the program because, during her second year, she got married – something that wasn’t allowed for those involved in the Corps. She wound up becoming an LPN as a registered surgical technician instead. After a move to Pike County and years of staying home caring for the couple’s two children (at the time, a third would be welcomed into the family later), an opportunity presented itself that she never could have imagined she would still be enjoying more than six decades later.

“As soon as I heard this hospital was going to be built, I applied as soon as I possibly could,” she said. “I was hired around July of 1958 and we didn’t open until December. An RN and I set up surgery, central supply and we also had the recovery room we were responsible for.”

Remembering that in the early days of the hospital they “were a busy bunch,” Mary Alice’s background was put to good use training all of the surgical techs and assisting the physicians performing surgeries at the hospital. Because she was credentialed in Medical Records as well, she also provided help to area nursing homes which had to have a credentialed person on staff.

After 35 years on the surgical staff, Mary Alice moved over to the Medical Records department for the next 25 years of her career. As she reached and then passed the usual retirement age, she knew she still had plenty to contribute after leaving that post.

“At that time, I was plenty old enough to retire and I told the administrator, ‘If you don’t find me another job, I’m going to be leaving,’” she recalled. “So they got me the job I’ve been doing the last several years, which is call backs, where I call surgery and ER patients who have recently been discharged to see how they are doing and get their feedback.

“When Adena took over APMC, they’ve been extremely good to me, and that’s what I’ve continued doing the last four years. I’m enjoying this and really enjoy getting the feedback I gather. I enjoy talking with the patients.”

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True to her past performance, she hasn't been content with doing just her own job. Mary Alice has been very active with the hospital's volunteers to the point that she jokes, "I'm involved with the volunteers as much as if I was a volunteer." In 2020, she took the lead in working with the Adena Pike Medical Center Foundation Board and Adena Health Foundation to shepherd to conclusion a project converting an inpatient hospital room at APMC into one specifically for hospice patients and their families. With the help of \$15,000 she personally donated, the room now bears her name and includes a pullout couch, microwave, refrigerator, tables and chairs, and more space than the average room, making it much more comfortable for families of hospice patients to gather and visit their loved ones in the hospital.

Mary Alice considers that project, as well as the kindness and compassion she's brought to relationships she's formed over the decades at the hospital, as her legacy. Others would definitely agree.

During the dedication of the Mary Alice Cisco Hospice Room in 2020, Dave Zanni, Senior Operations Executive Officer at APMC, expressed his appreciation and spoke of the importance of her generosity, her institutional knowledge of the hospital and her willingness to share of herself.

"Throughout her long and storied career at Adena Pike Medical Center, Mary Alice remains a true champion of this facility, never losing faith in what this hospital can accomplish or how we can best serve our community," he said. "Her passion has been a driving force behind our successes, making us stronger and better prepared to serve our community members."

Even now, 25 to 30 years after many people would have called it a career, Mary Alice finds it difficult to consider walking away from something she still enjoys doing. A recent hospital stay as a patient, however, convinced her the time was right.

She still plans to stay active with the hospital's volunteers, saying there is a definite need for additional help and urging members of the community to consider sharing a bit of their time and abilities to enhance the hospital experience for their friends and neighbors.

When she's no longer a daily fixture in the APMC halls and her name comes up in conversation, Mary Alice simply hopes people speak of her as having been a good employee who was very faithful to whatever job she happened to be doing. She also hopes they realize how much she loved them, how they have been like family and how much they will be missed.

"I like to take care of others, and I'm really going to miss coming here," she said. "Some people say, 'Why in the world do you want to work that long?' I just say, 'Because I really enjoy it.'"

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