

# @ the museum....

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The story of the growth and development of our local hospital is often associated with that of former superintendent Dorothy Doan. Until Dorothy assumed leadership of Strathroy General Hospital in 1956, the facility saw a new superintendent nearly every year. Her arrival as administrator ushered in an era of stability, as she oversaw the provision of efficient, yet empathetic, medical care in the community of Strathroy for over two decades.

Dorothy Doan's connection to the hospital began when she was just 17 years old and began training at the Nursing School at Strathroy General Hospital. The Komoka native completed her course in 1935 and when World War II was declared in 1939, enlisted with the Canadian Military Nurses Association to become a more experienced nurse.

Dorothy was assigned to duty in Cape Town, South Africa, and when her one-year contract expired, she opted to stay with the South African Nursing Service instead of returning home. During her annual two-week leave, Dorothy travelled throughout Africa and the Middle East. She was stationed in Italy when peace was declared in May of 1945, but she did not return home until the last of her patients was discharged in June of 1946.

Following the war, Dorothy was invited to return to Strathroy General Hospital as an assistant superintendent. She acted in this role until 1952, when she decided to pursue a nursing service administration diploma at the University of Toronto. As part of the course agreement, Dorothy acted as assistant director of Toronto Western Hospital for two years following the completion of the program. When Beatrice Mason left as hospital superintendent in Strathroy in 1956, Dorothy was once again invited to interview for the position.

In a past interview with the Strathroy Age Dispatch, Dorothy stated that the hos-

pital was in crisis when she took over in October of 1956. "We were \$37,000 in the hole," she said. "The next year, we were 37 cents in the black." Dorothy also said it was her ambition from the start to get a new hospital building and proper accreditation for the institution. The adept manager met her goal in May of 1962 with the hospital's move from a historic mansion to a new, state-of-the-art facility. She also oversaw the addition of two floors in 1974.

While working for Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (renamed in 1966), she continued her education via correspondence courses. In 1969, Dorothy obtained her fellowship with the American College of Hospital Administrators – the first woman in Canada to do so.

Dorothy Doan committed 49 years of her life to the health care profession – 33 of those years were dedicated to Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital. She retired in December of 1981, known as a great motivator who gave time to many charities outside of the hospital. Dorothy was also a lifetime member of the Sir Arthur Currie Branch #116 of the Royal Canadian Legion and a devoted member of Strathroy United Church.

Over the course of her lifetime, Dorothy was awarded the Canadian Centennial medal (1967), the Canada 125 medal (1992), and the title of Strathroy's Citizen of the Year.

An accomplished local woman who humbly dedicated her life to public service, Dorothy Doan passed away on June 10, 2006 at the age of 90. Her contribution to the development of our local hospital is just one part of the current Museum Strathroy-Caradoc exhibit, "A Legacy of Care: Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital" which runs until Saturday, Oct. 3.

*(@ the Museum appears monthly and is intended to highlight current exhibits, events, and acquisitions at Museum Strathroy-Caradoc. Visit us online at [www.strathroymuseum.ca](http://www.strathroymuseum.ca))*