



# MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

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Leonardtown, MD 20650  
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## Then and Now

**As part of our hospital's 100-year anniversary, we are taking a look at Then and Now by highlighting a hospital associate who has been a valuable part of our history in each issue of The Pulse.**



**W**ith one click on the keyboard, Rose Nelson answers nearly 500 calls on a busy day as one of the hospital's communications operators. Having worked in the position for 22 years, Rose recalls a time when she had every phone number in the hospital memorized, while today she simply has to click the appropriate number on her computer screen. "I remember when we switched to computers," said Rose. "We were all scared to death of them," she laughed. "When our papers were taken away from us, we all panicked. We've come a long way since then."

Before she was one of the voices behind the overhead announcements, Rose was a nursing assistant for 23 years. In the early 1970s when the Peabody I Wing opened, she was one of the first to work on the floor where she wore a white uniform and blue striped hat. "We used mercury thermometers and metal bedpans then. If you ever dropped one, you could hear the clang, clang throughout the hospital." She also talks of a time when there weren't any security personnel in the hospital so one of the county's few police officers would be called if need be. Since patient floors weren't divided by specific medical need, it made for some interesting times. When the new hospital opened in 1984, Rose helped to transfer patients to the new hospital. She recalls the day clearly because one of the patients was her late husband's, Francis "Buttons," relative.

Rose retired from nursing in 1989 and began working in her current position. During her tenure she's mastered three phone systems and her office has moved three times. No matter what position Rose holds at MedStar St. Mary's her goal is to always "help people" and that's exactly what she told Mrs. Jeffus, acting director of nursing in 1966, when she was interviewed 45 years ago and something that still resonates with her today.

Over the years, Rose has been able to call her coworkers family, and that's certainly the case with her biological sister Debbie Dingee who works in Environmental Services. On days when Rose isn't answering the phone, she loves to be outdoors.