

Mama's House

I first visited Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children with Jack years ago. Upon entering the hospital, I had a strange sensation. I asked Jack, "Have we been here before?" Jack answered, "I have, but I don't believe you have." I didn't think so either.

Several years later we came again, and, as before, we were warmly greeted. A wonderful aroma filled the air, and everyone was anxious to make us welcome. The staff was eager to show us around and inform us about what was going on ... then it hit me.

It was like going to my grandmother's house. I called her "Mama." She lived three blocks down the street from me growing up in a small frame house with a front porch and a swing hanging at the north end. Phlox and larkspur bloomed in a little flowerbed in the front yard.

As an only child, I would use any excuse for Mother to let me walk or ride my bike down to see her during the summer months. I would open the screen door and yell, "Mama." She would answer, "I'm in here," which usually meant the kitchen. A wonderful aroma filled the air. Mama gave me a big hug and asked, "Would you like a muffin?" Of course, I said, "Sure." They were kept in a tin drawer in the bottom of the "safe," a piece of furniture that served as a cabinet. I slid the drawer out and usually helped myself to two. They were so delicious! I can taste them now, but I have never been able to duplicate them. She just mixed a pinch of this and a little bit of that. She never wrote down a recipe.

Mama managed to have time for me even though she was a very busy person; she let me help. She taught me to churn butter, sew a straight seam on a treadle sewing machine and gather eggs from the hen house. I failed to master her art of quilting. Her stitches were always smaller than mine. I always left her house happier and more informed about something.

Get the picture? Only the aroma is different here. It's popcorn and your greeter has a name tag.

Now, I know Dr. Carrell had a vision for this hospital, but I doubt if he ever thought it would have the feeling of Mama's house.

The early pictures of children lying swaddled in iron beds, lined in long rows in a stark environment would indicate a very gloomy atmosphere. I am sure the person who bought that first box of crayons and started painting the hospital bright orange, red, blue and green received criticism. But, I believe Dr. Carrell would be delighted not only with the bright colors that changed the décor, but would also marvel at the modern medical techniques performed here.

Did you know that J. C. Montgomery, Jr. has an anti-negative detector machine? He takes it along when he interviews personnel for the hospital. If it beeps, he knows that person has negative bones, and negative won't work at this hospital. Everyone must be positive.

Jack and I would love to take credit for some of Tony Herring's accomplishments since he grew up in our neighborhood in Vernon where we lived for 35 years. But, we can only say we watched with great pride, as he grew, knowing he would become successful in any field he chose. We never imagined he would become a magician! He hasn't yet actually created flesh and bone but with the help of his qualified medical staff he has managed to help thousands of young patients leave TSRHC better prepared to function in today's society. That's medical magic!

Jack has had many opportunities to serve in diverse capacities through the years. I believe he would say serving here at TSRHC has been one of the happiest and most rewarding experiences of his life. I'm just glad I could tag along.

I do not anticipate moving to Dallas, but if I should, I would need to live in the Melrose Hotel, have a car and driver take me wherever I decide to go and have meals here in the dining room of the hospital. The desserts here are almost as tasty as Mama's muffins.

I'm sure I speak for all the wives when I say, "You have spoiled us rotten, and we loved it." Thank you for all the many years of thoughtfulness and kindness to us.

Yesterday is history; tomorrow is a mystery.

But, today is just another wonderful day in Mama's house.

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