

Newman Memorial Hospital wishes Jean Bartow “All the Best” After Her 39 Years of Service

There is no way to calculate how many lives have been touched by Jean Bartow, R.N. during her 42 years of nursing, 39 of them spent at Newman Memorial Hospital. A safe estimate would be in the thousands when you consider the patients she has cared for, the families for which she has advocated and the colleagues she has worked with. Her official last day at NMH was December 24, 2016 and she departs a career of incredible substance and tremendous contribution.

Jean Bartow, from Walhalla, North Dakota graduated from the University Of North Dakota in 1973 with a BSN, RN. From the time she was in the 6th grade, she knew she wanted to be a nurse. She was very close to her aunt, who was a nun and a Registered Nurse, Sister Carmelita. She started working with her at age 16 as a nurse’s aide and thought, “Yep! This is it! This is all I could ever imagine doing!” Luckily for Newman Memorial Hospital, she met Stan Bartow, from Laverne, OK and they married in December of 1975. They came back to Oklahoma in 1976 when he took a job teaching in Alva, OK and then moved to Laverne in 1977 where he opened up a meat processing plant.

Jean visited Shattuck and decided to check out Newman Memorial Hospital. “The atmosphere there just felt like coming home,” said Jean, “I instantly felt like it was where I was supposed to be and have felt that way ever since.” Jean worked nights for 6 years and had three young daughters by the time she moved to day shifts in OB and the ER. In 1983, two of her colleagues talked her into working on the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Jean says, “I didn’t really want to do it, but I was mentored and trained and ended up doing it for 14 years. It’s my first love along with working the ER.”

From 2002 to 2006, Jean served as Director of Nursing and then changed to Infection Control, Swing Bed Manager, Head of Employee Health, Case Management and WIC. One of the many ways she has shown her commitment to the community and to NMH is through her willingness to wear multiple “hats” and shift them to meet the needs of the hospital and her colleagues. In April of 2016, she agreed to resume the responsibilities of interim Director of Nursing until a permanent one was named.

When asked what it was about Newman Memorial Hospital that made her stay on for 39 years, Jean responded, “One of the reasons I stayed so long is the legacy of the place. It was started with such a purpose of doing the right thing for the right people. There have always been such good people there that I had to be a part of that! I’m proud to have worked at Newman that long! Throughout the years I have had so many incredible mentors that have just made it really easy to work there. We still have such awesome employees. People who are so dedicated and knowledgeable. We’ve all been there through the good and the trying times. Some of my best

friends have been made there. I'm so thankful that it's here and it's open. It is so crucial for our community. If the doors are open, then Northwest Oklahoma is a safer place for health."

Jean served Newman Memorial Hospital in many capacities over the years, but what shined through time and time again was her commitment to her patients, her colleagues and the vision of the hospital. She is admired and loved among her Newman family. When asked about Jean, one of her colleagues, Sarah Tapia, LPN, had this to say, "Jean Bartow was more than a nurse; she was a mentor, a mother, and a friend. You were not just working with Jean you were a teammate. I feel very blessed to have learned from her and will hold those memories near and dear to my heart. Thank you Jean! Love you!"

Jean expressed that on her last birthday, she knew she was ready to retire. "I've worked weekends and holidays for years and now I want to spend more time with my family than I have in the past. It's going to be a transition, but I think I'll adjust." In addition to her husband and children, Jean has eight siblings, six sisters and two brothers. "They are all so amazing in their own right. We definitely want to do some traveling together." When asked what prompted her to choose this time to make her retirement official, she said, "I have been serving as the interim Director of Nursing. With Catherine Ewing joining Newman as the new Chief Nursing Officer, I felt comfortable that this was a good time. I have visited a lot with Catherine and just felt so good about Newman and nursing being in good hands. I will be working a little bit in ER, but I am ready to step down and be around my girls."

Newman Memorial Hospital has had the honor of employing this wonderful, caring nurse for 39 years. Her commitment and loyalty are evidenced not only in her longevity of employment, but in the care and compassion she has demonstrated for her patients and her coworkers all of these years. When asked if there was anything she would like to say to her coworkers at Newman, Jean replied, "I am so proud of each and every one of them for being there. Hanging in through the past year has been rough and it's wonderful to see the hospital doing better. Each individual job is so important. It doesn't matter if you are in housekeeping, maintenance, the CEO or a nurse. We all come together to make the big picture. I love everyone there and am thankful for them. They mean a lot to me and what I have been a part of at Newman Memorial Hospital." As a parting gift, Jean paid the annual Chamber of Commerce dues in Laverne for Newman Memorial in memory of David Dersch, who was a dedicated NMH board member.

The staff at Newman Memorial Hospital and the members of the community which she has so faithfully served, wish Jean all the best in her well-deserved retirement.