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St. Paul Hospital

By John Roppolo

The curtain recently came down on St. Paul Sanitarium, the oldest private hospital founded in 1896. With several name enhancements, two locations and changes in sponsorship through the years, St. Paul in Southwestern Medical Center is being razed to make room for a multi-use building which will include high-tech stimulation training for physicians and interns from nearby Southwestern Medical Center and William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

Back in the 1890s, the City of Dallas was growing and there was a desperate need for another hospital since City Hospital was the only health facility serving the population of 37,000. Several prominent Dallas physicians and civic leaders appealed to Catholic Bishop Edward Joseph Dunne to encourage the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, a group of Catholic sisters prominent in health care administration, to open a hospital. Their mission was to serve the sick and the poor with compassionate care.

An agreement was reached in which the sisters paid \$1 for land purchased by a citizens' group. Two sisters traveled by covered wagon some 1,200 miles from its motherhouse in Emmitsburg, MD to Texas that June.

Prior to the hospital opening in 1898, the sisters operated a health facility in a small cottage on the property. At the opening of the new 3-story, 110-bed red brick Victorian building, Dr. Samson Eagon *(story continued on page 2)*

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Saint Paul Hospital circa 1900

complimented it as being “the finest hospital in the world, having all that is modern in equipment and appliances.”

Hospital grounds were located at Bryan and Hall Streets in East Dallas. The St. Paul School of Nursing was established in 1900, offering “hands on” education during its 71 years of operation. Students studied, lived and worked in the hospital during their intensive three years of training.

In 1906, a free clinic was opened in the hospital’s basement with Sister Brendan O’Beirne in charge. The clinic finally had its own building, the Marillac Clinic, to serve the predominantly Hispanic neighborhood in Dallas’ Little Mexico. In 1916, the Annex Building was added to keep pace with the city’s rapid growth. It elevated the original structure to five stories and added about 200 more beds and was renamed St. Paul’s Hospital.

The expertise of the sisters and their staff was severely tested in 1918 when 45 tents were set-up on hospital grounds to care for the Spanish flu epidemic affecting the soldiers from nearby Camp Dick. “From the beginning the sanitarium maintained an attitude of sympathy and cooperation with the government . . . until the final victory was won,” U.S. Army Col. John McReynolds wrote about St. Paul’s selfless aid to sick soldiers.

In 1943, a group of dedicated women founded the Women’s Auxiliary to make pajamas, gowns, sheets and pillowcases for patients and to raise money through the operation of a thrift store and hospital gift shop. In later years, it became the envy of hospital auxiliaries throughout Texas, donating millions of dollars for nursing scholarships, the latest in medical equipment and thousands of volunteer hours.

After World War II ended, construction of the Dallas Building was begun in 1950, increasing the capacity to 475 beds. As construction was coming to an end in late 1951, a disaster threatened to destroy everything the sisters and staff had built. On October 24, 1951, a five-alarm blaze erupted, but Sister Alberta Savage implemented an evacuation plan that saved the lives of more than 250 patients and employees. Even though \$125,000 in damage was caused by the fire, the hospital re-opened 24 hours later.

The Dallas Building was opened in April 1952. The next year, Sister Mary Helen Neuhoff of St. Louis was named hospital administrator, moving to Dallas where she had three brothers involved in a meat packing plant who were key supporters of the hospital. Sister Mary Helen became known for opening the doors for African American physicians to practice medicine in a private hospital.

In 1958, the majestic hospital was burgeoning and plans were launched for a brand new \$15 million hospital at Harry Hines and Inwood Road in Dallas’ prestigious Southwestern Medical Center near the medical school, Parkland, and Children’s. When it opened on December 22, 1963, the new 10-story hospital reflected the latest in medical technology and patient care. A caravan of ambulances with patients, heated panel trucks with the newborn babies and a van transported orthopedic patients. Within five hours, 96 adult patients and 16 babies were transferred without incident on a day that saw chilling temperatures and the year’s first snowstorm.

The spirit of the dedication ceremony in April of 1964 echoed the words of Sister Elizabeth Steiner, administrator, “into our new St. Paul has been poured more than bricks and mortar. There is a combination of love, devotion, time, talents and substance to which everyone has contributed. This is what is unique about St. Paul,” she said. By the early seventies, St. Paul was again experiencing growing pains, adding *(story continued on page 3)*



Mosaic in the lobby

Photo courtesy of the Diocese of Dallas

Professional Office Building I in 1974, an eight-story patient tower three years later, and a new cancer center by 1982. The hospital's reputation grew as an alliance with UT Southwestern Medical School as a teaching referral center prompted the change of name to St. Paul Medical Center.

After many medical breakthroughs in surgical procedures and patient care, St. Paul's destiny was coming to an end. Ascension Health Care System in 1996 turned over the management to Methodist Health Care System and in December 2000 UT Southwestern purchased the hospital's physical assets, renaming it the St. Paul University Hospital. On November 20, 2015, the demolition of the hospital was completed, thus closing the chapter of this famous hospital that served both the rich and the poor.

The Demolition of A Century-Old Building

By Reina Gonzalez

In the fall of 2014, one of downtown Dallas' oldest buildings—1611 Main Street—was demolished in the blink of an eye. This historic three-story Romanesque Revival building was, according to the National Register of Historic Places, constructed in 1885 and featured a sandstone façade.



1611 Main Street housed the famed C. Weichsel Co.'s retail store, which was located on the ground floor in the early 1900s. This store was responsible for selling the iconic old-time Dallas postcards which are today found in antique stores and on online stores. It also sold Weichsel's Map and Guide of Dallas which was published in 1919.

Immediately prior to its demolition, the building functioned as a residential structure with eight units. The building was removed so that the Joule, a boutique downtown hotel, could be further expanded.

For those familiar with the area, the 1611 Main Street building was adjacent to the giant artistic eye structure that is now standing in the place of another historic building (the Praetorian) which was torn down in 2012.

Although 1611 Main Street was considered a contributing structure to the Dallas Downtown National Register District and had been included on a 1981 list of structures recommended for Dallas landmark status, it unfortunately had no official historic designation at the time of its demolition.

However, while the building no longer stands, its demolition led to Dallas Mayor *(story continued on page 4)*

Mike Rawlings creating a downtown historic preservation task force. The work of this task force subsequently resulted in the City adopting a new process that requires historic buildings in and around downtown to undergo a special review before they can be demolished.

The Dedication of Swiss Avenue's Harris-Savage House Marker

By Michelle Love



On April 2, members of the Dallas County Historical Commission attended the unveiling of a new historical marker, the Harris-Savage House, 5703 Swiss Avenue. The Marker Dedication ceremony was hosted by homeowner Virginia Savage McAlester, a renowned author and architectural historian. Members of Preservation Dallas were present, as well as neighbors and friends.

The roots of the Harris-Savage House go back to 1843, when pioneers William Cochran, the first Dallas County Clerk, and his wife, Nancy Jane Hughes, lived in Peters Colony. Their grandson, William Randolph Harris, was born in Farmers Branch. After graduating high school, Will studied law under his first cousin, R.E.L. Knight, and J.L. Harris of the firm Harris & Knight.

Will was admitted to the Texas Bar in 1900 and remained with what became Thompson, Knight, Harris, Wright and Weisburg his entire legal career. Will and his wife, Minnie Beulah Bookhout, moved into the home in 1921. Will had a distinguished career, including the successful impeachment of Gov. James "Pa" Ferguson, and Minnie was an active clubwoman.

Dorothy Harris Savage inherited the home from her mother, Minnie, and with her husband, Former Dallas Mayor Wallace Savage, continued the family legacy there. The Savages were founders of the Dallas Academy, served on numerous civic and philanthropic boards and contributed greatly to the historic preservation movement in Dallas with involvement in the Historic Preservation League (now known as Preservation Dallas). With their help, this house and area were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the first listed district in Dallas.



The 1917 Mission Style residence boasts two curvilinear parapets; one defines the central entry to the front porch and the other enhances a large gabled attic dormer with Palladian window. Otherwise, the house design owes much to the Prairie style with horizontal lines, triple windows, square brick piers and widely overhanging eaves.



Dallas County Historical Commission Member Charles Stokes, former Commission Chairman Don Baynham, current Commission Chairman Fred Durham, and Commission Members Michelle Love and Chris Smith

Member Profile: Richard G. Stewart, Jr.



Richard G. Stewart, Jr. is one of the newest members of the Dallas County Historical Commission, having been appointed in February 2015 by County Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia.

A resident of Irving, Mr. Stewart retired as Assistant General Counsel Verizon Communications in 2013. As Verizon's Assistant General Counsel, he was the recipient of a number of Verizon Excellence Awards for his accomplishments in successfully representing Verizon in numerous legal and administrative matters. He joined the Verizon Legal Department, formerly GTE Corporation, in 1994 following a distinguished career in the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps.

A retired Navy Captain, Mr. Stewart's military decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Navy Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal and the Vietnam Service Medal. While serving as Commanding Officer, Naval Legal Service Office, Corpus Christi, Texas, he received the National NAACP Roy Wilkins Renown Service Award and was recognized by the Secretary of the Navy for "providing extraordinary pre-deployment legal assistance to active and reserve U.S. Navy and Marine Corps units en route to Operation Desert Storm." As Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, Northern District of California, while serving as Command Judge Advocate, Naval Station Alameda, California, he was recognized by the U.S. Attorney for his "superb efforts in criminal prosecutions." During the Vietnam War, he served as a line officer on board the *USS New Orleans*, LPH 11.

While Mr. Stewart may have retired from both the Navy and Verizon, his commitment to service has not. From 2009 - 2011 he served as President of The Patrick E. Higginbotham American Inn of Court and as Vice Chair of the Las Colinas Medical Center - Board of Trustees, Irving, Texas. A Life Patron Fellow of the Dallas Bar Foundation, Mr. Stewart was recognized for outstanding service as the Foundation's 2006 Fellows Chair, and in 2008, he received the Dallas Business Journal's Minority Leader Award. He is also a Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation and has served as Chair of the Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors, the Chair of Legal Aid of Northwest Texas, the Chair of the City of Irving Planning and Zoning Commission, a Trustee of the Dallas Bar Foundation, a Director of the Dallas Bar Association (DBA), Chair of the DBA Employment Law Section, Chair of the DBA Judicial Investiture Committee, Chair of the DBA Judiciary Committee, Co-Chair of the DBA Bench and Bar Committee, and a Director of the JL Turner Legal Association. He is currently the Chair of the City of Irving Arts Board and is a member of the University of North Texas Dallas, College of Law Board of Visitors.

Mr. Stewart received his undergraduate degree from Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana; a Juris Doctorate from Loyola University School of Law, New Orleans; and a Master of Laws degree from The George Washington University School of Law, Washington, DC.

Mr. Stewart is admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, Supreme Court of Texas, Supreme Court of Louisiana, District of Columbia Court of Appeals, U.S. Court of Appeals of the Armed Services, U.S. District Court: Northern and Eastern Districts of Texas, and Western Districts of Tennessee and Louisiana.

