



For Immediate Release

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GRADUATE OF FIRST LVN CLASS AT HUNTSVILLE MEMORIAL RETIRES AFTER 42 YEARS

After 42 years on the job at Huntsville Memorial Hospital, Verna Philio, LVN is hanging up her nursing shoes. As a graduate of the first class of the Joe G. Davis School of Vocational Nursing at Huntsville Memorial Hospital, Philio has seen her share of new faces arrive in this community.

“I started working for Huntsville Memorial Hospital on Labor Day 1967 and have been involved with Labor and Delivery, and postpartum care ever since,” she readily admits. “I always wanted to be in the nursing field and have never regretted a day of it.”

Her most memorable moment came years ago in the original downtown Huntsville facility when a mother arrived ready to give birth and the physician had not yet arrived. “I got to deliver my first – and only baby,” said Philio, who has never had a child of her own, but boasts two stepchildren and three grandchildren. “It was a little startling to see that baby coming right there in front of me, but Mom was ready, and so I had to step in to help.”

She’s also done her share of helping her family and friends during her lifetime - caring for her mother and father when they were sick and she raised her baby brother. She is looking forward to retirement to spend time in her garden, travel and get more involved with her church and her community.

The Thessalonia Baptist Church and the Grand Person Center will be two of the beneficiaries of her time during retirement, though she admits she is very much looking forward to warmer weather and enjoying traveling and fishing with her husband.

“With my husband and I having different schedules all these years, I really am looking forward to time with him. When he was at work, I was off; and when he was off, I was at work. I think it’s time for us to have some time we can spend together,” Philio said. And then she smiled telling of the flowers that her husband had sent to her nursing unit in honor of her retirement. “He’s a good man and he’s happy that I’m leaving because we need to spend some good times together,” she said.

Not sure what exactly she will do when she clocks out for the final time, she feels fairly confident that it will involve some tears. "This has been my family; Huntsville Memorial Hospital has been and always will be my home."

Philio has helped care for three successive generations of newborns for many families in Huntsville and surrounding communities and will remember those special moments along with so many other good times.

Her boss Anne Karr, director of Women's Health Services, said, "Verna is truly one of the best nurses I have ever worked with. She is organized, carries a heavy load when needed and does not complain. I have put all new hires with Verna for at least two weeks so she can teach them organizational skills, time management skills, and how to compassionately take care of patients. I cannot imagine working in Labor and Delivery without Verna. She has been my good friend, a mentor to all new nurses and someone the entire staff looks up to and respects. She gives 110% of herself for a full 12 hours, even after 42 years of caring."

Violet Martin, a co-worker for more than 25 years says that Philio is the best LVN she's ever had the pleasure to work with.

"I have met and worked with a lot of nurses both here and abroad and I can honestly say that Verna is one of a kind. She is very dedicated to her work and her work ethics is beyond reproach. With Verna, you won't have to guess if it is black or white. She will tell you like it is no matter what. Teaching new nurses is one of her great passions. Working with Verna, you will come out of the experience with strong skills and compassion to take care of people throughout your career," said Martin.

"It will be hard to leave the people. There have been so many who have been good friends and will remain good friends. Mary Carrera retired two years ago and we worked here together for 20+ years. But, there are lots of wonderful people here. I'm just not really sure what I will do when it sinks in that I don't have to come to work anymore," she said.

"When I walk out the door for the last time as an employee, I think I'll probably just go home, put my feet up and do a little bit of crying."

Sally Nelson, CEO at Huntsville Memorial Hospital summed it all up, "From all of her friends at Huntsville Memorial Hospital and the generations of families who have benefitted from her compassionate care, we send Verna best wishes for a wonderful retirement! You have set an amazing example for many generations and will be greatly missed."

CUTLINES

Verna Philio, LVN graduated in the very first class of the Joe. G. Davis School of Vocational Nursing at Huntsville Memorial Hospital. Her 42 years of service at Huntsville Memorial Hospital ended this week with much emotion, gifts, hugs and tears shared with friends, and a beautiful bouquet of flowers from her husband.

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About Huntsville Memorial Hospital

Since 1927, Huntsville Memorial Hospital has provided benevolent and charitable health care services, setting the standard for quality, proficient health care for the residents of Walker County and the surrounding communities. At Huntsville Memorial, we have great people who are passionate about your health. We have outstanding physicians, motivated leadership, and compassionate staff. We are your friends and neighbors – dedicated to excellence in everything we do – right here at home.