

PATIENT SEES PROGRESS AT CRMC OVER THE YEARS

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Herald-Citizen Staff, Cookeville, TN
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Herald-Citizen Photo/Heather Mullinix

Margaret Oaks looks at the birthday card Cookeville Regional Medical Center sent her twins on their first birthday in 1952. Oaks was the 29th patient to be admitted to the hospital following its opening in 1950.

COOKEVILLE -- Late on a snowy night Jan. 5, 1951, Margaret Oaks woke her brother who was visiting from Ohio and had him get his car ready. She was going to the new Cookeville hospital to have her twins.

"It was so stuffy, they rolled down the windows so I could breathe," said Oaks of the drive from Baxter that wintry night.

When they arrived at the recently opened hospital, a nurse ushered Oaks into the maternity section of the three-wing hospital and phoned for her doctor, **Dr. Thurman Shipley**. Eight-pound baby boy Jerry was delivered at 3:30 a.m. Seven-pound baby girl Kathy followed at 4:15 a.m. They were the first set of twins to be born at the Cookeville Medical Center, and Oaks was only the 29th patient admitted to the hospital.

Oaks spent the rest of that day resting up in the maternity ward, along with three other women. With mother and babies doing well, Oaks said Shipley discharged them later that afternoon.

"We didn't have insurance so, since we were all healthy, he sent us home so we wouldn't have a bigger bill," Oaks said.

Almost two weeks before, on Christmas Eve, Oaks and **her husband, the late Clarence Fowler Oaks**, had been into the hospital, expecting the birth of their second child.

"I'd spend all day cooking for Christmas," she said. "They said that caused me to go into false labor."

But, she was sent home with unexpected news. The single child she had been expecting was actually twins.

"**Dr. [Kenneth] Haile** asked if my husband or I had twins in the family. I was so scared. I told him no, even though we did," she said. "He said, 'Well, there's more than one baby.' They took X-rays and saw the babies were healthy and then they sent me home."

The new hospital was a new experience for Oaks, who had delivered her first child, Glenn, in 1948 at the Howard Hospital, the forerunner of today's Cookeville Regional Medical Center. **Dr. William Howard** operated the facility on East Main Street.

"It felt like you were walking into a home," Oaks said of the Howard Hospital. "The maternity ward was just four beds, and there were only five or six doctors in Cookeville at that time."

She recalls being cared for by a nurse, Adele Young, on that first hospital visit.

Over the years, Oaks, who is now 81 years old, has paid many visits to Cookeville Regional Medical Center. Times have changed. Nursing staff once wore traditional white uniforms with caps and doctors

were never seen without a long white coat, she said. Today, medical staff often opt for scrubs and sensible shoes. Smoking was banned from the building years ago, and ward-type rooms have been replaced with private and semi-private patient care areas.

But the biggest change has been the size of the hospital.

"In 1981, I was looking out the window at the expansion they were doing," Oaks said. She was visiting her mother and the hospital was finishing up its first big expansion, which started in 1976. The \$2.2 million expansion added 55 patient beds, a clean-air surgery room, a seven-bed intensive care unit and a fifth-floor shell.

"I thought, this is as big as its going to get," she said.

But CRMC wasn't finished. Just the next year, a sixth floor was opened. Since then, CRMC added a neurosurgery clinic, pulmonary clinic, performed its first open heart surgery in 1998 and added a helipad and a cardiovascular intensive care unit. In 2003, CRMC began work on an ambulatory surgery center and opened the acute care inpatient unit.

In December, CRMC opened its newest expansion, the North Patient Tower. The addition allows the hospital to offer all private patient rooms, expand the cancer center, expand ICU units, allow for future growth of surgical needs and provide space for families that are staying with their loved ones.

But that's not all that has changed over the last six decades. Oaks noted the increase in the number of doctors serving Putnam County and the Upper Cumberland. In the 1950s, one doctor was responsible for the care of the patient. Today, more than 140 physicians provide services in 36 specialty areas.

"I think it's great how much the hospital has grown," Oaks said. "It's good to see things grown and it's good they can do so much more."

***OAKS, CLARENCE FOWLER** - b. 16 March 1922, Boma, TN - D 20 April 2004, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN - PFC U. S. ARMY WWII

Place & Time of Service: Chapel-Baxter Funeral Home, 22 April 2004 at 4:00 p.m. Bro. Archie Whitefield & Bro. Jim Holifield, officiating, arrangements by: Baxter Funeral Home, Baxter, TN

PARENTS: William Earl Oaks & Fronie "Fronie" Rachel Roberts, both buried in Smellage Cemetery, TN.

WIFE: Margaret J. Cooley, md 24 October 1946

CHILDREN: Glenn, Clarence Michael, Jerry, Kathy Weaver & Joannie Rodgers Oaks

'Together Forever'

***OAKS, MARGARET J. COOLEY** - b. 10 May 1928

Husband: Clarence Fowler Oaks, md 24 October 1946

PARENTS:

'Together Forever'

Clarence Fowler Oaks Obt.

BAXTER -- Funeral services for **Clarence Fowler Oaks**, 82, of Baxter, will be held in the chapel of the Baxter Funeral Home on Thursday, April 22, at 4 p.m. Burial will be in the Smellage Cemetery.

The family will receive friends at the funeral home today, April 21, after 3 p.m. and on Thursday until time of services.

Mr. Oaks died Tuesday, April 20, 2004, at Cookeville Regional Medical Center.

Son of the late William Earl and Fronie Roberts Oaks, he was born in the Boma Community on March 16, 1922. (William Earl Oaks and his wife Fronie Robert Oaks are buried in Smellage Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN. William Earl Oaks was b. 19 November 1879 - d. 11 June 1944 & his wife, Fronie Robert Oaks was b. 30 May 1883 - d. 21 August 1957).

Mr. Oaks was a farmer.

His family includes his **wife, Margaret Oaks** of Baxter; three sons and daughters-in-law, Glenn and Sherry Oaks, Clarence Michael and Lisa Oaks, all of Cookeville, and Jerry and Judy Oaks of Silver Point; two daughters and sons-in-law, Kathy and Alfred Weaver, Joanie and Richard Rodgers, all of Baxter; two brothers, Norman Oaks of Indiana and Earl Oaks of Arizona; half brother, Burnell (Sam) Steele of Dodson Branch Community; half sister, Pauline Steele Hammons of California; 10 grandchildren, Jamie, David, Brian, Jennifer and Heather Oaks, Christy Phillips, Tracey Tucker, Thomas and Joseph Weaver and Andrew Rodgers; and three great-grandchildren, Cason Tucker, Madison Phillips and Tyler Oaks.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by three brothers, Lenard, Luna and Lenos (Booster) Oaks; and four sisters, Maude Jared, Adel Hancock, Clemmie Herd and Gennie Burgess.

Pallbearers will be Jamie, David and Brian Oaks, Thomas and Joseph Weaver and Andrew Rodgers. Honorary pallbearers will be Richard Rodgers, Shawn Phillips, Jerry Tucker, Johnny Cooley, Bill Shanks, Doug and Jimmy Burgess and Dorman Herd.

Bros. Archie Whitefield and Jim Holifield will officiate at the services.

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