

Betty Murtagh

Her goal after graduation from St. Catherine's High School (located on the East Side of Detroit) was to enter nursing school. This was the time however, in the early 40's that our country was emerged in WWII and the nursing schools were crowded. So she went to work at Packard Motor Car Company as a typist and after two years was accepted at the Providence Hospital School of Nursing where she graduated in March, 1947.

Armed with this grand diploma as a Registered Nurse, she went to work at the Wayne County Psychiatric Hospital. The hospital was doing specialized work with returning soldiers. Treatment involved twelve patients, who had three months of specialized care including individual and group therapy, dream analysis, music, insulin therapy and unbelievably, shock therapy. After working at Eloise for three years, she decided it was time for a change.

Having experienced part time work at a nursing home, Betty decided there was a true need for this kind of service. With the help and support of her husband, Charles (they were married in 1950) she went full speed ahead with the purchase and renovation of a beautiful building at 395 East Grand Boulevard. This was the only area zoned for this kind of business. The venture proved to be a success in many ways. Owning your own business provided you with many advantages, and just a few disadvantages!



Charles worked as a Manufacturer's Representative for a firm in Southfield and she ran the Murtagh Nursing Home for 15 years. In the interim, they had four children, and she went back to school and earned a Bachelor's degree from Mercy College of Detroit and then ...Betty joined the Blues in 1972, hired by Velma Glass as a consultant to skilled nursing homes, physical therapy and psychiatric facilities that were approved for participation in the Medicare Program. The responsibility of the consultant was to assist personnel of the facility to properly document services provided, so that reimbursement was assured. The recordkeeping in many instances was inadequate. Since documentation was the key to payment, it was essential that nurses, as well as doctors, were advised about the Federal regulations and need for adequate documentation. This department was often asked to participate in seminars and meetings throughout the state, in conjunction with hospital, marketing and billing representatives.

After three years in this department, she was hired by Howard Griggs to serve as a Medicare Consultant to retiree groups who were covered by the Blues. Also, during this period in time, she completed her Master's in Business, compliments of BCBS Educational Reimbursement Program. Much of my time was spent with union activities, community groups as well as special groups requesting assistance in understanding the various programs.

Once the government realized the value of the service we were providing to the retirees, they proposed that all retirees in Michigan should have access to the same service. Hence, her activity was transferred to Government Programs, and she went to work for Art Meharg.

She had wheels, a pony show and traveled!! Where two or three were gathered, she was there!

The job was fun and she treasured the friends she made at BCBSM. The trips were enjoyable and she met wonderful retirees throughout the state.

Betty retired in 1987 and has become a devoted soccer grandma. She and Charles spend winter months in Naples, Florida and most of the summer at a cottage in Canada on beautiful Lake St. Clair.