



Take part in local tradition.
1923.-2025



TREE OF *Lights*

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VIRGINIA WALCUTT GAY

It began with a gift. Virginia Walcutt Gay gifted \$50,000 to the City of Vinton in the early 1900s with the wish of establishing a community hospital. She gave back to a community she loved and cherished in honor of the health and well-being of the individuals living there. That gift was the beginning of Virginia Gay Hospital and a tradition of quality healthcare in Benton County.

For the past thirty-three years, the Virginia Gay Hospital Foundation has continued the legacy of Virginia Walcutt Gay through the tradition of giving in our Annual Tree of Lights Campaign. This cherished tradition allows you to honor or remember loved ones or recognize those who have touched your life by purchasing angels, ornaments, and lights on our giving tree.

Your support in the Tree of Lights Campaign ensures that you, your family, your friends, and neighbors will continue to have access to high-quality, conveniently located healthcare, right here in our community.

Every donation, no matter the size, makes a difference. Each contribution adds up, helping us continue to serve the greater Benton County area. Whether you're comfortable giving five dollars or five thousand, your tax-deductible gift directly improves lives by allowing Virginia Gay Hospital to offer essential services and maintain outstanding facilities staffed with professionals dedicated to meeting all of our healthcare needs.

Your investment in this campaign strengthens our community by supporting healthcare services that keep us well. Thank you for being a part of this lasting legacy of care.

2025 LEGACY HONORS



Harold Vanscoy PA-C

Harold Vanscoy's life was defined by service to his country, his patients, his colleagues, and his community.

Born in Denver, Colorado, in 1944, Harold's early path led him into the U.S. Army, where he served three tours during the Vietnam War. As a member of a 12-man Green Beret unit and the elite Delta Force, he served as a medic under the most challenging circumstances. His bravery earned him the Bronze Star, the Silver Star, and three Purple Hearts, but those who knew Harold best remember his deep sense of loyalty, compassion, and determination to care for others.

When he returned home, Harold became one of the first to join the pioneering Physician Assistant program at the University of North Dakota, established after the Vietnam War to train medics and nurses for civilian medical service. He carried

the same courage and commitment from the battlefield into exam rooms and hospital halls. His medical career began in Grand Forks before he joined Virginia Gay Hospital and Clinics, where he would leave an indelible mark for nearly two decades.

At VGH, Harold's work ethic and devotion to patients were unmatched. He spent long hours caring for the community by seeing patients in clinic, rounding on inpatients, and taking ER call day and night, often on weekends. His colleagues recall that he never hesitated to step in when help was needed and built lasting friendships with patients, nursing home residents, and staff alike. His tireless service, alongside Dr. Brian Meeker and a dedicated team, helped strengthen VGH during a period of growth and change, laying the foundation for the hospital's reputation for quality rural healthcare today.

Outside of medicine, Harold was full of life and surprises. He was a ringside provider for professional boxing matches, a baseball enthusiast who cheered for the Minnesota Twins and Kansas City Royals, and with his wife, Kathy, even served as a host family for Cedar Rapids Kernels players. Many also remember his creative side, from his Fiesta Fresh Salsa Company, which began in his kitchen and grew into a family business, to his legendary chocolate cake, a secret recipe he brought from Colorado. Harold was as quick with a story as he was with a helping hand, making him both a trusted provider and a cherished friend.

Harold's legacy at Virginia Gay Hospital is one of loyalty, service, and compassion. He proved that rural medicine could be both personal and high quality, showing generations of caregivers what it means to go above and beyond for patients. We honor Harold Vanscoy as a VGH Legacy Award Honoree recipient, we remember a man who lived with courage, cared with heart, and left behind a tradition of service that continues to inspire.



Celebrating the Career and Impact of Kris Goranson

This year, Virginia Gay Hospital is proud to recognize Kris Goranson, LPN, as a Legacy Award honoree for her extraordinary contributions to patient care, her dedication to her colleagues, and her lasting impact on the VGH family.

Kris's journey into nursing was inspired by her sister, Kim, who graduated from St. Luke's School of Nursing and continues to inspire her today. At just 25 years old, Kris faced the loss of her father, an experience that shaped the way she cared for patients. "I have learned to treat patients like family," she shared.

Kris began her career in 1984 as a nurse at the Van Horne Clinic, earning \$5.25 an hour in crisp white uniforms with no computers, only a handful of immunizations, and a much simpler healthcare landscape. When former VGH Administrator Mark Hearn called and offered her a position at the hospital, Kris accepted and stayed for the people. "We are a close-knit hospital, and I didn't want to work for a large corporate system," she explained.

Over the years, Kris witnessed tremendous changes in healthcare, from paper charting to computers, from ironed whites to scrubs, and from basic care to advanced medical technology. Through it all, her philosophy of

nursing remained the same: to provide care with kindness, compassion, knowledge, and even a touch of humor.

One patient in particular left a lasting impression. A young quadriplegic reminded Kris to slow down and appreciate life. After showing her the beauty of a clear blue sky, he changed the way she approached her days. Now, she stops to look up and appreciate it, and shares his words, as his spirit remains with her to this day.

Kris has spent the majority of her career working alongside Dr. Meeker and fellow nurse, Lu Horak. Their team was more like a family supporting one another through life's ups and downs, sharing not just the work of caring for patients, but also the bonds of friendship. "We always had each other's back; we are family," Kris reflected.

One of her proudest moments has been seeing her daughter, Stevi, follow in her footsteps and become a registered nurse at VGH. Patients have often told Kris how much Stevi's calm and compassionate care meant to them, a legacy of kindness carried forward to a new generation.

Today, even while living in Wisconsin, Kris continues to serve VGH patients remotely, ensuring they feel heard and cared for. "I hope to still make a difference, even if I'm not in the office," she said.

Looking back, Kris feels deep gratitude for her career: "The hospital has come from a band-aid station of the 70's to this amazing facility with great staff. I am grateful for my 26.5 years as a Meeker nurse. I have no regrets."

As she reflects on her legacy, Kris hopes to be remembered as the nurse who made patients feel comfortable and cared for and as someone who always promoted the strength and importance of VGH. Her advice to new nurses is simple yet profound: "Treat your patients like you would want your family taken care of. Be a great team player, you all depend on each other in this profession."

Virginia Gay Hospital celebrates Kris not only for her decades of service, but also for the compassion, humor, and wisdom she brought to patients, families, and colleagues alike. Her story reminds us that healthcare is not only about advanced medicine, but also about the small moments of connection that truly make a difference.



Celebrating the Service and Spirit of Tracey Franzenburg

Virginia Gay Hospital is honored to recognize Tracey Franzenburg, RN, with a 2025 Legacy Award for her 37 years of dedicated service, compassionate patient care, and her commitment to making VGH a place where patients and staff alike felt supported and valued.

For Tracey, nursing was almost a natural calling. Inspired by her mother, an RN who worked evenings in the ER at Mercy, and by the lively medical conversations she overheard from her mother's colleagues, Tracey "caught the bug" early. Working as an aide during her summers out of high school only deepened her interest. Then came a bit of serendipity: when a last-minute opening appeared at St. Luke's School of Nursing, Tracey jumped at the chance and began training that fall.

Her first role as a nurse was on the newly opened Progressive Care Unit at Mercy Hospital, where she immediately knew she had found her calling. "I remember LOVING my job," Tracey recalled. "I loved learning every day, that only proliferated at VGH."

Tracey's journey to Virginia Gay was also a mix of connection and timing. Her mother was a high

school classmate of former VGH administrator George Garwood, who helped her with financial aid to finish school. Later, a classmate from St. Luke's told her about an open surgical nursing position at VGH, Tracey's favorite clinical rotation. She applied, and the rest is history.

For Tracey, the decision to stay at VGH was simple: the personal connections. "Being a small-town gal to the core, I loved being able to develop relationships, with coworkers and patients alike," she said.

Throughout her career, Tracey witnessed tremendous changes in healthcare. She remembers the days when simple X-rays were the only imaging tools available, compared to today's CT scans, MRIs, and advanced endoscopies. She welcomed new medications and less invasive treatment options, though she also noted that technology created challenges.

Her proudest moments came when she knew she made a difference. Whether it was starting a critical IV in an emergency, recognizing symptoms early, or simply providing a patient with comfort and reassurance, Tracey valued giving care that was both personal and effective. "TLC and handholding go a long way," she said.

The community atmosphere at VGH made it feel like home. Staff, physicians, and patients often knew one another's families, creating a sense of trust and familiarity that Tracey cherished. She valued the chance to work not only with VGH physicians, but also with the visiting specialists who provided clinics, as these relationships deepened her knowledge and skills.

When asked about her legacy, Tracey pointed to three simple but powerful values: "Ask questions and listen to answers. Never stop learning and caring. Treat everyone with respect." She hopes patients and coworkers alike remember her as someone who made their experience a little easier, a little brighter, and always compassionate.

Now retired, Tracey reflects with gratitude. "I was able to love what I did and who I did it with," she said. Her hope for the next generation of caregivers is that while embracing technology, they never forget the importance of human touch and connection. "People are human and crave human touch," she reminded.

Celebrating the Career and Dedication of

Lu Horak

Do the best
job you can.
Everyone has
an important
role to play.

From the very beginning, Lu knew she wanted a career in the medical field. The desire to help others drew her to the profession, and in 1973 she began her career working in the clinic downtown across from the courthouse. Times were very different then, Lu earned \$400 a month on salary (with no overtime), worked every Saturday morning, and once a month even staffed the Sunday morning clinic. Each of the three doctors had one nurse, and Lu filled in wherever she was needed: running labs, assisting with patients, answering phones, and even helping with billing. "It really was simpler times," she reflected, remembering handwritten charting, the absence of gloves, and even mouth pipetting—practices long since replaced by safer standards.

As the clinic transitioned from being doctor-run, to St. Luke's, and eventually to VGH, Lu stayed. She loved her work, felt it was meaningful, and valued the ability to raise her family while working in town. Over the years, she witnessed major changes in healthcare such as computers replacing paper charts, universal glove use, and significant advances in medicine and technology. Though the switch to electronic records could be trying, Lu understood how essential it was to improving patient care.

Lu's proudest moments came when she was able to be there for people in need. One story stands out: a man collapsed just as he walked into the clinic. Lu quickly got him into a wheelchair and rushed him to the ER with Dr. Meeker, where he coded almost immediately. The ER nurses sprang into action, and together they saved his life. "Many other times weren't as dramatic, but still meaningful," she recalled. Even recently, she was reminded of her impact when a woman stopped her in the grocery store to thank her for years of care given to her and her family.

For Lu, patient care has always meant helping people with whatever their needs may be whether through kindness, reassurance, or simply being present. As a cancer survivor herself she often shared her experiences with patients facing similar diagnoses. "Knowing someone has been through things can give comfort and peace of mind," she said.

Throughout her career, Lu worked closely with her colleagues, particularly Dr. Meeker and fellow nurse Kris Goranson. Together, they built a team that functioned like family, supporting one another and sharing the workload with trust and understanding. "We really were a team," Lu reflected.

Looking back, Lu is grateful for the relationships she built with patients, with their families, and with her coworkers. She hopes to be remembered as someone who was caring, kind, and dependable. Her advice to new caregivers is simple: "Do the best job you can. Everyone has an important role to play."

As she reflects on her legacy, Lu is proud to have been part of an organization so vital to the community. "VGH is essential to Vinton," she said. "I needed to do my part as a small piece of something much larger."



Virginia Gay Hospital is proud to honor Lu Horak with a 2025 Legacy Award, recognizing her decades of service, her steady presence in the lives of patients, and the compassion she brought to her work every day.





TREE OF LIGHTS 2025

*Together, we
make a difference.*

Each year, gifts to the Tree of Lights bring vital equipment, comfort, and resources to Virginia Gay Hospital and Clinics. These items directly enhance patient care, support our staff, and improve community health. Your generosity truly lights the way.

2025 FUNDRAISING GOALS



LABORATORY

Behind every diagnosis is a lab result that guides treatment.

Our Laboratory team ensures that doctors have the accurate, timely results they need to make critical care decisions. With the right equipment, we can protect lifesaving blood products and be ready when emergencies arise.

Blood Bank Refrigerator

Provides safe, precise storage of blood products, ensuring availability for life-saving transfusions.



IMAGING

Early detection saves lives.

Our Imaging Department provides the advanced diagnostic tools patients need without traveling far from home. From cancer screenings to ultrasound exams, this team helps doctors find answers quickly and accurately, bringing peace of mind and lifesaving care to our community.

Digital Breast Tomosynthesis 3D Mammography

Detects breast cancer earlier and more accurately—giving patients the best chance at successful treatment.

Ultrasound Thyroid Probe

High-resolution imaging to diagnose and monitor thyroid conditions without invasive procedures.

VINTON CLINIC

At our Vinton Clinic, patients receive everyday care close to home, from preventive checkups to ongoing treatment.

By supporting staff with tools for comfort and security, we can provide a safe, efficient, and welcoming environment for every patient who walks through our doors.



Staff Computer Badge Readers

Protects patient data while ensuring quick, secure staff access.

Staff Chairs (23)

Ergonomic seating that reduces fatigue and supports staff in providing the best care possible.



ACUTE CARE

Our Acute Care team is at the heart of patient treatment and recovery, ensuring safe transfers, secure medications, and rapid staff communication.

Vocera Communication System

Hands-free communication that speeds up response times and ensures staff stay connected during critical moments.

Stand Aid with Moveable Legs

Helps caregivers safely transfer patients, reducing injuries and preserving dignity.

Pharmacy Door Badge Reader

Keeps medications secure and accessible only to authorized staff, protecting patient safety.

Stryker Transport Chairs (3)

Safe and comfortable patient transport throughout the hospital, reducing falls and ensuring timely care.



NURSING & REHAB

Our Nursing & Rehab Center is home to residents who rely on us not just for medical care, but for comfort, dignity, and quality of life.

By updating resident rooms and supporting safe mobility, we create a warm, home-like environment where individuals can live with independence and security.



Resident Room Furniture (40 Rooms)

Modern, comfortable furnishings create a safe, home-like environment for long-term care residents.

Stand Aid with Moveable Legs

Assists residents with safe transfers while preventing staff injuries.

RESPIRATORY THERAPY

Breathing is something most of us take for granted, until it becomes difficult. Our Respiratory Therapy team provides critical care for patients of all ages, from newborns to seniors, who need help breathing. With advanced equipment, we can respond quickly in emergencies, support patients during transport, and deliver accurate heart and lung assessments that guide treatment.



Phillips Cardiac Workstation

Faster, more accurate heart assessments lead to earlier treatment and improved outcomes.



Hamilton T-1 Ventilator

Portable, life-saving breathing support for patients of all ages, even beyond the hospital walls.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Your support allows us to maintain a clean, safe, and healing environment – protecting patients, families, and staff every single day.

Dexter 30lb. Capacity Washer

Keeps hospital linens clean and safe, supporting infection control and patient comfort.



giving options

“Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference.”

—Kathy Calvin



LARGE ANGEL	\$500
SMALL ANGEL	\$250
ORNAMENTS.....	\$200
CANDY CANES	\$100
STRING OF LIGHTS	\$50
GOLD LIGHT	\$25
GREEN LIGHT.....	\$20
BLUE LIGHT	\$15
RED LIGHT	\$10
WHITE LIGHT	\$5



SCAN THE CODE FOR ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS

Scan the code to access online giving or use the form enclosed to return donations by mail or drop-off (see form for details).



What You Can Do at Virginia Gay Hospital

QUICK ACCESS TO CARE • APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE

Family Medicine & Primary Care

- Atkins
- Van Horne
- Vinton
- Urbana

Surgery

- General Surgery
- Endoscopy
- ENT
- Orthopedic
- Podiatry
- Urology

Outreach Specialties

- Cardiology
- Dermatology
- Hematology/Oncology
- Nephrology
- OB/Gyn
- Orthopedics
- Pain Management
- Pulmonology
- Urology
- Wound Clinic
- ENT
- Podiatry
- General Surgery
- Infusion/Injection

Nutrition Services

- Diabetic Education & Prevention
- Obesity & Weight Management
- Eating Disorder Guidance
- Nutrition Therapy & Counseling

Home Health

- Home Care Aides
- Skilled Nursing
- Rehab Therapy
- Community Health

Imaging

- MRI
- CT
- Mammography
- Ultrasound
- X-Ray

Respiratory Therapy

- EKG
- Stress Testing
- Pulmonary Function Testing

Sleep Studies

Skilled Nursing & Therapy

- Physical
- Occupational
- Speech & Language

Labs

- Blood Draws
- Drug Screening
- Tissue Pathology

Emergency Department

- 24/7 Emergency Care

VG Nursing & Rehab

- Long Term Care Facility



Tree Walk

VIRGINIA GAY HOSPITAL

Kick off your holiday season with our Annual Tree Walk Celebration!

Join us for treats and beverages, and enjoy a festive visit to the exhibit. Place your bids on stunning pieces for a chance to bring home a special gift, all while supporting a cause that enhances local healthcare services.

Adopt-a-Snowman Mystery Draw!

Adopt your snowman during our holiday Tree Walk and bring a little extra sparkle home for the holidays! Meet our family of over 35 hand-knitted snowmen. Each one-of-a-kind, each with a name, personality, and birthday!



HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

For just \$15, you get to participate in our Adopt-a-Snowman Mystery Draw.

You'll receive a handmade, mystery snowman, who will come with a personalized adoption birth certificate and name.

Don't miss out! These snowmen are limited edition, and once they're adopted, they're gone for good!

The magic begins November 1st



Saturday, Nov. 1 10 AM-Noon

Thursday, Nov. 6 5 PM-7 PM

Saturday, Nov. 8 9 AM- Noon

OPEN HOUSE

Join us for cheers, great food, and fun for all at our 2025 Open House!

Explore our facility, meet our staff and enjoy the Tree Walk!

Thursday, Nov. 13 5 PM- 7:30 PM

Saturday, Nov. 15 9 AM- Noon

Thursday, Nov. 20 5 PM- 7 PM

Final Day of Bidding (final bid 11AM)

Saturday, Nov. 22 9 AM- 11 AM



Take part in local tradition.

The Tree of Lights is our major annual fundraising campaign and has been for over 30 years. Funds raised from the Tree of Lights support the healthcare needs of the people who utilize the services of Virginia Gay Hospital and our clinics in Atkins, Van Horne, Vinton, and Urbana. People have the opportunity to purchase various lights or ornaments in memory of or in honor of anyone of their choosing.

myvgh.org/vgh-foundation/tree-of-lights/