
9-15-1967 newspaper article about OR at Catawba Memorial hospital

Trained Staff of 14 Technicians Under Operating Room Supervisor

The operating room supervisor at Catawba Memorial Hospital is Mrs. James M. (Edna) Whitworth.

Her job is to "supervise and help in any way I can to assist in the operating room and the recovery room," she said. "I will teach my staff also and help anywhere I am needed."

Her staff consists of 14 persons - five registered nurses, four licensed practical nurses, two orderlies, two nurses' aides and one ward clerk.

She has 10 years' experience as operating room supervisor.

Her schooling and professional experience includes schooling at the Gordon Crowell Memorial Hospital in Lincolnton (which is no longer a school), working in obstetrics at Charlotte Presbyterian Hospital and in pediatrics at Baby's Hospital, Wilmington.

She has attended an intensive four-week session at Duke to study thoracic surgery and urology.

Mrs. Whitworth is happy to work professionally in Catawba County because she has root deep in its soil. She was born in Hickory. Her husband is a veterans employment representative in Hickory and her two boys attend school there. Her 19-year-old son is a sophomore at Lenior Rhyne College and her 14-year-old son is in the 9th grade at College Park.

Mrs. Whitworth is proud to show people around her post the top floor.

"Every piece of equipment is modern, the best that is available," she said.

There are four operating rooms, a cast room, scrub rooms, frozen section rooms, labs, anesthetic storage, clean-up sections, "clean" areas, recovery rooms, isolation rooms, supervisors office, doctors' locker rooms and nurses locker rooms, dictating rooms, and snack bar.

The snack bar is very essential when you're tired between cases," she said.

In the frozen section rooms, a pathologist can take a piece of tissue, such as a tumor, and know in less than an hour if it is malignant.

There are large lighted view boxes that enables doctors to study x-ray.

She described the clean-u section that contains a supersonic device that cleans instruments by high-frequency sound waves.

"It vibrates them clean," she said.

The "clean" areas and the "dirty" areas are separated so that no one gets mixed up.

"There is no room for mistakes here," she said.

The recovery room can contain eight patients at a time.

"In an extreme emergency we could use six rooms at one time for operations," she said. "Of course, I don't know where we would get that much help immediately."

Contaminated cases can use the isolation recovery room.

The doctors' and nurses' locker rooms are for changing from street clothes into operating room clothes.

They contain lockers, lounges and showers. There are some sections of Mrs. Whitworth's post where those in street clothes may not enter for sanitation purposes.

A dictating room is available so that doctors may use machines to dictate their case histories. A secretary will type them later.

Electricity is an important thing in an operating room where gasses are present.

"We wear conductive booties. No sparks are caused," she said.

Mrs. Whitworth repeats her pride in her job and in the new hospital.

I'd advise any youngster to get into nursing," she said. "The pay is good and getting better all the time. And you are helping people. If there is a more modern and better hospital than Catawba Memorial, then I haven't seen it."