



Roosevelt Says Farewell to Paul Abbey

As the old saying goes, “if walls could talk.”

Well, Roosevelt Care Center’s walls don’t have much on the former Director of Patient and Resident Services, Paul Abbey, who just polished off a forty-three-year career at the facility in January.

Abbey’s tenure began with a bustling Roosevelt Hospital’s drug treatment center back in 1972. But as the story goes, Roosevelt would eventually transition from a hospital into a long-term care center.

Decades would march on, and Abbey would bear witness to any number of other changes, including major renovations and an evolution of care at Roosevelt.

Dramatic transformations were most assuredly afoot, from the advent of the computer and the onset of technology to a shifting focus on the patient as a whole. In terms of medicine, the aim expanded from the mere improvement or maintenance of the body to caregivers incorporating the mental and social wellbeing of residents as well. In that time, Abbey’s office would become the anchor of the historic building’s west wing.

Stranger stumbled in for directions, staff for a quick and cheery conversation and residents for a glimpse of the smile that rarely fades. “When I spoke with the residents and their families, that was the point of each day that I actually felt like I was affecting change,” he said. “It’s where the rubber meets the road.”

Aside from his good-natured reputation, Abbey will be remembered for his instrumental role in establishing the resident and family councils, as well as jumpstarting the employee assistance program. On his off-hours, Abbey has spent the better part of three decades working as a part-time clinic supervisor for a substance abuse treatment center in New Brunswick.

Upon retirement, Abbey says he’ll continue his work at the clinic, begin volunteering and take up a bit of travelling. As for his exodus from the daily grind, Abbey said his colleagues are likely what he’ll miss the most. “I have such respect for the people who do this work,” he said. “There’s a living being there, to take care of and not a lot of money to be made. They’ll bring in homemade gifts or help residents outside...they’re just good people.”

