

Provena Mercy celebrates service, dedication, innovation

BY LINDA GIRARDI

For The Beacon-News

A century ago, the Sisters of Mercy embarked on a mission of healing in Aurora.

How have they continued that mission for 100 years?

"Our lasting power is from God," Sister Anne Marie Doran told the guests in ball gowns and tuxedos at the centennial gala for Provena Mercy Medical Center over the weekend. Nearly 600 guests attended the black-tie fundraiser, "A Century of Powerful Healing," at the Q Center in St. Charles.

Mercy's legacy began when Catherine McAuley reached out to care for the poor in her homeland in Ireland and founded a religious community of women she named the Sisters of Mercy.

"It was her mission, generosity and leadership that set the foundation for many of the wonderful traditions we practice today," said George Einhorn, interim president and CEO of Provena Mercy.

The Sisters of Mercy spread their mission across the Atlantic Ocean and were the founding order of a hospital in Aurora. The "humble abode" evolved into the state-of-the-art Provena Mercy Medical Center.

"Ever since the Sisters of Mercy opened a hospital in an old apartment building in 1911, there has been something very special inside Provena Mercy



Dr. Michael Conrad and his wife Nanette Conrad preview the live auction items during the Mercy Gala hosted at the Q Center in St. Charles. Nearly 600 attended the centennial celebration.

Medical Center," Einhorn said.

Tradition of sacrifice

Memories of the hospital's early days came in reflections and stories from nurses and physicians who dedicated their lives to the mission of the Sisters of Mercy. The reflections were interspersed during a three-course meal from pre-recorded messages across a larger-than-life video screen.

"This is a special time that we need to remember the sisters and all the sacrifices they made," said Ruth Ann Cortis, a member of the last class of nurses to graduate from the St.

Joseph School of Nursing.

Dr. Richard Bodie recalled the untiring commitment of the Sisters of Mercy, whom he described as "cornerstones" of the hospital.

"The Sisters of Mercy were always on top of things and loaded with suggestions," Bodie said.

"We could never imagine hospitals would have recovery rooms, intensive care units or cardiac care center. Sister Patricia came to staff and said we need an intensive care unit and we got one. In essence, they have always been moving forward."

Upgrades for patients

The event chairmen, Dr. Thomas and Trudy Huberty, recognized the Provena Mercy Foundation staff and shared how the hospital was planning for another century of "powerful healing."

"We all know that healthcare in our nation is at a watershed moment, so we ... cannot afford to rest on the laurels of the past but rather inevitably transition our gaze to the future," Thomas Huberty said.

Huberty noted the hospital's physical transformation project known as the "patient room renovation and privatization" program. Each patient room originally designed as semi-private, two-patient rooms are being converted to modern, comfortable, single-patient private rooms.

Huberty said a successful capital campaign is needed to support the project. Trudy Huberty said all of the proceeds from Saturday's gala were dedicated to the campaign, but more work is needed.

"Past generations have brought us to this point in Mercy's history. Our enduring legacy will be the healthcare ministry that we bequeath to subsequent generations," Trudy Huberty said.

Hospital officials announced at the gala that the Dunham Fund awarded a \$205,000 grant toward the project.