

Decades of Dedication Have Deep Abington Roots

The Dixon Family's Legacy of Generosity Bolsters Abington Health System



Edith “Eddie” Robb Dixon figures prominently in Abington Memorial Hospital’s past, present—and future. For more than six decades, Mrs. Dixon has dedicated herself to supporting the hospital and its mission to improve lives.

Edie’s connection to Abington began before she was even born. Her late husband, Fitz Eugene Dixon, Jr., was the great nephew of George W. Elkins, who established the hospital with land and financial backing in 1914. With the support of Fitz’s mother, Eleanor Widener Dixon, the Abington Memorial Hospital School of Nursing opened its doors along with the hospital; 27 years later, she donated the funds to build the hospital’s original Nurse’s Home.

After marrying Fitz in the 1950s, Edie began volunteering at the hospital as a cherry-red, and also helped out in the coffee house and the office. While she curtailed her hands-on duties after her two children were born, Edie and her husband continued to support Abington through philanthropy. In particular, they became champions of the school of nursing.

In March of 1993, the school moved to the Pennwood Building at the Willow Grove campus and continued to thrive. When a nationwide nursing

shortage in 2000 prompted Abington Memorial Hospital to establish a \$20 million initiative to respond to the need for nurses, the Dixons spearheaded the project with a generous endowment. In May 2001, the school was renamed the Abington Memorial Hospital Dixon School of Nursing in honor of both Edie and her mother-in-law.

Throughout their marriage, Edie’s and Fitz’s philanthropic works reached far and wide across the region, with particular focus on Abington’s school of nursing. After her husband’s death in 2006, Edie carried on his passion for giving through financing scholarships and supporting fundraising efforts at the school.

“I could see that my husband’s support for nursing scholarships made a huge impact on people’s lives, people with families to support who otherwise couldn’t afford a nursing education,” Edie says. “It’s something I’ve wanted to continue. Nursing and nursing education are especially important to me, and at Abington they are both excellent.”

This year, the Abington Memorial Hospital Dixon School of Nursing merged with the Jefferson College of Nursing and transitioned into a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)

program. The school is now located at the Abington – Dixon Campus at the Abington Health Center – Willow Grove, and the Penwood Building recently was renamed Dixon Hall.

In 2016, Edie gave another large gift to the Abington – Jefferson Health’s Reimagine Cancer Care campaign for the new Asplundh Cancer Pavilion. She also received the Distinguished Trustee Service Award and an honorary doctorate from Thomas Jefferson University in recognition of her decades of generosity, philanthropy, and support of the work being done at Jefferson.

Refusing to slow down in her 80s—even after a knee replacement (at Abington, of course)—Edie remains active with philanthropic and leadership activities in the arts, education, and healthcare throughout the region. She currently serves on the Jefferson Divisional Board of Trustees and is a trustee on the Abington Hospital Board and the joint Abington – Jefferson Institutional Advancement Committee.

“Healthcare today is going through so much change,” says Edie. “But Abington is very well suited for meeting the challenges. I feel Abington is the best hospital in the area.”