

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 25** - Now home to 7,400 people, Henderson was officially incorporated on May 23, 1953. Dr. Jim French, who had also served as Rose de Lima Chief of Staff, was sworn in as the town's first mayor.

That same year, Sister Felicia Haidysz, OP, was appointed as the hospital's second administrator. As one of the original seven Sisters, she had already worked for six years in the hospital nursery and medical records before taking the position of hospital administrator.

The title "Angel of Mercy" fit Sister Felicia perfectly. Local banker Selma Bartlett said that the compassionate Sister "always forgave the medical bills of those who could not afford care."

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 26** - As the hospital's administrator, Sister Felicia was very generous, routinely forgiving medical bills of the less fortunate. This left little money to expand the hospital or purchase much-needed equipment.

A young physician, Dr. Rueben Lockitch was upset when the hospital's only anesthesia machine was reserved for another procedure. He asked the Sisters to order another but was told they did not have the \$1,000 it would cost.

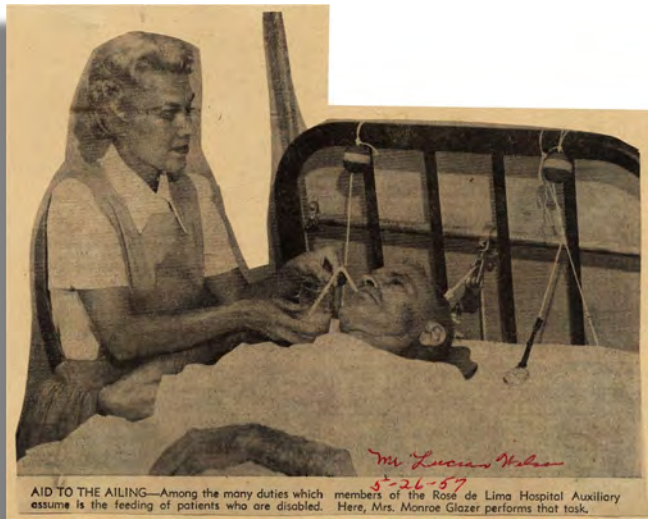
Dr. Lockitch called Beldon Katelman, owner of the El Rancho Vegas Hotel, and asked if he would pay for a second anesthesia machine. Mr. Katelman visited the hospital and promised the Sisters they would have the funds in hand within a few days.

Dr. Lockitch later became the hospital's chief of staff.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 27** - Once the Sisters established their management of the hospital, the relationship and respect between the Sisters, local doctors and staff solidified with each passing year. The hospital's census crept upwards. The hospital wards, once wanting for patients, were at times near capacity.

When the hospital filled, the Sisters often gave up their living quarters to accommodate additional patients.

One Sister wrote Adrian Dominican Superior, Mother Gerald Barry, describing the situation, "We are as busy as can be. It seems there is no end to patients. I moved out of my room last night to make room for someone and this morning we had to send two patients home to await bed space... Evidently a delayed reaction to our prayers of 1947 and 1948!"

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 28** - In 1954, one of Rose de Lima hospital's first expansions got under way. The dormitory-style addition would provide a dining and recreation room for the Sisters of the hospital and those serving at nearby St. Peter's Catholic Church.

There would be much more expansion to come as the Sisters worked to serve the burgeoning community.

While the delivery of quality, compassionate care and community service secured the Sisters a place in the hearts of all they served, their commitment to excellence earned Rose de Lima recognition within the hospital industry.



# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 29** - In 1955, Rose de Lima Hospital earned the distinction of becoming the first southern Nevada hospital accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Hospital Organizations.

The Sisters continued their work without losing sight of their mission to do God's will. "Under the leadership of the devoted Sisters, Rose de Lima became the elite of the group [of hospitals] in the 1950 to 1960 period – at least in the eyes of the local citizens," said Dr. Miller.

According to Henderson businessman Lou LaPorta, it was not simply the people of Henderson who adored the Sisters, but the entire Las Vegas Valley. "People were willing to travel from all edges of the valley to be cared for at Rose de Lima," he said.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 30** - The 1950s found Rose de Lima hospital with real needs. Its wards were bursting at their seams. Thus, Sister Felicia strove to raise money to expand the hospital by accepting – and often encouraging – the community’s offers of help.

The St. Rose Women’s Committee records state that “Sister Felicia harnessed the spirit of the 1950s and was able to reach into the community to find financial resources beyond reimbursable care.”

With the help of supporters like Kathlyn Mowbray and Lucy Foley, she organized an auxiliary of women who gave generously of both their time and talents. The auxiliary raised money through several events including the Mardi Gras Ball.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 31** - As the Rose de Lima Hospital Administrator, Sister Felicia worked to cultivate gifts from grateful patients.

Betty Foley, who delivered all nine of her children at Rose de Lima recalled one of the many evenings Sister Felicia joined her family for dinner at their home.

“We asked a few friends to join us, and Sister Felicia pleaded her case for the hospital so convincingly that one of our neighbors wrote her a sizable check right there and then.”

The neighbor, J.A. Tiberti, found Sister Felicia’s passion for the hospital’s ministry so persuasive that he later told the Foley’s he would likely go broke if he were to dine with her again.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**June 16, 1957:**

*"Try to picture six patient, tolerant, selfless Sisters of the cloth working around the clock... to stem a flood of sickness and injury, death and accident, birth and new life that descends on them without letup, twenty-four hours a day. That is the story of Rose de Lima Hospital."*

**CHAPTER 32** - After a decade of service to the southern Nevada community, Rose de Lima Hospital had earned the trust of doctors and the community.

*"That is the story of wonderful nuns who ask nothing more than the chance to make people well, who give nothing less than their entire selves to people no matter what color you are, no matter who you believe in, no matter what you believe – for if you are sick or ill, or dying and bleeding or if you are giving birth, you need them and they need you."*

*"...If it were possible for hospitals to be built on selflessness and love, Rose de Lima Hospital would tower thousands of feet into the air far above any structure in the area, far, far above the skimpy man-made structure of towering Hoover Dam."*





# 75 Years of Caring

• Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •



#StRose75



**CHAPTER 33** - As the 1950s progressed, so did the Sisters' ambitious plan to build a \$1 million, three-story patient tower at Rose de Lima. Fundraising became a priority.

Harley E. Harmon, a local insurance agent and county commissioner, headed up a \$150,000 fundraising drive that was kicked off with a luncheon at the Sands Hotel.

Hank Greenspun, publisher of the Las Vegas Sun, made the first pledge of support for \$2,500 (about \$25,000 today). The Sands Hotel donated \$2,500, and the Tropicana Hotel and the El Cortez each gave \$500. John De Luca of De Luca Liquor presented the Sisters a check for \$3,500 representing donations from customers. The Major Max C. Fleischmann Foundation gave \$100,000, and \$21,700 was received from the Ford Foundation.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 34** - With capital mounting from the community and philanthropic organizations, Mother Gerald Barry loaned Rose de Lima \$100,000 and left the door open for the Sisters to borrow another \$100,000 if needed for the building fund. The hospital also received a \$450,000 federal grant toward the \$1 million addition.

Probably the most notable “ask” Sister Felicia would herself make was to Al Freeman, a publicist for the Sands Hotel. She asked for his aid in coming up with creative strategies for fundraising. It was not until some time later, when he was confined to the hospital with chest trouble, that he had a “stroke of genius.”

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



Sister  
Angelita

## CHAPTER 35 - THE ANGEL BREAD STORY - Part 1

The Angel Bread story started quite unexpectedly, when Sister Felicia asked Al Freeman, a publicist for the Las Vegas Sands and a patient, for ideas on how to raise funds to expand Rose de Lima.

At first Freeman, who was unhappy with the hospital food, was starved for ideas. That changed when he tasted some lightly toasted and buttered bread which Sister Angelita baked from a family recipe brought from Germany.

He said, "Oh, Angel. You have a gold mine right here. Put this bread on the market and you'll make money."

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



## CHAPTER 36 - THE ANGEL BREAD STORY - Part 2

Las Vegas Sands Publicist Al Freeman felt his idea to sell Sister Felicia's delicious Angel Bread to raise money for the hospital was divine intervention.

Sister Felicia found it depressing. How would the Sisters, already overwhelmed in their ministry of caring, find the time and resources to make and market bread?

Mr. Freeman's inspiration came while he was in a hospital bed and tasted the bread baked from Sister Angelita's family recipe. In the weeks following his discharge from the hospital, Mr. Freeman returned to the hospital with local and national bakery representatives who carefully watched how Sister Angelita made her golden loaves of bread. Soon local bakeries were making Angel Bread and returning a share of the proceeds to Rose de Lima.



# 75 Years of Caring

• Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



## CHAPTER 37 - THE ANGEL BREAD STORY - Part 3

The Henderson community went wild for Angel Bread, buying loaf after loaf to support the hospital. .

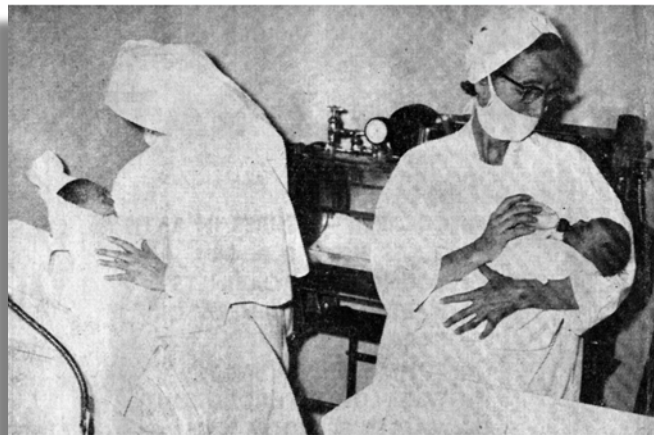
Following the community's incredible support, purchasing thousands of loaves of Sister Angelita's Angel Bread to raise funds for the hospital, Mr. Freeman and (then attorney, later judge) John Mowbray established the Angel Bread Foundation.

News articles about Angel Bread ran in papers from Henderson to the Twin Cities. A children's book about Sister Angelita's bread baking and reflections have also been written to pay homage to her heavenly bread. The incredible success of Angel Bread is one of St. Rose's most cherished stories.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 38** - It was the 1950s and the Baby Boom was visiting southern Nevada in earnest.

Sister Felicia wrote in a November 1956 letter to Mother Gerald Barry, "Everything is progressing at a rapid pace and the babies just keep us stepping. We average about fifty babies and more a month – just since the beginning of the year we have had 530 births – so that will give you an idea, Mother, about the increase in the maternity department."

It has been said that so many babies were born in the late 1950s that the hospital did not have enough bassinets to hold them all. In an effort to find suitable sleeping quarters for the little ones, some were placed in the top drawer of a bureau. People have often wondered if this story is folklore – hospital annals have confirmed it to be true.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



## CHAPTER 39

In 1956 Rose de Lima Hospital was the first medical facility in the area to obtain a radioisotope (nuclear medicine) laboratory and the first fully-accredited cancer treatment center.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 40** - On April 4, 1958, ground was broken on the three-story patient tower which would house a new emergency room, surgical suites, obstetrics unit and additional beds to better accommodate the community's growth.

Bishop Robert Dwyer blessed the spot marked by four stones, then dug the first shovelful and blessed everybody in a sizable audience that included Henderson's Mayor William Byrne and Senator Alan Bible.



# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 41** - On October 25, 1960, years of hard work and support from the community came to fruition and the first bed was moved into the new wing of Rose de Lima hospital.

Notations in the hospital annals that week state: "Many friends came to the assistance of the Sisters in moving furniture and beds into the new wing. [We] had an open house Friday and Saturday. At least 1,000 people visited."

The first patients were moved on October 28, 1960, and the first two major surgeries were performed.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



Nevada Governor  
Grant Sawyer tours  
the new neuro-  
psychiatric unit with  
Sister Helen Margaret,  
Rose de Lima  
Administrator, and  
Sister Benedicta  
Marie,  
Adrian Dominican  
Vicaress General.



**CHAPTER 42** - In March 1962 a twenty-bed expansion of the hospital allowed for the opening of a neuropsychiatric unit.

Rose de Lima was the first private hospital to have a contract with the State Mental Health Services.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



Comedian Shecky Green



Dean Martin admires a model of a hospital expansion.

## CHAPTER 43

DECEMBER 5, 1962 - A Christmas party was held for Rose de Lima's ninety-nine auxiliary members. Comedian Shecky Green came as Santa Claus to entertain the auxiliary and visit patients.

Rose de Lima Hospital benefitted from the generous support of Las Vegas headliners, including appearances at hospital fundraising events, hospital visits with patients, and a regular charity golf tournament attended by the biggest names in the business, including Bob Hope and Bing Crosby.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



## CHAPTER 44

OCTOBER 11, 1964 - When President Lyndon B. Johnson visited Las Vegas for a campaign event, all of the Adrian Dominican Sisters at Rose de Lima hospital were given special invitations to sit in the convention center as guests of U.S. Senator Howard Cannon.

When the president spotted the Sisters seated in the front rows wearing their white habits, he came to the edge of the stage to shake hands with them.



# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 45** - The hospital's successes of the 1950s turned to more challenging times in the 1960s and serious thought was given to relocating Rose de Lima Hospital from Henderson to Las Vegas.

As Las Vegas continued to grow, so did the number of hospitals which, combined with increased traffic, made the road to Rose de Lima seem longer. Still just a 13-mile drive on Boulder Highway, but that distance became too time consuming for many doctors.

The circumstances drove the hospital, which had always struggled to keep abreast of its bills, deep into the red. Sister Helen Margaret, serving as hospital administrator, felt that desperate times called for desperate measures. She consulted engineers and was assured that the recently completed hospital tower could be relocated and moved to Las Vegas in sections.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 46** - When patient numbers dropped at Rose de Lima, many joined in the fight to keep Rose de Lima Hospital in Henderson. Father Caesar Cavilgia of St. Anne's Parish and a Sunrise Hospital chaplain, took up the Sisters' cause, strongly encouraging physicians to continue making rounds at Rose de Lima.

"There was no doubt that the spirit and quality of care was excellent at Rose de Lima, but convenience had become a factor in where physicians sent their patients," said Father Cavilgia. "I talked to the physicians, but both Sunrise and Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital were closer to their offices and homes."

As hospital administrator, would Sister Helen Margaret find the solution to her red ink problem by moving the hospital to Las Vegas, as an engineer's analysis told her could be done?

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 47** - With rumors circulating that Rose de Lima may be considering a move from Henderson to Las Vegas, Henderson Home News Columnist Morry Zenoff took physicians to task, chastising Las Vegas doctors not willing to make the trip to Rose de Lima. Henderson patients went where their doctors directed them – to Las Vegas.

On Tuesday, March 12, 1963, the hospital's red ink problem spilled onto the front page of the Las Vegas Sun newspaper. The headline, set in big red letters read, "Rose de Lima Hospital May Move to Las Vegas," followed by a subhead that read "Henderson's Ill Fail to Use Facility."

The combined efforts of many to keep the hospital in Henderson must have had an impact. Six months later, Rose de Lima's census hit a new high with ninety-five patients and eight babies.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 48** - In August 1968, Rose de Lima hospital opened an intensive care and coronary unit funded with the help of an \$18,500 donation from BMI.

The need for the unit became tragically apparent when three Henderson industrial workers were seriously burned in a fire at Stauffer Chemical Company.

When presenting the donation to the Sisters, BMI President, James Orr, said, "Since the good Sisters from Adrian, Michigan, took over the small industrial clinic and hospital, it has been our privilege to watch the continuous growth of the facility to its present stature and size where it ranks with the finest in the state. The caliber of the services provided is as fine as anywhere available."



# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 49** - 1968 saw construction of a helicopter pad at Rose de Lima Hospital.

The Sisters, doctors, personnel and prominent citizens who attended the event were given complimentary helicopter flights by Hughes Aircraft.

# 75 Years of Caring

- Celebrating 75 Years over 75 Days •

#StRose75



**CHAPTER 50** - In 1968, the Sisters continued their collaboration with the State Mental Health Services.

Together with the state, they opened a mental health service facility in Southern Nevada. Their goal was to develop something that offered more than the temporary holding facility the state had in Northern Nevada. The unit, under the guidance of Sister Marie Brigid, could accommodate twenty patients in a home-like setting.