

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

After 53 years of nursing, Gail Nelson LPN-C, can have some time to herself.



Staff at Perkins County Health Services gathered recently to present Nelson with a keepsake clock, enjoy refreshments, and take the opportunity to wish her well on her retirement.

Throughout her years at the hospital, where she worked in delivery and the nursery, Nelson has worked under 10 different directors of nursing and 11 different administrators.

Being around babies and their mommies was her favorite thing, as well as the most rewarding, said Nelson.

She graduated from nursing school at St. Anthony's in Denver and has spent over a half century demonstrating her talents at the medical facility in Perkins County.

The biggest changes through the years have been the escalating paperwork and the license renewal fees. When Nelson began her nursing career, it took a signature on only one piece of paper for admission—now it's many. Back then it cost \$2 to renew her nursing license—now its over \$100 every two years along with continuing education hours.

For her skill, her personality, her dedication and reputation, Nelson was selected by her peers in the past as "Outstanding Employee of the Year."

Her treasure chest of memories includes being forced to remain at the hospital when a blizzard prevented travel for either the incoming shift or those already at work.

"Patients always appreciated us working holidays," added Nelson. She said she was very blessed through the years with great health and hardly ever had to miss work.

Nelson's plans include being able to sleep in, attend more evening activities, and play cards. She and husband Keith will be married 54 years in June. Her freedom will allow for more time with their two sons, Martin and Dennis, and five grandchildren.

Looking back at a lot of years of employment at the facility, Nelson said, "It was a good place work, it was a wonderful hospital, and it's a great community."