

A Historical Note: A Story of Adventure and Courage

By Evelyn A. Port, Historian

It was the year of America's bicentennial, 1976, Bonnie Ackley was President of FWC and Sally Fleming was the First Lady of the UM.

I was a Newcomer and delighted to drive a Golden Member to the Fall Reception. Our conversation was mainly about the weather, and I had no inkling of the marvelous story yet to be told. Arriving at the reception door, I was literally abandoned and told with a hand pat to go and enjoy myself in this room full of people, many of whom I would, one day, call friends.

During our drive home, after a lovely afternoon, she mentioned that she also was a nurse and I sat mesmerized as she described her early life. "It was very difficult for a female in 1912 to enter the nursing profession and my father who was a UM physician forbade me to do so. I was determined and received my degree to practice and decided the O. R. was rather exciting. Then in 1914, I felt a duty to join the War effort and entered the Nursing Corps, which sent me to England, France and finally to Belgian front lines. There were masses of wounded soldiers. We worked exhaustlessly around the clock with no sense of time. I'll never forget Armistice Day, at the end of the war, when I stood proudly on French soil and was decorated with the Medal of Valor by Generals Pershing and La Foche.

Returning to Michigan, my old O.R. position offered only a very sedate life. But my father would invite young physicians to our home. I especially enjoyed Charlie and Will. We called them 'our boys'. Charlie was the mischievous one, and Will more quiet. "I guess they turned out well, my dear. I know they are famous now." "Do you mean the Mayo brothers?" I asked. "Of course, dear, Charlie and Will Mayo."

This Golden FWC Member and our Golden Members in general are truly the backbone of our organization and I was very privileged to hear one of the great stories among the many yet to be written.
