

Heritage Museum display preserves history of nursing school

ST. CLAIRSVILLE - The Belmont County Heritage Museum is very proud to display artifacts from the the Ruth Brant School of Nursing that were housed in the East Ohio Regional Hospital.

A native of Pennsylvania, Ruth Brant Maguire came to Martins Ferry in 1923 after becoming a registered nurse. Initially her duties were as floor supervisor before advancing to assistant superintendent, and eventually administrator on October 1, 1925. Ruth held the administrator position for 45 years.

In 1925, Ruth organized the Martins Ferry Hospital School of Nursing, which was later named in her honor. The school graduated more than 500 nurses before its doors closed in 1965.

During her administration, the hospital grew in both size and scope of services. Additions to the hospital campus were added in four consecutive decades, ultimately growing from 30 to 200 beds.

Also known for her commitment to civic activities, Ruth was a founding member of the Betty Zane Frontier Days Steering Committee and served on the city's Board of Health. She also founded the Ruth Brant School of Nursing Alumni Association. She was inducted into the Martins Ferry Hall of Honor in 2009.

The Alumni Association recently disbanded after the closing of East Ohio Regional Hospital in September of 2019. Along with a monetary doantion, items commemorating the nursing school that were housed in the basement of the hospital were donated to the Belmont County Heritage Museum. The historical items which include uniforms, graduating class photographs, and equipment and are now on display in the Martins Ferry room.

The grand reopening of the Hertiage Museum will be Friday, Sept. 4 beginning at noon. The St. Clairsville Area Chamber of Commerce will have a ribbon cutting and free Kirke's Homemade Ice Cream will be served to those who tour the museum.

Pictured presenting a check from the alumni association to the Belmont County Tourism Council for the Heritage Museum are (l-r): Group Tour Manager Cathryn Stanley, Helen Vascura (Class of 1963), Marjorie Nichols (Class of 1965), BCTC Executive Director Barb Ballint, and Carolyn Sandreco (Class of 1965).