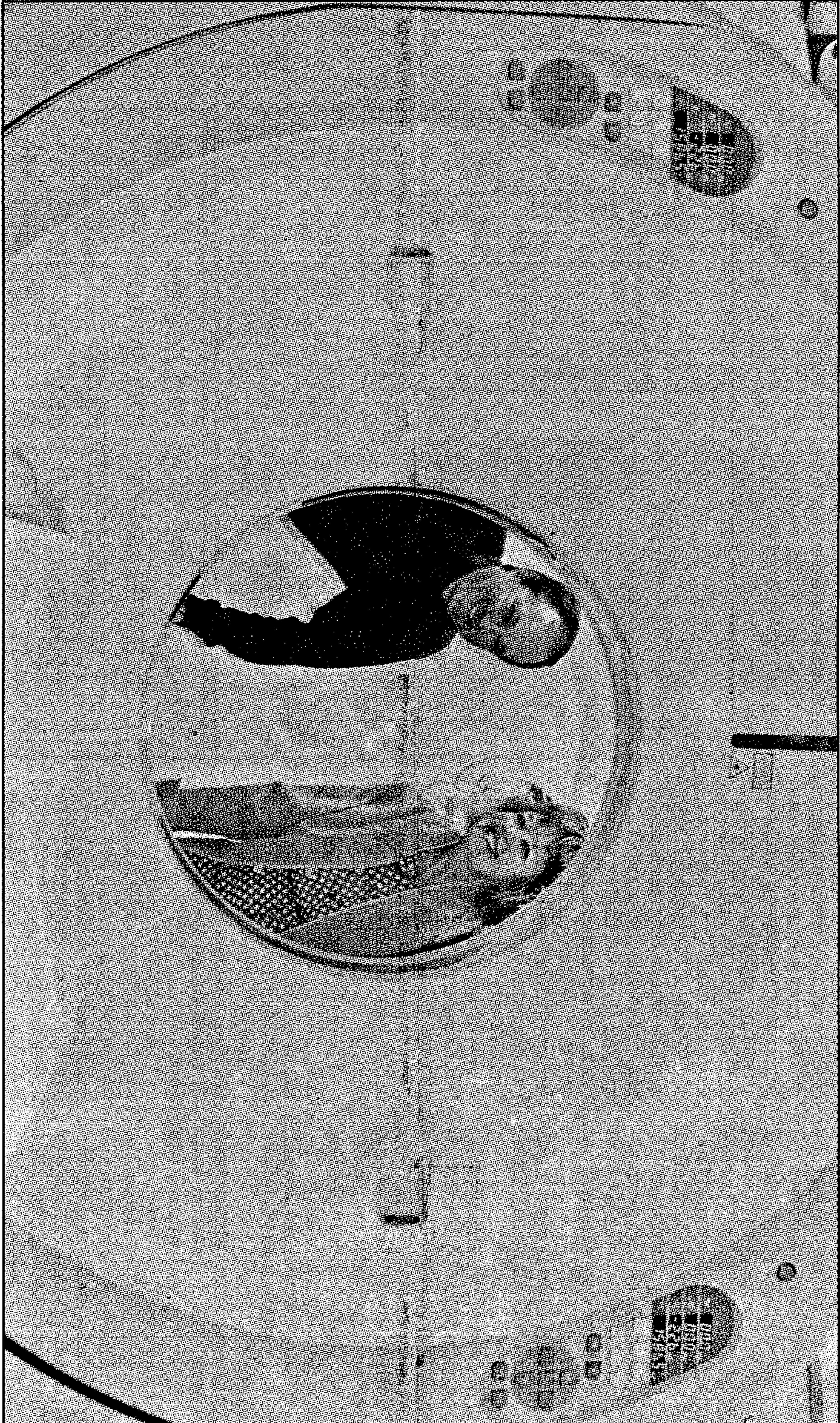


## Kellie to retire as McCall hospital chief



McCall Memorial Hospital Administrator Karen Kellie and Dr. Paul Traugher, radiologist, look through the hospital's multi-slice CT scanner.

Star-News Photo by Lucia V. Knudson

## *Administrator, who will step down in 2010, has seen patient numbers, facilities grow under her watch*

**BY LUCIA V. KNUDSON**

*The Star-News*

Karen Kellie plans to retire as administrator of McCall Memorial Hospital in 2010, a quarter century after she assumed the top job at the publicly owned hospital.

Kellie, 57, said she in good health and wants to retire at the same time as Tom Kellie, her husband of 25 years, who plans to retire from the Forest

## **Deliberate process to be used to replace Kellie**

**BY LUCIA V. KNUDSON**

*The Star-News*

The search to replace Karen Kellie as administrator at McCall Memorial Hospital will kick into gear this summer.

Those associated with the hospital and within the community will be invited to meet with the search firm that has been hired for the job, officials of St. Luke's Regional Medical Center said.

St. Luke's administers the hospital under a management contract, and Kellie is employed by St. Luke's.

The hospital hired Healthcare Placement Group based in Mission Viejo, Calif., a professional executive recruiting firm.

St. Luke's has previously used the firm for high-level executive searches, said Maureen O'Keefe, vice president of human resources at St. Luke's Medical Center. St. Luke's has had good luck using the firm in the past, O'Keefe said.

Talks between the firm and hospital senior staffers, members of the hospital's board of trustees, physicians and others in the community would gather the qualities desired in a new administrator.

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Service in two years.

"It's been on the horizon," Karen Kellie said of her retirement plans.

The hospital was owned by Valley County when Kellie came to McCall in 1981 and was managed by a consortium that included the communities of McCall, Cascade, Council and Cottonwood. A joint board ran the McCall and Cascade hospitals.

The hospital auxiliary was supporting McCall Memorial with equipment purchases, and no hospital foundation existed at the time.

In 1983, voters approved forming an independent, taxing district to finance hospital operations. Medicare had changed its payment system, county funding was limited, so additional support was needed, Kellie said.

"That meant taxes, and voters responded positively," she said.

The hospital throughout Kellie's administra-

## **McCall hospital profile 1985 and 2008**

McCall Memorial Hospital has grown substantially in all ways since 1985 when Karen Kellie took over as hospital administrator. Here is picture of growth between then and now:

- Employees: From 50 in 1985 to 140 today.
  - Family Doctors: From two to 10.
  - Internal Medicine Doctors: From one to two.
  - Radiologists: From none to three.
  - Visiting Specialists: From none to 42.
  - General Surgeon: From none to one, effective in July.
  - Total Budget: From \$1.24 million to \$17.75 million.
  - Outpatients: From 6,300 to 28,200 (2007).
  - Inpatients: From 558 to 546 (2007).
  - Births: From 115 to 130 (2007).
  - Square Footage of Main Hospital: From 16,000 to 32,000.
- The hospital operates three clinics not in existence in 1985:
- McCall Medical Clinics, completed in May, 5,414 square feet.
  - Donnelly Medical Clinic, completed 2007, 1,248 square feet.
  - Integrative Medicine Clinic, completed 2006, 1,458 square feet.
  - Allen Nokes Center, completed 2002, 4,393 square feet.

tion, and before, has been progress-minded with a high-caliber medical staff interested in improving themselves through continuing education.

## **Three-Legged Stool**

That health care is about building relationships has been Kellie's leading philosophy. She fondly compares the relationships that make hospitals go, to a "three-legged stool."

"The leader in my position represents the staff. The (hospital) board represents the community. And the third leg is the physicians on the medical staff," she said. "All three need to be strong and driven to continuously improve."

Kellie credited the hospital's board of trustees with foresight in strategic planning and focus on achievement for helping her lead the hospital for more than two decades.

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## **Services expanded under Kellie's leadership**

Many changes have happened at McCall Memorial Hospital since Karen Kellie took over as the chief administrator in 1985. Here is a list, by no means exhaustive, of the improvements made during her tenure:

- Expansion of medical staff and other professional staff in step with population growth.
- Improved diagnostic testing in McCall with the addition of lab testing, a sleep lab, bone densitometry, colonoscopy, mammography, a CT scanner and continued upgrades.
- Visiting medical specialists to save patients trips to Boise or elsewhere. A dozen services regularly come to McCall.
- McCall doctors providing service at five clinics around the region.
- The addition of St. Luke's Home Care and Hospice to serve a 75-mile radius of McCall.
- Expanded mental health services.
- The McCall Integrative Medicine Clinic, the first of its kind associated with a hospital in the state.
- A full-time general surgeon slated to open a practice in McCall in August.
- The McCall Memorial Hospital Auxiliary Thrift Shop.

# Kellie: McCall hospital chief to retire

*(Continued from Page A-1)*

She also gave the McCall Memorial Hospital Auxiliary credit for its supportive role.

"Thanks to our hospital auxiliary's vision, I've also strengthened my belief in patient and family-focused care in a healing environment," she said.

What causes her the most stress are those times when she sees her work is not meeting people's needs.

Access to and the cost of health care are no longer sustainable, Kellie said. For two years now, she has served on the American Hospital Association's Intermountain Regional Policy Board where the main focus is reform.

"Health promotion, chronic disease management, and other

prevention efforts in primary care should be reimbursed more consistently and at a higher rate," she said. "It would be an investment and prove cost effective in the long run."

Information technology has been used effectively to lower overhead and avoid duplicating diagnostic testing, she said.

## Optimistic About the Future of Health Care

The mechanics of making universal health care viable needs to be worked out, and the country needs to explore matters concerning "the quality of life and end of life," she said. She lauded the Mayo Clinic model where the patient comes first

and receives multidisciplinary, compassionate care. And she lauded the model's growing support from doctors and others.

"I am an optimist by nature," Kellie said. "I do not feel U.S. health care will be the same in five years; I think it will improve."

In 1981, Kellie came to McCall Memorial Hospital to work as vice president of nursing and patient care.

Her medical career began in the early 1970s with nursing studies at Washington State University in Pullman. She graduated Washington State's nursing program with a bachelor of science in 1972.

A two-year stint followed in respiratory intensive care at the University of California-San Francisco veterans hospital.

Later, Kellie advanced her

career at the University of Washington at Seattle, earning a master's degree in nursing in 1976. She then went to work at the trauma center of Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

Volunteer service called, and Kellie headed to Puerto Cabezas, a small mountain town in eastern Nicaragua, for three months working as a nursing instructor for a group called Option.

Kellie returned to Seattle to become director of coronary care for four years at Providence Medical Center then moved to McCall in 1981.

Kellie appreciates in a personal way the hospital that has grown up during her tenure.

"This hospital saved the lives of two of my friends," she said.

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## Process

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Those qualities would be distilled into a composite to be brought to trustees.

A "transition committee" would be formed made up of board members, doctors and others.

After a candidate profile is decided upon, the search firm would solicit resumes and compile a list of suitable candidates. The first round of interviews would likely be conducted by late fall this year, O'Keefe said.

About three choices would be made, and those people could come to McCall in January, partly to get a taste for a McCall winter, she said.

"Winter here is important for them to see and understand," O'Keefe said.

The finalist would likely be chosen somewhere between late winter and early spring in 2009, with a move to McCall expected by late spring or early summer. That would allow about a year of overlap time for the new administrator to learn the ropes from Kellie.

"The process gives everybody some ownership with the ability

to participate," O'Keefe said.

O'Keefe agreed finding someone to follow in Kellie's footsteps could be tough.

"But we have the commitment to keep looking until we do," she said.

Kellie, a former nurse, relates well to staff and doctors, because of her nursing focus, and finding someone with that same capability would not be easy, said Dan Krahn, chairman of the hospital trustee board.

The long tenure of many staffers while Kellie has been on board attests to her leadership, Krahn said.

"I think it's been a terrific run," he said. "Having staff along time at a hospital is not typical where turnover is something like every five years."

Kellie stands out for her ability to foster relationships with hospitals and medical organizations around the state and beyond, Krahn said.

Kellie's people-oriented nursing mind-set has balanced with the hard-nosed approach often taken by business types, he said.

"She has a uniqueness to see the nursing side, where she came from, and put that with the financial side," Krahn said.