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Draft transcript of an interview with

NORMA KING

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KEMH Alumni Transcription draft:

Norma King

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- This is an interview with Norma King on 15 May 2015*
 - My name is Brigitte Glockner and I will be speaking with Norma about her association with King Edward Memorial Hospital in Subiaco as part of the KEMH Alumni Centenary Celebration Project*
 - This interview will form part of an oral history archive that may be held at the KEMH Alumni, the WA Medical Museum, the Batty Library or other museums or libraries*
 - Before we begin, I need to make sure that you, Norma understand your rights in relation to this interview*
 - Do you understand that you will control access to the information given during this interview in the Conditions of Use form you have received which you will fill out and sign at the end of this interview? Yes*
 - Does the Alumni have your permission to make a written transcript of this recording? I do*
 - Do you understand that you may terminate this interview at any stage? Yes*
 - This interview is taking place at 53 Braden Way in Marmion*

For our discussions today can we begin with when did you start at King Eddies?

It's a long time ago, but it was 1970. Um, I actually arrived in Perth at 3am on Christmas Eve 1969, a 10 pound pom and my first interview was held in the grounds of Shenton Park Annex in early 1970, sitting on the grass in the shade under a gum tree. My interviewer was a Radiologist, Dr Peter Breidahl, the Honorary Consultant Radiologist at both the Shenton Park Annex and King Edward Memorial Hospital. This was, for me a far cry from the formal interview sitting at the end of a polished table in the Boardroom of the British National Health Service. After the interview, I was recommended for Sister Hazel Kooyman, otherwise known as Sister Kenny, as she was going on Long Service Leave from King Edward Memorial Hospital X-Ray Department. So began my radiography career at KEMH. The x-ray department in those days was in Harvey House next to the Physiotherapy Department, now it's called the WA Medical Museum. Sister Kenny had been a Senior Radiographer there since 1952. She was originally trained as a nurse at Fremantle Hospital and after doing her midwifery at KEMH she was encouraged by a Radiologist, a Dr Donan, to learn to do radiography. In 1952, Dr Donnan was the Honorary Consultant Radiologist

from Fremantle Hospital. So, while she went on her Long Service Leave for six months, the x-ray staff consisted of a radiographer, Dawn Horrex, she was acting senior in Sister Kenny's position and a newly qualified radiographer, Christine Edgar and myself, I was the relieving radiographer for the 6 months and I can say they were most likely the best 6 months of my working life. KEMH in the 1970s was likened to a small country hospital where everybody knew everyone else, even the Hospital Administrator knew the names of your husband or your wife and how many children you had. At this time, Sister Kenny and King Edward Memorial Hospital were well known for the expertise in performing pelvimetries using the Manchester St Mary's Hospital method. Three x-rays were obtained of the pelvis and measurements taken of the patient. Once the films were developed and dried we were then able to measure and calculate the scale, the size of the pelvic inlet and outlet which would ensure the patient's safe delivery. We often had x-ray films sent to us from all over the state by special delivery so the age and normality of the fetus could be determined by Sister Kenny and the radiologist as to the age or whether there were twins or whether there was an abnormality. In those days, there was no ultrasound, there was no digital imaging and there were no CT scans. We had two x-ray rooms in Harvey House, one was a fluoroscopy unit and a general room which also housed a mass miniature chest x-ray unit. We also had a portable machine for use on the wards and theatre and the special neonatal nursery. At lunchtime, the visiting radiologists would come to do the reporting and perform a screening session. This composed of mostly barium meals, barium enemas and hysterosalpingograms. The radiologist arrived wearing these dark red goggles to adapt their eyes to the dark, ready for viewing the fluorescent screen. It's a wonder none of them were picked up by the police on their way from West Perth but in those days the roads were very quiet (laughs). The mass miniature chest unit was part of WA's tuberculosis campaign to ensure all women who gave birth at the hospital were free of the disease. We very rarely had any positive cases and if there was any doubt, we'd recall the patient and perform a normal full-sized chest x-ray and on the odd occasion, unfortunately, we did refer patients to the Chest Clinic in the city for further treatment. The 6 months went all too quickly and sadly, I had to leave King Edward for a short time as in August 1971 a full-time permanent position became available and Sister Kenny offered it to me. I was

overjoyed to be back again and spent 3 very happy years working with my colleagues who also became my friends. The Honorary Visiting Radiologists were still Dr Breidahl, Dr John Vary, Dr Paul Sprague and later, Dr Jim Rowlands. Sister Kenny was very involved with Australian Institute of Radiography of which we radiographers were members. Her role was to provide refreshments for various meetings throughout the year and we girls spent many a quiet afternoon in Harvey House in the enema prep room making sardine and onion and cheese and gherkin sandwiches and she used to get us to slice the lamingtons in half and place them in her esky ready for the hungry radiographers attending the AIR meetings.

OK, in those days, with only three full-time radiographers we were all expected to give a 24hour , 7 days a week service so this meant being on-call for an entire week every third week including weekends and public holidays. Luckily, we had a fairly low workload, we were young, and we were able to cope. Most of our calls were to the special nursery to check the umbilical lines and the tubes following intubation on the neonates. In 1974, I resigned reluctantly from King Edward to spend some time with my recently widowed mother and later to be at home with our young son. However, in April 1987, I once again joined the radiography team at KEMH initially for 3 months part-time maternity relief followed later by a permanent part-time position. Sister Kenny had been retired for a while and Alan Carter was the Chief Radiographer. At that time, there were 2.5 radiographers, Alan and Margaret McIntyre, both full-time and Lorili Jacobs who worked 5 mornings a week and whom I was relieving. Much had changed since I left 13 years ago. The X-Ray Department was now on the ground floor of the new B Block building and ultrasound had completely overtaken obstetrical imaging requiring specialist ultrasonographers and obstetricians. There were only the same two x-ray rooms, a viewing room and a dark room. The office, reporting rooms and staff rooms were shared by the ultrasound staff. Later, the larger x-ray room was made into two rooms to make way for the new bone density machine. Over the next 19 years I experienced many changes in work practices with the introduction of computers in 1989, followed later by a new computer driven equipment. Our images appeared on monitors, both in screening room and when using the portable image intensifier in theatre. Our x-ray films emerged developed

and dried from the automatic film processor, such an amazing improvement from the wet developer and fixer tanks at the old Harvey House X-Ray Department. There were a few radiology staff changes over the years when Perth Imaging resigned as Dr Breidahl had retired and Dr Vary had passed away. Dr Rowlands from St John's increased his sessions along with Dr Thonnell and Bettenay when Princess Margaret Hospital and KEMH amalgamated. During the early 90s I was encouraged to train in the modality of mammography as a surgeon experienced in breast surgery was performing a few operations at King Edward. I attended a postgraduate course at Curtin University, I was sent to a conference in Sydney and had 12 months practical experience at Perth Imaging in HBF on William Street. We even had a mammography machine still in its plastic wrappings just waiting to be installed. Unfortunately, this was to no avail as the Health Department decided that Royal Perth Hospital was better suited than we were and even though we were a women's hospital, and being advertised as a Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, made no difference. An even greater disaster for myself and my colleagues was the sudden and unexpected death of the Chief Radiographer, Alan Carter, in 1999. Lorili Jacobs and I stepped into the breach sharing the senior full-time position until a replacement, Brendan Beeson, was found 4months later. Brendan had been a Senior Medical Imaging Technologist, as we were called in the year 2000. He had been at Fremantle Hospital for 5 and a half years. Over the next 6 years there were many more changes with the introduction of PACS, Picture and Archiving Communication System and a new digital imaging machine. Ian Morris became the Chief Medical Imaging Technologist over both sites and Princess Margaret Radiographers were included in our roster. In October 2006, I retired after a career in Radiography spanning 44 years, 22 of which were spent at King Edward. In December 2006, I joined the volunteers at the WA Medical Museum in the old stone building, Harvey House, where I worked in the X-Ray Department in the 1970s and to me it feels just like coming home.

Thank you, Norma. That's fantastic. You're doing such a great job being at the Museum and you also are a member of the Alumni and you have done quite a few interviews yourself so I thank you for that and thank you for that wonderful information you have given me

about your life at King Edward and the Radiography Department which is something that you can't find in a book. You can only find it in the memory of people who worked there. So thank you, Norma.

It's my pleasure.