

### Why does Boswell Hospital Sit Atop a Hill?

Medical care that we take for granted today was uncertain at best in the early 1960s. Early residents had to go to Glendale Hospital for treatment or to visit a friend. Youngtown had opened a hospital, but it only had 12 beds.

A group of members from United Church envisioned a medical complex on 103<sup>rd</sup>, south of Grand Ave., beginning with the retirement home we know as Sun Valley Lodge. The plan was to eventually build a 61-bed hospital on the 12 acres to the east of it along 101<sup>st</sup> Ave.

Jim Boswell, Del Webb's partner in building Sun City, felt those plans were too modest for a growing community of seniors. By the time Phase 2 began north of Grand, Boswell made an offer too good to refuse. He'd contribute \$1,200,000 under four conditions: the hospital must have 100 beds with room for more; it must serve the entire NW Valley, not just Sun City; it must be the finest facility of that time; and it would be named for his uncle, Walter O. Boswell who Jim called the "original Arizona Boswell."

This generous offer was quickly accepted; DEVCO donated land along Thunderbird; and fund-raising began in the community to show support. Webb, who went to Mayo Hospital in Rochester MN for annual check-ups, was impressed with the radial design being incorporated into a new building there, and hired the architect.

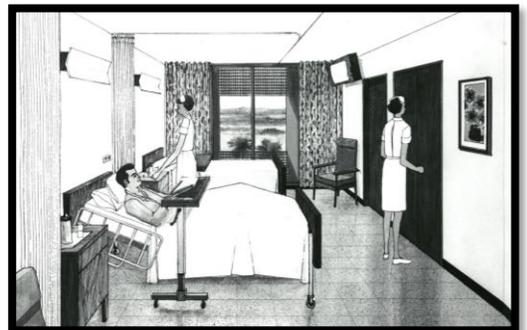
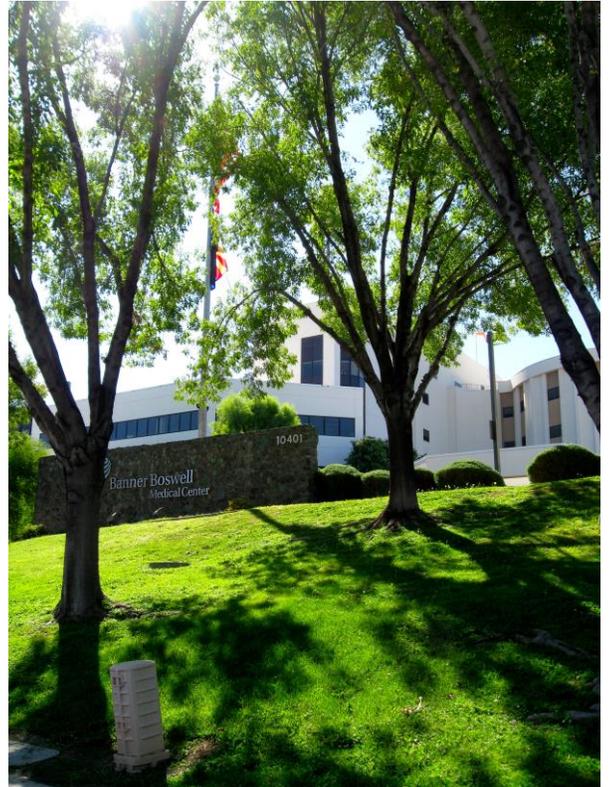
Naysayers outside the community claimed there was no need for a hospital "way out there." Others claimed no nurse or doctor would ever work there – to which John Meeker famously replied: "We are going to hire your very best and brightest!" Once construction was underway, there was no shortage of applicants, including nearly 100 for the position of hospital administrator!

The former flat cotton fields of Marinette soon sprouted a hill upon which the new hospital would sit. According to a newspaper article of the time, Hospital Board President William Chapman claimed "Our non-profit hospital association wanted the hospital to stand high because we expect it will be outstanding among such institutions in the West!"

Practical reasons, however, were the real reason for the hill. Phase 2 would contain Arizona's first lake in a subdivision, and earth removed to create 26-acre Viewpoint Lake had to go somewhere. Creating a 21-ft. high hill elevated the hospital while reducing the amount of excavation required. And hospital planners liked the added height, as it assured every patient room a panoramic view of Sun City.

There is no doubt that the tall hospital building has become a landmark for Sun City, seen all the way from downtown Phoenix on a clear day.

*For more of the story of the History of Healthcare in the Sun Cities, visit the new exhibit opening Nov. 1 at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, 10801 Oakmont Dr. Open 1-4, M, W & F.*



Visitors to the new Phase 2 model homes found a model hospital room for them to inspect, along with 6 side chairs for them to vote on the most comfortable and attractive.