The End of an Era

Broken Bones, lacerations, and late-night illnesses were among the thousands of maladies that brought students through the doors of Pullman’s community hospital during its 57 years on Washington State University’s Pullman campus.

That era ended December 16, 2004, when Pullman’s hospital moved its last patient from the brick building it shared with WSU’s Student Health and Wellness Services and settled into a new site on Bishop Boulevard a half-mile away.

Since 1903, when a smallpox outbreak in Ferry Hall forced college officials to house patients in a gymnasium, people have turned to Washington State for medical help. That year, the need for beds prompted the college to open a two-story infirmary called Maple Cottage, which sat in the place now occupied by WSU’s fire station.

But the small, seven-bed cottage couldn’t accommodate the fast-growing student population for long.

In 1928, a new four-story brick building, the architectural match to Honors (White) Hall to the north, was built with donations and student money on its current site bordered by Washington and Nevada streets. It was named Finch Memorial Hospital, in honor of the project’s greatest benefactor, the estate of John A. Finch of Spokane.

Dr. Betty Adams recalls the building from her time here in the late 1940s as a student and nurse’s aide. She remembers seeing all things typical to a student health clinic: football injuries, stomach flu, car crash victims, and sometimes homesickness.

Seriously ill patients were sent off to the hospital 16 miles up the highway in Colfax. “In the middle of winter, that could be a chal-