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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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History of St. Elizabeth's Hospital Book, "*Poor Ladies...Rich Gift*," Recently Published and Available for Purchase This Holiday Season



Belleville, IL – St. Elizabeth's hospital has been in existence in the Belleville community for over 136 years after being founded by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis. Their long journey from Germany to Illinois has now been documented in a recently published book named "***Poor Ladies...Rich Gift.***"

This extensive history was written by Tom Vernier, Administrative Consultant and long-time St. Elizabeth's Hospital colleague. It is filled with stories from the very beginning of medical services offered by the Sisters in Belleville and covers the next 136 years of compassionate care in fulfilling their mission. This is the only publication written exclusively about the Hospital Sisters and St. Elizabeth's Hospital. The project was underwritten through the St. Francis Foundation Fund.

While researching the many stories in the book, Vernier was most struck by how quickly

the three founding sisters established themselves in the Belleville Community. They arrived in November of 1875, and by 1881, received approval and funding to build their first hospital in Belleville. “That was truly an amazing demonstration of their nursing skills,” Vernier said, “and also the trust that the community had discovered in such a short period of time.”

The book also notes many of the “firsts” that came about at the hospital. St. Elizabeth’s was the first hospital in the metropolitan area to institute a Critical Care Unit, which are now standard in all hospitals. Other firsts included the willingness to bring on board the first Medical Director, Dr. Howard Lange; to establish a medical residency program; and the first to create a support program for AIDS and HIV victims in Southern Illinois.

Also included in the book are hundreds of photos which enhance the story of the Sisters and provide an entertaining visual walk through history.

Hard copy and paperback versions of the book can be purchased at the Gift Shop in the Main Lobby of St. Elizabeth’s Hospital or ordered by mail. Visit steliz.org to download the order form and submit with payment to St. Elizabeth’s Hospital – Friends/Book Order, 211 S. Third Street, Belleville, IL 62220. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Friends of St. Elizabeth’s Hospital.

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