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Golden girl Brenda's 50 years of health care service

It was the year of the last great flood of Bath when a young Brenda Oliveira started work at the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD).

Tom Jones was in the charts with Delilah, Lyndon Johnson was US president, the world had its first sighting of a jumbo jet – and Brenda had no idea how long her new career would last

The answer – an amazing 50 years, and counting. All at the RNHRD, known as the Min, all as a health care assistant and all on the night shift.

Brenda, 82, said: "It suited me when my children were little, and I just got used to it. I feel very proud that I've worked here for so long – I never planned it, but as the years went by I've never thought of leaving."

Brenda was guest of honour at a celebration team party at the Min, where family, friends and colleagues raised a toast and presented her with flowers, a long service certificate and commemorative glass award.

James Scott, Chief Executive of the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Many congratulations to Brenda on this amazing and unique achievement. We thank her for her dedication over so many years and her continued enthusiasm for her work."

Amanda Pacey, RNHRD Matron said: "Other matrons and sisters I speak to are amazed at Brenda's story and so envious that she has stayed with us for so long. I think it's because of the sort of family we are here, we always rely on each other and help each other. One matron remembered a time when we were short-staffed on New Year's Eve and Brenda, of course, stepped in to help out at short notice."

Senior Sister Andreia Ferreira said: "Brenda's a legend and an inspiration to us all. She's always cheerful and friendly to staff and patients – and even on her days off she comes in to see us with little treats to eat."

Brenda, from Widcombe in Bath, is now, finally, planning to call it a day later this year. She plans to spend more time with Ollie, her husband of 63 years, and their four children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

She said: "I've loved it here. It's a hospital with a family feel where you get to know your patients over a long period. I'm very proud to have been lucky enough to work here – it's where I started and it's where I'm going to finish."

Ends

Notes to Editor:

- The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.
- The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.
- In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.
- The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust is now building a purpose-built RNHRD and Therapies Centre and working towards new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future
- For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk