

Willamette View Celebrates 65 Years!

The History of Willamette View in Four Parts: From 1942 through 2020

Part I - How We Came to Be – the Story of Willamette View: 1942 - 1955

by Joyce Allmon, Director of Corporate Communications

As part of Willamette View's 65th anniversary, this is the first of four articles throughout 2020, looking at our growth and the elements that make us a very special community.

The story of Willamette View begins with two individuals – the Reverend Edward Terry and Clyde Mummery.

Reverend Edward Terry

In 1942, a Methodist minister named Edward Terry envisioned a “modern retirement home” – a place where people would grow old together in a safe environment rich in community life. But there was no model for a community of this type. Then, in 1945, when Rev. Terry was a delegate to the Methodist Homes & Hospitals national conference in Chicago, he heard a man from Pacific Homes, Inc., in Los Angeles talk about pre-selling apartments, and with these “founders fees” it was possible to fund construction. Rev. Terry found his model.

The next step was to assemble a group who could make his idea a reality. On September 1, 1951, at the Malloy Hotel in downtown Portland, the group met, and Methodist Homes, Inc., (OMH), was created. This new entity became the advisory organization and sponsor for what would later become Willamette View Manor. It was also from this group that the first Board of

Trustees emerged.

From the onset, OMH established that membership in this new type of home for seniors would be extended to persons of all churches and faiths. But could Portland support a high-class apartment hotel – a “Manor” – for retired people? Research showed it could. Several existing hotels and buildings in Portland were considered, then rejected. It was decided to build new. Scouting for a 15- to 20-acre parcel of land soon began.

There was now a financing model and an organization to sponsor the new home, but there was no one on board who could sell the concept – convince people to prepay before there was even a building. Rev. Terry realized they needed a promoter. Then a congregant told him about a fundraising dinner at another church. “It was the best organized smorgasbord dinner he had ever attended.” And it was all due to a retired businessman from Detroit, Mich., who managed the successful affair. That man was Clyde W. Mummery.

Rev. Terry approached Mummery to raise the millions needed for the Manor project, but there was a caveat. There was no money for a salary, but he could have the title of Executive Director and a desk in the secretary's office at the Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church in Portland. Mummery agreed.



Clyde Mummery

Clyde Mummery's first act was to secure drawings of the latest designs in apartment housing from across the country. He also needed an architect and building engineer to work without pay. Architect Walter Kelly and Engineer W. C. Wilcox took the jobs on faith, agreeing to work “until such time as they could be paid.” When an apartment design from New York City arrived that they liked, the trio set about to revamp it, creating what was to become Willamette View Manor.

It was during this period when Portland attorney Paul Biggs was added to the OMH Board of Trustees for gratis legal advice. He reviewed contracts secured from other “old folks’ homes,” re-drafting them into a contract for OMH. The initial contract included a successor's clause, allowing the first residents, or founders, as they were called, to designate a successor for their apartment. Mummery now had what he needed to sell the project – blueprints and a contract with a hook.

The first few years had setbacks. Although \$1 million in apartment sales had occurred with \$500,000 collected, no site had been selected; construction had not begun. The founders demanded action. Many pulled out of the project. Five members of the Board



Willamette View Manor in January 1955

How We Came to Be – The Story of Willamette View: 1942 – 1955

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of Trustees resigned. This was a low point for Mummery, but motivating. He demanded that the Manor had to be built – no matter what.

It All Comes Together: 1953 to 1955

The Board of Trustees restored confidence in the project. Sales had to be recouped and property purchased. A 22.5-acre site overlooking the Willamette River, immediately south of Matson Memorial Hospital, was secured for \$27,000. The “modern retirement home” now had a name – Willamette View Manor. A construction bid was awarded to Ross B. Hammond.

The completed Manor would total \$2.5 million. On August 23, 1953, a groundbreaking ceremony was held, and within 60 days, all but 11 of the 240 apartments had been sold.

Clyde Mummery was Willamette View Manor’s first administrator. Rev. Edward Terry continued as president of the Board of Trustees through 1957. With construction nearly complete, celebrations were scheduled. An open house and Founders Banquet were held on December 11, 1954, in the new Manor dining room and lounge. The next day a special worship service was held, then the formal dedication

ceremony, with A. Raymond Grant, Bishop of the Portland Area Methodist Church, as the speaker. On January 3, 1955, the first residents started moving into their new home. The founders created the Willamette View Association, installing its first Council on May 25, 1955.

Willamette View’s culture is rooted in its beginnings. Much is owed to those innovative individuals – Rev. Raymond Terry and Clyde Mummery – as well as the trustees and founders. Without them and their combined talents and vision, there would be no Willamette View today.

Part II - Creating a community: growth from 1955 - 1969

Sixty-five years ago, Willamette View Manor, as it was then known, opened for business. It was an unusual business for the time. The thought of still-active, independent people living together had been the idea of one man, Rev. Edward Terry. On January 3, 1955, his idea became a reality. (See "Willamette Views," March 2020, page 12, "How We Came to Be – 1942 - 1955.") The concept was to build a housing complex with all the amenities, specifically for retirees – a place where they could benefit from each others' ideas, expertise and contributions – and be supported as they aged.

It does not sound strange now, but in the early 1950s, this was unique. When Rev. Terry envisioned a place safe, secure and rich in community life, designed for seniors who were not ill, it was unheard of, and many did not believe it could happen. But enough did.

The first people to literally buy into the idea were called Founders. It was their prepaid entry fees that paid for the cost of the Manor's construction. The price of an apartment ranged from \$7,500 for a studio without a kitchen (265 sq. ft.) to \$20,000 for a two bedroom (711 sq. ft.). The monthly fee was a flat rate of \$100 per person per month. Flat rate contracts would become an economic survival concern for Willamette View by the end of the 1960s.

The nearly 300 Founders went on to create a new, interesting and different lifestyle for themselves. (See "Willamette Views," May 2020, page 12, article by Sandie Helmick about life at Willamette View, 1955 to 1959.)



Willamette View Manor campus in 1960 before Phase 3 and third floor addition to the hospital (left foreground)

Expansion was inevitable

Following the opening success of the 240-apartment Manor, thoughts immediately turned to growth. So there was no surprise on March 2, 1956, when it was announced by the board of directors that a "manorette-type" expansion was in the works. Originally, a 70-cottage development was planned, but a study determined that it would be better to build a fireproof annex instead. Working drawings of the now-named Court with 127 units went out for bid on June 26th. A groundbreaking event was held on August 3, 1956, with construction to follow. The Court officially opened on January 15, 1958, but the first 21 residents had started moving in beginning December 7, 1957.

With the opening of the Court, the number of apartments increased to 367, with approximately 500 residents on campus.

With more residents, the need for nursing care increased

In May 1955, Willamette View housed a 20-bed capacity infirmary licensed for 14 nursing home beds by the Oregon State Board of Health. It was located on the first floor E wing of the Manor. But in 1958, with nearly 500 independent living residents, a 14-bed nursing home would not be large enough.

The next significant addition came with the construction of a two-story hospital for the "chronically ill and aged." It was built in three phases. Phase One included 60 nursing beds, completed in January 1959. In the summer, Phase Two added 20 additional nursing beds, doctors' offices outpatient care, physical therapy and a pharmacy. Phase Three added 40 ambulatory beds – a precursor to supported, personal care services – and a third floor to the building in October 1962. The new building was called Willamette View Hospital*

and was located where the Plaza now stands.

Willamette View receives international recognition

Soon, word spread about Willamette View. Curiosity was piqued. In October 1959, the "Saturday Evening Post" published "No Housing Worry Here," an article about "a new cooperative apartment complex in Oregon that found a solution to the problems of post-retirement living, offering a unique combination of freedom and security for its residents for the remainder of their lives." People the world over read the article and inquiries poured in. A comment by resident Si Berry helped seal the deal for many when he wished he and his wife had become residents earlier – "I think this life is a way of staying off old age." By the end of 1959, there would be close to 600 residents. The writer of the article was Arthur W. Baum from Pennsylvania. He and his wife would later move here.

Looking out for one another through charitable giving

Between 1960 and 1962, the Board of Directors went about the process of creating an Endowment Fund for charitable purposes to be administered by the board and the administrator. Prior to that effort, the only two sources of income for Willamette View were residents' monthly fees and the



WV Hospital Phase 2 addition – 1959; currently it is the Plaza building. South wing is on far right past the skybridge.

resale of apartments, and these monies went to pay for day-to-day operations. To support its nonprofit status and charitable works, funding was needed from a third source.

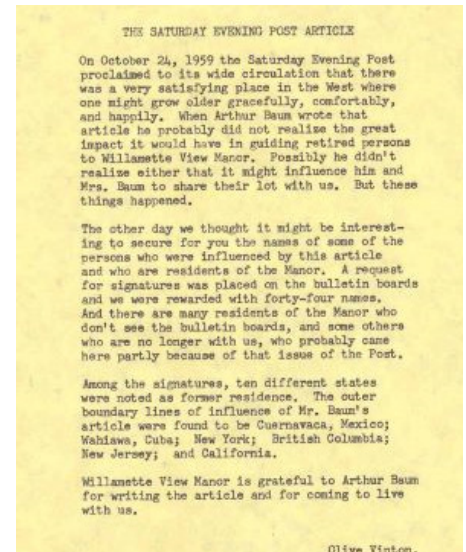
Donations were needed.

In a letter, circa 1962, written by Clyde Mummery, Willamette View's first administrator, he stated, "the purpose of the Endowment Fund was to take care of the Founders and members who outlived their pocket books," as well as fund other charitable activities. Residents were very generous. During the first months of fundraising, over \$150,000 was gift-ed to the fund. In 2020 dollars, this is nearly \$1.3 million.

A contract change ensures Willamette View's future

The turning point for Willamette View's existence came on January 7, 1969, when the board of directors and administrative staff started meeting with residents to introduce essential revisions to Founders' flat rate lifetime contracts – their \$100 per month per person could no longer cover expenses. In 1969, 65 percent of Willamette View's 450-plus residents were original Founders. To secure Willamette View's future, pricing and fee adjustments would need to be based on the cost of actual operations; pro-rated property taxes would also be passed on to residents. Factors that contributed to the situation included inflation, failure to gain property tax relief, minimum wage increases, longevity of residents and the inability to refinance due to an operating deficit.

The rate change required Founders to sign an amendment to their contracts, raising the monthly fee to \$140 plus taxes, adjusted annually as need-



Resident Olive Vinton reports on results of a "Saturday Evening Post" article. To read the full article on Willamette View in the October 24, 1959, issue of the "Saturday Evening Post," go to the WV Resident website. Click on Council program areas/Education/Resident archive.

ed. Fourteen Founders refused to sign the contract addendum and moved out. Willamette View weathered initial expansion and then near closure. In 2020, we celebrate all those pioneering individuals who contributed to the quest, growth and continuing existence of our community. *Note: The hospital had several names throughout the years. In addition to Willamette View Hospital, it was also called Willamette Methodist Hospital, Willamette Methodist Convalescent Hospital and lastly, Willamette View Convalescent Center. In March 2001, following the opening of the new Health Center, the Convalescent Center was closed. On July 19, 2002, after remodeling and repurposing, the building was reopened as the Plaza.

Following the opening of the Willamette View Hospital in 1962, campus life settled into a relatively quiet period without construction projects, but that ended in 1979 when, during a 16-year period, multiple expansions were undertaken, giving Willamette View a newer look, more service options and a larger footprint.

Part III - We continue to grow: 1979 - 1995

As part of Willamette View's 65th anniversary, this is the third of a four-part series on the history of its growth and expansion.

During the years between 1962 – when construction of the Willamette View Hospital was completed – and 1979, life on the Willamette View campus was relatively peaceful. Oh, there were some moments of note, such as in October 1970 when the U.S. Postal Service added a “1” to Willamette View Manor’s address. Instead of 2705, we were now located at 12705 SE River Road. The local area was growing. And a month later, in November, the Post Office installed locking mailboxes in the Manor and Court buildings – no longer could staff handle the U.S. mail. But the high point just might have been the delivery of the new Willamette View Manor bus in the fall of 1978 – a replacement for the yellow circa-1960 school bus in current use. Residents raised \$30,000 to buy the newer bus. This time, the bus color was green.

Yes. It was a quiet time. But that ended in 1979 when, during a 16-year period, multiple construction projects were undertaken, giving Willamette View Manor – as it was still known – a facelift, a larger footprint, and a new residential option.

New complex built – dining room-kitchen-auditorium

The first major project began July 27, 1979, with the groundbreaking for a much-needed larger dining room-kitchen-auditorium complex.

In 1955, when Willamette View Manor opened with 240 apartments and nearly 300 residents, the dining room was located on the first floor, a



The crowded Manor dining room in 1956

wing, of the Manor – taking up the entire wing. It could nicely accommodate diners. But following the opening of the Court in 1958, with its 127 apartments and almost 200 residents, dining became a close-quarters experience with residents eating almost shoulder to shoulder in two shifts. In addition, the kitchen was located in the Manor basement, with food transported by way of an elevator, making service slow. (That same elevator is still in operation today; it’s the one that only goes between the Manor first floor and the lower Level.)

Not only was uncomfortable and cramped dining an issue, but the auditorium was located on the eighth floor of the Manor. (The space was later converted to four resident apartments.) Imagine having only two elevators and one stairwell to transport hundreds of people to and from an event or program! So, yes, after 25 years, it was time to build a larger and more accessible dining room-kitchen-auditorium complex that would physically connect the Manor and Court buildings. The cost for this update was \$1.6 million. The

first meals were served in the new and spacious Manor dining room on August 27, 1980. Note: 38 years later this addition would be replaced. The current Riverview building, opened in October 2018, now sits on the same site as the 1980 dining room-auditorium complex.

1980s bring improvements, a significant addition, and a name change

In 1983, two smaller projects were completed. In May, construction of a “bump-out” addition to enlarge the communal dining room in the former hospital, renamed the Convalescent Center in 1978 (Plaza building today), was built. In October, the Manor’s front steps and entry doors were remodeled for handicap accessibility as well as an interior update of the reception area. This project included the replacement of the old telephone switchboard with a modern console system.

And 1983 ended with the groundbreaking for the Terrace building on December 18. Long-range plans included development of personal care – supported living residences – a precursor to the concept of assisted living. At the time, the Terrace was a significant addition to the housing options



Construction of the Terrace in 1984



Mildred Allen at old switchboard with U.S. mailboxes behind in 1969

available on campus. Willamette View Manor, Inc., was now able to offer supported living services in 96 studio and one-bedroom apartments. The Terrace building would also house an indoor swimming pool and a second auditorium. No other senior community in the area could match this range of residential living options and amenities.

The Terrace was dedicated in a ceremony featuring Senator Mark O. Hatfield as the keynote speaker on March 30, 1985. At the head table that day were future residents Fred and Laura Jean Jory and Bishop Cal McConnell.

Another significant happening of note in 1985 was a name change: Willamette View Manor, Inc., became Willamette View, Inc., dropping “Manor” from the corporate name. From now on we would be known as Willamette View.

Willamette View gets a facelift, receives accreditation

Looking tired and needing an update, the Willamette View campus received a \$12.5 million facelift 36 years after opening. Started in October 1991, the main components of the facelift in-

cluded a new front entry with portico and central air conditioning for the Manor, replacement of the Court-Convalescent Center skybridge, and repainting of all campus buildings. But there were also two large construction projects undertaken: replacement of the south garages with a two-story parking garage and a surface lot, and the addition of a 7th floor to the A, B, D and E wings in the Manor. (When the Manor opened in 1955, it was designed with six floors on the side wings and eight floors in the center tower.) By December 1992, all updates were completed.

The final projects of this era were in 1994, when the tennis court and putting green were added – thanks to the fundraising efforts of residents – and the 1995 seismic upgrades to the Manor kitchen, dining room, and auditorium were made.

Two milestones also occurred in 1995: a 40th anniversary celebration dinner and open house were held, and Willamette View received its first national five-year accreditation from the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission, now known as CARF International. We have continued to be re-accredited every five years since.

Next installment in Willamette View’s expansion story

Look for the final article on the history of Willamette View’s growth in the December issue of *Willamette Views*. It picks up our story at the end of 1999, when expansion planning launches Willamette View into the 21st century. Over a 20-year period, the addition of programs and building projects secures Willamette View’s place as a leader in senior services and housing.

65 Years of good leadership when it counts

There have been many faces and styles in Willamette View’s administrative leadership. At first, they were titled administrator, then executive director, at one time president, and now, CEO. Since 1955, Willamette View has had six full-time executive directors/CEOs and one interim executive director.

The first 44 years: When Willamette View’s first administrator, **Clyde Mummery**, retired, he was replaced by **Marshall C. Hjelte** on May 1, 1963. Mr. Mummery, after moving into the Manor, would die just 10 months later, at age 77, in the Willamette View Hospital. Four years later, Willamette View’s third administrator or executive director was appointed in March 1967. His tenure lasted a little longer – 32 years! That man was **James G. Edwards – Jim** to all of us now, since he and Vickie are residents in a River Ridge Home, having moved to Willamette View in March 2013.

The next 21 years: In addition to Mummery, Hjelte, and Edwards, there were **Mark King**, 1999 – 2004; **Frank McNamara**, WVI board member and Interim Executive Director, June – December 2004 (Frank and Joan McNamara are current residents and neighbors of Jim and Vickie Edwards since 2017); **Jim Mertz**, 2005 – 2009; and **Craig Van Valkenburg**, first appointed as acting administrator in August 2009, then CEO on January 1, 2010. Craig continues as Willamette View’s CEO. Good leadership when it counted has kept Willamette View vibrant, financially sound, and healthy.

Part IV - Creating our future: 1999 - 2020

As part of Willamette View's 65th anniversary, this is the last of a four-part series on the history of its growth and expansion.

In the September *Willamette Views*, we left off with Willamette View receiving its first accreditation from the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission (now CARF International) in 1995. For this final article we jump ahead to 1999 and the start of our next 20 years of growth.

1999 – 2002: Health Center, River Ridge Homes, and Plaza expand offerings on campus.

The next building boom at Willamette View began on October 23, 1999, with the groundbreaking for the 66-bed Health Center and 22 River Ridge Homes.

The new Health Center's design was a vast departure from the Willamette View Convalescent Center, which opened originally as the Willamette View Hospital in 1959. Based on a social model of care, the Health Center featured a skilled care unit and four small neighborhoods, where assisted living, memory care, and nursing services were geared to a patient-centered approach to long-term care. At a cost of \$10.6 million, the Health Center was a major improvement from the medical model of care found in nursing homes at the time. After the Health Center received a Certificate of Occupancy from the state, the first residents moved in, in March 2001.

The Commons building and the duplex-style houses, called The Homes on River Ridge, opened in April 2001. Built at the southern end of Willamette View's property, the \$4.6 million addi-

tion added a variety of residential options not available in other senior communities in Portland at the time.

In November 2001, following the opening of the Health Center, demolition began on the vacant Convalescent Center. The former 120-bed skilled nursing facility was recreated as the multipurpose pet-friendly Plaza, with 17 independent living apartments, courtyards, a café, meeting rooms, and corporate offices at a cost of \$4.8 million. It reopened on July 19, 2002. Today, the Plaza has 22 apartments and houses the Heron's Nest employee break room, a Clackamas Federal Credit Union branch, and Willamette View Home Care office.

2006 – 2016: Terrace becomes the focus of change – Fitness Center, Patio Homes, White Oak Grill, and Balcony Homes bring new energy to the building. With a decreasing demand for personal care or supported living apartments, and a desire to create a new program offering, construction of a \$1.6 million exercise center in the Terrace began in July 2006, incorporating the existing indoor swimming pool and spa. Twenty-four supported living apartments on the first floor of the Terrace were gutted to make way for a



Patio Homes construction – 2007

5,600 square-foot Fitness Center and seven Patio Homes for independent living residents. The Fitness Center featured staff-led balance and strength training instruction, a cardio workout room, floor exercise studio, fitness assessments, and computerized equipment to track an individual's progress. As a first-of-its-kind in the marketplace, a grand opening for the public was held on February 15, 2007.

On the heels of the Fitness Center's opening, construction of the Patio Homes began in April 2007. These seven spacious independent living apartments occupied the remainder of the Terrace first floor. They were designed with private entrances from the outside and personal patios. Floor plans ranged from 1,770 to 2,293 square feet. The cost of the Patio Homes project was \$3.8 million, financed by the entrance fees from the sale of the new apartments. The first residents moved in on September 15, 2007.

After seven quiet years, additional modifications in the Terrace were made to support big changes to come, which included razing of the 1980 Manor dining room-auditorium complex. With the Manor kitchen out of service, the Terrace kitchen would be called upon in a major way.

So, on October 27, 2014, construction began on the White Oak Grill – a new \$1.8 million dining venue. Not only was it a much-needed remodel, but when the Manor dining room and kitchen were torn down to make way for the Riverview building, the White Oak Grill would be the only kitchen available to prepare meals for residents across campus. With five months of fast-tracked work, the White Oak Grill



Harmony Garden construction – 2012

opened March 27, 2015, with a new menu and environment. It was fortunate that the White Oak Grill opened early, because the Manor kitchen was closed on February 19, 2016 – a year ahead of schedule – due to a broken pipe under the kitchen floor .

In May 2016, the last redesign project in the Terrace began when 25 licensed care apartments on the second and third floors in the west wing were converted into 12 independent living Balcony Homes. These pet-friendly, light-filled apartments with gas fireplaces ranged in size from 886 to 1,790 square feet.

Why all the changes in the Terrace? The Terrace opened in 1985 with 96 supportive living apartments, but with the surge in construction of for-profit assisted living facilities, occupancy in the Terrace dropped and revenue was lost. Even after reducing the Terrace to 55 licensed residential care apartments, by 2006, it still had occupancy issues. By 2015, the lost revenue was in the high six figures for the year. This was not a sustainable situation. The answer was to create the right balance of residential options and a revenue source by adding more independent living units on campus. The Terrace is now home to 27 licensed residential care and 19 independent living apartments.

The Terrace building has seen its share of downsizing and changes over the years. But these additions – Fitness Center, Patio Homes, White Oak Grill, Balcony Homes – plus the opening of the artworks studio in May 2011, have created a vibrant atmosphere and one of the most eclectic environments on campus.



Terrace dining room before remodel – 2014

2012: Harmony Garden becomes a place for the body, mind, and spirit. Between June 11 and September 5, 2012, a transformation occurred in a seldom-used, uninviting green space located in the middle of the Health Center. A therapeutic horticultural garden was created with trees, edible herbs and fruits, flowering plants, brick walkways, seating areas, sculptures, water features, and ADA gardening tables. It was designed as a place to nurture the body, mind, and spirit – to be accessible to all residents, families, visitors, and staff. But most of all, Harmony Garden was a safe place for residents in the memory care neighborhood to touch and be touched by the sights, sounds, and smells of nature.

2014: Philanthropy office is formalized at Willamette View. In December 2014, Willamette View opened its Development and Donor Relations Office and a Development

Committee was formed to oversee philanthropy programs and fundraising at Willamette View. Then two years later, on November 11, 2016, following the recommendation from the resident naming task force, the Blue Heron Foundation At Willamette View was formally unveiled. The new foundation immediately went about “building community together” by creating gifting opportunities for funding resident assistance, special programs and projects, employee scholarships, and capital campaigns like the Riverview Project.

2017 – 2019: Riverview Project and North Pointe Homes complete 20 years of growth.

Planning for the new Riverview building and North Pointe Homes had roots in the work begun in 2010 when Willamette View’s Vision 2020 strategic plan was developed. Then following a Facility Conditions Assessment and Energy Study in 2013/2014, a Master Site Plan was created in 2015. This plan looked at growth areas and the optimal use of space, both internally and externally. It became a roadmap for repositioning Willamette View for the future, such as adding more independent living residences on campus, redesign of our front entrance, and continued evolution of a signature food and beverage program.



Rose garden by north garages – 2017

On November 18, 2016, the long-awaited plans for the \$14 million Riverview Project were unveiled, with demolition and then construction beginning the following summer. A groundbreaking event was held on August 16, 2017. The new Riverview building sits on the exact same site as the 1980 Manor dining room complex, but includes so much more: the larger Blue Heron Auditorium, The Cove bar, Elk Rock bistro, Riverview dining room, Marketplace with “to go” items, an outdoor patio with gas fireplace, and a commercial kitchen others would envy.

capital campaign raised \$1.7 million for the project and included naming opportunities for spaces and equipment like the ice cream machine. A ribbon-cutting event and celebration party were held October 19, 2018. While the Riverview Project was under way, demolition of the north garages began in April 2018. Construction of the \$37 million North Pointe homes began soon after. The 47-apartment building was designed to be planet friendly with the environment in mind. It includes solar panels and green roof carports, striking a balance between livability and energy efficiency.

The first residents started moving into North Pointe in August 2019. It was during the construction of North Pointe that the roses planted next to the now-demolished north garages were relocated, with new plants added, to a visitor-friendly new rose garden in the north lawn area. Truly a place to sit and “smell the roses.”

Author’s note: I hope you have enjoyed a look back on the past 65 years. If our history tells us anything, it’s that Willamette View will never stop evolving. It’s just who we are!



The Manor and Riverview buildings - 2019