Earlier this year during Sunday dinner with her family, Anita Leveke, RN, BSN, CEN, found herself repeating what she had been saying for years about her time as a nurse in Mercy’s Emergency Department. “I grew up there,” she stated. After a brief pause she continued, “I grew old there.”

Leveke has been a nurse for more than 36 years, 33 of which were spent in various departments at Mercy, mostly in the Emergency Department. “I’ve been a part of Mercy Emergency for more than half of my life,” said Leveke.

By the time she was 10 years old, Leveke knew she wanted a career in nursing. One of her teachers had been a nurse, and stories of helping people resonated with her. Upon completion of nursing school, she worked at Des Moines General Hospital and Iowa Lutheran Hospital. She came to Mercy in 1985, and after working for a short time on 7 North, she moved to the Emergency Department.

Leveke acknowledges emergency nursing is not easy, and it is not for everyone. But now, as she steps down from her position in the Emergency Department, she looks back on her career with fondness and pride. She considers herself fortunate for the opportunity she had to help so many people on what was likely the worst day of their lives.

“There are so many stories I will never forget,” said Leveke. “Some are miraculous, some are heartbreaking. I am truly blessed to have been at Mercy for so many wonderful years. It’s been an honor to work alongside the amazing doctors, nurses and techs who all come together in support of one another to help those in need.”

Leveke will now focus her time on pursuing her Masters of Science in nursing, with an emphasis in education. Her goal is to help train future nurses through teaching. Her advice for the next generation of nurses is simple, “take care of yourself, and take care of each other.”

LINDSEY KLUNDER RECOGNIZED WITH DAISY AWARD

Lindsey Klunder, R.N., is Mercy’s newest DAISY Award recipient. She was surprised with the award at a ceremony April 12 in the 9th floor Cardiac Medical Intensive Care Unit, with several of her family members, colleagues and Mercy nursing leadership in attendance. Also in attendance were the patient she was nominated for serving, and several of his family members, including some who traveled from other states to attend this celebration and express their personal gratitude to one of Mercy’s amazing nurses.

Lindsey received nine separate nominations for the award from this patient’s family, to recognize the exceptional care she gave to their family member and to each one of them while the patient was hospitalized. Following is an excerpt from one of the nomination forms:

“We were fortunate to have Lindsey as our nurse. She not only gave my husband the best professional...
NEW STROKE TREATMENT OPTION NOW AVAILABLE 24/7

As central Iowa’s only hospital to receive the Gold Seal of Approval™ and Primary Stroke Center certification from The Joint Commission, Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines is the optimum location for stroke patients to seek treatment. By staying ahead of trends and offering the most advanced, state-of-the-art treatment options, Mercy is able to offer new, innovative procedures right here in central Iowa.

In January 2018, Mercy started performing 24/7 clinical coverage of mechanical thrombectomy – a new interventional procedure available to acute ischemic stroke patients. With this procedure, a blood clot is removed from a person’s brain with an instrument called a stent retriever by opening the intracranial vessels after a large stroke which, without treatment, could lead to severe disability or death.

“We are very excited to be able to offer this new procedure for patients who have suffered a stroke and to improve the care provided to our community, patients and families we are privileged to serve,” says Kathy Goetz, vice president of Perioperative Services.

Mechanical thrombectomy is considered as a breakthrough in stroke treatment. It can be used in conjunction with Activase, also known as t-PA, or tissue plasminogen activator, which is a protein involved in the breakdown of blood clots, or alone if the patient is unable to receive Activase. Studies have shown mechanical thrombectomy also significantly reduces stroke-related disability and mortality.

This procedure is led by Einar Bogason, M.D., central Iowa’s only fellowship-trained vascular neurosurgeon and cerebrovascular and endovascular medical director of the Mercy Stroke Program. Dr. Bogason is supported by a team of specialists across various departments, including: Michael Jacoby, M.D., a fellowship-trained vascular neurologist and medical director of the Mercy Stroke Program; Terri Hamm, stroke coordinator; and staff in Emergency, Neurosurgery, Neurology, Imaging, Radiology, Rehabilitation and the Neuro Trauma Medical Intensive Care Unit (NTICU).

In the past year leading up to 24/7 clinical coverage, Mercy has had 20 mechanical thrombectomy cases. In those cases, patients showed the symptoms of a stroke, and based on medical imaging results, qualified for mechanical thrombectomy. Some patients had almost immediate improvement in their symptoms.

Mercy is one of only two thrombectomy centers in the state of Iowa; and the first and only one located in central Iowa.

During the month of May, Mercy will commemorate American Stroke Month by running a special campaign designed to educate the community on recognizing the signs of stroke and the importance of seeking treatment as soon as possible.

DAISY AWARD (CONTINUED)

The Force was strong with babies born at Mercy on May 4, also known as Star Wars Day. Amanda Selby, friend of Megan Summers, RN, from our Mother/Baby Unit, crocheted the amazing Star Wars character hats that were given to babies born on May 4 at Mercy. The hats included an Ewok, Yoda, Princess Leia, BB-8 and R2-D2. Pictured are Tanner Clark with baby Reed, and nurses Emily Dawson and Megan Summers.

Mercy implemented the DAISY Award program in April 2017 to honor our nurses, who consistently provide compassionate and remarkable care while demonstrating clinical excellence. Winners are presented with a certificate, pin and a hand-carved stone sculpture entitled A Healer’s Touch. Additionally, everyone in the honoree’s unit is treated to cinnamon rolls.

Find out more about the award or submit a nomination at mercy.dm/daisy.