

LEADERSHIP AS WWII CADET NURSE MAKES HEBEL A TRAILBLAZER

Fox Point resident credited with aiding multiple nursing programs throughout Wisconsin



Standing at her father's side amid the hustle and bustle of a Saturday stroll in the park, 4-year-old Alma Hebel stood, playing patriotic songs on her horn for World War I service members returning home.

Growing up in a single-parent household because of the unexpected death of her father, Hebel's commitment to service started at an early age. It was just before the beginning of World War II in September 1944 when Hebel, now 93-years old, like many women across the country, answered the call to serve her country as a nurse. She was just 17 when she packed her bags and fulfilled her duty of healing the wounded and tending to the sick through the U.S.

Cadet Nurse Corps program.

With the assistance of the Nurse Training Act of 1943, Hebel received both her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania. She was one of the nearly 124,000 nursing graduates across the nation at the time, receiving tuition-free schooling because of the legislation and the need for nurses. During her studies, she also met her future husband, Donn K. Haglund.

For years, Hebel worked as a cadet nurse in hospitals domestically, caring for the wounded upon returning home from the war. Ultimately, she returned to the University of Pennsylvania to teach aspiring nurses through the school's

hospital contract and associate degree programs.

Hebel and her husband ended up moving from Pennsylvania to Wisconsin, where their son Erik was born and where she received her doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Finding a new career after nursing, Hebel was hired as a nursing educator at Marquette University in Milwaukee. She noted that some people "laughed at her funny nursing hat," often confusing it for the headwear nuns on campus wore.

Credited with crafting the UW-Madison College of Nursing's Milwaukee program and teaching its first class, Alma Hebel-Haglund is largely considered a trailblazer. She also introduced an associate degree program in nursing in Wisconsin, and helped build Cardinal Stritch University's School of Nursing. She also served as an adjunct professor at Concordia University — Wisconsin, owned a small business, served as president of Haglund Associate Leadership Management Institute — which consulted business communities — and she wrote the book *Honey, It Won't Come Off*, which centers around 17th-century England's general hospital.

Although they were part of a military organization, cadet nurses of WWII have never truly been considered veterans. Recently, though, Congress has taken up legislation that would view cadet nurses as "honorary" veterans, allowing them to receive service medals and burial benefits.

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs' Women Veterans Program thanks Alma for her life of service.