Mrs. Ellie Reser, RN is now the Chaplain/Bereavement Coordinator for the St. Claire Medical Center. She is almost as beloved in Morehead as Dr. Louise. Mrs. Reser came to Morehead from Indiana as a young bride and new nurse. She worked in Louise and Susie's office. She began the local hospice program. Her admiration for Louise is probably even more moving in her telling as she is, herself, a healer and knows the worth of this special gift. Her explanations of how Dr. Louise works as a healer are probably the closest clues to be found for Dr. Louise's special magic.

Ellie Reser was the organizing energy behind the now famous birthday celebration for Dr. Louise when she turned 75. Mrs. Reser was more than happy to talk about her relationship with Louise and Susie. She was interviewed in her home and she was prepared with letters and pictures and a script for the play that she had written for the birthday occasion. All of these things she generously turned over to me.

Her story is full of information, but more, it is the story of her own courage as one who came to this town a stranger and remained to give solace to so many. She is herself a heroine.
INTERVIEW WITH ELIE RESER
In her home in Morehead, KY
January 18, 1993

Louise’s history is rather interwoven with the history of the University and the reason for that is that she and Bob Bishop and that little group of children used to play in a playhouse which is just where the University Center (ADUC) is now. She (Louise) also was on the faculty at Morehead before she went to medical school. So, I thought anything that you could have that would give you a clue as to what it was like... During the war they taught sailors here. I believe they were trying to make instant officers. I think, all over the United States, teaching people math and things that they could use in being navigators and that sort of thing. So during the early years of the war they had military men on campus. But it was in the late 40’s I think, that Louise went back to medical school. She finished faster than normal because the physician shortage was so great at that time. So she did what would normally take people 4 1/2 years in less time. Which, really, I can’t imagine how much studying that must take to do what she did.

The way I know some of the stories about Louise is that we had this little sort of celebration of her life and it was to coincide with her forty years of practice in Morehead. And it was also a celebration of the hospital. They wanted to do something to honor her. They asked me to think about a script for what would we do at that celebration. What I did to prepare for that was to find as many people as I could that went to high school with her-- because she went all of her years in school right here in Rowan County. Except when she went away to college and med school. And Bob Bishop was forthcoming, and Jane (Mrs. Boone Caudill) -- her sisters and several other people I have listed in that script. And I asked them to come together at the hospital for a luncheon, just to tell stories. It was wonderful. We took down the stories and as I listened I took down stories that I thought would play.

One of the most wonderful stories, that is the most fun to do, was when the children, making adventure for themselves, they put a pony in the third floor window of what was then the Evans’ home. It later became the Layne Funeral Home. The Evans’ home was a center of a lot of their activities. One of her dearest friends was Sidney Evans. And her brother “Tick” Evans (Eldon Evans) is still living. Now he didn’t remember too much about putting the pony up there but Mr. Cassity did. Bob Bishop did. And how they ever got that pony up three flights of stairs?
Well, when Mrs. Evans got home from one of the church meetings—the Methodist Church was about two blocks away—she saw this pony looking out of the window and a lot of people in the yard. That was one of their best stories. Another story I tried to get them to talk about—is what she did scholastically. Did she compete in anything? And she and Bob Bishop were competing on the debate team. I guess the farthest point they would have gone would have been over to West Liberty—but in those days the roads were so terrible that you had to go on the train.

From what I understand, you had to go out to where Lee Clay was to get on the train... That was a brick manufacturing place. That's where the North Fork Railroad was and that railroad would take you up to just outside of West Liberty. But you would have to spend the night because that train went so infrequently—and then they would walk home from Clearfield!

There was another hangout— that was for young people-- and that was the Old Eagle's Nest. It was where Arby's is now and there used to be the Midland Trail Hotel. Up from that was the Eagle's Nest. It was known in this area for many many years as the place to eat between Ashland and Lexington. See, back in those days you had to travel on US 60 and it was an all day trip practically to go from Ashland to Lexington because the roads were curvy and two lane all the way. So, this was a good place to stop and eat lunch. The food was excellent.

When I first came to Morehead The Eagle's Nest was the place to go. In the morning men would all sit around this huge round table and you could find out the news of the day that way. The women would usually stop by for coffee in the afternoon. And they would sometimes bring their little children with them and they would sit over on the side-- there were little tiny tables for them-- and they would sip coke while the women exchanged the news of the street. We used (in the skits) just one little thing with the Eagle's Nest, and tried to incorporate dances of the day, which would have been the Charleston and those things.

Louise was always, she sounded, from what I could understand from the people I've talked to-- she was sort of at the center of a lot of activities, she and her sister, Cille (Lucille Caudill Little). Cille, to this day, is very vibrant and expressive. And I can imagine that she and Louise together would have been quite an interesting pair. They are very close in age, I think next to each other in age.

Now, Jane Caudill was Louise's brother's wife-- Boone. She and Boone and their father were involved with the bank in Sandy Hook-- as is Boone Proctor Caudill. They still are.
Louise is also on the Board—their names are synonymous with banking. (Louise’s father, Daniel Boone, also helped found People’s Bank in Morehead)

Louise’s people were so vital to the development of this area that I would think that some of this is important to tell you about Louise because the banks in Morehead and Elliot County and maybe in one other place were all founded by her father’s brothers. Daniel Boone, her father, was at Sandy Hook. There was a brother that was with a People’s Bank here, and, so, there was a story that they told me one time which I did not record. But, it was about how they first brought the money, which was to start the bank at Morehead, over the ridge. They brought it, I think the story goes, in bags of meal that they were bringing over here. See, it was kind of rough and woolly down where highway 32 is now. And the stories that I have read about the Rowan County War and the way things were is that that was a place you went through when it was good to know somebody who knew somebody along the way. Because, you know, there were people that really wanted your possessions—not just to do you harm. But, it was kind of a rough place.

However, in the midst of all this roughness, there was also a great deal of culture. And I think that the Evans’ and the Caudills, all of these good solid families, kind of first settlers that you talk about from Rowan County—they paid attention to education. I mean, Louise graduated from Columbia in New York City. I believe her family cared a lot about what we would think good moral values are. I know they did because they had been good upstanding business people as long as I can remember. They went to the church of Phoebe Button and her son—that came to make Morehead Normal School. They were sort of like missionaries in their view of coming here. I'm not sure that Brother Button wasn't a minister in the Christian Church. That may show up in George Young's paper. In fact, I'm sort of giving you—oh, I don't want this to be a historical document.

Well, they tried to tell me at the time I was doing the stories, that “Tick” Evans was a little bit older. His name is really Eldon Evans—but I think he would surely fill you in on how the Evans’ family and the Caudill family were close. It may be that they are somehow related. Louise’s family is such a large family—they came out of Poplar Grove. I was once visiting a home health patient out there. They said, “Do you know Dr. Louise Caudill?” I said, “Yes, I do.” They said, “Do you know that this is where her father grew up?” It’s out right on the line between Elliot and Morgan. It’s a beautiful area. There’s a ridge that goes along and they lived down in
this house rather down a steep hill. I believe that-- I know they sold meal and maybe things like that. (farmed)

What I'm trying to say is that her family and some other good solid families in this community made a foundation for what Morehead has become today. Because the town of Owingsville, Mt. Sterling and these other places seemed like they had more money and you will find the big fine old homes there. These people didn't have that kind of money but they had the values and the foresight to see that some things would happen here and would happen right.

And Louise has been a mover in that direction, ever since... You know, she taught at school, but she-- well, it was kind of unheard of for a woman her age-- if you already had a profession, to go back to school and put in all that time at medical school, which couldn't have been easy. And there aren't many women. Stop and think about it. It's getting much better now, but back then, women doctors were very scarce. They were looked on as an oddity. Jane is the one who can tell you about how they started the office there in that building above the pool hall. Louise's mother-- now this is an aside but you can keep it in-- Louise will tell you the same story-- Granny Caudill owned that building. Louise's mother. Everybody called her "Granny Caudill." She was much loved by the community. As she grew older she drove a great big Cadillac right down the middle of the street! She MIGHT stop at Second Street, but, then again, she might not! And we all knew her-- it was a small town. This town has grown so much just since the time I've come here. But, she was a much loved woman. So gracious, inviting everyone to her home.

I think Louise's gregariousness came from both sides of the family. From her father, who could politic with the best of them. But her mother had that sort of all encompassing thing-- to sort of help the world and did a lot with the church and all. Her Mom, came from, I believe, lawyers. The Proctors. I'm quite sure that two of her mother's brothers read law. They were all interested in education. I think at that time for them to have aspirations for their daughter to become a doctor-- well! Louise has said that her father told her that she could be anything she wanted to be. Now, for Mr. Dan Caudill to say that back in those days, I think, was just remarkable.

Also, you have to think about the Bishops. Bob Bishop and Louise were lifelong friends. They were classmates. His sister (Roberta) became a pharmacist. And the reason that Bob never got to go away to school was because on graduation night-- oh, it's the saddest story. His
father died. High school. After graduation he and Louise were both going to go away to school. After his dad died he stayed home in order to keep the business going. And that’s when Bishop’s Drug Store—well, when that closed—I really wanted to cry because Bob Bishop struggled so hard for so long to keep that place open. He was always interested in plays and things and he would go on the train to New York. They all went on theatre trips! They’d go up to see the plays in New York. They still go to all the plays here together—to everything. Yes, they have been. And Jane’s and Boone’s children became more than just nieces and nephews to Louise. Proc and Sally and Susie and Etta. It was sort of the thing for Proc and Sally to spend Saturday night with Louise and Susie. Then they would go to church on Sunday morning and then, well, then they lived down there behind that office. They did that because women were always coming in to have babies. I don’t know how they lived like that. It was years they lived like that. And it was not unusual for them to have more than one baby a night. Did she tell you the story about Monseigner Towell?

Okay. When Monseigner Towell—we kept trying to have the hospital here—and everyone kept telling us that we didn’t have enough of a population base. And this was NOT a Catholic town. Well, it’s much better now, and they have a building. When we first came to town, now... Susie (Halbleib) is Catholic. I could say that we could name for you the Catholics. There were ten or less and they met in a little garage church up near the old swimming pool—where their church is now. And Susie was a part of that congregation. Well, the local people called on the Baptists and they weren’t interested and the Methodists, and they weren’t. I was so pleased that in their planning they didn’t try to make it a little county hospital because it could never have become what it is now. We’d seen our little county hospitals. There was one for a while, sort of a little one, over at Grayson. Mt. Sterling never had the prestige, it was sort of like, if you couldn’t make it to Lexington, you could stop off at Mt. Sterling.

Louise’s vision and the vision of the early leaders was that we would have a hospital of quality with specialists. And I believe that, even in those early days, Louise was looking for University links. Because, she did not want this just to be a little lying-in hospital. This was to be someplace where we did competitive medicine. We could get all the right tests here without going to Lexington.

When this hospital got started, the Appalachian Region Commission was taking over. The Miner’s Hospitals were (ARH) down in Southeastern Kentucky and they were putting little
hospitals in just everywhere and they were spreading out into every little community. Well, the communities were without medical care. But in the planning stages, they were just willing to put up a building and somehow it would be staffed. And Louise and her group realized that this was going to get them in trouble. I mean, if you are going to have a hospital, you have to have competent people in lab and x-ray and you can’t just bring in individual doctors— you have to have things to help them do their work. So, it was her vision that we wouldn’t go with—we wouldn’t do something we couldn’t really do a fine job with.

Louise Caudill has never been happy with anything that wasn’t good quality. That shows in her schooling, that shows in her practice. For example, their records are exemplary. Louise kept good records when those around us didn’t. Even when she wasn’t wanting to be with Medicaid, when it first came out— it was a mess. There were some people really cashing in with it. And they got indicted because they had no records to say what they had—no records to back up what they were charged for. Louise’s records down there—starting in 1957— for me—she can look back and see everything that has happened to me since 1957. It’s right there. And you could think that, as she grew older, she wouldn’t pay as much attention to that but they are just as meticulous today as she and Susie were on the very first day I went to see them. I had my second child in that office down there.

Now, here’s how my life crossed Louise’s: I was a brand new graduate from the Lutheran Hospital School of Nursing back in 1957. That was in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I was from a little town just south of Fort Wayne. My husband at that time had graduated from Morehead State Teachers College. He was from Indiana. He had come down here on a music scholarship and also did theatre. He knew Louise very well at that time because they supported the theatre, even back then. Every production he was in, I’m sure Louise and Susie were there. There was no place for me to work in Morehead. There were three doctors and they already had a nurse. The Health Department had a nurse. (The doctors were Sam Raynolds, Everett Blair, Dr. Jerrett was still practicing—and Louise, four, but Jerrett had health problems) So there was no hospital. The Health Department was a one nurse place. And I can remember how just really forlorn I felt— I had been offered a really good position at my own hospital because I’d graduated with honors. And I thought, ‘Where in the world am I going?’ I must have been 21 and my husband was going to go to graduate school and expected to get his degree in one year.
His degree would have been in education but his undergraduate was theatre/music. His name was Don Holloway. They have a scholarship named for him now. Anyway, he came home one day and said, "I've found a job for you. It's in a little town named Olive Hill. You can be the nurse at this Methodist Boarding School." I was pretty excited. It was imperative that I work because Don was in school and we had no money. And I thought this is a fine way to start out-- going to a place that needs health care and I can't find a job. I even thought maybe I could work in the library. I thought, 'this is ridiculous.'

Well, I did take that job in Olive Hill and the Superintendent left and the principal of the school got drafted and that was during the Korean conflict and that left the school without a principal. Well, Don had enough credits, graduate education credits, so they said he could have an emergency certificate so that he could keep the kids grades that year. But the Methodist Church had already begun to say that they were going to phase out the school because it was originally meant for mountain children who couldn't afford to get to school otherwise. That was before a lot of school busing. So they came and boarded and the families could come on weekends and at vacation time they could go home. As I remember, there were about 40 boarding students and 60 day students. I still remember my very difficult year in Olive Hill.

Well, there were marches on the school. They were going to close that school. People were angry about it... very angry. They padlocked the buildings and did all kinds of threatening. They thought the school should stay open, and that the Methodist Church had done the people wrong. Well, it was a terrible year, no violence, but some days the drunks would be shooting so that some days I wouldn't hang out the wash-- they'd be shooting up in the trees. Most of the bullets would be, you know, so there were some days you didn't do things outside. It was just a place that-- you know, I was from a very sheltered background-- in Northern Indiana, where people didn't behave this way. And there was a lovely group of people but most of these people were very angry because the school was closing.

The problem was that the Carter County schools were, at that time, in such bad shape that they really did worry about sending their kids to school. See, that was the time when the brickyards were there-- Harbison Walker and General Refractories were at full speed and they had superintendents of these places-- and they were from Pennsylvania. It would be like bringing someone to Morehead if our schools were REALLY bad. And there was no culture or whatever. These people thought we were taking their center of culture, their center of education,
and so, they were very angry. And, of course, we were the local people put there by the Methodist Mission Board.

All that doesn't have anything to do with Louise except to say that when we moved to Morehead, the next year, I felt like I was coming to heaven. Because, I could go in to town and people talked to me. There, in the banks sometimes, we wouldn't be waited on! And one drugstore in Olive Hill, we couldn't go to because they would just say ugly things. I worked a little bit over there with a young physician who left after two years. It was an angry town. So, I came to Morehead where there was a University and I had a physician. I think my first entry on my card with Louise was for my oral polio and that would have been back in 1957. I knew, immediately, when I met her, that this lady was going to be my doctor!

Louise was a little, very athletic person. She played a lot of tennis. She was very up when you talked to her. One thing was that she had a more family oriented practice and the other thing was that my husband had gone to her as a student. She was the one to whom more students went more than any place else.

You know, all those doctors were cousins. Dr. Blair’s mother was Daniel Boone Caudill’s sister-- grew up right here, so they were close, by being relatives. And then, Sam Reynolds was also a cousin but I’m not sure exactly how that worked-- but all three were related. Well, in those times, you lived with people in your County. They had large families and you didn’t go away, you stayed there. So, they intermarried. Anyway, my husband thought so highly of Louise and so, of course, that’s where I went.

She had just moved into her new, her brand new place. The same buildings were around here then. That apartment building has been there for a real long time. A little bit later I worked as the office nurse for Billie Jo Caudill, who was a second cousin-- who practiced with Louise for a while. But, it didn’t work out. You know, when there’s an established practice-- and Louise knew everybody so well, it was very hard for the people to say, “Well, Billie Jo will be your doctor.” They wanted Louise and Susie. I worked in their office. I actually worked for Billie Jo-- this was a woman-- so Louise and Susie would work in the morning and Billie Jo and I worked in the afternoon. And then we would alternate. Both of them did a lot of deliveries-- there in the office. And then, it was during this time, or shortly after, I started working for Billie Jo that the hospital was being planned.
I worked for Billie Jo for three years. We stayed with Louise, I think, for about 9 months or so and then we set up an office just up the street. See, I was a known quantity that had no job here. And there just weren't very many nurses here. Now that was something we thought about also, when we were building the hospital. Where are we going to get the nurses?

I wouldn't say it was a competition, because Louise's people were not leaving and Louise had more than enough to do. And she had another young man that came and worked with her and it was the same thing. People wanted Louise, they didn't want anybody else. I think that happens, probably, in practices that are already established and a new person comes. But these people are very loyal and honor that physician and they don't want another one. I'm sure if we told patients to do something they would first call up Susie to make sure it was the right thing to do.

I am a VERY loyal patient of Louise's. Even though I worked for a while for this other physician. Oh, I liked Louise! Immediately! I think that when I go to see Louise-- well, she makes you feel like you are the only one in the world that she's concerned about. I can't imagine anyone thinking that she had anything else on her mind; she does that. And how do people have this ability? I just don't know.

I also go to a specialist now. But, when I have to go and get myself adjusted, mentally, I walk down the street to Louise. She sometimes gives me a prescription but I don't really need any pills, usually, because by the time I have left I have things in perspective. And, I've had some really difficult things happen in my life. She has known all about them. She has always been there, no matter when I had to call-- no matter how upset I was-- she would make some kind of order out of it. And out of so much of what happened, that she's been entwined with, she became a friend more than anything else. She still is a friend. She is a friend that knows how to put my psyche back to square one. I go there-- not very often-- probably every six or eight months-- I need an adjustment. I always have some little physical complaint, but then it always gets down to the fact that I never get sick if I don't have something bothering me inside.

I think a lot of it is-- but I'm just speaking for myself. And I have seen a lot of sick people. Even cancer. I think my breast cancer came from a lot of the incredible stress that I was under with my parents. You know, trying to keep them... so, yes, if you are stressed, your body shows it, in many ways. Louise has been touting this-- that stress causes illness-- for as long as I've known her. And that was way before they wrote about it. And she always had made sure, in
talking with us, and ha us point out what was going on in life at that time, that it generally has something to do with what’s happening with you then. That has been true for me. You could look back through my cards at her office and the illnesses-- for example, at one time of strain, I ended up in St. Joe’s Hospital with a disease they couldn’t figure out. my immune system went crazy and I had knots on my legs and all sorts of things. They treated me with things. But, when we came back and Louise and I sorted it out, my body had finally just said, 'It’s too much stress.' So, I ended up in a bed for six weeks. And I got well.

She doesn’t say that to you. No. She lets you say it. She is an adept counselor. She never has to say it to you. She works you around until you say it yourself. And that’s the height of counseling. To bring that realization to the person-- saying this is what is wrong with you or this is what to do-- she more than likely will say, “Well, let’s talk about it.” “We can do this or we can do that. But maybe, now that you know what’s going on, maybe we should just see if it’s going to settle down by itself.” This has happened to me just in the last month. She said, “I think we might identify what’s causing it.” Which is totally emotional and, she said, “Usually when you find out what it is that seems to be doing it for you, it doesn’t take much medicine for you.” And that’s the truth. I took the pills back to Susie and said, “I don’t think I need these. I thing I’m going to try other things. It’s going to take a while.” And they are fine about that. That’s the way they like to see it.

I think that, you know, one thing I want to mention is the incredible way that she and Susie work hand in glove. I saw it first hand when I worked there. It was amazing, Susie knew what Louise was going to do practically before Louise did it. It is sort of like a beautiful dance. Susie has this whole role of things that she manages and she is the one who reminds Louise when someone needs a pap smear, or when to order a chest x-ray. Susie is the best physician’s assistant that I know. She is able to sort out the emotional things with people she knows when it’s time that you have to talk to Louise. She never tries to keep you from seeing Louise. But, I know that when they would be seeing pages and pages of people in that office and delivering babies... I don’t know how Susie kept things going. I don’t know how they made it!!

They didn’t get very much rest in their early days. The hospital did help that some, because that way the nurses could watch the patients until they had to be called in. But before that, when somebody came in (in labor), Susie was up checking them. She had to. I had a delivery at Bellefont Hospital in Ashland for my first child. But my second delivery was the best.
And I went in at 12:30p.m. of that day-- I took castor oil at 5:30 in the morning. It’s good for you if you are overdue. So, I went there at 12:30 and had the baby at 2:30p.m. and went home at 6:00p.m.!

And Susie was marvelous. I think I had two whiffs of chloroform and that was it. I was awake and the baby cried before she was even fully out of the birth canal. I always tease Rachel that she came out hollering and has been talking ever since. I walked to the delivery table. Louise would take your arm-- kind of help you-- but she would say, “Now you have to walk. Now you’ve got to move.” And she’d sling your arm over her shoulder and, buddy, you walked and got on that table. I remember Susie saying, “Louise, you don’t have time.” Turn around, and Rachel was there. But, what if she had come that fast and I was on my way to Lexington? That’s scary!

It was a perfect delivery. I went home, that day. It was like what they say are new kinds of things today-- birthing centers. Louise had one years ago! Before they wrote about them. And she had an emergency room that was available. She always said, “God has been good to us. We didn’t lose any mothers.” And she said, “We were so far away from help.” She knew the risks. But it was better than doing it at home because she had more help there in the office than you would have up the creek somewhere. But she knew that (the birthing place) wasn’t the end and I believe that that was a great impetus for the hospital. She did not want to lose a mother. I think that would have killed her. If, because she didn’t have enough help, that she lost somebody. I think that was one of her great worries.

You think about it. Years back, some of the times they went up a ‘holler’ so then they couldn’t see any other patients. So bringing them to their own birthing center helped a lot. The idea of a real hospital was something she talked about from early on.

Louise, I think, has suffered from insomnia some and instead of doing things like most people do, I think-- drinking warm milk or whatever-- Louise gets up and she ponders and reads. She reads medical journals. Probably one of the best read physicians in this town. She reads all the new things. And, apparently, she does not require a great deal of sleep. Because she always was saying things like, “Well, I was up wandering about the other night, and I got to thinking about...” Also, I think she was seeing cases that I think she felt like could be taken care of here. And I believe that it was probably out of these night time musings that-- from these ponderings that she did, that she thought, “Why can’t we have a hospital here?” But, it was at
that time that she also said, “And it’s not going to be one of these little two-bit hospitals.” She always has practiced ‘careful’ medicine. She would not be happy with one that wasn’t excellent. And so, it’s now a matter of record as to what she did. And James McConkey wrote about that (in Rowan’s Progress)—he really did a wonderful job. Especially concerning the complexities of getting a hospital here. And there were problems.

Do you remember John F. Kennedy? Do you remember how some people thought that the Pope was going to ruin us? It was back then, it was the same milieu, same period of time—1961-1963— it was the Kennedy years. People were very exercised about having a Catholic President and the loss of religious freedom. We heard, oh, terrible things. It was bad, the things we heard. Some would have preferred no hospital to having Catholics. It was that strong. The feeling was that bad.

One of our favorite stories is about this gentleman who got up in a prayer meeting and said, “I don’t know about anybody else, but if I ever get sick, don’t stop at this Catholic hospital, just put me in an ambulance and take me on to Central Baptist in Lexington.” Well, as luck would have it, this same gentleman fell down the stairs in the winter during a snow storm and broke his hip. He was more than happy to go to the St. Claire Medical Center. There he was attended to most carefully by the good sisters! We had a lot of sisters at that time. And Dr. Warren Proudfoot fixed his hip and he was cared for beautifully. And after it was over, he testified about the good care he received!

In the early days, when we did have the hospital, “Snooks” Crutcher, the newspaper editor... he’d write these columns. Well, he loved the Sisters. He adored Sister Mary Edwin. But, he wrote explanations in the newspaper about how we were to address them and about what Sisters were. Because in this area people were totally ignorant about those things and, about the Sisters. He told about the ones who would be nurses, and who would be lab techs. See, all the major parts of the hospital were supervised in the first years by a nun. And they all had the expertise that we needed. Now, we had some Hill Burton money, government money. The Sisters made a considerable investment. I really don’t know how it all worked financially.

The Sisters of Notre Dame are from Covington, Kentucky. They are mostly teaching sisters. In fact, when we had this hospital, they had a nursing home in St. Charles--St. Charles in Covington--that and this place are their only two medical facilities. They had had a little
hospital in Lynch, but that closed. That was just prior to coming home and they may have had an investment in the St. Charles Nursing home and they weren’t looking for a job.

But, Monseigner Towell was the one that pushed them. And word was that he called the Sisters and gave them the word that they needed help here. That story that he saw those babies lined up on the couch...! And that was just by accident! We just don’t know. He just showed up! Louise and Susie didn’t know he was coming. He’d just said that he would stop some time when he came through here. And on the day he came was when we had all these babies. And Susie had them all lined up on the couch, in dresser drawers or something, I think. And she had them... yes, and when the Monseigner saw that, he was just, just so touched. Because, here are these babies that need a place, that need a hospital. He just couldn’t imagine that they were here with not any more than that. He thought they should have a nursery like a hospital.

And this is the thing that we credit it with-- some Act of Providence that he came to Morehead on the same day that all those babies got here. And, that his heart was very touched by babies that he felt should have been in a hospital nursery. The truth is, those babies were probably just fine. I know they had been cared for very well. But Monseigner saw this was a place where he felt the Notre Dames ought to come. Five babies all born on the same night is kind of stupefying!

I don’t know who those five babies were. We tried to find some of them. We tried (for that program) finding all the first babies-- the first baby in the hospital we got. We did a lot of sleuthing. And, that night of the celebration for Louise, I was so choked I couldn’t possibly sing, because all of those babies, now grown people-- and one of mine was up there holding hands--it encircled the whole auditorium. Button Auditorium-- at least a thousand people-- and sang (words were added to “We Are the World”... ‘we are your children).

Louise knew about the celebration. She was kind of, well, oh, well, kind of self-effacing. She thought, oh, maybe a couple hundred people would show up. That place was full. I’ve never seen Button as full. And all of these people had come and we had the sixth grade and we had some kids doing a rap. We had a couple-- oh, Joyce LeMaster and her husband played Jane and Boone Caudill. . . what I’ll do is just give you this script. What it did was show you different points in her life.
She loved it. She finally came and we had all the people who told us the stories and we had kind of an honor section right there and she was right there seated in the middle and we had a reception for her afterwards. This celebration isn't the same thing as you are doing. This was just a tribute to her-- but this has to be more. I think this (the play you are doing) has so much to do with what a difference a life can make to a community.

Her history, yes, we know some of that, but I believe a great deal should be put into the way she is able to look at a patient as a total person. She has always practiced holistic medicine, before it was even known! She started a birthing center before people even talked about it! She was ahead of her time in many many things. For example, these stress-related things. She's always been there and she's always been reading and trying to be the best she could be. She would have been a healer no matter where or when she was born. I feel that she is the essence of the traditional women healers that I've read about. And women healers bring a different energy to medicine than men do. I'm talking about women's traditional role as being a nurturer as well as, or along with, the healing process. And I feel that Louise has brought an extra-- some kind of extra energy to this-- healing.

I'm looking at her from her point of view. I'm looking at it as a woman healer; looking at the total environment and realizing, right up front, that many people come to the doctor's office for emotional needs instead of real physical needs. The two are entwined and that somebody who has the gift of eliciting information that will help her be able to help the patient. As I said before, she works you around until you are able to identify what the problem is. You don't wait for her to say, 'This is what I think and this is what I'm going to give you for it.' You work out your own plan. I've been working out plans for myself with her for many years. Not always did it mean that I did them! Changes, things that would make me healthier. Sometimes it could be a dietary change, but she has not loaded me up with tranquilizers. Louise has only given me short term things. She hasn't been pushing pills-- she has been pushing insight into your own problems-- like what changes you can make. There's a lot of good counseling that goes into her practice and I think that that's why she is such a good healer.

Now, this happens with everybody. I send people to her when I think that basically that is what they need-- that they need to go and talk to somebody that can gently lead them. She kind of gently brings them around. I've sent many disturbed college students to Louise Caudill and they've come back much better.
I think she just genuinely loves people and wants to help them. Well, you see, people that you know really do make a difference and I think it shows up all the time in medicine because you yourself can know if, when you go to the doctor, for something-- are they really listening to you? She’s not the only physician that has this gift, but I feel like she has used her gift longer and more successfully than many other people.

When I think of Louise Caudill, I think of a healer, in the very best sense of the term. I know that with Louise it is an internal thing. It comes from within. It’s not something she’s studied to learn how to do. She has studied medicine and she went to good medical schools. However, I believe that, as with teaching, and with many other professions, there is something, sometimes, a gift that people will have.

There are ‘gifted’ teachers. Look across the University. Three people could teach the same course, but it might be one that has the way of making it clear and bringing forth that spark of wanting to know about the students. There are many teachers that can do note learning and you just spit it back. But the teacher who is able to turn them on to wanting to know more about a subject-- that, to me, is a teacher and that’s a gift.

Louise was born with her gift to heal. And Susie has a great gift, too and I think about it a lot. Susie has always been the support system. She never tried being a star. And she has worked in the background facilitating, making the rough way smooth. She’s a great cook. I think she could see whenever Louise needed positive reinforcement. When things were going bad--she’d have people to dinner. Still, she was running the office, getting up in the night to go along out on calls. Susie has been a very very great part of this team. And I believe that Susie is bright. She is very very bright. When I come in, Susie knows me and I just say, “I don’t think it’s an antibiotic that I need. I need to speak with Louise.” And she’s so kind. You know, I love Susie and I feel she has offered me as much healing in many ways-- by facilitating.
INTERVIEW WITH ELIE RESER.


In her home in Morehead, Kentucky.

I First, I'd like you to understand that after this tape is transcribed I will give it to you and you can take out anything you want to - so you will feel comfortable about talking - or, if there is something you don't want transcribed, just say so, and I will leave it out. The tapes will be returned to you if you want them. We will put that in writing when I give you the transcription.

E I know you want to make things the best for Louise and the only reason I'd like to read it over is to make sure that everything is accurate.

I First, you are giving me something from Mr. Young.

E George Young used to be at this University and he wrote this little piece for a great long time, my guess is 35 years and he wrote this little piece probably for the raconteur or somebody up at the University. It was telling his memories of some of the things that were happening here.

The reason I'm giving that to you is that Louise's history is rather interwoven with the history of the university and the reason for that is that she and Bob Bishop and that little group of children used to play in a playhouse which is just where the University Center (ADUC) is now.

She (Louise) also was on the faculty at Morehead before she went to medical school. So, I thought anything that you could have that would give you a clue to what it was like....

During the war they taught sailors here, I believe. They were trying to make instant officers, I think, all over the United States, teaching people math and things that they could be used in being navigators and that sort of thing. So during the early years of the war they had military men on campus. I think George even speaks about them.

But it was in the late 40s, I think, that Louise went back to medical school. She finished faster than normal because the physician shortage was so great at that time.

So she did what would normally take people 4 and a half years in less time.

Which, really, I can't imagine how much studying that must take to do what she did.

The way I know some of the stories about Louise is that we had this little sort of celebration of her life and it was to coincide with her forty years of practice in Morehead.

And it was also a celebration of the hospital. They wanted to do something to honor her.

They asked me to think about a script - what would we do.

What I did to prepare for that was to find as many people as I could know that went to high school with her - because she went all of her years in school right here in Rowan County.
Except when she went away to college and med school. And Bob Bishop was forthcoming, and Jane - her sisters and several other people - I have listed in that script. And I asked them to come together at the hospital for a luncheon, just to tell stories. It was wonderful.

Did you tape that?

No. We took down the stories and as I listened I took down stories that I thought would play. One of the most wonderful stories, that is the most fun to do was when the children, making adventure for themselves, they put a pony in the third floor window of what was then the Evans home. It later became the Layne Funeral home. The Evans home was a center of a lot of their activities. One of her closest friends was Sidney Evans. And her brother "Tick" Evans was someone. Now he didn't remember too much about putting the pony up there but Mr. Cassity did. Bob Bishop did. And how they ever got that pony up three flights of stairs - and when Mrs. Evans got home from one of the church meetings - the Methodist church was about 2 blocks away - she saw this pony looking out of the window and a lot of people in the yard. That was one of their best stories. Another story I tried to get them to talk about - what she did scholastically - did she compete in anything? And she and Bob Bishop were competing on the debate team and - I guess the farthest point they would have gone would have been over to West Liberty - but in those days the roads were so terrible that you had to go on the train. From what I understand, you had to go out to where Lee Clay was to get on the train....

What was that?

It was a brick manufacturing place. That's where the North Fork railroad was and that railroad would take you up to just outside of West Liberty .... but you would have to spend the night because that train went so infrequently - and then they would walk home from the Clearfield. There was another hangout - that was for young people - and that was the old Eagle's Nest. It's where Arby's is and there used to be the Midland Trail Hotel. Up from that was the Eagle's Nest. It was known in this area for many many years as the place to eat between Ashland and Lexington. See, back in those days you had to travel on US 60 and it was an all day trip practically to go from Ashland to Lexington because the roads were curvy and 2 lane all the way. So, this was a good place to stop and eat lunch. The food was excellent and when I first came to Morehead, that was the place to go. In the morning the men would all sit around this huge round table and you could find out the news of the day that way.
The women would usually stop by for coffee in the afternoon. And they would sometimes bring their little children with them and they would sit over on the side - there were little tiny tables for them - and they would sip coke while the women exchanged the news of the street.

We used (in the skits) just one little thing with the Eagle's Nest. and tried to incorporate the dances of the day, which would have been the Charleston and those things.

Louise was always, she wounded, from what I could understand from the people I talked to - she was sort of at the center of a lot of activities, she and her sister Cille.

Cille, to this day, is very vibrant and expressive, and I can imagine that she and Louise together would have been quite an interesting pair. They are very close in age, I think next to each other in age.

Have you talked with Jane yet?

No, I haven't.

Jane Caudill was Louise's brother's wife - Boone. She and Boone and their father were involved with the bank in Sandy Hook - as Boon Proctor Caudill. They have been - Louise also is on the Board - their names are synonymous with banking.

Evans - would that be someone to talk to?

Well, they tried to tell me at the time I was doing the stories, that Tick Evans was a little bit older. His name is really Eldon - but I think he would surely fill you in on how the Evans family and Caudill family were close. It may be that they are somehow related.

Louise's family is such a large family - they came out of Poplar Grove. I was once visiting a home health patient out there. They said, do you know Dr. Louise Caudill? I said, yes, I do. They said, do you know that this is where her father grew up. It's out, right on the line between Elliot and Morgan - It's a beautiful area. There's a ridge that goes along and they lived down in this house rather down a steep hill. I believe that - I know they sold maybe meal and maybe things like that. And there's a story Louise can tell you - and I don't know if this is apropos......

But her people were so vital to the development of this area that I would think that some of this is important to tell you about Louise because the banks in Morehead and Elliot County and maybe in one other place, were all founded by her father's brothers. Daniel Boone, her father, was at Sandy Hook.

There was a brother that was with a People's Bank here - and so, there was a story that they told me one time which I did not record. But, it was about how they brought the money which was to start the bank at Morehead over the ridge.

They brought it - I think the story goes - in bags of meal that they were bringing over here.
See, it was kind of rough and wooly down where highway 32 is now. And the stories that I have read about the Rowan County War and the way things were is that that was a place you went through when it was good to know somebody who knew somebody along the way. Because, you know, there were people that really wanted your possessions - not just to do you harm.

But, it was kind of a rough place. However, in the midst of all this roughness, there was also a great deal of culture. And I think that the Evans' and the Caudills, all of these good solid families, kind of first settlers that you talk about from Rowan County - they paid attention to education.

I mean, Louise graduated from Columbia in New York City. I believe her family cared a lot about what we would think good moral values are. I know they did because they had been good upstanding business people as long as I can remember.

They went to the church of Phoebe Button and her son - that came to make Morehead Normal School. They were sort of like missionaries in their view of coming here. I'm not sure that brother Button wasn't a minister in the Christian Church. That may show up in George Young's paper.

In fact I'm sort of giving you - oh, I don't want this to be an historical document.

Well, the context is necessary.

What I'm trying to say is that her family and some other good solid families in this community made a foundation for what it has become today. Because, the town of Owingsville, Mt. Sterling and these other places seemed like they had more money and you will find the big fine old homes there. These people didn't have that kind of money but they had the values and the foresight to see that some things would happen here and would happen right. And Louise has been a mover in that direction - ever since. You know, she taught at school, but she - well it was kind of unheard of for a woman her age - if you already had a profession - to go back to school.

Put in that time at medical school, which couldn't have been easy. And there aren't many women. Stop and think about it. It's getting much better now, but back then, women doctors were very scarce. They were looked on as an oddity. Jane is the one who can tell you about how they started the office there in that building above the pool hall.

Louise's mother - now this is an aside but you can keep it in - louise will tell you the same story.... Granny Caudill owned that building.

- Her grandmother?

No, Louise's mother. Everybody called her Granny Caudill.
E She was much loved by the community. As she grew older she drove a
great big Cadillac right down the middle of the street!
She MIGHT stop at Second Street but, then again, she might not!
And we all knew her - it was a small town.
This town has grown so much just since the time since I've come here.
But, she was a much loved woman. So gracious, inviting everyone to
her home.
I think Louise's gregariousness came from both sides of the family.
From her father who could politic with the best of them. But her
Mother had that sort of all encompassing thing - to sort of help the
world and did a lot with the church and all.
Her Mom, came from, I believe, lawyers, the Proctors.
I'm quite sure that two of her mother's brothers read law.
They were all interested in education. I think at that time for them
to have aspirations for their daughter to become a doctor - well,
Louise has said that her father told her that she could be anything
she wanted to be.
Now, for Mr. Dan Caudill to say that, back in those days, I think was
just remarkable.
Also, you have to think about the Bishops. Bob Bishop and Louise
were lifelong friends, they were classmates.
His sister became a pharmacist. And the reason that Bob never got to
go away to school was because on graduation night - oh, it's the
saddest story, his father died. High school.
After graduation he and Louise were both going to go away to school.
After his dad died he stayed home in order to keep the business going.
His sister then went to pharmacy school.
And Bob Bishop probably knows more about pharmacy than anybody in
the world but he had to give up that to keep things going. And that's
when Bishops Drugstore - when that closed, I really wanted to cry
because Bob Bishop struggled so hard to keep that place open - for
so long.
He was always interested in plays and things and he would go on the
train to New York - and Susie - they went on theatre trips!
They'd go up to see the plays in New York

I They still go to all the plays here - everything.

E Yes, Yes. They have been, in fact they're - well, Jane's daughter
Susie...well, Jan'es and Boone's children became more than just
nieces and nephews to Louise. Proc and Sally -. It was sort of
the thing for Proc and Sally top spend Saturday night with Louise
and Susie.
Then they would go to church on Sunday morning and then -well
then they lived down there behind that office. They did that because
women were coming in always to have babies. I don't know how they
lived like that.
It was years they lived like that.
And it was not unusual for them to have more than one baby a night.
Did she tell you the story about Monseign P Towell?

I She did, but you tell me also.
Ok. When Monsigneur Towell - we kept trying to have the hospital here - and everyone kept telling us that we didn't have enough of a population base. And this was NOT a Catholic town.

I It still isn't.

Well, it's much better now and they have a building. When we first came to town - now, Susie is Catholic - I could say that we could name for you the Catholics. There were 10 or less and they met in a little garage church up near the old swimming pool - where their church is now. And Susie was a part of that congregation.

Well, the local people called on the Baptists and they weren't interested and the Methodists, and they weren't. I was so pleased that in their planning they didn't try to make it a little County hospital because it could never have become what it is now. We'd seen our little County hospitals.

There was one for a while - sort of a little one - over at Grayson. Mt. Sterling never had the prestige, it was sort of like, if you couldn't make it to Lexington, you could stop off at Mt. Sterling.

Louise's vision and the vision of the early leaders was that we would have a hospital of quality and with specialists. And I believe that, even in those early days, Louise was looking for University links. Because, she did not want this just to be a little lying-in hospital.

This was to be someplace where we did competitive medicine. We could get all the right tests here without going to Lexington. When this hospital got started, the Appalachian Region Commission was taking over. The Miner's Hospital were down in Southeastern Kentucky and they were putting little hospitals in just everywhere and they were spreading out into every little community.

Did they do that because a community asked for one?

Well, the communities were without medical care. But in the planning stages, they were just willing to put up a building and somehow it would be staffed. And Louise and her group realized that this was going to get them in trouble.

I mean, if you are going to have a hospital, you have to competent people in lab and x-ray and you can't just bring in individual doctors - you have to have things to help them do their work. So, it it was her vision that we wouldn't go with - we wouldn't do something we couldn't really do a fine job with.

Where do you suppose this vision came from?
I mean, it is so far thinking when other might take anything when in a desperate situation. I guess it could be just conjecture.

Louise Caudill has never been happy with anything that wasn't good quality. That shows in her schooling, that shows in her practice. For example, their records are exemplary. We have had physicians - this is an aside and has nothing to do with Louise except to say that, she kept good records when those around us didn't both. Even when she wasn't running (wanting?) to be with Medicaid when it first came out - it was a mess. There were some people really cashing in with it. And then they got indicted because they had no records to say what they had - no records to back up what they had charged for.

Louise's records down there - starting in 1957 - for me - she can look back and see everything that has happened to me since 1957. It's right there. And you could think that, as she grew older, she wouldn't pay as much attention to that but she is just as meticulous today as she was on the very first day I went to see her. I had my second child in that office down there.

When they were still living there?

Could you just talk a little about you - again for this place - about your life and then your life crosses her life?

Yes. I was a brand new graduate from the Lutheran Hospital School of Nursing back in 1957. That was in Fort Wayne Indiana. I was from a little town just south of Fort Wayne. My husband at that time had graduated from Morehead State Teachers College.

Was he a native of here?

No, he was from Indiana. He had come down here on a music scholarship and also did theatre. He knew Louise very much at that time because they supported the theatre back then. Every production he was in, I'm sure Louise and Susie were there. There was no place for me to work in Morehead. There were three doctors and they already had a nurse. The Health Department had a nurse. (The doctors were Sam Raynolds, Everett Blair, Dr. Jerrett was still practising - and Louise, four, but Jerrett had health problems. So, there was no hospital. The Health department was a one nurse place. And I can remember how just really forlorn I felt - and I had been offered a really good position at my own hospital because I'd graduated with honors. And I thought, where in the world am I going? I must have been 21 and my husband was going to go to graduate school and expected to get his degree in one year.

In theatre?

It would have been in education but his undergraduate was theatre /music.
His name was Don Holloway. They have a scholarship named for him now. Anyway, he came home one day and said, I've found a job for you. It's in a little town named Olive Hill.

You can be the school nurse at this Methodist Boarding school. Called..........?

I was pretty excited. It was imperative that I work because Don was in school and we had no money. And I thought this is a fine way to start out - going to a place that needs health care and can't find a job. I even thought maybe I could work in the library. I thought, this is ridiculous...

Well, I did take that job in Olive Hill and the superintendent left and the principal of the school got drafted and that was during the Korean conflict and that left the school without a principal. Well, Don had enough credits, graduate education credits, so they said he could have an emergency certificate so that he could keep the kids grades that year.

But the Methodist church had already begun to say that they were going to phase out the school because it was originally meant for mountain children who couldn't get to school otherwise. That was before a lot of school busing.

So they came and boarded and the families could come on weekends and at vacation time they could go home.. As I remember there were about 40 boarding students and 60 day students.

I still remember my very very difficult year in Olive Hill.

Difficult? How?

Well, there were marches on the school. They were going to close that school.

People were angry about it?

Very, very angry. They padlocked the buildings and all kinds of threatening .....they thought the school should stay open. ...and that the Methodist church had done it wrong. Well, it was a terrible year. No violence but some days the drunks would be shooting so that some days I wouldn't hang out the wash - they'd be shooting up in the trees. Most of the bullets would be - you know - so there were some days you didn't do things outside.

It was just a place that - you know, I was from a very sheltered background - in northern Indiana, where people didn't behave this way.

And there was a lovely group of people but most of these people were very angry because the school was closing.

Were there economic problems?

The problem was that the Carter County schools were, at that time, in such bad shape that they really did worry about sending their kids to school. See, that was the time when the brickyards were there - Harbison Walker and General Refractories were at full speed and they had the superintendents of these places - and they were from Pennsylvania......
E (cont'd) It would be like bringing someone to Morehead if our schools were REALLY bad. And there was no culture or whatever. These people thought we were taking their center of culture, their center of education, and so, they were very angry.
And, of course, we were the local people put there by the Methodist Mission Board ......and all that doesn't have anything to do with Louise except to say that, when we moved to Morehead, the next year.
I felt like I was coming to heaven.
Because, I could go in to town and people talked to me (there) in the banks sometimes, we wouldn't be waited on.
And one drugstore in Olive Hill, we couldn't go because they would just say ugly things.
I worked a little bit over there with a young physician who left after two years . It was an angry town -
So, I came to Morehead where there was a University and I had a physician.
I think my first entry on my card with Louise was for my oral polio and that would have been back in 1957.
I knew, immediately, when I met her, that lady was going to be my doctor.

I On what did you choose her?

E She was a little very athletic person. She played a lot of tennis. She was very 'up'. when you went in to talk to her ...

I Could we back up a minute - there were three other doctors her and how did you choose her?

E One thing was that she had a more family oriented practice and the other thing was that my husband had gone to her as a student.
She was the one tow hom more students went than any place else.
(Next section deleted)
you know, all those doctors were cousins.
Dr. Blair's mother was Daniel Boone Caudill's sister - grew up right there out in that place so they were close by being relatives.
And then, Sam Reynolds was also a cousin but I'm not sure exactly how that worked - but all three were related.

I I sort of thing that about Morehead - that the whole town are cousins.

E Well, in those times you lived with the people in your County.
They had alrge families and you didn't go away, you stayed here.
So, they intermarried.
Anyway, my husband thought so highly of Louise and so, of course, that's where I went.
She had just moved into her new, her brand new place.
The same buildings were around there then. that apartment building has been there for a real long time.
A little bit later I worked as the office nurse for Billie Jo Caudill, who was a second cousin - who practiced with her for a while.
But it didn't work out.
You know, when there's an established practice - and Louise knew everybody so well, it was very hard for the people to say - well, Billie Jo will be your doctor. They wanted Louise and Susie.
E (cont'd) Then, along with some other problems that Billie Jo had, then I worked in that office. I actually worked for Billie Jo - this was a woman - so Louise and Susie would work in the morning and Billie Jo and I worked in the afternoon. And then we would alternate. Both of them did a lot of deliveries - there in the office. An then - it was during this time or shortly after I started working for Billie Jo that the hospital was being planned.

I How did you get that job - just walk in?

E I think she called me. See, I was a known quantity that had no job here. And there just weren't very many nurses here. Now that was something we thought about also, when we were building the hospital. Where are we going to get the nurses?

I How long did you work for her?

E Three years. No, we stayed with Louise, I think, for about 9 months or so and then we set up and office just up the street.

I Was that competition?

E Oh, I wouldn't say it was competition because Louise's people were not leaving and Louise had more than enough to do. And she had another young man that came and worked with her and it was the same thing. People wanted Louise, they didn't want anybody else. I think that happens, probably, in practices that are already established and a new person comes. But these people are very loyal and honor that physician and they don't want the other one. I'm sure if we told them to do something they would call up Susie to make sure that was the right thing to do. And I am a VERY loyal patient of Louise's. Even though I worked for a while for this other physician.

I So your first visit was for vaccine. What did you think at first?

E Oh, I liked her!! Immediately.

I Is it possible to say why?

E I think that when I go to see Louise - well, she makes you feel like you are the only one in the world that she's concerned about. I can't imagine anyone thinking that she had anything else on her mind.

I I've read that that's the whole secret of charm. But she doesn't seem to do that on purpose.

E She does it. And how do people have this ability? I just don't know.
How many others have you met like that?

E I go to a ........ specialist now but, when I have to go and get myself adjusted, mentally, I walk down the street to Louise. She sometimes gives me a prescription but I don't really need any pills, usually, because by the time I have left I have things in perspective. And, I've had some really difficult things happen in my life. She has known all about them. She has always been there, no matter when I had to call - no matter, how upset I was - she would make some kind of order out of it. And so much of what happened that she's been entwined with was.....

E She became a friend more than anything else. She still is a friend. She is a friend that knows how to put my psyche back to square one. I go there -0 not very often - probably every six or eight months - I need an adjustment. I always have some little physical complaint but then it always gets down to the fact that I never get sick if I don't have something bothering me inside.

I Do you believe that's true of most health problems.

E I think a lot of it is - but I'm just speaking for myself.

I But you have seen a lot of sick people.

E Yes, ...yes. Even cancer. I think my breast cancer came from a lot of the incredible stress that I was under with my parents. You know, trying to keep them ....so, yes, if you are stressed, your body shows it. In many ways.

Louise has been touting this - that stress causes illness - for as long as I've known her. And that was way before they wrote about it. And she always had made sure, in talking with us, and has us point out what's going on (in life at that time) - it generally has something to do with what's happening with you then. That has been true for me. You could look back through my cards at her office and the illnesses - for example at one time of strain I ended up in St. Joe's hospital with a disease they couldn't figure out...

My immune system went crazy and I had knots on my legs and all sorts of things. They treated me with things. But, when we came back and Louise and I sorted it out, my body had finally just said, "It's too much stress." So, I ended up in a bed for six weeks. And I got well.

I Did she finally say that to you?

E No. She let's you say it. She is an adept counselor.
She never has to say it to you. She works you around until you say it yourself. And that's the height of counseling.

To bring that realization to the person - saying this is what is wrong with you or this is what you do - she, more than likely, will say, "well, let's talk about it." "We can do this or we can do that. But maybe, now that you know what's going on - maybe we should just see if it's going to settle down by itself."

This has happened to me just in the last month. She said," I think we might identify what's causing it." Which is totally emotional and, she said, "Usually when you find out what it is that seems to be doing it for you, it doesn't take much medicine for you.

And that's the truth.

I took the pills back to Susie and said, I don't think I need these, I think I'm going to try other things. It's going to take a while.

And they are fine about that.

That's the way they like to see it.

I think that, you know, one thing I want to mention is the incredible way that she and Susie work hand in glove.

I saw it firsthand when I worked there. It was amazing.

Susie knew what Louise was going to do practically before Louise did it.

It is sort of like a beautiful dance.

Susie has this whole role of things that she manages and she is the one who reminds Louise when someone needs a pap smear - or when to order a chest x-ray.

Susie is the best physician's assistant that I know. She is able to sort out the emotional things with people and she knows when it's time that you have to talk to Louise.

She never tries to keep you from seeing Louise.

But I know that when they would be seeing pages and pages of people in that office and then delivering babies....I don't know how they made it!!

I don't know how Susie kept the thing going.

I wondered how they ever got any rest.

They didn't get very much rest.

The hospital did help it some because that way the nurses could watch the patients until they had to be called in. But before that when somebody came in (in labor) Susie was up and checking them. She had to.

I had a delivery at Bellefont Hospital in Ashland) for my first child. But my second delivery was the best.

And I went in at 12:30 of that day - I took castor oil at 5:30 in the morning.

Can that be good for you?

Yes, if you are overdue.
So I went there at 12:30 and had the baby at 2:30 and went home at 6:00. And Susie was marvelous. I think I had two whiffs of chloroform and that was it. I was awake and the baby cried before she was even fully out of the birth canal. I always tease Rachel that she came out hollering and has been talking ever since.

I walked to the delivery table. Louise would take your arm - kind of help you - but she would say - now you have to walk. And you'd have such a short time between contractions but she'd say - now, you've got to move. And she'd sling your arm over her shoulder and - buddy - you walked and got on that table.

I remember Susie saying, "Louise, you don't have time, turn around and - Rachel was there. But, what if she had come that fast and I was on my way to Lexington. That's scary.

It was a perfect delivery.

I went home that day.. It was like what they say are new kinds of things today - 'birthing centers.' She had one years ago! Before they wrote about them. And she had an emergency room that was available.

She always said, "God has been good to us. We didn't lose any mothers."

And she said, we were far away from help."

She knew the risks. But it was better than doing it at home because she had more help there in the office than you would have up the creek somewhere.

But she knew that (the birthing place) wasn't the end and I believe that was a great impetus for the hospital.

She did not want to lose a mother.

I think that would have killed her. If because she didn't have enough help that she lost somebody - I think that was one of her great worries.

I wonder how many children were born before the hospital.

Well, we tried to find out for that program. It was difficult. I think that in James McConkey's book we have some statistics. We had to go back in records from when they first started out which was years....

Either she or Susie said it was something like 8,900 or some stupefying number.

You think about it - years back - some of the times they went up a 'holler' so then they couldn't see patients. So bringing them to the birthing center helped a lot.

The idea of a real hospital - was that something she talked about from early on?

Louise I think has suffered from insomnia some and instead of doing things like most people do, I think - drinking warm milk or whatever - Louise gets up and she ponders and reads. She reads medical journals. Probably one of the best read physicians in this town.
E She reads all the new things. And, apparently, she does not require a great deal of sleep. Because she always was saying things like, "Well, I was up and wandering about the other night, and I got to thinking about....."
Also, I think she was seeing cases that I think she felt like could be taken care of here.
And I believe that it was probably out of these night time musings that - from these ponderings that she did - that she thought, "Why can't we have a hospital here."
But, it was at that time that she also said, "And it's not going to be one of these little two-bit hospitals."
She always has practiced 'careful' medicine. She would not be happy with one that wasn't excellent.

And so, it's now a matter of record as to what she did. And McConkey wrote about that - he really did a wonderful job.

I And she spoke about the hospital ideology.

E And the vision that she had I think came - I think Everett probably talked to her about it - Everett Blair, her cousin -. I think she used him as a sounding.
Together they - you know, one of the reasons we didn't have a hospital was that the people who were here thought, we don't have enough to run a good hospital and we'd just be like these other places, which wasn't what they wanted either.
She was the spark of it.

I The amazing thing to me is that - this community seems to be run by the Methodists and Baptists, and Christian church. The people with money are there. And, yet, she had to go to the Catholics.
She said they had a lot of supporters.

E She had gone around and spoken to them.

I Why would they criticize having the catholics running the place when they could have done it.

E Do you remember John F. Kennedy? Do you remember how some people thought that the Pope was going to run us? It was back then - it was the same milieu- same period of time - 1961-1963 - it was the Kennedy years. People were very exercised about having a Catholic President and loss of religious freedom.
We heard - oh, terrible things. It was bad - the things we heard.

I You mean some would have preferred no hospital to having Catholics.

E It was that strong. The feeling was that bad.
One of our favorite stories is about this Baptist gentleman who got up in a prayer meeting on Wednesday night and said, "I don't know about anybody else but if he ever got sick, don't stop at this Catholic hospital, just put him in an ambulance and take him on to Central Baptist in Lexington."
E Well, as luck would have it, this same gentleman fell down the stairs in the winter during a snow storm and broke his hip. He was more than happy to go to the St. Calire Medical center. There he was attended most carefully by the good sisters. We had a lot of sisters at that time. And Dr. Warren Proudfoot fixed his hip and he was cared for beautifully and after it was over he testified about the good care he received. In the early days, when we did have the hospital, "Snooks" Crutcher, the newspaper editor... he'd write these comuns... Well, he loved the sisters. He just adored Sister Mary Edwin.

But, he wrote in the newspaper how we were to address them and about what Sisters were. Because in this area people were totally ignorant about those things and Sisters. He told about the ones who would be nurses, and who would be lab techs. See, all the major parts of the hospital were supervised in the first years by a nun. And they all had expertise that we needed.

I So - ok, you had the money - the Catholic church put up part of the money? And the town matched it?

E No, we had some Hill Burton money, government money. The Sisters made a considerable investment. I really don't know how it all worked....

I What Order was this?

E The Sisters of Notre Dame, in Huntington. The Sisters of Notre Dame are mostly teaching sisters. In fact, when we had this place, they had a nursing home in St. Charles, St. Charles in Covington and that this place are their only two medical facilities. They had had a little hospital in Lynch but that closed. That was just prior to this and they may have had an investment in the St. Charles Nursing home and they weren't looking for a job.

But, Monseigner Towell was the one that pushed them. And word was that he called the Sisters and gave them the word they needed help here. That story that he saw those babies lined up on the couch....

I And that was just by accident....

E We just don't know - he just showed up! They didn't know he was coming. He'd just said that he would stop some time when he came through here. And on the day he came was when we had all these babies. And Susie had them all lined up on the couch - in dresser drawers or something, I think. And she had them.....yes, and when the Monseigner saw that, he was just - just so touched. Because, here are these babies that need a place, that need a hospital. He just couldn't imagine that they were here with not any more with not any more than that. He thought they should have a nursery like a hospital.

And this is the thing that we credit it with - some Act of Providence that he came to Morehead on the same day that all those babies got here. And, that his heart was very touched by babies that he felt should have been in a hospital nursery.
The truth is, those babies were probably just fine. I know they had been cared for very well. But Monseigner saw this was a place where he felt the Notre Dames ought to come.

Just five babies all born on the same night is kind of stupefying.

I don't know who those five babies were, we tried to find some of them. We tried (for that program) finding all the first babies - the first baby in the hospital we got. We did a lot of sleuthing.

And, that night, I was so choked I couldn't possibly sing, because all of those babies, now grown people - and one of mine was up there holding hands - it encircled the whole auditorium. Button Auditorium - at least a thousand people - and sand.

Did she know all about this - not a surprise.

Yes, she knew about it. She was kind of - well - oh, well, - kind of self effacing. She thought, oh, maybe a couple hundred people would show up. That place was full, I've never seen Button as full. And all of these people had come and we had the sixth grade and we had some kids doing a 'rap', we had a couple - oh, Joyce LeMaster and her husband played Jane and Boone Caudill ...what I'll do is just give you this script. What it did was show you different points in her life.

How was she about it?

She loved it.. She finally came and we had all the people who told us the stories and we had kind of an honor section right there and she was right there seated in the middle and we had a reception for her afterwards.

Here are the pictures.

Oh, maybe this has already been done.

No. No. it hasn't it isn't the same thing.

Is that the Mrs. Janes who lives behind me.

Yes, she can tell you everything about early Morehead.

(Discussion about photographs and how the slides were projected)

This was just a tribute to her - but this has to be more. I think that this (what you are doing) has so much to do with what a difference a life can make to a community. And, her history, yes, we know some of that but I believe a great deal should be put in to the way she is able to look at a patient as a total person. She has always practiced holistic medicine before it was even known. she started, she started a birthing center before people even talked about it.
She was ahead of her time in many many things. For example, these stress related things. She's always been there and she's always been reading and trying to be the best she could be.

I guess it could be easy to take just anybody's life and tell the events of it - or accomplishments - but about here - I don't know just what it is. Maybe that is what I'm looking for. There is something else here, about this woman and I don't know what that IT is?

Earlier on you said, "She would have been a healer no matter where or when she was born."

I feel that she is the essence of the traditional women healers that I've read about. And women healers bring a different energy to medicine than men do.

Are you talking in the sense of - well, I know you have been out West and worked with the Indians....

I'm not talking about that - no. I'm talking about women's traditional role as being a nurturer as well as, or along with, the healing process.

And I feel that Louise has brought an extra - some kind of extra energy to this - healing.

Are you saying that healing is more than getting well, it is an approach to living?

I'm looking at her from her point of view. I'm looking at it as a woman healer; looking at the total environment and realizing, right up front, that many people come to the doctor's office for emotional needs instead of real physical needs. They are entwined and that somebody who has the gift of eliciting information that will help her be able to help the patient.

As I said before, she works you around until you are able to identify what the problem is.

You don't wait for her to say, this is what I think and this is what I'm going to give you for it - you work out your own plan.

I've been working out plans for myself with her for many years. Not always did it mean that I did them...

You mean changes.

Changes - things that would make me healthier. Sometimes it could be a dietary change but she has not loaded me up with tranquilizers Louise has only given me short term things.

She hasn't been pushing pills - she has been pushing insight into your own problems - like what changes can you make? There's a lot of good counseling that goes into her practice and I think that that's why she is such a good healer.

Could this be because you are a nurse and she has worked with you and knows you and likes you or does this happen automatically with everybody?
Everybody. I send people to her when I think that basically that
is what they need - that they need to go and talk to somebody
that can gently, she doesn't hit upon people, she kind of gently
brings it around.
I've sent many disturbed young college students to Louise Caudill
and they've come back much better.

Do you think this is like a 'gift' that occurs every so often -
a genetic accident - or ....... I don't think she set out to
practice being extraordinary.

I think she just genuinely loved people and wanted to help them.

Would you say that that is rare?

I think she just genuinely loved people and wanted to help them.

Well, you see people that you know really do make a difference
and I think it shows up all the time in medicine because you yourself
can know if, when you go to the doctor, for something - are they
really listening to you?
She's not the only physician that has this gift but I feel like she
has used her gift longer and more successfully than many other people.

When I think of Louise Caudill, I think of a healer, in the very
best sense of the term.

Elie, there are also people who say that about you - they do.
I wonder, do you know you are doing that, or is it just what you
have to do?

It's just what you have to do.
I know that with Louise it is an internal thing. It comes
from within. It's not something she's studied to learn how to do.
She has studied medicine and she went to good medical schools.
However, I believe that, as with teaching, and with many other pro-
fessions, there is something, sometimes, a gift that people
will have.
There are 'gifted' teachers. Look across the University. Three people
could teach the same course, but it might be one that has the way of
making it clear and bringing forth that spark of wanting to know
about the students. There are many teachers that can do rote learning
and you just spit it back. But the teacher who is able to turn
them on to wanting to know more about a subject - that, to me,
is a teacher and that's a gift.
yes, I believe you are born with it.
She was born with her gift to heal.

Do you think Susie was too?

Yes. Susie's great gift, and I think about it a lot, is - Susie
has always been the support system. She never tried being a star.
And she has worked in the background facilitating, making the rough
way smooth. She's a great cook. I think she could see whenever
Louise needed positive reinforcement. When things were goin bad -
E she'd have peo-le to dinner. Still, she was running the office, getting up in the night to go along out. Susie has been a very very great part of this team. And I believe that Susie is bright. She's very very bright.

I Some people have told me that Susie alone could tell them what to do.

E...Yes, Susie really knows, but when I come in, Susie knows me and I just say I don't think it's an antibiotic that I need, I need to speak with Louise. And she's so kind. You know, I love Susie and I feel she has offered me as much healing in many ways - by facilitating.