



Mayo Clinic Heritage Films
Discussion Guide

Determined Spirits
The Sisters Who Built Saint Marys Hospital



For 97 years, the Sisters of Saint Francis led Saint Marys Hospital, providing the physicians and surgeons of Mayo Clinic with well-managed, up-to-date facilities and dedicated staff to help serve their patients. During that time span, five Sisters served as chief administrators, stewarding Saint Marys as it grew from a modest building with a single operating room to one of the largest and most respected hospitals in the world.

Leading the hospital with exceptional business acumen and leadership skills, the Sister administrators were always true to their Franciscan values of service, compassion and reverence for all creation.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the Mayo brothers, dedicated to the scientific method, and the Sisters of Saint Francis, committed to their faith, made such an effective team?
2. What are the values that inform your work?
3. How does one balance compassionate values with the need for financial responsibility and productivity?
4. How would you have responded to the concerns Sister Domitilla heard that her modernization of procedures was threatening the staff's "sense of family"?
5. In your life, has change most often been a "blessing," a "builder" or a "destroyer?"
6. When have you been called to take an unexpected career path?
7. How would you answer the question Sister Generose is asked in the film, "What would you hope to accomplish as the chief administrator of a hospital?"