Riley Hospital Memorial Stained-Glass Window Historical Background

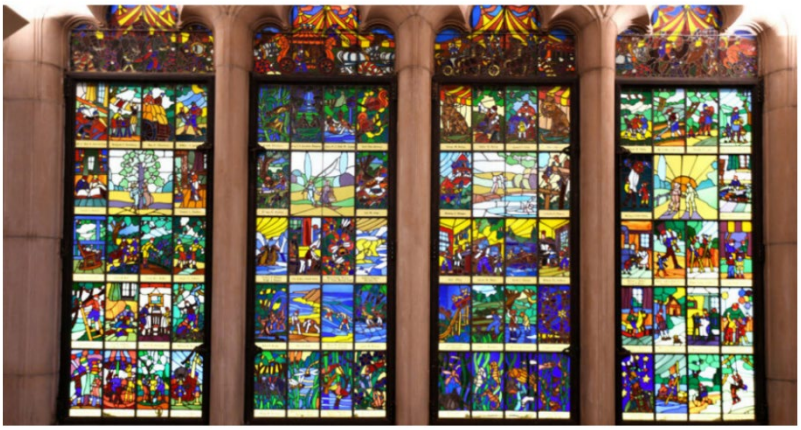


Photo courtesy Riley Children's Health

In 1927, after five years of planning, the James Whitcomb Riley Memorial Association (now Riley Children's Foundation) introduced a special way to honor major donors: a large stained-glass memorial window at Riley Hospital for Children. Located in the hospital's original lobby, currently the Edward A. Block Family Library, the window celebrates children and the poetry of James Whitcomb Riley.

The window features 120 colorful panels made from imported glass from England and Germany. Each panel shows a child-friendly scene and includes the name of a person or organization chosen by a donor.

Indianapolis-based artist, architect, and engineer, Thomas Entriken Hibben, who worked with Robert Frost Daggett, the architect who designed the original Riley Hospital for Children building in 1924, designed the window. Hibben talked with children to learn more about the types of designs they would like and he delivered with vibrant primary colors and images of children captured in the acts of "doing things" in each panel. Hibben brought James Whitcomb Riley's poems to life with circus images representing the poem "Circus Parade" at the top of the window. Other poems of James Whitcomb Riley represented in the windows include: "Our Hired Girl", "That Old Sweetheart of Mine", "The Fishing Party", "Old Swimming Hole", "Out to Old Aunt Mary's", and "Raggedy Man"

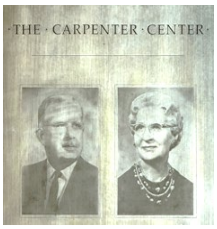
The stained-glass panels were crafted by master artisans from the Stewart-Carey Glass Company in Indianapolis, whose co-founder's daughter, Mary Stewart Carey, launched The Children's Museum of Indianapolis in 1925.

The window was unveiled on December 27, 1927, by the Association's first President Hugh McK Landon (1921-1947), with a memorial address by James W. Fesler, President of the Indiana University Board of Trustees. Landon and Fesler also were Association Incorporators. This memorial stained-glass window remains a Riley Hospital historic treasure and is a cherished symbol of creativity, generosity, and childhood.

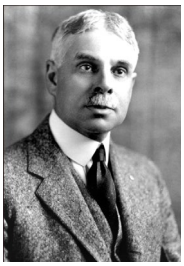
Prepared by Riley Hospital Historic Preservation Committee in partnership with the Edward A. Block Family Library, 2025. To learn more, see: IUI ScholarWorks/History of Riley Hospital for Children/Riley Hospital Histories/Memorial Stained-Glass Window Inventories.

Some of the 120 Names on Riley Hospital's Memorial Stained-Glass Window:

Names of people and organizations (including Riley Hospital early supporters like Psi Iota Xi and Indiana High School Sunshine Societies), were added to stained-glass panels in the decades after 1927, including:



Don P. and Gladys Carpenter of Brazil, Indiana, left estate gifts supporting two major pediatric health initiatives: The Carpenter Center (Indiana's only pediatric kidney transplant and dialysis center) in 1982, and the Wells Pediatric Research Center in 1996. Don P. Carpenter was a civic leader, banker, and Governor of the Indiana District of Kiwanis International in 1952. *Photo courtesy Sydney Gendron*



Elizabeth Sinclair (c. 1773–1849) was the grandmother of William Fortune, a key founder of the James Whitcomb Riley Memorial Association in 1921. After Riley's death in 1916, Fortune purchased his Lockerbie home and later sold it to the Association at cost. The home became a public museum in 1922 and remains open today. *William Fortune photo courtesy of Riley Children's Foundation.*

Candace "Candy" Laird Newman (1944–1966) was the only child of broadcaster Ruth Lyons. She appeared on the Ruth Lyons 50-50 Show from a young age and became a regular in 1965. Candy passed away from breast cancer at age 21, and Lyons chose a stained-glass panel to honor her memory. *Photo of Ruth Lyons and Santa Claus at Riley Hospital, 12/17/49, courtesy IUI University Library Special Collections & Archives.*

Marjory McGowan (1915–1986) was the daughter of Spencer Wishart, an early Indy 500 racer, who competed in the Indianapolis 500 from 1911 to 1914 and died in 1914 in a major road race in Illinois. Her grandmother, Mrs. H.J. McGowan, appears on the same panel and was married to Hugh J. McGowan, builder of the Indianapolis Traction Terminal in 1904. *Photo of Wishart in his 1914 Indy 500 Mercer car courtesy of the National Automotive History Collection, Detroit Public Library.*

Martha Stewart Moxley (1913–1918) died of the flu at age five. Her mother, Charlotte Scott Moxley, first President of the Indianapolis Junior League, saw the benefits of occupational therapy in World War I as a Red Cross lieutenant. In 1924, she led the League in founding and supporting Riley Hospital's Occupational Therapy Department for 24 years. *Photo (ca. 1925) of Junior League volunteers at Riley Hospital courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.*

Emily Caroline Rae (1961–1962) passed away at five months old from congenital heart disease at Riley Hospital. In her memory, her parents created a fund that supports education for pediatric cardiologists. Her father, Edwin Carter Rae, PhD, an art historian, was one of the "Monuments Men" from 14 nations who during WWII recovered, restored, and returned thousands of priceless European art works stolen by the Nazis**.** *Photo of Edwin Carter Rae, PhD, 1947, courtesy University of Illinois*