On October 2, 1902, a train carrying the great showman Buffalo Bill arrived in El Paso. On that same train was a young nurse heading to California from New York. Intending nothing more than a brief stop to visit a friend, she walked out into a rainstorm, and with her footsteps came a herald of change for the nursing and medical profession, in the city, in the state and in the nation.

A. Louise Dietrich entered the world on Nov. 17, 1878, in the small farming community of Ossining, N. Y. As one of the 11 children born to Valentine and Paso in 1908 and opened St. Mark’s Hospital, located by Julie Ferguson, Travis Gutierrez, Stephanie Limas, Astrid Burke and Natalie Marquez as one of the nation’s leading medical advocates of the 20th century. Geister stated that although she and Dietrich didn’t always agree, “She [Dietrich] had a singular and powerful courage in standing by her convictions.”

The Texas House of Representatives 57th Legislature honored Dietrich by passing a resolution which stated that she had done almost as much as her distinguished predecessor, Florence Nightingale, with her service to the medical profession.

Dietrich was memorialized at St. Alban’s with a memorial service. Her husband, the retired executive of the National Nurses Association, Janet Geister, wrote a letter to honor one of the greatest medical advocates of the 20th century. Geister stated that although she and Dietrich didn’t always agree, “She [Dietrich] had a singular and powerful courage in standing by her convictions.”

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