In 1928, Henrietta Egleston Hospital for Children opened, thanks to the vision and generosity of Thomas R. Egleston Jr. The hospital—named for Egleston’s mother, who had four children die at an early age—pioneered programs that directly involved parents in their child’s care, beginning with a policy of allowing parents to spend the night.

In 1956, Emory University donated 5 acres to Egleston. With $2 million in support from family estates and foundations, the new 100-bed Henrietta Egleston Hospital opened within three years and became a first-rate teaching facility for Emory.

Egleston later added the George and Irene Woodruff Pavilion, which was dedicated to the Woodruffs in recognition of their generosity and service to the hospital. With strong support from the community, the hospital opened the Emory-Egleston Children’s Research Center. Egleston’s years of growth set the stage for the many lifesaving triumphs and medical advances that would occur in later years.

While Egleston reached significant medical milestones, the hospital maintained its primary focus of providing for the unique needs of children. For example, play therapy was introduced in 1968 with the addition of tricycles equipped with I.V. stands—a precursor to the brightly colored wagons that carry children throughout the hospital today.

Egleston also led the way in medical research. Its first kidney transplant in 1980 laid the groundwork for Georgia’s original kidney dialysis program developed exclusively for children. The hospital’s first blood and marrow transplant was performed in 1984, followed rapidly by the first heart, liver and heart-lung transplants.

In 1990, Egleston launched a public safety awareness campaign to combat preventable accidents, including traffic injuries, drownings and choking. These promotional messages effectively reached millions of parents and children. Building upon that success, the Emory-Egleston Center for Child Advocacy was established two years later to further protect the health and well-being of children.

In 1991, the hospital became the first in Georgia to offer extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), a lifesaving heart-lung bypass technique. The following year, Egleston specialists performed the hospital’s first cochlear implant, which allows children with severe to profound hearing loss to hear.

Egleston’s growth continued in 1995 with the opening of what we now know as the Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center. The Sibley Heart Center, named for two generations of family members who served the hospital, opened two years later.

The Egleston garden was the country’s first hospital-based garden to provide homegrown fruits and vegetables for young patients during World War II.