



Tiffany Circle
Society of Women Leaders



Serving Cuyahoga, Geauga and Lake Counties



The three Favrite windows in the Board of Governors Hall of the American Red Cross National Headquarters building were commissioned from the Tiffany Studios in 1917 as the organization moved into its new building. They depict the theme of ministry to the sick and wounded through sacrifice. Dedicated in 1923, they are reputed to be the largest suite of Tiffany windows created for a secular environment and have remained in situ where they can be appreciated in the environment for which they were created. Most Tiffany windows, except for those in churches, have been removed from their original location. The detailed molding within the room was designed to complement the windows and enhance their beauty.

Miss Mabel T. Boardman, a prominent early 20th century leader and secretary of the American Red Cross for many years, suggested the idea for the windows to the Woman's Relief Corps of the North and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, two organizations of Civil War women. Each organization contributed \$5,000 and the three windows were created for a total of \$10,000. The contributions of these two organizations confirmed the dedication of the building "In Memory of the Heroic Women of the Civil War."

The Woman's Relief Corps of the North donated the left panel. Miss Boardman stated that it was inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, *Santa Filomena*, that glorified the work of Florence Nightingale: "A lady with a lamp shall stand in the great history of the land, a noble type of good, heroic womanhood." Louis Comfort Tiffany's *St. Filomena*, noted for her healing powers, is surrounded by attendant maidens who provide love and compassion. One carries a shield emblazoned with the Red Cross emblem. She is followed by Hope, carrying a banner with an anchor on painted on it. By her side is Mercy, bearing gifts.

Next is Faith, who carries a torch and palm fronds and Charity who offers a healing drink. In the foreground, a mother holds her child, who has gathered flowers, while in the background, a maiden carries the Red Cross banner.

The central panel was a gift of both organizations. It illustrates that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was conceived on a battlefield near Solferino, Italy in the middle of the 19th century. The panel portrays an army of gallant knights in armor, carrying spears, and mounted on horses as they head into battle. The central figure carries a large flag with the Red Cross emblem in the center. He rides a white steed bedecked with a jeweled saddle and bridle. These "Tiffany Jewels" are colored glass stones that are embedded in the windows. Near the feet of the trotting horse lies a fallen warrior who is receiving food and aid from a faithful comrade. The window expresses that even in the middle of battle, there is still a time and a place for humanitarian behavior.

The right panel was given by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. According to Miss Boardman, a great friend of the American Red Cross, Nobel Peace Prize winner Elihu Root suggested the theme for this window. It depicts Una, wife of the Red Cross knight in Edmund Spenser's highly allegorical epic, *The Faerie Queen*. The story depicts proper human behavior. Una represents Truth. She is the graceful central figure in the panel with an abundance of good deeds (flowers) overflowing her apron. Maidens accompany her. One carries a cross and another a lamp of wisdom. Behind her is a banner with a heart, symbolizing love. Other women carry Red Cross banners. A young woman kneels in front of Una holding a shield with the Red Cross emblem on it. The shield inspired the design of the Tiffany award, the highest recognition that an American Red Cross staff member can receive.