In 1955, as Superintendent of the Oregon State Mental Health Hospital, Dr. Dean Brooks provided a safe environment or asylum, for mentally ill patients to recover and rehabilitate. Recovered patients were allowed to leave the hospital and return to the community with the hope that they had learned from their experience and would not get themselves into trouble or incarcerated.

While at the Oregon State Mental Hospital, Dr. Brooks took exceptional care of patients by providing nutritional food, proper hygiene, and daily essentials, such as toiletries, laundered and ironed clothing, and shoes. Dr. Brooks believed in providing these essentials to patients, especially after a trip to a Texas hospital. This hospital did not turn out the lights before bed, leaving patients confused about the time and often awake at odd hours. Upon his return to the Oregon State Mental Hospital, Dr. Brooks placed an emphasis on turning lights off at night as a courtesy to patients, who needed proper rest. In appreciation, Dr. Brooks found a bushel of shoes upon his return, and later wrote down his story against the dehumanization of patients.

Dehumanization is treating a person who depends on care as less than a person. Humanizing patients in such institutions include providing food and other essentials, such as “shoes.” Moving towards humanization of patients included leaving shoes in a basket for patients to wear instead of nothing, first come first served on a daily basis. Patients relished in delight of wearing a different pair of shoes every day. Little essentials like these help patients avoid feeling overlooked, ignored, or dehumanized.