

The Vigil

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

Grateful Hearts Give: How Comfort and Care Eased a Family's Sorrow



The McClain family scattered Patrick's ashes in the peaceful surroundings of Pisgah Gorge Falls

"...the hospital staff shared personal stories of loss that touched our hearts and brought us comfort in a way that only a surviving parent can understand."

On September 7, 2022, Caroline McClain learned during a routine 20-week ultrasound that the baby, whose arrival she and husband Jason were happily anticipating in the coming year, had no heartbeat.

"It was a complete and total shock after a healthy pregnancy thus far," McClain, former executive director of the Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center, later wrote in a Facebook post.

With no other choice but to immediately deliver the child they'd named Patrick Christopher, McClain arranged for three-year-old son Connor's care and a few hours after the devastating news, checked into the Women and Children's Center at Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham. Just before midnight on September 8, Patrick was born, and the heart-wrenching process of honoring his life while simultaneously grieving his loss began.

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"We were able to hold him, spend time with him, and have him blessed and baptized," she says.

In all, the McClains spent five days at the hospital, a welcome respite during which they quietly mourned and prepared to deal with the onslaught of reality that would hit when they returned home. And for the entire stay, they felt wrapped in a loving atmosphere of comfort and support.

"The medical team at Ascension St. Vincent's was incredible. The hospital staff shared personal stories of loss that touched our hearts and brought us comfort in a way that only a surviving parent can understand," McClain says. "With so many things happening so quickly, we were never scared. Clearly, God was there the entire time."

If not for the strong faith connection at Ascension St. Vincent's, McClain believes, her family's plight would not have prompted the abundance of care and comfort they received.

An especially touching moment occurred when the woman who delivered food to the McClains each day shared her own story of losing a daughter several years before. Later, as they prepared for discharge, the McClains offered the woman a floral arrangement that someone had sent as a gesture of sympathy and support for the bereaved family.

"Coincidentally, it was her daughter's birthday," says McClain, "and she told us she would be putting the flowers on her daughter's grave."

On a crisp and sunny Sunday the weekend before Thanksgiving, the McClain family—Jason, Caroline, and Connor—traveled to northeast Alabama to scatter Patrick's ashes in the peaceful surroundings of Pisgah Gorge Falls near Scottsboro.

"It was just the three of us, a very private and personal ceremony," McClain says. "It was the perfect way to turn him back to God."

"We truly believe that Patrick Christopher's life and death has a purpose," she says. "God had a different plan than we expected, and we will one day see what He reveals."

In gratitude for the caring support their daughter and son-in-law received at the Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham Women and Children's Center, McClain's parents, Carolyn and Bill Satterfield, donated to Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation. On a comment form accompanying their donation, the Satterfields noted that the medical team,

led by Dr. Shannon Ellis, "was wonderful in helping our daughter through the ordeal when she lost her baby at 20 weeks."

"They were looking for a way to show their appreciation," says McClain, "and a donation seemed like the best way to do that."

Supporting the mission of the Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham Women and Children's Center promotes excellence in care for women and pediatric patients. Won't you help? Call 205-558-3850 or visit stvfoundation.org.



Donors Carolyn and Bill Satterfield with grandson, Connor

Memorials

Lord, may our prayers come before you in memory of those we entrust to your eternal care.

Melissa Albright
Lillian Andrews
Mary Bell-Snyder
Dr. Richard Berryman
Douglas Brasfield
Jane Elizabeth
Brasfield
Sylvia Braswell
Michael Brewer
Wallace Bromberg
Peggy Bryan

Linda Cain
Ava Chandler
Debra Coia
French Cross
Frank D'Amico
Lena D'Amico
Elbert Davis
Jacob Eaton
Irma Erdreich
M.K. Erdreich
Dale Fowler

Connie Giles
Bettie Ruth Glover
Suzanne Graves
David "Ellis" Gray
Marilyn Grubbs
Natalie Hooks
Donna Horn
Jerry Hutchens
Denise Johnson
Louise Josof
Edwin Kerr

Anne LaRussa
Evonne Lawrence
Albert Legrone
William Lunsford
Dorothy Millican
Willis Miracle
William "Bill" Moran
Don Parker
John Prather
Teddy Raley
Frances Ross

Paul Ross
Scott Sanders
Rodney Staggs
Jack Sullivan
Ben Tamburello, Sr.
Dr. William Terry
Blue-Berrie Tillis
James Tucker
George E. Wilbanks

Why One Physician Gives: Supporting Others Makes Lives Better, Souls Brighter

Third-generation physician Susan Salter, MD, a radiation oncologist at Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham Bruno Cancer Center, is a giving person by nature. As a physician, she spends countless hours tending to her patients; as a wife and mother, she devotes herself to caring for her family. She also strives for greater good as a church and community volunteer. And because she believes in the power of "together we can," Dr. Salter contributes a leadership level gift and is a Saint Luke Physician Giving Society member supporting Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation.

"I have seen firsthand the impact that giving to the Foundation can make," she says. "Even a small gift can help support a cancer patient with a ride to treatment, help with medicine or medical equipment that insurance doesn't cover, or simply provide a meal for a family struggling during treatment."



Dr. Susan Salter

associates diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma. Later, when the associate was in the late stages of cancer, Dr. Salter saw the Foundation step in to help the family.

"This meant the world to our staff and me to see how truly caring the Foundation was to our co-worker and friend," Dr. Salter says. "If you have ever been on the receiving end of giving, you understand how it inspires and encourages others. Giving can make a difference in ways you may never be aware of."

Dr. Salter's gift for giving is clearly not a sometime thing. To her, it's a way of life. "Giving is something that was instilled in me at a very young age," she says. "My family taught me the importance of giving to others, whether it's just a random act of kindness or supporting a friend in need. In turn, I have passed the importance of giving on to my children because I think giving teaches responsibility."

And it's not just money she encourages them to give. "A simple smile, serving at a shelter, or giving a donation can be powerful enough to touch the life of another person," she says. "Whatever you can give will make the lives of others better and brighten your soul as well."

[Learn more about giving at stvfoundation.org.](http://stvfoundation.org)

"If you have ever been on the receiving end of giving, you understand how it inspires and encourages others."

On a larger scale, Dr. Salter saw Foundation gifts provide transportation assistance to one of her cancer center

Honorariums *The following individuals were recognized through a gift in their honor.*

Jason Alexander
Dr. L. Doug Alford
Dr. Hassan Alkhawam
Joseph Antonio
Elizabeth Baker
Dr. Mack Barnes
Dr. Stephen Beck
Dr. Heath Beckham
Andrew Bell
James Berryhill
Dr. Sheldon Black
Judge Sharon
Blackburn
Dr. Timothy Bode
Dr. Cara Bondly
Kris Boone
Dr. Alain Bouchard
Dr. James Bowman
Dr. Joseph Brewer
Dr. John Brockington
Dr. Lyle Cain
Suzannah Campbell

Dr. Carter Capra
Wayne Carmello-
Harper
Dr. Sirisha Chada
Dr. Paul Clark
Dr. Corey Coleman
Dr. Richard Cox
Dr. James Crenshaw
Dr. E. Merritt Cullum
Dr. Jeffrey Davis
Hilton & Sallie Dean
Dustin Diggs
Evie Doughty
Jacob Doughty
Jolee Doughty
Marjie Doughty
Allyson Duncan
Dr. Shannon Ellis
Dr. Benton Emblom
Dr. Noah Fitzpatrick
Dr. James Flanagan
Dr. John Foster

Dr. Spencer Gaskin
Andrew Gnnan
Bennett, Charlotte,
& Ellis Gray
Dr. Brian Guffin
Dianne Guthrie
Dr. David Hall
Shanon Hamilton
Dana Harris
Dr. Stephen Heinzman
Judge William Hereford
Edward Herr
John Hinson
Harold Hodo
LeeAnn Howard
Scott Hughes
Dr. Ryan Humphreys
Marcia Johnson
Louis Josof
Joe Keating
Dr. SangAe Kim-Park
Hannah Layne

Thomas Luckie
Jeffrey McRee
Dr. Joshua Menendez
Dr. Lakisha
Moore-Smith
Knud Nielsen
John Okken
Dr. James Parks
Dr. John Parks
Dr. J. Michael Parks
Betsy Pautler
Sandra Poole
Eli Powers
Jett Powers
Riggins Powers
Tim Puthoff
Dr. Craig Rich
Mark Rives
John Rochester
Hazel Rock
Dr. Jon Rosser
Austin Rowe

Ryker Rowe
Dr. Susan Salter
Dr. William Scofield
Amy Shelton
Farris Smalley
Dr. Jeremy Smith
Mary Warren Smith
Phil Stutts
Dr. Parvez Sultan
Dr. Carol Swindle
Julia Taliaferro
Peppi Talley
Brynleigh Thomas
Suzanne Thorn
Dr. Scott Tully
Dr. Panayotis Vardas
Jay Vines
James Walker
Dr. Joseph Welden
Carson Wells
Dr. Adam Witcher
Dr. William Woodall

Bradley Awards Honor Behind-the-Scenes Nurses

One day in the mid-1990s, Dr. Merrill Bradley was making rounds at St. Vincent's Hospital, now Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham. As he moved in and out of patients' rooms and up and down the hallways, he noted how hard the nurses were working, and he admired them for their kindness and care.

He recalled that Medical Services had recently given awards for outstanding care to floor nurses who were nominated by their patients to receive those awards.

"I thought it was a shame that there were no awards for behind-the-scenes nurses, like the ones I worked with during surgery," he said. "I knew those nurses were working hard, too."

That seed of a thought eventually grew into the Merrill N. Bradley and Julia H. Bradley, Department of Surgery Award, established by Dr. Bradley in 1994 to honor his wife. She was a nurse anesthetist, and he was an intern/resident in surgery at

Roosevelt Hospital in New York City when the two met in 1949. They had been married for 65 years when Mrs. Bradley passed away last year.



Dr. and Mrs. Merrill N. Bradley

The endowed fund recognizes surgical nurses for outstanding professionalism and awards scholarships to surgical nurses to help them further their education in nursing. Nominations come from awardees' peers, supervisors, and physicians. Leslie Flemming, RN, was the second recipient of a Bradley award, and nearly 30 years later, she recalls the pleasure of being chosen.

"It was an honor to be nominated and recognized for my work, but even more so because of Dr. Bradley's reputation as a man, doctor, and surgeon," she said. "He has also consistently been a generous donor to our hospital."

Call 205-558-3850 to learn how you can establish an endowment and address a specific area of need.

Recliner Upgrades Help Promote Healing Process

When James West, MD, donated to Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation, he had no idea exactly how the money would be used. He was just doing what he has felt compelled to do all his life: Give back to make life better for others.

"My family and I have been blessed. I was raised by good parents who taught me to give," he says, "so I've always felt the need to share."

As it turns out, Dr. West's contribution will be used to upgrade 40 recliners in the patient rooms at Ascension St. Vincent's St. Clair. The gift will also honor the care Dr. West received when a heart attack landed him in the St. Clair Emergency Department in late December 2022.

Furthermore, says Ascension St. Vincent's St. Clair Administrator Lisa Nichols, "Dr. West's gift will have a positive impact on patients for years to come. These hospital-grade recliners will include a tray for meals, drinks, and personal items, as well as provide additional support in promoting the healing process."

Dr. West readily endorsed the plan. "During my 50-plus years of practicing surgery, I found that most patients, family, and guests judge a hospital on cleanliness, appearance, and comfort as much as on the quality of care," Dr. West says. "It was with those thoughts in mind that I expressed my 100 percent agreement when Lisa Nichols shared her recommendation to upgrade the recliners."

Make life better for others through giving. Call 205-558-3850 or visit stvfoundation.org.

Expansion of Behavioral Health Unit Provides Older Patients with Continuity of Care



Dr. Candace Perry

A small shift is set to occur at Ascension St. Vincent's East that can make a big difference in the lives of older patients.

Six beds in the adult behavioral health unit will be converted to geriatric beds to meet the rising need for treatment of neurocognitive disorders in older individuals. This, according to Suzannah Campbell, president of Ascension St. Vincent's East, will increase the number of beds in the geriatric behavioral health unit from 20 to 26, while reducing the bed count in the adult unit from 60 to 54. The funding for this geriatric bed expansion will be provided by Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation.

"During my medical career, I have always wanted to provide this population with the care that I wanted my grandparents and now my parents to receive."

"Based on current demands and future expectations, the adult unit will be able to accommodate admissions with the remaining beds," says Campbell. "Right now, approximately 15 to 20 geriatric patients are turned away each month due to lack of geriatric psychiatric beds, and this shift will help alleviate the problem."

From a medical standpoint, says Candace Perry, MD, Psychiatry, the expansion of the geriatric behavioral health unit will allow Ascension St. Vincent's East to better care for the community.

"As our population ages, we will have more residents of the Birmingham area who will be experiencing neurocognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and other dementias," says Dr. Perry. "We will also have more older individuals requiring care for depression and schizophrenia. Having more beds available will give them greater continuity of care within our healthcare system."

Dr. Perry finds caring for older adults fulfilling, so this move to increase access to geriatric behavioral care is something she's glad to see.

"During my medical career, I have always wanted to provide this population with the care that I wanted my grandparents and now my parents to receive," she says. Expanding the geriatric unit will require a limited amount of construction. Plans call for the additional beds to be open by Fall 2023.

[Improve the quality of life for vulnerable patients.](#)
[Donate to the Behavioral Health Services Fund.](#)

A Good Time Was Had By All

What do a big bash, the Big Easy, and golfers with big hearts all have in common? They raise big money for Ascension St. Vincent's programs.

BINGO BASH

When the annual Bingo Bash for Ascension St. Vincent's Cancer Centers returned on April 20, three years had passed since the last in-person event. Sidelined by COVID-19 in 2020, the Bash reemerged in 2023 with a bang, raising \$129,000 to benefit cancer patients, their family needs, equipment, services, and programs.

The event featured a fun and festive atmosphere, music, and fabulous prizes for the lucky Bingo winners. Food from Little Donkey and decadent desserts by Pastry Art Bake Shoppe and Edgar's Bakery rounded out the evening. Regions served as the title sponsor. Honorary community chairs were Elizabeth and Bob Baker; honorary medical chair was Mack Barnes, MD.



TASTE OF NEW ORLEANS

The robust flavors and smooth sounds of the Big Easy came together in a savory blend for the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation Junior Board's Taste of New Orleans event on February 21. This fun-filled celebration of the city's traditional cuisine, jazz music, and signature drinks took place amid the elegant surroundings of The Farrell and raised \$36,000 to benefit Ascension St. Vincent's Women and Children's Services. Brasfield & Gorrie served as the title sponsor for this lively Mardi Gras-themed event.

GOLF CLASSIC

Golfers with a heart for patients with cardiovascular issues—and the programs and services that endeavor to help them lead healthier lives—spent November 8, 2022, at Greystone Golf & Country Club, teeing it up to benefit Ascension St. Vincent's Cardiovascular Services. By the time all 29 teams cleared the course, the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation Golf Classic raised \$80,000 for the cause. The title sponsor for the event was R1 RCM. Many thanks to the players, community partners, and Greystone staff who worked hard to make this event such a tremendous success.



Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Kim Mayer and Dianne Guthrie

If anyone understands that some of life's greatest rewards come from serving others, Kim Mayer and Dianne Guthrie do. Thanks to their roles as volunteer supervisors—Mayer for Ascension St. Vincent's East, Ascension St. Vincent's St. Clair, and Ascension St. Vincent's Blount; Guthrie for Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham, Ascension St. Vincent's Chilton, and Ascension St. Vincent's One Nineteen—they see each day how satisfying service to others can be.

"Volunteerism gives individuals a feeling of being a part of a greater mission, a feeling of giving back to the community and a feeling of helping others," says Mayer. "It brings individuals into an environment which has a purpose, and they can feel like they are a part of a family."



Volunteer supervisors
Dianne Guthrie and Kim Mayer

needs, as well as to address any additional needs or special projects.

Volunteers, says Mayer, are young and old, come from a variety of backgrounds, and feel a strong need to give back to their communities. While many are juggling volunteer commitments with other obligations, others are retired but still have plenty of dedication, compassion, and wisdom to bring to the volunteer table.

Mayer's greatest need for volunteers is at information desks. She also, however, has needs in gift shops, surgery waiting, cardiac rehab, outpatient labs, same-day surgery, bariatric education, and cancer treatment center. Guthrie

needs bow makers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, information desk volunteers, GI transporters, wayfinders, and Christmas stocking makers.

Guthrie often cites a favorite quote by author Sherry Anderson to illustrate how she views the volunteers she works with: "Volunteers don't get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless."

"Every time I am around our volunteers, I am inspired by their servants' heart, as I see how they live out our mission each day," she says. "Their actions, words, and deeds are great examples of Christ's compassion and love for others."

Mayer's and Guthrie's responsibilities include recruiting, training, placing, and supporting volunteers at their respective facilities. They also regularly communicate with hospital administrators, department managers, and directors to ensure that the volunteers are meeting each facility's

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer at Ascension St. Vincent's East, Ascension St. Vincent's St. Clair, or Ascension St. Vincent's Blount can reach Kim Mayer at 205-838-3265. Those wanting to volunteer at Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham, Ascension St. Vincent's Chilton, or Ascension St. Vincent's One Nineteen should call Dianne Guthrie at 205-939-7186.

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Sisters' Vigil



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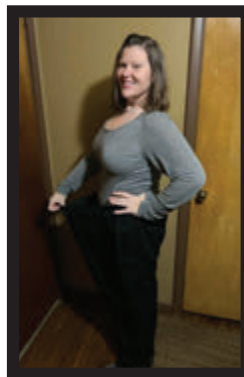
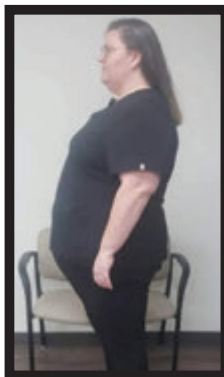
Loss of Pounds Means "Pounds of Clothes" for a Good Cause

The Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham "Journey to Fit" Bariatric Surgery Program recently joined other bariatric surgery centers around the country in "Pounds of Clothes," an organization on a mission to collect men's and women's casual and business attire from weight-loss patients whose wardrobes have become too large and give it to people in need of those larger sizes.

"For our patients, it is both a 'cleansing' experience and a chance to help change someone else's life for the better," said Aimee Rothe, Bariatric Surgery Program director.

Anyone can donate clothing, whether bariatric patients or not. Donated clothing should be in good condition with no holes, stains, missing buttons, or broken zippers. It should also be free of pet hair and not previously in

storage for a long time. In-season clothing is preferred. No underwear or bras, please.



Crystal Clabaugh is a recent success story

Donations may be dropped off at the Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham Bariatric Center, 2660 10th Avenue South, any Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday, 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Call ahead at 205-930-2175 to arrange for someone to collect your donation curbside. Pickup service from your unit/work area is available to Birmingham campus associates.

"This project," says Administrative Director of Nursing Chuck Lacey, "is a shining example of how we show reverence to and serve our patients according to our core values."

Looking for more ways to donate? Visit stvfoundation.org.