



the giving spirit

Theresa J. Vann Scholarship Leaves a Lasting Legacy of Service and Compassion

As a loving mother of six, compassionate OB/GYN nurse, and a devoted nursing instructor, Theresa Anne Jones Vann – known to almost everyone as Mrs. Vann – dedicated her life to caring for others. Described as never knowing a stranger, Mrs. Vann spent more than 60 years of her life serving at St. John's Hospital.

After graduating from St. John's College of Nursing, Mrs. Vann began her career in 1949 in the St. John's Hospital maternity ward. She helped to bring countless new lives into the world, assisting mothers during labor, delivery and post-partum. "Mom loved babies," said Mrs. Vann's daughter, Mary Therese (better known as M.T.). "Her kindness and communication skills touched those around her, and gave her opportunities for the most interaction with new mothers and their families."

In 1967, Mrs. Vann became an instructor at the St. John's College of Nursing. "Mom wanted to give back and build the skills of future nurses who shared her

passion for health care and her compassion for others," said her son, Les Vann, now a television station executive in Savannah, Georgia.

Maintaining her position as a nursing instructor required ongoing education for compliance with ever-changing teaching requirements. Mrs. Vann earned a bachelor's degree and two master's degrees while balancing caring for her family and nursing students. "We kids were always a handful to keep up with, but she was always sweet and very caring to us," said Les. "In addition to all of us, she looked after her aging parents as well – always checking on them."

"Her caring ways did not stop there," added M.T. "In addition to our family and her nursing students, Mom was always a neighborhood nurse as well, helping to treat everything from skinned knees to heart attacks. She was always there for everyone." And because she had always been there for everyone during her productive life and career, M.T. and Les talked to



Pictured left: Sister Charitas, right: Theresa J. Vann

their mom about establishing a lasting legacy of giving. Thus, the *Theresa J. Vann Scholarship* was established which today benefits both students and instructors at the St. John's College of Nursing.

"Mom worked hard to fund her continuing education and make ends meet," said M.T. "She wanted the scholarship to benefit both students and faculty to honor the career and life path she took." As a fitting tribute to a lifetime of selfless giving, Mrs. Vann received the 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award from the St. John's Alumni Association. M.T. and Les both agree it was one of their mother's proudest moments.

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HOSPITAL SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION

ways to give

Through the Friends of St. John's Hospital, there are many ways to give and make a significant impact in the lives of others. Types of gifts include planned gifts, education and scholarship programs, or designating your gift to benefit a specific area of St. John's expertise. Contact Friends of St. John's Hospital to learn more.



Donor Recognition Wall, Coming Soon!

Numerous individuals have helped support the mission of St. John's Hospital through lifetime gifts, annual gifts and estate gifts. Their generosity has made a difference at St. John's Hospital and in the lives of the patients we serve. A donor recognition display will be located in the main lobby of the hospital to recognize and thank donors who support the mission of St. John's Hospital.

Letter From Beverly Neisler



Greetings from St. John's Hospital!
It is my pleasure to serve as the new
Chief Development Officer.

Most of my career has been spent working in the world of philanthropy here in Springfield. When I tell people what I do, the natural reaction is to say "I could never ask anyone for money." In reality, I could never ask someone for money for my personal gain, either!

I view my life's work much like a conductor with an orchestra. Just as the conductor makes the connection between the audience and the music, I orchestrate a connection between people and mission-related programs and projects that will bring meaning and purpose to their lives.

Those of us who have chosen this profession feel blessed to work alongside people who choose to invest in worthy causes. Here at St. John's, our donors see the benefits of supporting an organization whose primary mission is committed to modern medicine and faith-based care focused on the mind, body and spirit.

The Friends of St. John's Hospital is comprised of a 15-member leadership council committed to advancing the mission of the hospital through charitable giving. We are here to receive charitable gifts on behalf of the hospital. In turn, your contributions are awarded in the form of grants to various departments throughout the hospital to support educational endeavors and visionary medicine.

Charitable contributions allow us to live our mission by offering compassionate care to the needy, provide access to world-class health care, fund life-changing preventative health programs, support care-enhancing technology and capital improvements and develop the future of health care through education and research.

We invite you to get involved in the future of St. John's Hospital. Making gifts to St. John's is a noble endeavor. We are changing lives and we are saving lives. Your investment in St. John's Hospital will have a mighty purpose, and one that will always be treasured by our patients and their families.

May God bless you in this season of fall, and always!

Sincerely,

Beverly Neisler, CFRE
Chief Development Officer



Photo courtesy of South County Publications

Pillowcase Project Provides Comfort to St. John's Children's Hospital Patients

To welcome pediatric patients to St. John's Children's Hospital, we have developed the Pillowcase Project. Patients select a special pillowcase, featuring a favorite cartoon character, sports designs or other theme. "The pillowcases brighten and add warmth to whatever area the pediatric patient may be in," said Clinical Child Life Specialist, Susan Spears. "They make an incredible difference in their hospital stay."

Key funding for the Pillowcase Project was inspired by a firsthand experience at St. John's Children's Hospital. "My son was diagnosed with leukemia during his eighth-grade year and during three years of intensive treatments, we spent a lot of time at the hospital," said Gary Lowery, of the Lowery-Muller Group of Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC. "We saw what a difference small items of comfort can make in the healing process."

This experience prompted Lowery to establish the 4 *The Kids Fund*, along with Darin Muller and Denise Young. This initiative, through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, provides important funding for the Pillowcase Project and other area children's charities.

Through the combined efforts of 4 *The Kids Fund* and St. John's Children's Hospital, enthusiasm for the Pillowcase Project has spread throughout the community. Businesses such as Zara's Collision Center and Heartland Credit Union have generously supported the project in addition to local fabric stores, middle schools and high schools. This program for St. John's Children's Hospital has united and inspired many others who have come together in a spirit of goodwill and giving.

"The Pillowcase Project provides comfort to children and helps families navigate a very stressful time in their lives," Clinical Child Life Specialist Vanessa Tinkous said. "I am currently making a quilt out of the pillowcases one of our pediatric cancer patients collected over the course of many successful treatments," she said. "These pillowcases - and this quilt - represent a path on her journey. It gives her something positive and motivational to remember as she moves forward into the next chapter of her life."

4 *The Kids Fund's* goal is to have 12 businesses support the Pillowcase Project each year. If you or your organization would like to support the Pillowcase Project, we invite you to contact us at the Friends of St. John's Hospital today.

5 Questions With Trudy Nelson

President, Friends Leadership Council



1. How did you become involved with the Friends of St. John's Hospital?

I was asked to volunteer about 15 years ago by a neighbor, Florence Lee Wellons, a previous Friends Board Chair whose husband Bert was a cardio thoracic surgeon at St. John's. I began on the Toast of the Town committee, served on the Advisory Council for six years and chaired Toast of the Town. I was invited to the St. John's Friends Board by Denise Pope when Bob Narmont was Chair. I became Vice Chair when Jerry Barkmeier was in charge. I am serving my ninth and last year on the Leadership Council.

2. What inspires you to participate in charitable causes?

My parents were very special people and wonderful role models. They were "depression babies," very hard workers and savers, and they gave money to causes they believed in. Their gravestone offers the quote, "You make a living by what you get, you make a life by what you give."

3. How does Friends of St. John's Hospital benefit the local community?

I believe that communities are stronger when they have excellent health care. It's pretty simple really.

4. Why is it important to be a good steward?

St. John's has a beautiful history of Franciscan Sisters coming to the United States and serving others. Someone has to be a good steward of what has been created for us. I've always been a fan of my elders and I like the idea of showing respect for women who worked as hard as they have in the service of others.

5. Why should others support the Friends of St. John's Hospital?

My message would be, if you or someone you love has had care you are grateful for, or if you've known people who have made health care their life's work and they have inspired you, or if you believe that having top notch medical options in the region are important for the stability and growth of our community, you should consider giving to the Friends of St. John's Hospital. These are just a few of the thousands of reasons for giving. Whatever your reasons are, please act on them and participate. We need you.

St. John's Care Inspires Patient to Express His Gratitude

The physicians, nurses and staff members of St. John's Hospital strive every day to provide patients with the inspired care they deserve. Thomas McGee, an 87-year-old patient who underwent a knee surgery at St. John's Hospital recently contacted the Friends of St. John's Hospital to express his appreciation for the excellent care he received and to make a personal donation to ensure future patients receive the same great care he experienced.

"After my knee surgery, I was advised to have inpatient rehab at another local hospital facility," said Mr. McGee. "I was there for just two days before returning to St. John's - there is just no comparison." He sites caring and attentive St. John's staff members as making a true difference in his recovery. "Everyone I encountered, from the nurses, occupational and physical therapists and even the janitorial staff could not have been friendlier and more helpful," he said. "It gives you real confidence in your care when you see people who are happy with their jobs and know what they are doing."

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Administrative Assistant

Theresa J. Vann Scholarship

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When Mrs. Vann passed in 2012 at St. John's Hospital, M.T. said there was an outpouring of donations to the scholarship to celebrate Mrs. Vann's life. "From two dollars to thousands of dollars, the range of gifts reflected the wide range of lives she touched."

"It means so much to all of us in the College of Nursing that a beloved St. John's nurse and faculty member - and her family would continue to do so much for so many," said Brenda Jeffers, Chancellor of the College of Nursing. Jeffers added that qualification for the scholarship is not based solely on financial need, but also leadership and character. "About 90% of our nursing students receive some form of financial aid. This scholarship is a huge advantage to a deserving student - and faculty member, as well."

For complete details on how you can establish a scholarship with St. John's College of Nursing, contact the Friends of St. John's Hospital.

St. John's Care Inspires

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Debunking a prevalent myth, Mr. McGee said he even loved the St. John's Hospital food and highly recommends the potato soup. "There wasn't one day at St. John's that was not a good day," he said. "The inpatient and outpatient therapists helped me to progress from using a walker, to now walking with just a cane. I could not be happier with the care." Mr. McGee also added that both he and his wife have been patients at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota for specific medical treatments. "I'll tell you one thing - Mayo Clinic is tremendous, but in my opinion St. John's is just as good," he said. "I see they talk about delivering inspired care - and that's exactly what they do!"

Although Mr. McGee was not aware of it when he called, the Friends of St. John's Hospital has a specific donation program for patients and their loved ones who have experienced exceptional care and wish to express their gratitude. The Guardian Angel Program allows these satisfied patients, like Mr. McGee, to invest in the high-quality, inspired care St. John's offers. "I think St. John's care is one of the best investments anyone could ever make," he adds.

Volunteer Opportunities

October 26 - Downtown Farmer's Market - 8 am - noon

Two individuals to register volunteers for Miracle Makers and Extra Life

November 21-22 - WDBR Cares for Kids Radiothon - 6 am - 7 pm

Groups or individuals needed to answer phones and record pledges or help at merchandise table (in two hour shifts)

Events

October 12 - Kohl's Gotta Dance Community Dance Day

10 am - 1 pm - Lincoln Park

November 21-22 - WDBR Cares for Kids Radiothon

6 am - 7 pm, both days

Listen to stories of hope, healing and courage from patients, families and staff at St. John's Children's Hospital during the 8th annual 103.7 WDBR Cares For Kids Radiothon and make a pledge to support the St. John's Children's Hospital. For more information, call (217) 544-KIDS (5437)

November 23 - Kohl's Gotta Dance Presents: Rising Stars - 6 pm

Hoogland Center for the Arts

To care. To give. To change lives.

Your gift will make a direct, positive difference for those in need, right here in our area. Here are several ways to reach us:

online: www.givetosaints.org

phone: (217) 757-6555

mail: Friends of St. John's Hospital

e-mail: sjsfriends@hshs.org

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