A Good Name

Dr. William McWhirter of Mercer, Pa., instilled in his two children what is important in life – doing the right thing and standing up for what is right. He would remind them of something his father used to say, “You will be remembered for your good name, not by how many ties you’ve accumulated.”

Dr. McWhirter is remembered by many in Mercer County for his good name and good heart. “Daddy was such a wonderful role model,” said daughter Cynthia Hughes. “Hardworking, honest and compassionate. He had a wonderful sense of humor and was quick to find the humorous side of things.”

He was also a skilled orthopedic surgeon that served as a member of the senior staff at Greenville Regional Hospital for 37 years. Elaine Owen, who is the Transitional Care Nurse at St. Paul’s, worked with Dr. McWhirter on the orthopedic floor at the hospital and remembers his good heart.

“He was very caring toward his patients,” she recalls. “He had very high standards for their care and was always available for his patients, day or night. If they needed him, he would be there.”

The old saying goes, “Behind every great man there is a great woman.” For Dr. McWhirter, that was Donna Rae Cozad. In the summer of 1957, he was working at Mercer Cottage Hospital while finishing his medical degree at Temple University School of Medicine when he spotted Donna walking on her lunch break to get the mail.

He was immediately smitten and stopped at her home the next two Saturday nights hoping for the chance to see her. Both times she was out with friends, and he spent the evening with her parents instead. The third Saturday they finally connected, and it was the beginning of a lifelong love with his best friend. They celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in December 2017.

“Our mother adored her family and loved nothing better than having her family visit, going on a family trip or traveling with her husband,” said Cynthia. With her husband serving on the hospital staff, Donna also supported the hospital as an active member and president for the volunteer auxiliary.

Over the years, Dr. McWhirter referred many patients to skilled nursing care at St. Paul’s Senior Living Community. When his own health began declining in 2015 and it became too difficult for Donna to care for him at home, St. Paul’s was the natural choice.

“As both our parents’ mothers had been in nursing care at St. Paul’s in their last years, we had already experienced the wonderful care provided there, and we knew that was the best place for him,” said Cynthia. “The entire staff at St. Paul’s were wonderful to both my parents and to David [my brother] and I.”

That is why when their parents passed away within months of each other in 2018, Cynthia and David knew they wanted to honor their memory with a gift to St. Paul’s.

“David and I felt committed to give back to St. Paul’s, both for the stellar care our father and grandmothers received as well as to help continue St. Paul’s mission in the community,” said Cynthia.

As a result, this summer they, along with Cynthia’s husband Brian who secured a matching gift from his employer, made an impactful gift to the Keeping the Promise Fund for benevolent care for residents in need at St. Paul’s.

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Their generous gift was made in memory of their parents as well as their grandmothers Blanche McWhirter & Martha Cozad, who they both recall having giving hearts.

Blanche Rebecca Anderson grew up in Mercer and graduated from Slippery Rock State Normal School. She taught in a one room schoolhouse for 11 years until she married John McWhirter. They had four children. “She was a sweet lady who was as honest as the day is long,” said David. “Although I was too young to know her well, I remember how kind and warm she was.”

Blanche spent her final years as a resident of St. Paul’s in the late 1970s. David recalls visiting her there and bringing her ice cream for her birthday, which she loved. She had a wonderful sense of humor, which she passed on to her son. Both David & Cynthia remember lots of laughter as they were growing up.

Martha McDougall grew up in Coolspring, attended Grove City College and graduated from Slippery Rock State Normal School. She married Herman Cozad in 1924, and they had one child Donna.

Martha was a beloved teacher in Mercer. David ran into one of his grandmother’s former students recently. “He thought she was terrific,” David said. “He recalls that she would tell him ‘I’ve had a lot of students over the years, and I loved them ALL!’ I think that says a lot about how she was as a teacher and a person.” In 1964, Martha was honored by the Mercer Chamber of Commerce as “An Exceptional Teacher of Children.”

Clearly these two families valued integrity, helping others and giving back to the community. We are so thankful to Cynthia and Brian Hughes and David McWhirter for carrying on that legacy at St. Paul’s.

A Gift of Thanks

Residents, clients and families often ask how they can give back and say “Thanks” to the staff who have provided excellent care to their loved ones while living at St. Paul’s. One way is through the Staff Appreciation Fund.

A gift to the Staff Appreciation Fund enables St. Paul’s to recognize staff throughout the year for their exceptional service and quality care that they provide to residents.

Donations to the Staff Appreciation Fund may be used for staff recognition events, spontaneous recognition of a job well done or special items for the staff, such as holiday treats or gift cards.

Another way to recognize staff is to do something special for a particular neighborhood or building such as having a pizza party. These kinds of gifts should be coordinated with the Administrator of the building.

This past spring Dick & Patti Jones and Bob & Margie Hays made such a gift when they donated Easter baskets stuffed with goodies to staff at The Heritage. Patti & Bob are residents in Jones Serenity Circle.

“We certainly appreciate the loving, compassionate care the staff shows our loved ones. It brings us comfort knowing they are lovingly cared for,” said Margie.

The staff at St. Paul’s are not permitted to accept individual gifts, cash or currency of any kind from a resident or family member. With the holidays approaching, consider instead making a gift to the Staff Appreciation Fund in their honor. They will be notified of your kindness. For more information about giving to the Staff Appreciation Fund, please contact Dawn or Teresa in the Charitable Giving Office at 724-588-7610.

A Good Name

Free Ask an Expert Program
“Tax Savings & Charitable Giving”
September 26 at 6:30 p.m.
The Keifer Building at St. Paul’s
341 E. Jamestown Rd, Greenville, PA
Please RSVP to Jennie at 724-589-4646 or jkather@sp1867.org.

In Memory of
Dr. William & Mrs. Donna McWhirter
Mrs. Blanche McWhirter
Mrs. Martha Cozad

The new plaque added to the the Keeping the Promise donor recognition wall in The Villas lobby

Staff at The Heritage loved the goody-filled baskets gifted by Dick & Patti Jones and Bob & Margie Hays
Joy in the Familiar

Thanks to a gift from the John B. Millen, Jr. Enrichment Fund, Jones Serenity Circle now has two Life Stations for residents to enjoy.

Jones Serenity Circle is one of St. Paul’s memory care neighborhoods on the fourth floor of The Heritage in Greenville, Pa.

Life Stations were created for residents with Alzheimer’s or other types of dementia. They encourage residents to engage in familiar activities that may spark memories and provide them with a sense of purpose, wellbeing and joy. The stations are interactive with several items for residents to touch, feel and use.

The Handyman Life Station is located in the lounge off the dining room and consists of a work bench and peg board with a variety of safe tools and project materials, like brushes, a tape measure, and plastic pipes.

The Laundry Life Station is located in the activity room and includes a washer and dryer set, laundry basket, assorted clothing and drying rack.

“The new Life Stations are a wonderful addition to Jones Serenity Circle!” said Patti Arensberg, Life Enrichment Coordinator. “Several residents have been enjoying them and the familiar activities.”

There are many positive effects when residents engage in meaningful activities like the Life Stations provide. Boredom is alleviated, reducing wandering, agitation and other challenging behaviors. Residents have improved self-esteem with the sense of purpose and success in completing a familiar activity. In addition, residents who engage in meaningful activities may sleep better at night and experience less anxiety and depression.

The John B. Millen, Jr. Enrichment Fund was created to support creative initiatives like the Life Stations to improve the lives of residents with memory loss at St. Paul’s.

John B. Millen, Jr. is a board member emeritus at St. Paul’s. He began serving on the board of directors in 1976. His children Jana, Julie, John III and wife Laura established the John B. Millen, Jr. Enrichment Fund in 2010 in honor of his 35 years of service to St. Paul’s.

Thank you to John B. Millen, Jr. and family and friends who made the addition of the Life Stations possible!

Today, named funds, like the John B. Millen, Jr. Enrichment Fund, can be established through a gift of $50,000 or more and may be designated for general or specific purposes according to the donor’s wishes and St. Paul’s mission needs.

For more information, please contact Dawn Hartman, Director of Planned & Major Giving at 724-588-9613 ext. 1214 or dhartman@sp1867.org.
A Wish Come True

Thank you for making wishes come true at St. Paul’s! We were able to keep the spirit of Christmas alive all year long thanks to your generous contributions to the annual Christmas Appeal last year.

In 2018, more than $28,000 was raised with your help. The gifts donated to this annual appeal are used to ensure every resident in The Villas, The Heritage and The Ridgewood receives a special Christmas gift. The remaining funds are used to purchase resident wish list items at each facility to benefit residents throughout the year.

This year The Ridgewood and The Heritage were both able to purchase new patio furniture from their wish list for residents and visitors to better enjoy the outdoors. The new furniture at The Heritage is located outside of the third floor terrace and at The Ridgewood is located on the Sunshine Patio overlooking their two raised garden beds.

With fall now here, residents and staff are busy making their wish list for the 2019 Christmas Appeal. Check your mailboxes for the upcoming appeal in November.