SURVIVING & THRIVING
QUALITY IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

The Joint Commission Top Performer on Key Quality Measures® 2012
- Heart Attack
- Heart Failure
- Pneumonia
- Surgical Care

The Arkansas Methodist Hospital Corporation is recognized by The Joint Commission as a Top Performer on Key Quality Measures® for achieving excellence in performance on its accountability measures during 2012 for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical care. Arkansas Methodist was also recognized as a Top Performer in 2011 for the same measure sets. Out of 3,343 eligible hospitals submitting accountability measure data to The Joint Commission, AMMC is one of 1,099 to meet or exceed the target rates of performance for 2012.

Arkansas Methodist Medical Center
It's all about you.

900 W. KINGSHIGHWAY • PARAGOULD, AR • 870-239-7000 • WWW.MYAMMC.ORG
It affects us all

There’s nothing fair about cancer. It can’t be reasoned or bargained with. It can’t be transferred, returned or exchanged. Like the rain, cancer falls on the just and the unjust. It doesn’t discriminate.

The American Cancer Society estimates that 16,520 Arkansans will be diagnosed with cancer in 2014. Nationwide, more than 1.6 million of us are likely to become cancer patients.

Those are troubling statistics, to say the least. But they don’t indicate hopelessness, nor do they mean we have to go down with the bat on our shoulder. The people who inspire us most are those who, when faced with difficult or seemingly insurmountable odds, dig in their heels and fight.

Folks like Greg Buhler, Stacy Masters and Denise Stroud, all of whom looked cancer in the eye and won the staredown. In the process, their strength and spirit infused ours. They hold their heads high with good reason.

But we must also acknowledge that cancer wins some battles as well. The American Cancer Society estimates that nearly 600,000 Americans will die of cancer-related causes this year. They will be friends and family members, or co-workers, like Dr. Floyd Shrader and Dr. Richard Gard, noble friends of our medical center who lost their respective battles with cancer within the last few months.

AMMC stands with our community in recognizing those who have survived cancer, remembering those we’ve lost to it, and encouraging the folks who are fighting cancer today. We’re also committed to doing everything we can to prevent, diagnose and treat this terrible disease, and to provide the very best care possible to those struggling to beat it.
A real go-getter.

Stacy Masters never could sit still. She’s constantly working for the benefit of others, whether those “others” are half a world away or just down the road. So when she was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, it was extremely hard for her to be still and let others do things for her. Read her story in our special issue devoted to cancer survivors. (Spoiler alert: She still can’t sit still!)

In remembrance: Thelma “Mike” Mandrell

AMMC Auxiliary member Thelma “Mike” Mandrell passed away as this issue of The Beacon was being planned and assembled. “Ms. Mike” was a longtime survivor of breast cancer – she often told us that she was the oldest breast cancer survivor in Arkansas, and while we never verified that with any other source, we felt confident that Ms. Mike wouldn’t lead us astray. She was a remarkable woman whose contributions to the Auxiliary and to AMMC will be missed, as will her friendliness and kindness.

Thelma “Mike” Mandrell, 91, of Paragould, died Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center.

Born March 10, 1922 in Greene, Iowa, Mrs. Mandrell was a former waitress and a longtime volunteer with the Arkansas Methodist Medical Center Auxiliary. She was a member of Immanuel Baptist Church.

Survivors include two sons and daughters-in-law, Steve and Ruth Mandrell of Littleton, Colorado and David and Pat Mandrell of Tulsa, Oklahoma; one brother, Col. Dale Shatzer of Sun City, Florida; one sister, Miriam Heilwagner of Milan, Illinois; two grandchildren; and five great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Donald Ray Mandrell; and her parents, Clarence and Ora Shatzer.

According to some of the members of the AMMC Auxiliary, volunteering was one of Mike Mandrell’s favorite things to do. She could often be heard saying, “I’m up at 5:00 AM and have my face on by 5:30, so call me.” Mike started volunteering on the patient floors in 1984 and by 1988 she had already earned her pin for 100 hours of service. She also spent time helping at both Information Desks, the one in the CCU Waiting Room and the one inside the main entrance of the medical center. “She loved this place,” said Shirley Clason, AMMC Auxiliary President. “Her family even acknowledged that at her funeral. The display showed her love for AMMC and the Auxiliary,” said Jimmie Hout, AMMC Auxiliary Treasurer. Mike’s love for Arkansas Methodist Medical Center and the Auxiliary was expressed in numerous ways including through the countless hours she served. She received her pin for 8,500 hours in 2012 and would have received her pin for 9,000 hours this year.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO's Note</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remembering “Ms. Mike”</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honoring Our Employees</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker Joins Chateau Staff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing Pat Dennis</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Hope Donations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby New Year Arrives</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss AMMC Pageant Winners</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Her Fate</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMMC’s Carrie Rowland</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighter Days</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin Deep</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COVER:** Stacy Masters. ©2014 by Jason Bishop Photography (www.jasonbishopphotography.com)
Arkansas Methodist Medical Center recently held its 48th Annual Employee Service Awards Banquet at Red Goose Restaurant and Catering. A total of 91 employees were recognized for a combined total of 1,135 years of service. Honorees were recognized for years of service in five year increments. (Those receiving the honors are pictured above and are listed on Page 7.)

Other awards presented that night included: Judy Foster, RN, with the Bright Idea of the Year award (below, center, with AMMC HR Director Kevin Thielemier); Stephanie McCloud, Beacon of Light of the Year award winner (pictured at far left with Thielemier); Shay Willis, AMMC Foundation GEM Award winner (pictured at bottom left with Foundation Director Terry Austin and Foundation Assistant Teresa Vangilder); Teresa Vangilder, 2013 Employee of the Year (below, right, with Thielemier) and Robin Patten, 2013 Manager of the Year (pictured at immediate left with AMMC President and CEO Barry Davis).
Baker joins Chateau staff

Lauria Baker, LSW, has been named the activities director at Chateau on the Ridge Assisted Living. In her role, she plans activities internally and externally for the residents of the facility. Prior to joining the team at Chateau on the Ridge, Baker worked as the Family Home Teacher/Health and Safety Coordinator at Children’s Homes, Inc. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Work from Arkansas State University in 1991. Lauria and her husband, Perry, have three children, Curtis, Zac and Abby.

AMMC Service Award recipients for 2014

Kathy Faulkner, 40 years of service; Brenda Davis, 35 years; Reba Wessell, Wade Taylor, Judy Foster, Belinda Dillard and Candy Yancey, 30 years; Marlan Walton, Alice Wilson, Terri Jenkins, Carl Parrish, Susan Reeves, Robin Smith and Judy Moore, 25 years; Carol Ann Stohs, Tony Hall, Mable Crossno and Carol Reddick, 20 years; Jon Tripod, Stan Booth, Donna Howard, Amy Speer, Carol Harrelson, Connie Newberry, Linda Mangrum, Kim Covington, Brenda Garrish, Patsy Johnson, Jo Shutt, Misty Hancock, Tammy Davis, Dinah Bates, Iva Fahr, Tinna Stanford, Jason Grogan and Rhonda Hyde, 15 years; Jason Hunt, Christen Agee, Kari Gauthier, Jerry Miller, Ron Poe, Sarena McCord, Karina Martin, Nancy Ray, Ann McCord, Dawn McClung, Suzanne Williams, Ashley Snyder, Sherry Haertling, Lisa Bridges, Rene Dickson, Christi Foust, Ashlie Davis, Sonya Smith, Lance Sullinger, Pat Malone, Debra Johnson and Amy Williams, 10 years; and Patrick Autry, Beverly Bearden, Zach Birmingham, Huston Bowden, Steven Burrow, Connie Clifford, Clara Delagarza, Sheila Dempsey, Bo DeSpain, Oscar Flores, Brian Garrett, Kristy Gookin, Karri Green, Brittany Hart, Christopher Hatley, Teri Horne, Malory Hubble, Sara Hughes, Julie Jenkins, Tabetha Johnson, Heath Lamb, Amanda McKenzie, Shae Murphy, Brandy Pace, Vanessa Presson, Ashley Rader, Samantha Ray, Davina Rippy, Tyler Schweighart, Jordan Silva, Billy Wagner, Candice Wicker and Teddie Wiggins; all five-year service award recipients.

May his legacy of caring and compassion live on forever.

The entire Arkansas Methodist Medical Center staff mourns the passing of Dr. Richard A. Gard. He will be forever remembered as a compassionate physician, husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend.

Our sincerest condolences to the Gard family.
Two added to hospital board

Arkansas Methodist Medical Center has added two local men to its board of directors: David Dudley and Rev. John Fleming

David Dudley is an executive vice president and regional loan administrator for BancorpSouth in Arkansas and Missouri. He has 35 years of experience in banking and finance and has served as the bank regulator and in various management and board capacities. He is currently a board member for the Economic Development Corporation of Paragould and also the Paragould Light Water and Cable Commission. He is also a past chairman of the Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Dudley is married to Karin, who is a member of the Auxiliary at AMMC, and they have one daughter, Elise.

Reverend John Fleming serves as the senior pastor at First United Methodist Church in Paragould and has since June of 2013, appointed there by Bishop Gary Muller of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Prior to his appointment to FUMC of Paragould, Rev. Fleming served as the pastor at the First United Methodist Church in Sheridan. Other appointments include the Harmony Grove Charge (near Camden), First United Methodist Church of Little Rock (Associate Pastor), and Saint Paul United Methodist Church in Little Rock. Fleming is also on the Board of Ordained Ministry for the Arkansas Annual Conference and served as Chaplain to the House of Representative for Arkansas’ Eighty-Eighth General Assembly.

When asked about serving on the AMMC Board of Directors, Fleming said, “I am excited about serving on the board. I believe that the hospital is a vital part of our community and surrounding communities. I want to help make it the best that it can be.”

Fleming is married to Susie (Simpkins) Fleming and they have two daughters, Annie Grace and Julie. Both children are students in the Paragould School District. John is a member of the Rotary Club of Paragould.

Pat Dennis joins AMMC as Women’s Services educator

Pat Dennis, RN, BSN, IBCLC, has been named the Educator for Women’s Services at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center. She is responsible for prenatal education to include childbirth preparation, breastfeeding and infant safety classes as well as lactation services to include inpatient and outpatient consultations. Prior to joining the team at AMMC, Pat worked at Mercy Hospital in Springfield, Missouri for 15 years as the Coordinator for Prenatal Education and Lactation Services.

Pat holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Southwest Baptist University in Springfield, MO. She has been an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant for 11 years and a Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educator for 10 years. She is also a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician. She enjoys working with expectant families to prepare for the birth of a child and with new moms assisting with breastfeeding needs.

She and her husband, Galen, have four children and one grandson. They are members of Living to Go church where Galen is a minister.
The first baby of the New Year was born at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center on Thursday, January 2, 2014. Travis and Pamela Benham, of Walnut Ridge, welcomed Jackson Lee Benham at 8:19 AM. Jackson weighed 7 pounds 4.9 ounces and was 20.1 inches long. He joins sisters Kylie (3) and Carley (4). The family received several gifts including a case of diapers and a case of formula from the AMMC Central Supply Department, two knitted hats from the First United Methodist Church Threads of Faith group, a Kiss the Cook gift certificate, a Kids Savings Account from First National Bank, a floral arrangement from Ballard’s Flowers and an Arkansas Methodist Medical Center baby spoon. Pictured left to right are Kylie, Carley, Jackson and Pamela Benham. Not pictured is Travis Benham.

The Greene County Tech Junior High School Cheerleaders recently made an $810 donation to The Foundation at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center earmarked for Project Hope. Project Hope is an initiative of The Women's Council at AMMC that provides mammograms to women in our region who may be at risk for breast cancer but are unable to pay for the screening. Pictured front row left to right are AMMC Mammographer Carrie Rowland, Samantha Padalino, Madison Sims, Grace Bulkley, Taylor Barnes and AMMC Foundation Director Terry Austin. Second row left to right are Halle Roleson, Holly Henson, Kamryn Dearing and Maegann Sheffer. Third row left to right are Maddie Phillips, Kacie Schechter, Whitney Skaggs and Coach Cassie Despain. Fourth row left to right are Abbie Dickson, Taylar Sanduskey and Ashlyn Adams. Fifth row left to right are Paige Mitchell, Kersten Hovis and Addyson Friar.

The Senath Women's Club also recently made a $3,000 donation to Project Hope, an initiative of the Women's Council at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center in Paragould. First row (seated) left to right are Kathy Tansil, Katie Small, Pam Small, Tammy Gibson, Lila Jackson and Phyllis Jackson. Second row left to right are Billie Braden, Berni Mauldin, Patsy Hanners, Nancy Todd, Lee McNutt, Martha Layne, Pat Davis and AMMC Foundation Director Terry Austin.

Baby New Year!

The first baby of the New Year was born at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center on Thursday, January 2, 2014. Travis and Pamela Benham, of Walnut Ridge, welcomed Jackson Lee Benham at 8:19 AM. Jackson weighed 7 pounds 4.9 ounces and was 20.1 inches long. He joins sisters Kylie (3) and Carley (4). The family received several gifts including a case of diapers and a case of formula from the AMMC Central Supply Department, two knitted hats from the First United Methodist Church Threads of Faith group, a Kiss the Cook gift certificate, a Kids Savings Account from First National Bank, a floral arrangement from Ballard’s Flowers and an Arkansas Methodist Medical Center baby spoon. Pictured left to right are Kylie, Carley, Jackson and Pamela Benham. Not pictured is Travis Benham.
Abby Huckabee is the 2014 Miss AMMC. Abby was crowned on Saturday, April 19. As the winner of the Senior Miss competition, Abby receives a $500 scholarship. A graduate of Greene County Tech, she plans to attend Arkansas State University in the fall.

Approximately 125 contestants participated in this year’s pageant, which is a fundraiser for The Foundation. The pageant raised around $8,500 for The Foundation in support of AMMC.

The Foundation congratulates and thanks each of our participants, as well as these sponsors:

- First National Bank
- Utility Trailer
- Professional Credit Management
- Focus Bank
- Turner Dairy
- Glo Salon and Spa
- Adams Florist
- Teleflora

Wee Miss winners (from left): 1st Alternate and Most Photogenic, Charlee Groneman; Queen, Brinlea Daniel; 2nd Alternate and Miss Community Spirit, Aubree Bagwell.

Baby Miss winners (from left): Queen, Falan Poe; 1st Alternate, Ryneigh Collingsworth; 2nd Alternate, Edelaya Copeland; not pictured is Most Photogenic, Karter DeRoe.

Toddler Miss winners (from left): Zoey Clayton, 2nd Alternate; Aynsley Wynn, Queen and Most Photogenic and Abigail Gage, 1st Alternate and Miss Community Spirit.

Young Miss winners (from left): Katelyn Oglesby, Queen; Karlie Thompson, 1st Alternate and Miss Community Spirit and Alexis Slayton, 2nd Alternate and Most Photogenic.

Petite Miss winners (from left): Mattie White, Queen; Presley Martin, 1st Alternate; Ava Ruthven, 2nd Alternate; Emily Rowe, Most Photogenic and Sadey Taylor, Miss Community Spirit.

Tiny Miss winners (from left): Kiannah Rodriguez, 2nd Alternate; Zoey Godwin, 1st Alternate and Most Photogenic; Ellee Vincent, Queen and Graylee Slayton, Miss Community Spirit.

Little Miss winners (from left): Maggie Rabjohn, 1st Alternate; Halee Benson, 2nd Alternate; Ava Carter, Most Photogenic and Abigail Oglesby, Queen and Miss Community Spirit.
Teen Miss 7th winners (from left): Katelyn Cole, Queen; Gracie Williams, 2nd Alternate; Addison Piercy, 1st Alternate and Most Photogenic and Kaylee Seals, Miss Community Spirit.

Teen Miss 8th winners (from left): Kersten Hovis, Queen; Sydney Manchester, 1st Alternate; Holly Henson, 2nd Alternate and Most Photogenic and Laci Rountree, Miss Community Spirit.

Teen Miss 9th winners (from left): Bailey Bridges, Queen; Ashlyn Baldwin, 2nd Alternate; Katelyn Brooks, 1st Alternate and Most Photogenic and Madison Phillips, Miss Community Spirit.

Teen Miss 10th winners (from left): Ashlynn Ruhl, 2nd Alternate; Addison McCreless, Queen; Haylee Barr, 1st Alternate and Ashley Ward, Most Photogenic and Miss Community Spirit.

Teen Miss 11th winners (from left): Cassidy Sutton, 1st Alternate; Madallyn Puckett, Queen, Most Photogenic and Miss Community Spirit and Michaela Brandon, 2nd Alternate.

Senior Miss winners (from left): Abigail Huckabee, Queen; Madison Janski, 1st Alternate; Jaime Clayton, 2nd Alternate; Kenzie Overshine, Most Photogenic and McKinlee Walker, Miss Community Spirit.

Pre-Teen Miss 5th winners (from left): Reilly Davis, Queen; Aubrey Defries, 2nd Alternate; Destiny Baldwin, 1st Alternate and Most Photogenic and Sarah Purcell, Miss Community Spirit.

Pre-Teen Miss 6th winners (from left): Phoebe Harris, 1st Alternate and Most Photogenic; Kyleigh ThrEstkeld, Queen; Alexis Maddock, 2nd Alternate and Hannah Halverson, Miss Community Spirit.

Pre-Teen Miss 7th winners (from left): Phoebe Harris, 1st Alternate and Most Photogenic; Kyleigh ThrEstkeld, Queen; Alexis Maddock, 2nd Alternate and Hannah Halverson, Miss Community Spirit.

Junior Miss 10th winners (from left): Ashlynn Ruhl, 2nd Alternate; Addison McCreless, Queen; Haylee Barr, 1st Alternate and Ashley Ward, Most Photogenic and Miss Community Spirit.

Junior Miss 11th winners (from left): Cassidy Sutton, 1st Alternate; Madallyn Puckett, Queen, Most Photogenic and Miss Community Spirit and Michaela Brandon, 2nd Alternate.
The Masters Family: Doug, Stacy, Dawson (foreground) and Dalton (standing). (Photo by Jason Bishop Photography; all rights reserved.)
I am Thankful For...

Master of her fate

It won’t happen to me always sounds soothing and reassuring in our heads, even though we know we’re fooling ourselves at best and tempting fate at worst.

From the moment Stacy Masters felt that sharp stinging pain – a pain she’d never felt before or since – and found an unfamiliar lump in her right breast, she knew immediately that her days of ignoring the risks were over. It had happened to her. And she knew it in the same moment that she found the lump.

“I think from the beginning, even Thursday night, we as a family just kind of knew,” Masters, who was 41 at the time, said. “I know that sounds a little weird. But you have those gut instincts, and I think we just all knew. We just didn’t know how bad it was.”

Thursday, March 28, 2013: the night cancer became forever part of Stacy Masters’ life.
“I kind of think it was God’s way of getting my attention,” Stacy said, admitting the wake-up call was necessary. Despite an ominous family history – both her mother and grandmother fought breast cancer – Stacy had let routine preventive care lapse.

“Even with my family history of breast cancer, I still did not do the...self-exams, and I hadn’t had a mammogram in at least six years,” she said.

As this was happening, she and her husband, Doug, who are farmers in Arbyrd, Mo., were working hard to control the messages their young sons, Dawson and Dalton (ages 7 and 5 at the time of the procedures), were receiving throughout the ordeal. Dr. Alleman told Stacy and Doug to let the boys know what was going on and answer their questions, which the couple did. But beyond that, Stacy wanted as little intrusion as necessary for the boys.

“I didn’t want it to take over our lives,” she said. “It wasn’t going to be the topic of our daily conversation. We wanted Dawson & Dalton’s daily activities to resume as normal as could be without any interruptions. If (Doug and I) did need to talk about something, we either talked about it at night or talked about it on the phone when they weren’t around, but we did not talk about it in front of them. If they had questions, we answered them – together – the best we could, without giving them too much information.”

But try as they might, the Masters couldn’t keep the boys from fearing the worst for their mom.

“During this, I had a really good friend, Mickey Allen, who passed away with cancer,” Stacy said. “The last few months were horrible for him (physically), and it became more personal because I was fighting my own battle and we were going to visit him. There were times when Dawson and Dalton would ask me, ‘Are you gonna get that bad?’”

Dalton’s concern for his mother displayed itself weekly at the family’s church service.

“When the preacher would ask, ‘Is there anyone we need to pray for?’ there was not a Sunday that went by that Dalton did not raise his hand and say, ‘Please pray for my mom,’” Stacy said.

Those prayers were answered in the affirmative. By the end of April 2013, Stacy’s procedures were complete, and she began regular trips to Jonesboro for radiation and hormone therapy treatments. She and Doug continued to accentuate the positive, and there was a lot of good news to share. Stacy began to see her diagnosis as an opportunity, as her eyes were opened to the number of people facing cancer struggles of their own.

“Every day, when someone would finish their treatment, there were three or four more people coming in,” Stacy said. “It was overwhelming to me. So many people were being diagnosed daily, having to start treatments daily.”

During her own battle, Stacy’s friends and family had secretly designed and sold “Team Stacy Rocks” t-shirts to raise awareness and support for her fight.

“I was really grateful for them, but I didn’t want to keep the money (from the sales),” she said. “We had private insurance and it was covering things well. Carrie (Rowland) had told me about Project Hope, and that made up my mind where I wanted the t-shirt money to go.”

Project Hope is an initiative of the Women’s Council at AMMC. It provides mammograms for women in the area who are uninsured, underinsured, or otherwise cannot afford the screenings. Masters requested that the $1,500 from “Team Stacy Rocks” shirt sales be donated to Project Hope. But she wasn’t done there.

As she noticed the steady influx of...
Stacy Masters was in recovery following her first lumpectomy, and, well…
“OK, I don’t do well with anesthesia, and I was mad,” she says, laughing.

It’s funny now, but that day, as she tried to shake off the effects of the anesthesia, it was no laughing matter. The nurse was telling her what she needed to do before she could go home, but Masters was having none of it.
I just turned my head,” she said. “I wouldn’t even speak. I wouldn’t talk to them. When she left, I looked at [her husband] Doug and said, ‘I want Carrie Rowland. I’m not doing anything until Carrie gets here.’ Doug had no idea who that was, but he told the nurse, and she said, ‘I can get her.’

A mammographer at AMMC, Rowland doesn’t generally spend much time in the surgical recovery area of the hospital. But when she got the call that day about Masters, Rowland went.
“As soon as Carrie came in, I started crying,” Masters said. “I remember her patting my hand and talking to me and I was fine then. I did everything they asked me to, but I needed to see her. She didn’t stay long, but it was enough to satisfy me to make me feel better about the whole situation.”

Carrie Rowland is known for going the extra mile for her patients, and for helping them cope if the results of a mammogram show reason for concern. Denise Stroud recalls how at ease she felt with Rowland almost immediately upon meeting her, and also how Rowland provided encouragement when it was needed most – when Stroud’s mammogram showed a mass.

“Carrie came out and sat with me on a bench in the hallway [after the mammogram], and told me, ‘We’re going to eat this elephant one bite at a time,’” Stroud said. “I just love her to death.”

Like Stroud, Masters only met Rowland on the fateful day that she underwent a mammogram that would detect cancer. And like Stroud, Masters felt blessed by Rowland’s calming presence.

“I didn’t know she would play as big a role in my life as she does now,” Masters said, “but I just felt really close to her that day. Carrie knew (the results of the mammogram), and she just talked to me like she had known me my whole life, trying to comfort me.”

You’ll see Rowland at all sorts of events related to breast cancer awareness. Whether it’s the annual Dig for a Cure and Hoopin’ for a Cure ballgames at Paragould High School, Relay for Life, Fishing for a Cure, or health fairs in the area, she’s likely to be there. It’s all in a day’s work for Rowland.

Did you know AMMC schedules mammograms as early as 7:00 a.m.? Call 239-7820 to schedule your mammogram. Don’t put off this potentially life-saving screening!
David and Sarah Stroud, now 18 and 15 respectively, have few vivid memories of their father.

David remembers a hospital bed set up in the family’s dining room, where his dad spent the final days of his life, drawing closed a curtain in the doorway when he needed rest or was in pain. If the curtain was open, little David, an energetic first grader, could go in and see his father.

Sarah was a toddler then and has no recollection of the healthy, lanky, tireless version of John Stroud. Photographs and relics, like the miniature ceramic village he painstakingly painted by hand and the trees he planted in the backyard, are all she has. A family friend in California attached a photo of John to a small red construction paper heart. Sarah carries it daily in tribute to the daddy she hardly got to know, a faint ember from a fire whose warmth she can only vaguely recall.

But their mother, Denise, remembers. And always will.

Denise Stroud watched cancer steal her husband in 2002. Shortly after the Strouds moved to Paragould – shouldering the noble ministry of being houseparents for troubled kids living at Children’s Homes, Inc. – a nagging pain in John’s hip became unbearable. The tall, active 34-year-old became persistently tired and ashen and couldn’t keep weight on. The Strouds were referred to a physician in another city, and a CT scan there ultimately revealed the source of the trouble: two menacingly large and rare tumors, synovial sarcomas, growing in John’s hip. Worse, one tumor had wrapped itself around one of the largest blood vessels in his leg, making full removal impossible.
BRIGHTER DAYS

Cancer took Denise Stroud’s husband. Then it came for her.
But after surgery to remove as much of the tumors as possible, and months of intensive radiation and chemotherapy, John was told his cancer was in remission.

In spring 2013, Denise was in a conversation with her co-worker, Kim Stewart, who was following the Facebook feed of a young woman fighting breast cancer. Stewart asked Denise when she had last had a mammogram. About three years, Denise said.

"Kim said, 'Are you calling (to schedule the screening) or am I?''' Denise said. And under her friend’s continued coercion, Denise eventually made an appointment with AMMC mammographer Carrie Rowland. That appointment was going well, the two women chatting about friends they had in common, when, in Denise’s words, “Carrie suddenly got very quiet and serious.”

Denise’s screening had revealed a mass, and a biopsy was ordered on it. After sharing that news, Rowland “chased down Dr. (Guy) Peeples in the hallway,” Denise said, to see if he could schedule the biopsy appointment with Denise immediately. He did, and a few days after that procedure, Denise was called in for a consultation about the results.

“I had been through this cancer thing once,” she said, referring to John’s history. “If they don’t tell you over the phone, it’s bad news.”

In this case, she was right: The news was bad. The mass in her breast was cancer, but it was in the early stages. Still, Dr. Peeples was straightforward with the medical plan: the entire breast would need to be removed.

“It threw me for a loop, big time,” Denise said. “I just didn’t expect that. But he explained how I was actually one of the fortunate ones in that after this, I would know the cancer was gone.”

Denise took the films showing the mass, and she convened a family meeting that night at her parents’ home.

“I sat all four of them (her parents and her children) down in the living room, and we talked about what we might be in for,” she said. “There was no reason to try to hide it.”

Denise’s main concern was making sure her children understood that al-
though they lost their father to cancer, her diagnosis was not a death sentence.

“I did worry about my kids thinking the worst,” she said. “I didn’t want them to think this was the same thing happening now that took their dad. This was still scary, but different.”

Denise did her best to make things as normal as they could be. Her surgery was scheduled for the same day as David’s junior year prom, and she insisted he attend it.

“That (surgery) was at the back of my mind the whole time,” David said. “Whenever I was at school, I really tried to focus, but whenever I had a free moment, it was back on the front of my mind. I thought of canceling (prom), but I feel like she wanted me to go.”

While she tried to keep things on an even keel prior to the surgery, Denise’s recovery from it threw everything into tumult. She was in pain and very limited, and it was during this time, she said, that her children stepped in to take care of her.

“It was my kids taking care of me when I went through that,” Denise said. “David especially, and Sarah too, but David was right there when I needed him.”

David had maintained an inner confidence that his mother’s surgery would be successful, but seeing her after the surgery created some doubt.

“I was confident that she was gonna be alright, but in the back of my mind there’s always doubt, you know,” he said. “Honestly, the lowest point, I think, was after the surgery, because that was just when I was the most worried about her. I knew that the cancer was gone, but I’ve just never seen her in the state I saw her in. It’s kind of hard seeing your parents like that.”

John’s remission lasted all of three months. The cancer soon returned to his hip, and by the time he could get an appointment with a specialist in Little Rock, it had advanced to the point that amputating the leg was the only recommended option. Three of them – John, Denise and Sarah, who was just a baby – sat in the room and faced the grim diagnosis together.
SKIN DEEP

SKIN DEEP

A lifetime of work & play in the southern sun came back to haunt Greg Buhler

Please understand if Greg Buhler doesn’t congratulate you on your killer tan. To Buhler, every tan could be a killer.

Buhler, 57, enjoyed a traditional southern boy’s upbringing: summers spent shirtless to beat the stifling heat.

“Ever since I was a little kid, we’d run around the yard with no shirt on,” he said. “You get a little older, you still ran around with no shirt. We’d go to the beach – I don’t think we ever went and didn’t get sunburned. Well, the American Cancer Society says every time you get sunburned you increase your chances for cancer.”

For several years as an adult, Buhler built swimming pools and worked long hours in the sun with just a pair of shorts on. Through his childhood and early adult years, Buhler rarely – if ever – bothered to apply sunscreen.

“When I was a kid, we never heard of sunscreen,” he said. “We couldn’t have afforded it even if we had known. My parents wouldn’t buy sunscreen, they’d buy a loaf of bread. We weren’t well off – we wouldn’t have been out buying that kind of stuff.”

But a decade ago, when Dr. William Bulkley removed a rough spot from the skin in front of his temple, Buhler became aware of the sun’s damaging effects. He began to make annual appointments for Dr. Bulkley to check his skin for problematic moles and other potential issues.

Then one day in the summer of 2012, Buhler noticed a spot on his back, roughly the size of a pencil’s eraser.

“It looked like a mole but it was raised up,” Buhler said. “My wife took a cell phone picture of it, and I made an appointment with Bulkley, but by the time the appointment came, the spot had gone back down.”

Still, the spot’s rise had given Buhler cause for concern.

“I told him, ‘I don’t care what we think it is, take it out,’” Buhler said. “Immediately, they sent it off to be checked, and sure enough, it was melanoma.”

According to the Mayo Clinic website (www.mayoclinic.org), melanoma,
the most serious type of skin cancer, develops in the cells (melanocytes) that produce melanin – the pigment that gives your skin its color.

“Bulkley said, ‘This is real, real serious stuff,’” Buhler said. “He told me like three times, ‘You’ve got to get this done. This is life-threatening stuff.’”

Dr. Bulkley referred Buhler to general surgeon Dr. Robert Alleman for continued treatment.

“Alleman was real aggressive and I’m glad he was,” Buhler said. The surgeon removed a baseball-sized area around the original spot. “He wanted to be sure he got it all. He took a big piece out, and it came back that the perimeters were clear.”

In addition to the perimeters, the tests on Buhler’s lymph nodes also came back free of cancer. Buhler took the good news, and the second chance, to heart.

“I’ll see these guys 80 years old working in their garden, wearing long sleeves and a big old hat,” he said. “They’re smart. I don’t care how goofy you look, you need to stay shaded. There’s no telling how many people are running around out there that have no clue that they’ve got carcinoma or melanoma.

“These people that go and worry about their tan: They won’t like me saying this but there’s no such thing as a healthy tan,” Buhler said. “I’m sorry, that’s pigment in your skin trying to block out the sun.”

And while Buhler now takes a more proactive approach to preventing skin cancer, his battle with melanoma has not changed his outlook toward the future. His faith gives him stability and perspective regardless of the situation.

“Don’t get me wrong, I want to be here with my family,” he said. “But I have peace of mind, if it’s my time, it’s my time. I’ll go to the doctor and do what needs to be done. Once I had done what they told me I needed to do, I wasn’t going to sit and worry about it.”

That’s one part of you that doesn’t need sunscreen: a sunny disposition.

new cancer patients coming in for treatments, Stacy felt compelled to do something to help.

“Our area (Southeast Missouri) doesn’t have a Relay for Life,” Stacy said. “We participate in the Buffalo Island event, but I felt we needed something over here to get people involved and increase awareness.”

Soon, the “Fishing for a Cure” event was on the planning table. Held in October at Hoyt’s Catfish Pond near Arbyrd, the first-year event raised over $8,000, which was split between the American Cancer Society and AMMC’s Project Hope. Among the many businesses and individuals who sponsored the event were several farm families in the area. Stacy said many of those families could potentially benefit from a program like Project Hope.

“A lot of farmers don’t have a private insurance policy,” she said. “Would they be able to get help (without Project Hope)? Probably not, because of their income level. I don’t think anyone should be left behind because of their financial status.”

Stacy and her friends are already working on the 2014 Fishing for a Cure, scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 27, again at Hoyt’s Catfish Pond. Coincidentally, the event will come on the heels of Stacy’s next checkup.

“When I come in here in September, there’s gonna be that nervousness of ‘Is it there?’” she said. “I think that’s normal. I’m not going to let it be the focus of my everyday life.”

Among the many Bible verses Stacy has discovered or re-discovered during this trying year of her life, one that has stuck with her is Psalm 112:7: “They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.” And in addition to her friend, Mickey, who lost his battle with cancer, Stacy has watched others fight their own battles. And while those battles have not been waged without fear, the struggle has been made more bearable by having friends fighting alongside. It’s given her a sense of purpose to be able to provide comfort for others. For instance:

“I was at a ballgame here in Paragould, and a police officer comes up to find out if I’m Stacy Masters. He asked me if I could talk to this lady. I talked to her for about the whole ballgame. That was a Friday, and she was scheduled to be here (at AMMC for a cancer procedure) on Tuesday morning. Monday night she called me and asked if there was any way I could be up here the next day to be with and pray with her and her family. As soon as I dropped the boys off (at school), I came. She says to this day, that once we came into the back and prayed with her and her family, that there was just a peace that came over her. Everything changed after that, she was more comfortable, she had a peaceful feeling after surgery. It’s things like that, whenever you feel like you can be an inspiration and change somebody’s life, or make things easier on them when they’re going through something like this, I feel like that’s been my purpose.”

Though Stacy may – and hopefully will – be cancer-free for the rest of a very long life, cancer will always be part of it. However, it will occupy space in her life only on her terms, as she provides comfort and encouragement to those fighting the disease, and works to raise funds and awareness to prevent or treat it.
“When the doctor left the room, John broke down crying,” Denise recalled. “And John wasn’t a crier. It was heartwrenching. He was very scared, naturally. I didn’t know what to say or do to help him feel any better.”

The surgeon asked John whether he wanted to undergo the amputation. Denise answered for him.

“I looked at the surgeon and said, ‘There’s no choice about it. He’s having the surgery,’” she said. “And John agreed. He wanted to be here to see his kids grow up.”

Had John lived to see them, he would be very proud of his kids. David and Sarah have wrestled the adversity that came with their situation, and each has found a way forward to a promising future.

David, tall and broad-shouldered with a deep voice that fills the room, carries his father’s relentless creative curiosity. Denise says John was “a tinkerer,” and from a young age, David has been one, too. He would disassemble a small appliance simply to figure out what made it work, and then put it back together. The garage of their home, filled with tools, gadgets and gizmos that belonged to John, is sacred space for David, a place where his skills and interests align and knot with his father’s.

In the absence of his dad, David scuffled along for a few years. His grandfathers provided presence and counsel and influence, but it wasn’t until David entered the band program at Greene County Tech that he began to feel somewhat whole again.

“Mr. Danny Davis has been a role model for me since sixth grade,” David said. His mother echoes that, citing the “huge difference” Davis has made in David’s life.

Sarah is tall and thin, with dark hair surrounding a beautiful face whose default setting is “smile.” She prefers to keep things light and sweet, to focus on the good things about her life now rather than dwell on a past she doesn’t really remember. She’s quick to express her gratitude for her home and family; she’s happy for what she has, not morose about what she doesn’t. And while she wishes her dad had been part of that home and family, she isn’t consumed by his absence or the unfairness of it. Still, when cancer struck at her mother, Sarah admitted to some worry.

“I was scared at first, not knowing what was gonna happen, thinking about my dad’s situation,” Sarah said. “But I knew from what she said that it wasn’t gonna be as bad.”

• • •

On October 1, 2002 – coincidentally, the first day of that year’s National Breast Cancer Awareness Month – John Stroud died. After the amputation, he had gotten progressively weaker in his dogged fight against cancer. He participated in a medical trial, but its medicines drained his energy and made him “like a zombie,” Denise said, and he eventually dropped out of the program.

“When he stopped taking those meds, it was like my husband came back,” she said. John had a burst of energy and went back to his creative pursuits. He built a bed for David and some clothes hampers. He was back out in the garage working on things again. He planted trees around the house – an oak and a maple in the backyard. Today, those trees are hearty memorials for the Stroud family, who lost their husband and father just a few days after that burst of creative energy. Like David, the oak is thick and broad and the maple, like Sarah, stands tall and sweet. The legacy of John Stroud courses through all four.

As for Denise, she continues the often overwhelming task of nurturing the family on her own. She leans on her parents and, from time to time, on friends from church and work, but mostly she makes her way with her own determination. Now fully healed and a year removed from her surgery, she’s got plenty to occupy her. David just graduated from Tech and starts college this fall. Sarah is at the age where she’ll soon be driving, and there will be boys and movies and ballgames and all the heart-thrilling, heartbreaking chaos and drama contained therein.

Still, in the inherent unfairness of her situation, Denise finds moments to breathe deep and remember. In those months following John’s death, Denise would find a quiet moment each night to sit and relax. And each night, the quiet would be briefly interrupted by the mechanical beep beep beep of a watch chime. It was an alarm John had set on his watch, which now lay in a drawer among other keepsakes. Its nightly sounding, perhaps a nuisance to the outsider, provided comfort for a young widow raising two children. When she heard the beeps, Denise would look up from whatever she was doing.

“Good night, John.”
These Memorial Gifts to The Foundation were made between October and December 2013.

Noel Cooper
  Tommy and Cindy Bowers
  Susan Youngblood
  Ginger Hyde

Ray Rankin
  Sally Martin
  Dr. A.E. Andrews

Brenda Howard
  AMMC Retirees

Louis Riney
  AMMC Retirees

Alan Rose
  Al and Lana Williams

Georgia Page
  Pearl Todd
  Sandra Dement

Dr. Tony Stallcup
  Larry & Kathy Cupp

Dr. Charles Ainley
  Wynthia Ainley

Martha Johns
  Jeremy & Ashley Watson

Sharon Desenza
  Nick Desenza

Lawrence, Inas & Jim Treadway
  Jackie & Nadene Jamison

John Robert Smoot
  Glenda & Robin Smoot

Gifts of Honor

In honor of Robin Patten
  Mary Ann Stallcup

In honor of Mike & Rhonda Jones
  Mary Ann Stallcup

In honor of Kay Lynn & Rudy Dodrill
  Mary Ann Stallcup

In honor of Bill & Anne Fisher
  Betty Jackson

In honor of Preston & Donna Bland
  Mary Ann Stallcup

In honor of Phil Herget’s Birthday
  Don and Nancy Wood

In honor of the AMMC Home Health Department
  Pete & Linda Black
  Jeff, Christine, Amanda & Elizabeth Reese

In honor of Marianne Brewer
  Ahibhusan & Margrit Chakraborty

In honor of Dr. Len & Mrs. Denise Kemp
  Kendall & Sandy Jetton

In honor of Dr. Kenneth Rodgers
  Roy & Linda McSpadden

In honor of Dr. Jon & Mrs. Ranae Collier
  Roy & Linda McSpadden

In honor of Dr. John & Mrs. Patti Hines
  Roy & Linda McSpadden

In honor of AMMC’s 5th Floor Employees: Jason Masingale, Stacey Defries, Candice Wicker, Don Wilcox, Shay Willis, Terry Austin & Teresa Vangilder
  Robin Patten

In honor of Pam Webb
  Mary Ann Stallcup

Make a Tribute Gift

Your gift to The Foundation, made to honor the life and legacy of someone dear to you, will have a legacy of its own. Each tribute gift is put into The Foundation’s endowment fund.* We use the investment earnings from that fund, not the gifts themselves, as a perpetual source of funding for improvements at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center. Your gift will live on, providing the funding needed at AMMC for generations to come. Just complete this form, detach & return it with your gift, and we’ll take it from there.

* – We honor the donor’s wishes with regard to gifts. If you direct your tribute gift to a specific fund, department or project at AMMC (instead of endowment), we will honor that request.

Name of person you are honoring

This gift is a ☐ Memorial ☐ Honor gift.

Your Name

Address

Daytime Phone

E-Mail Address

Is there someone to whom we may send notification of your gift, along with a message of your choosing?

Name

Address

Message

Use the envelope provided, or mail your gift and this form to: The Foundation; P.O. Box 339; Paragould, AR; 72451
THE FOUNDATION
Arkansas Methodist Medical Center

20TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

THURSDAY 9.11.14
PARAGOULD COUNTRY CLUB

CALL (870) 239-7077 OR REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.MYAMMC.ORG