# Friends For Life

WINTER 2023

Your Mercy Legacy



Friends of Mercy Foundation

A Dignity Health Member



# Dear Friends of Mercy,

**Geoff King**Chairman of the Board, Friends of Mercy Foundation

As I reflect on 2022, it seems like we had so many balls and unanswered questions in the air when the year began.

Where would the post pandemic Covid virus take us? When would Mercy's Tower project begin? Who would Mercy's new President and leader be? Would the Friends of Mercy Foundation be able to continue its mission given the difficult economy and environment?

I think these questions have been answered to some extent or in one form or another. The Covid virus continues to infect and make people sick in one degree or another, but, our Country and Community have shown resilience in fighting off this bug and the others that have raised its ugly head. Our wonderful Mercy staff has had the ups and downs of having to react to ongoing Covid infections as well as the RSV and new flu viruses. Our staff are still standing and are doing their best to meet the ever increasing needs of our Community. A big thanks to all our Mercy Hospital team and doctors.

The Tower project started in March and is under full construction. It will provide additional facilities that will enhance and improve Mercy's ability to better provide for and meet the health needs of our Community. Many thanks to all who have supported this project!

And, we got our new fearless leader and President of the Hospital; B.J. Predum. B.J. comes to us from Michigan with tremendous qualifications. He joined our leadership team at a time when the health care industry and hospitals around the Country were battling very difficult circumstances, including staffing, financial issues and the like. He jumped in with his sleeves rolled up and is showing his leadership skills in very difficult times.

#### Welcome aboard B.J.!

The Friends of Mercy is alive and well! The Community continues to respond in a very generous manner to support the Foundation's support mission of Mercy Hospital. The Community and Hospital staff continue to provide their financial support to the Tower project and all of the other outreach and capital funding for needed equipment to support our doctors and staff so they can provide the best care available.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the Friends of Mercy board members for their time and support of the Foundation as well as the efforts and commitment of Toni Harper and our wonderful Foundation staff. Most of all, a big thank you to all of our donors who have committed to supporting the Hospital and the Foundation's mission.



B.J. Predum

President/CEO

### I am so happy to be serving Mercy and living in the Bakersfield community with you. I have found that my heart is full here.

The legacy of Mercy is truly inspiring, and I've continually been blown away and humbled by the stories I've heard and the passion I see in our hospital leadership, employees, board members, and our community. The mission of Mercy Hospital is thriving, and alive in the hearts and actions of our many stakeholders who are dedicated to see it continue

to grow. This growth does not happen by accident. It only occurs through dedicated membership toward a shared vision and vibrant philanthropic support. Mercy and Bakersfield are my family's home. Like you, I'm called to serve where I live. I am appreciative of the courageous and compassionate Sisters who dedicated their lives to the vulnerable in their midst. I am honored to have the privilege to carry the torch into the future.



**Toni Harper** *VP Mercy Hospitals Philanthropy* 

## My favorite annual issue of Friends for Life is the one you are holding today.

In this issue, we recognize every person, family, company or foundation who gave during the last year. This year, you will find seven pages filled with names

of those who looked past their own needs and chose to support Mercy Hospital and the Legacy of the Sisters of Mercy. As you read on, you will find very personal stories about the deep connections they have with Mercy Hospital. I can't help but think of the stories held in your heart, and in the hearts by those listed in the last seven pages. Thanks to your generosity, this legacy will continue for generations to come. On behalf of myself and the Friends of Mercy team, we are filled with gratitude for your support and we look forward to a very bright 2023.

# Mercy Hospitals By the Numbers FY 21/22

# Served by Mercy

112 Years Serving the Community 11,397 Inpatient Admissions 88,838 Outpatient Visits 2,452 Deliveries 77,058 Emergency Room Visits 12,639 Home Health Visits 6575 Surgical Procedures 727 Robotic Surgeries Performed

## The Heart of Mercy

1,531 Employees 628 Nurses 546 Affiliated Physicians and Providers 46 Medical/Surgical Specialties 991 Total Donors



# Memories of Comfort & Care

— Evelyn Young Spath, Ed.D.

# As a child, I spent several Christmas seasons as a patient at Mercy Hospital.

Family tells that as a baby, I was fascinated with the lights on our Christmas tree. This was 1960. The bulbs were big and hot. In an unguarded moment, I crawled to the tree and put my mouth on a hot bulb, severely burning the right corner of my mouth. For several years until I was 18, I underwent reconstructive surgery to repair the electrical burn and the deformity of the hole it left.

My memories of my stays at Mercy are of comfort and care. Giant evergreen trees, the tallest my wonder-filled childhood eyes had ever seen, stood steadfast outside my hospital room window. They were taller than the building I was in. They seemed to reach right up to heaven and stretch as far as I could see in a perfectly straight line down the middle of Truxtun Avenue. The red and green glow of their string lights bathed my room in the colors of Christmas. I decided they were God's Christmas trees. They comforted me at night when I felt afraid and was missing my family.



Dr. Donald Sargeant, my plastic surgeon, took great care of me over the years. He was dedicated to restoring the corner of my mouth. He talked to me about the surgeries in a way a child could understand. I also remember Nurse Anderson, who responded to my night call button and reassured me so that I could go back to sleep.

Several decades later, as Chief of Staff at CSUB, I underwent elective surgery at Mercy Southwest where I was cared for by graduates of

CSUB's Nursing Program. Now in retirement, I am honored to serve as a member of Mercy Hospital's Community Advisory Board and Community Benefits Committee, giving back a modicum of what was given to me from childhood to adulthood.

To Mercy Hospital doctors, nurses, and staff past and present, I thank you for your dedication, comfort, and care. You are a blessing to those you serve.

# Grateful Spouse, Grateful Patient

- Pat Durando Campbell

My connection with the Friends of Mercy Foundation began in June of 1999 when my husband Tim Durando and I attended a gala fundraiser for the Florence Wheeler Cancer Center.

Half way through the dinner, Tim was not feeling well so we had to leave early. An appointment with his doctor, followed by CT scan and biopsy results indicated that Tim had metastatic bile duct cancer. After a valiant nine-week battle and some of his last days being spent at Mercy Downtown we were able to take him home to Wasco where family surrounded him at his passing on August 25,

1999. The compassionate, loving care Tim received from his nurses at Mercy led our family to ask for memorial donations to the Friends of Mercy Foundation to be directed toward the cancer center. Our good friend Kevin Andrew introduced me to Stephanie Weber, who was the VP of Philanthropy. I didn't know then that that introduction would lead to a fourteen-year term on the Foundation and a close friendship with Stephanie and her husband Doug.





When the Foundation began Project Comfort—the renovation of the Family Birth Center in 2008, I had one of the patient care rooms dedicated to Tim's memory. My prayer was that any patient who was in his room would know that they had a special angel watching over them. In October of this year I had anterior hip replacement surgery performed by Dr. Al Coppola and the amazing OR team at Mercy Southwest. The evening after surgery I was taken to one of the patient recover rooms. Still being a bit groggy and sedated, I didn't take in my surroundings until the next day when I was getting ready to go home and I asked

my husband, Mike Campbell, what the plaque on the wall next to the television said. I can only describe my reaction as a "goose bump" moment when he told me I had been in Tim's room with a very special guardian angel keeping a watchful eye over me! Together with my husband Mike, this grateful patient will continue to support the Foundation and Mercy Hospital. The work the Foundation does both within the walls of the hospital and in the community touches many people that we may never meet but knowing that our donations will make a difference in their lives brings us great joy.

Patient Laboratory Label

CAP#: 16789-30 CLIA#: 15D0647198

CAP#: 16789-30 CLIA#: 15D0647198

FOR LABORATORY USE ONLY:

Family #:
Proband: 
Proband: 
Not Proband: 
BL

CN

BL

Medical Record #: \_\_\_\_\_ Patient Recently Pregnant: ☐ Yes ☐

As crazy as it sounds, as a kid, I always felt like Mercy was my "safe place."

Why? Well, I spent a lot of time here when I was diagnosed with a blood disorder.
From 1997-2000 I was hospitalized in pediatrics (now Women's Care Center at Mercy Southwest) for treatments, spent many days a week getting labs drawn, and my mom would often "order out" from the grill when we would head home. The nurses that cared for me, lab techs, and my pediatrician at the time created a sense of trust that stayed with me. Some of those people are still here (whether they remember or not), but they made a big difference in a scared early teen's life. It definitely sent me on a path to healthcare.

— Meghan Lansing, RN, Manager Family Birth Center and NICU

iller-Dieker

A few years ago when I had just started working at Mercy Hospital, my wife and I found out that we were expecting our third child.

We were beyond excited. However, around the second month of pregnancy my wife had a miscarriage and our happiness turned to sorrow. I remember Sister Judy Morasci counseling and praying with us with such empathy. Her words helped us to begin the healing process. My wife had a procedure performed at Mercy Southwest and the staff was wonderful. To this day, I remember so fondly Sister Judy's words of encouragement and faith that helped us through one of the toughest moments that my family had to endure.

— *Rodrigo Vazquez,*Mercy Hospital Employee,

Community Health Initiative



# Founders Circle

The Friends of Mercy Foundation gives special recognition to its donors who have contributed a total of \$10,000 or more. We sincerely appreciate the support and generosity of our Founders Circle members listed on these pages.

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