Celebrating Life’s Moments, Even in a Hospital

Brianna Dragunoff sat quietly in her hospital bed as a nebulizer pumped mists of medication through a plastic mouthpiece and into her lungs. The breathing treatment was given at regular intervals to ease her painful and often-labored breathing. Several times a day she wore a special vest that vibrated and created pressure on her chest to loosen the sticky mucus that relentlessly accumulated in her lungs. Cystic fibrosis (CF), a genetic disease that affects the lungs and digestive system, had taken its toll on the 17-year-old high school senior but it had not defeated her. Brianna has faced CF with a patient endurance and maturity beyond her years. But frequent hospitalizations, concerns about infection exposure, and low stamina often robbed her of the life experiences that most teens take for granted.

For the past six months Brianna had been in and out of hospitals. This was her second time at Gaylord, and now she was trying to get healthy enough to have lung surgery. Her room was on Milne 2 and during her first stay at Gaylord, two of her nurses, Courtney Fletcher, LPN, and Margarita Norris, RN, had quickly bonded with her. Brianna is a

A Night in Disguise: A Community Creates a Prom

“I got to have everyone there that I love.”
Brianna Dragunoff

The Gaylord Fund
Supporting care beyond the ordinary
Dear Friends,

Celebrations lift the spirit and provide opportunities to express appreciation, deepen relationships, and create important memories. Events such as weddings, parties and even proms, when shared with family and close friends, often mark the milestones in our lives. When someone is hospitalized, the significance of these events is magnified for both our patients and their loved ones.

The words that Dr. David Lyman spoke at the 1952 dedication of the building named in honor of Gaylord’s first, and beloved head nurse, Florence Burgess, still ring true 62 years later.

“The new patient on arrival has just been through an emotional upheaval. His normal path of life has been violently disrupted and the vistas along it have disappeared. He finds himself surrounded by “rugged wind-swept hills” which, to him, are bleak and threatening. From the moment of his admission the staff, employees and fellow-patients begin to give him a new outlook.

They endeavor to show him that those apparently bleak hills hold a challenge, not a threat, and to convince him that if he accepts that challenge will find ahead a path that holds far more for him than the one so recently destroyed. Slowly and almost imperceptibly this goes on until one day he awakens to the fact he too has started on the climb and with a new song in his heart through consciousness of the “unutterable green” that lies ahead.”

There are stories in here about celebrating marriage, youth, hope, and of a life well lived. As we support our patients on their individual paths, our staff are often inspired to go the extra mile. In the process, all of us discover who we are and what we are capable of doing.

You make these stories possible.

From all of us at Gaylord, thank you.

THE GAYLORD FUND
SUPPORTING CARE BEYOND THE ORDINARY
In Sickness and in Health

Gaylord Helps Father Fulfill Vow to Daughter

It was a joyous time in the Getchell household as parents Mary and Steve busily prepared for the upcoming nuptials of their daughter Lori.

But when Steve, a 58-year-old stage hand by trade, suffered a massive stroke only seven weeks before the wedding date, all plans were put on hold.

“He had no function,” explained his wife, Mary. “The stroke left him completely paralyzed on his left side and no one was really sure how well he’d recover. The five days he spent in the ICU were probably the most trying our family has ever experienced.”

But soon after arriving at Gaylord Hospital for rehabilitation, Mary said something in her husband’s outlook changed.

“Gaylord gave him back his will … and then some,” she said. “He was determined to walk Lori down the aisle.”

Lori recalled how a dry erase board hung in Steve’s room – the kind often used to keep patients informed of the date and the name of their nurse - provided constant motivation to her father. It was there, in a column entitled “Today’s Goals,” that Steve had commissioned a nurse to write “November 16” in bold letters.

“My wedding date,” Lori explained. “It’s what drove him every day.”

As the weeks progressed, so did Steve’s condition.

“In no time he was standing at the bars and walking, moving his arms, and making incredible progress with his speech. He came a long way in a short time,” explained his wife.

For the Bride, the Choice Was Easy: “I Wanted Him There”

As the wedding approached, Mary and Lori planned to secure a day pass so Steve could attend the ceremony and ensuing reception. But only a week and a half before the wedding date, the Getchells

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To Love, Honor and Cherish

Life is unpredictable, some moments are mundane and others change the course of life forever. Chic Oppenheimer was 19 years old when his life-altering moment occurred in 1974. Home from college to attend his sister’s wedding; he was at a party when he noticed his sister’s friend sitting on the low railing of the apartment’s third-story balcony. Worried that she might fall, he suggested she move. In that same instant she tipped backwards and Chic lunged to grab her. They plummeted together to the ground. The young woman landed on top of Chic and walked away with only a few scratches. Chic was rendered a quadriplegic, breaking his neck at C6–C7. (As a result of his accident and subsequent lawsuit the state of Connecticut passed a landmark decision increasing the height of railings on balconies/decks.)

Chic was sent to Yale New Haven Hospital and then to Gaylord for rehabilitation, where he worked diligently to get as healthy as possible. He then went to computer school, acquired and drove an adaptive van, found a job and enjoyed his hobbies, which included cars and collecting guns. Independent and resourceful, he learned to target shoot with great accuracy even without the use of his hands or adaptive equipment.

After the accident, Chic lived with his parents where two wheelchairs dominated the scene – Chic’s and his mother’s. For most of Chic’s life his mother had been in a wheelchair due to multiple sclerosis. Then, several years after Chic’s injury, his father died unexpectedly from a massive heart attack. The effects of his own accident layered with the sudden loss of his father caused Chic to struggle with depression. He quit his job and started drinking heavily.

Facing Challenges, Finding Love
But Chic was a fighter. He returned to Gaylord where he went through rehabilitation for alcohol abuse and beat it! Eventually he bought a home in Portland, Connecticut where he met the love of his life. Chic was recovering from an autologous stem cell transplant as a result of Hodgkin’s lymphoma, when Lynne Johnson was assigned as his home health aide.

Lynne instantly liked Chic and confessed to a friend that she might fall for him. It was soon clear that they had feelings for each other and that Lynne needed to remove herself from his case for professional and personal reasons. “I didn’t want to be his aide anymore,” said Lynne. “We wanted to be able to pursue a normal relationship.” Chic and Lynne became a couple and remained that way for more than 14 years.

Then, in January of 2012, Chic suffered a bout of pneumonia. Medical complications resulted in his being in and out of hospitals over the next year. In April of 2013, he came to Gaylord with another round of pneumonia and needing a ventilator to breathe. Lynne visited Chic for hours every day, taking only one day off a week. Through every trial the couple’s love and devotion provided a bedrock of mutual support. “We held each other up,” said Lynne.

Amidst Treating a Severe Illness, A Wedding is Planned
As the months passed it became clear that Chic would continue to be hospitalized. But a new plan evolved…a wedding. “We’ve felt married forever and we considered ourselves married,” explained Lynne. “But we decided after 14 years it might last so we’d go ahead and make it legal.” The couple talked about doing a
quiet ceremony by the bedside. But once Chic’s sisters and nurses got wind of the nuptials the wedding took on a life of its own.

Intense activity ensued as family, friends, and Gaylord staff stepped in as ad hoc wedding planners. Because Chic had been at Gaylord for so long the medical team knew the couple well and wanted to make the wedding memorable. “We think of Chic and Lynne like family,” said Tina Dogramatzis, RN, one of Chic’s nurses.

It was decided that the wedding would be in Chic’s room on December 8th. Tina came in on her day off to decorate the room and other staff pitched in to help as they could, during breaks or between patients. Still others brought in flowers or food for the reception. White Christmas lights were hung, and some tulle netting and bright bouquets of flowers decorated the widow sill. A therapy cart was turned into a makeshift pulpit and a huge heart-shaped poster with a collage of photos of the couple, made by Tina, added a personal touch.

To ensure that Chic was decked out appropriately two of his nurses, Beverly and Peggy, bought him a top hat and a tuxedo t-shirt decorated with red vest to match Lynne’s wedding blouse. Bouquets arrived from family and friends, and Lynne selected silk flowers to carry down the isle.

As family, friends, neighbors and staff clustered into the room for the ceremony, Chic’s best man, his longhaired Chihuahua and faithful companion, Punky, sat at the foot of the bed. Lynne walked into the room and down the aisle, formed by the guests, to “Ribbons in the Sky,” the couple’s special song. One of Chic’s biggest worries before the wedding was that he might drop Lynne’s ring during the ceremony but he seamlessly slipped it on her finger.

As Chaplain Leonard Williams pronounced them husband and wife, Punky curled up in approval and many of the guests shed tears of joy. Chic’s sister, Emmy, said it was one of the happiest days of her life. “I never thought my brother would get married and to be able to see Chic and Lynne experience this was wonderful,” she said.

About a week before the wedding Lynne had purchased Chic’s wedding ring.

“We wanted to be able to pursue a normal relationship.”

* Respiratory complications are the leading cause of death in people with spinal cord injury, commonly as a result of pneumonia. Intubation increases the risk of developing ventilator-associated pneumonia; individuals with spinal cord injury who are intubated have to be carefully monitored and treated with antibiotics if symptoms of pneumonia appear.

(National Institutes of Health)
“Wouldn’t Miss it for the World”

Sixty two-year-old Hamden resident Betsy Claro was looking forward to a monumental year. Her only son Justin, after all, was to wed his beautiful fiancée, Rita, in May.

But when she began to experience oddly distorted vision and tingling in her face, medical experts were perplexed. No one, it seemed, could understand Betsy’s rapidly deteriorating condition.

For six months Betsy remained hospitalized at Yale New Haven Hospital as she bravely faced a litany of devastating conditions including encephalitis, meningitis, brain stem abscesses, seizures, and a weeks-long coma. Listeria, a difficult-to-diagnose food-borne infection, was finally pinpointed as the cause.

“She was so weak,” said son Justin White. “Mom could barely move her extremities. The only way she could communicate was by nodding.”

A Long Stay and a Bond with Her Caregivers

After her discharge from Yale, Betsy commenced what would become a year-long stay at Gaylord Hospital. Here, the mother of three made progress in improving her communication despite her reliance on a ventilator to breathe.

“She became much better at voicing and mouthing words,” Justin explained. “But the listeria had taken its toll on her body. She still needed maximum assistance from the staff.”

It was Betsy’s close connection to the staff, her son said, that buoyed her spirit throughout her stay. “The best part of Gaylord was the community. My mom formed a lot of real relationships with the staff. Because she was so compromised it gave our family a lot of confidence to know that there were doctors, nurses, and therapists who truly cared about her.”

Betsy’s family held out hope that the mother of three would be able to attend the ceremony and reception. But as the date approached, it became painfully evident that their dreams could not be fulfilled.

Unable to Leave the Hospital, the Wedding Was Brought to Her

“It meant a lot to my mom that I was getting married. She wouldn’t miss it for the world,” Justin said. “That’s when Gaylord stepped in. Everyone came together to make a beautiful ceremony...
Traveling Life’s Road Together

Edward Frost was born in Costa Rica. Beulah Pompey was born in Virginia. After emigrating to the U.S., Edward drove a taxi. Their lives intersected when Edward began driving Beulah to and from her job because her health issues made driving difficult. Ultimately, they became a couple and have been together for more than 17 years. They were married at Gaylord on Jan. 17, 2014 in Edward’s room on Milne 2. Beulah was dressed in a vibrant purple outfit with her mother and cousins in attendance. As Chaplain Leonard Williams performed the ceremony, the couple’s joy was contagious. Edward and Beulah beamed huge smiles as he slipped the wedding ring on her finger.

Beulah said, “We have been on our honeymoon ever since we were very sure of each other. One day after church I asked God to send me someone and Edward was that person!”

The groom was impressed when the VP of Development and Public Relations met with him to ensure that even the most minute details - such as signage and making sure the doors were unlocked – were tended to. But it was the loving gesture of two “amazing” therapy aides, he said, that touched him the most.

When Lisa Desandre and Dawn Peck’s supervisor asked for volunteers to ready Betsy for the ceremony, the two eagerly stepped forward to come in on their Memorial Day holiday.

“We had a special connection with Betsy. She was really sweet,” explained Dawn. “Even though she was mostly non-verbal, she’d always smile when she saw me and would mouth, ‘How are you?’”

On the day of the wedding the duo arrived at 6:30 a.m. to give their beloved patient a shower, do her hair and makeup, and get her dressed. They recalled how Betsy beamed as the nursing and therapy staff flocked around to admire her.

“They may not have been able to express her happiness verbally,” Dawn said, “but the delight on her face said it all. It meant a lot to me, too.”

As the two wheeled their patient to the ceremony, Betsy mouthed ‘Thank you’ and joined the rest of her family for the long-awaited occasion.

“She couldn’t stop smiling throughout the entire ceremony,” her son recalled. “It meant the world to her to be there. It’s a special moment we’ll never forget. We’re very grateful.”
typical teenager who likes to wear funky socks and loves to watch movies, but she also has a quiet strength that draws people to her. The two nurses knew how hard it was for her to be hospitalized again, so they snatched extra time to talk with her about her life and interests whenever possible.

One day in early May, Brianna mentioned wistfully that she was going to miss her senior prom. Having been ill for so long she had already missed many of her senior year rights of passage. As if reading each other’s minds, the two nurses immediately suggested hosting a prom at Gaylord. Brianna was taken aback. Was something like that even possible?

A Wish Becomes Reality

Needing permission to pursue the idea, the two nurses immediately contacted Sandy Delong, RN, their nursing supervisor. They felt confident about getting a go ahead because of other events that had taken place for patients including weddings, birthday parties, and even visits from pet horses. The two co-workers, who were also close friends, were determined to create a magical prom experience for Brianna, although they weren’t quite sure how.

Permission for the prom was quickly granted and the nursing duo was catapulted into the role of prom planners. Brianna’s mother, Cheryl, also gave her blessing. She knew the prom would give her daughter a much-needed emotional boost. Word of the event raced through the hospital and Courtney and Margarita were quickly overwhelmed with offers of help and resources from every part of the hospital. Did they need food? How about a cake? What kinds of decorations would they need? Could they use a DJ for music? How about some favors for the tables? Would Brianna like to have someone do her hair and makeup? How about some professional photos? Spouses, family members and even friends of staff offered to help. Many staff members gave financial support.

As momentum built, Brianna was unsure about what to expect. To help her visualize the setting, they showed Brianna, her mother, and her younger brother Jake the Brooker lecture hall where the prom would be held. The duo encouraged her to create a guest list and Brianna decided to invite close friends and family and the staff closest to her from Gaylord, about fifty people. For the prom’s theme she selected “Midnight Masquerade: A Night in Disguise.” Maybe wearing a mask would allow her to step away from being sick and be someone else for a few hours.

Coming Together for A Moment of Happiness and a Spotlight on a Disease

All of the planning helped divert Brianna from her upcoming surgery, but she was feeling a little uncomfortable being the focus of attention. What she really wanted was for the prom to bring greater awareness to CF. May was Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month so she chose purple for the prom decorations – the color that symbolizes CF. There have been strides...
in treating CF but there is no cure and Brianna and her mother hoped that any media attention would highlight CF.

With preparations in full swing, Courtney and two friends worked late one night decorating twenty masks with spray paint, jewels and glitter. Margarita wrangled a donated crown and tiara for the prom king and queen and free balloons for decorations. Secretaries obtained food donations from local establishments and offers of food of every kind rolled in from staff. In a final flurry of activity, volunteers worked all day to transform the lecture hall into prom central. Practically every department in the hospital was involved in one way or another.

It was only nine days from the moment of conception to the evening of the prom on Saturday, May 10, 2014. That afternoon, Brianna sat on her bed having a breathing treatment while a pharmacy tech, who had volunteered her skills, curled her hair and applied her makeup. Another staff member had done Cheryl’s hair earlier in the week and Jake was decked out in a new bow tie for the event.

**A Special Night That Helped Her Forget She’s a Patient**

Brianna, dressed in purple, met with her friends and family in the lobby of Brooker and then she walked into the prom on a red carpet to the song “Milkshake” from the movie Mean Girls. She was smiling from ear to ear. The hall was totally transformed with purple decorations and balloons, and small, glittering white lights. The buffet tables were laden with enough food and drinks to feed a small army. A magnificent masquerade-themed cake topped off the dessert table and party favors with purple candy were at every seat. In the corner a professional DJ, Stephen Cribb, who had volunteered his time and equipment, was playing the music Brianna had chosen. Everyone was dressed in their best prom attire, including the staff members who weren’t on duty. The music pulsed and everyone moved to the dance floor as the joy of the moment saturated the room.

While Brianna looked vibrant she still needed medical attention during the evening. Her nurses subtly checked on her breathing, oxygen needs and pain level, whisking her off to her room for a breathing treatment or medication when necessary. They were able to coordinate care so her absences were hardly noticed. But keeping her pain under control was important. At one point her nurse suggested it was time for pain medication but Brianna said that she said she didn’t need it. She was so happy and distracted that she forgot she was in pain!

*Continued on page 12*
Hometown Hero

Albie Booth

The late 1920s have been called the Golden Age of college football – and in that gilded era, few collegiate players shone as brightly as Yale’s Albert James “Albie” Booth.

A New Haven native, Albie Booth was a virtually unknown sophomore on Yale’s football team in the fall of 1929. That all changed on October 26 that year at the Yale Bowl when, with his team trailing 13-0 to Army in the second quarter, he entered the game. He quickly delivered what the National Football Foundation describes as “perhaps the greatest single game performance in Yale history,” scoring all of his team’s points and leading the way to an upset win before a crowd of 80,000. A headline the next day declared: “Booth 21, Army 13.”

In those days, when college football was king, Albie became nationally known overnight. Standing only 5’ 6” tall and weighing 145 pounds; he was dubbed the “Mighty Mite” and “Little Boy Blue” by sportswriters. He also excelled at basketball and baseball.

A Lung Infection Slows His Athletic Career

But his athletic career almost ended in 1931, when he developed the lung infection known as pleurisy. It was only after recuperation at Gaylord Farm Sanatorium that he was able to resume playing.

Captaining the Yale football team in his senior year, Albie starred in one of the most exciting college games of the season against Dartmouth. Scoring three touchdowns, including one on a 94-yard kickoff return, he made most of his team’s points in what would become the highest-scoring football tie to that time: 33-33.

In November, the most anticipated contest of the season against archrival Harvard ended in a 3-0 victory for Yale, thanks to Albie’s drop kick field goal. But it was after the Harvard game that he collapsed in pain and was diagnosed with pleurisy. “The tremendous physical strain of three years of varsity football and two baseball and two basketball campaigns put upon a physique that mustered only 145 pounds is believed to have contributed to the breakdown that forced Albie Booth into a private sanatorium for months of rest and recuperation,” the Associated Press reported.

He came to Gaylord on December 1. “Bundled in blankets and heavy clothing, Booth made the 10-mile trip to Wallingford in an ambulance,” a newspaper account revealed. “Attendants said he stood the journey well, and that he went to sleep almost as soon as he was put to bed.”

The press kept close watch on the famed athlete’s days at Gaylord. “Every report has stated that he has constantly improved, in taking the out-door treatment during the winter months, and he was last week transferred from the infirmary to a cottage,” The Hartford Courant reported in early February 1932. A week later, an Associated Press story said part of his exercise routine involved washing milk pails, and “the job isn’t new to him, for he carried a milk route to earn money during his prep school days.”

After Gaylord, He Returns to Yale and the Athletic Field

On February 17, 1932, his health restored, he returned to college, missing all of the basketball season and most of the baseball season. “Victorious over a lung infection that halted his brilliant
football career, Albie Booth left [Gaylord] ... and returned to the Yale campus to finish his studies,” the AP said. At first, he was a bit rusty on the baseball diamond. “Out of practice, Albie failed to make his usual good showing either at shortstop or at bat,” a May 10 news story reported. But on June 21, in the Harvard game, he came to bat with two outs, Harvard ahead 2-0; with the count three balls and two strikes, he drilled a grand slam home run; Yale won the game.

Albie secretly married his childhood sweetheart, Marion Noble, on July 4, 1932 in St. Mary’s Church in Branford; neither set of parents knew of the union until months later. Also that year, he played a football star (what else?) in “The All-American,” a Hollywood film starring Richard Arlen, Andy Devine, and Gloria Stewart. In 1933, he and Marion welcomed the first of their two daughters. After Yale, he played a few years of semi-professional baseball, and eventually took a less vigorous job, that of District Operations Manager for the General Ice Cream Corp. of New Haven. In the 1950s, he refereed college football games, and tutored Yale football players in his spare time.

**A Man Revered By His Friends**

When he unexpectedly died of a heart attack at age 51 on March 1, 1959, the sports world mourned. On that day, “Albie Booth the man was dead; Albie Booth the legend continued its journey into immortality,” Sports Illustrated reported. The Albie Booth Memorial Boys Club in New Haven was named for him, as was an annual fundraising exhibition football game. He was “a fabulous athlete, a good husband and father, unfailingly a gentleman and a man revered by his closest friends,” The Hartford Courant declared. Among his honorary pallbearers were the Governor of Massachusetts, the Mayor of New York City, and the President of Yale. The Connecticut Legislature passed a resolution of regret at his passing.

He was buried, as the Associated Press put it, in New Haven “within kicking or home run distance of Yale’s athletic fields.”

He was “a fabulous athlete, a good husband and father, unfailingly a gentleman and a man revered by his closest friends,” The Hartford Courant declared. Among his honorary pallbearers were the Governor of Massachusetts, the Mayor of New York City, and the President of Yale. The Connecticut Legislature passed a resolution of regret at his passing.

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Prom, continued from page 9

Cheryl Dragunoff hugs Courtney Garrett Mendez and his sister Jenn at the rehearsal dinner before her wedding.

Later that evening, the Prom Queen, Brianna, and King, Tony Chen, one of her best friends, were crowned and they danced to “Let It Go” from the movie Frozen. The waterworks began for many as they watched Brianna’s beaming face. She had been released, at least for a time, from the grip of illness and was enjoying life as a normal, happy teenager. Every effort that had gone into creating the prom was validated in that instant.

The next day Brianna was completely exhausted but happy and grateful for all that had happened. She said that this prom was different from a regular prom because she got to have everyone there that she loved. Courtney and Margarita credit the success of the prom to the Gaylord community. It was the community’s caring spirit and the donations of time and resources that brought their idea to fruition. And happily, media exposure about the prom brought increased awareness to CF, as Brianna and her family had hoped.

Brianna’s surgery to remove part of her lung was a great success and she will be attending college at Salve Regina University in the fall. She is looking forward to her next steps knowing that she supported by the love of her family and friends.

For information about cystic fibrosis: www.cff.org

Returning the Favor

Garrett Mendez was only 19 when, in November 2005, he suffered a massive brain stem stroke after a hard hit during a hockey game. The stroke left him unable to move. When he was admitted here his head was the only thing he had control over. Nearly two months later he walked out of Gaylord on his own.

When his sister, Jenn, got married in June, 2013, the family wanted to use the celebration as a chance to give back. Instead of wedding favors, the bride and groom made a donation in their guests’ names to a fund in honor of Garrett and his recovery. The monies are used to purchase much-needed equipment to help other stroke victims.

To Love, Honor and Cherish, continued from page 5

but she wanted to make sure it fit. As she tried it on his finger, he asked her to leave it there. But Lynne said they weren’t married and he would have to wait. After the wedding Chic told her that he would kiss the ring every night before bed as he thought of her. As Chic grew sicker and lost weight his nurses had to tape the ring on his finger. It was still there when he passed away in January.

Chic was an inspiration to all who knew him. He was determined not to let quadriplegia limit his life. He triumphed over alcohol abuse, battled two rounds of cancer, recovered from a stem cell transplant, and faced many medical complications with an amazing strength of spirit.

For Lynne, her devotion and love for Chic knew no bounds. He was the love of her life. Perhaps Emmy’s comment about her sister-in-law sums it up best: “Lynne is the best thing that ever happened to my brother. She has taken such good care of him and loved him so deeply that it makes me cry when I think of it.”
were shocked to discover that Steve’s insurance would cancel his healthcare benefits if he left Gaylord to attend the wedding.

“There was no way I was getting married without my dad,” Lori said. “I didn’t care if we had to have the ceremony right there in his room … I wanted him there.”

Almost immediately, the Gaylord team stepped up and offered to host the wedding ceremony on campus. With little more than a week’s notice, the staff busily set to work to ensure a seamless event.

“They made it easy,” Lori said. “All we did was tell them the date and how many people were coming. They secured a beautiful, private foyer and rearranged the furniture so that we could be married in front of a gorgeous fireplace. My original thought of having the wedding in his hospital room was greatly exceeded by the space they provided.”

On the morning of November 16, a group of nurses cheerfully fussled over the father of three as they groomed him and helped him into his tuxedo. As the bride descended the staircase in her wedding gown, Steve rose from his wheelchair, took Lori’s hand, and – with the help of his walker – proudly fulfilled his hard-earned dream of escorting his youngest daughter down the “aisle.”

“It was beautiful,” Lori said. “As much as the whole experience meant to me, I know it meant even more to my dad.”

Her mother agreed. “He was so touched. I remember him turning to me with tears in his eyes and he said, ‘If I died right now, you wouldn’t even have to change my outfit,’” she laughed. “He was just so happy.”

“I can’t say enough about Gaylord. They made all the difference.”
When my mother had a massive stroke, she came to Gaylord for rehabilitation. I was amazed when on the first day there she was able to pick up a fork to eat—something she could not do before she arrived. I feel my mother was very lucky to be at Gaylord. Together, we made it possible for her to enjoy life more.

When I realized not too long ago that my will was out of date, I decided to update it to include a gift to Gaylord. It was a simple and meaningful way to express my gratitude to Gaylord for making it possible for my mother to lead a viable, fairly independent life.

I know Gaylord has done wonderful work for a long time, and hope that my gift will help assure it will be here for others for years into the future.

If you would like to say “thank you” for the great care you, a family member or friend received at Gaylord—and to ensure that Gaylord will always be here to help our families and friends—please consider naming Gaylord in your will or trust.

Thank you!

John Ifkovic, whose mother was a patient

Want to leave something to Gaylord in your will?

You can identify us as Gaylord Hospital (Tax ID #06-0646649), located in Wallingford, CT.

For a free estate planning guide, and a free list of the 25 critical documents we all need, just go www.GaylordGift.org, or contact Karen Hatcher, Planned Giving Officer, at 203-284-2844 or khatcher@gaylord.org.

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Susan M. Lewin, a longtime friend of Gaylord Hospital, died suddenly of a pulmonary embolism on November 24, 2013 in Orange, Conn.

As is the case with many supporters of the hospital, Susan first became involved because she knew a patient, a dog-walking friend who was recovering from a stroke. After visiting Gaylord several times, Susan asked how she could best help the hospital and the patients it serves; she was told about the Special Needs Fund, which provides many types of financial assistance to those transitioning to post-hospital life, and she contributed to it.

“She was so in tune with the needs of people,” says Tara Knapp, Vice President, Development at Gaylord. “She made a big difference in people’s lives, both individually and as part of the community.”

Born in Malaysia, Susan grew up in Scotland, earning degrees from Edinburgh University and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She married her husband, Clement, in 1987, and they moved to the United States four years later. A trained endocrinologist, she worked in research until the birth of her daughter, Sylvana.

“She was a quiet leader, but a very effective one,” Tara says. “She could see connections between needs and opportunities, and frequently had insightful suggestions.”

After Sylvana was born, Susan did volunteer work for many New Haven-area organizations, including Chairing the Women and Girls Fund of the Community Foundation of New Haven, working with Vista Vocational Life Skills, and supporting Marrakech, a halfway house for women with mental retardation, and Quinnipiac University. She was on the Board of Hamden Hall Country Day School and was also a police commissioner in Orange.

When the national and state economies experienced declines following the recession of 2008-9, Susan noticed that Gaylord’s Special Needs Fund was being used more frequently, in part because more patients were underinsured. “Susan came to me and said this troubled her,” Tara says, “and she had a solution. ‘What if we do a challenge?’ she asked.” After contributing her own funds, she invited Gaylord employees to contribute—and they did, to the tune of about $14,000. “That was just typical of Susan,” Tara says.

“She was a quiet leader, but a very effective one,” Tara says. “She could see connections between needs and opportunities, and frequently had insightful suggestions.”

Besides Clement and Sylvana, she leaves her mother and a brother.

In Memoriam

Gaylord Names New Board Member

Kimberly D. Hartmann, interim Dean of the School of Health Sciences of Quinnipiac University, has been named to the Board of Directors of Gaylord Hospital.

Prof. Hartmann, who earned a bachelor’s degree in occupational therapy and a master’s degree in health sciences from Quinnipiac, earned her PhD from the University of Connecticut. She has been a professor of occupational therapy at Quinnipiac since 1984.

She is a fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association, and earned Quinnipiac’s James Marshall Award for Service in 2010 and the university’s Center for Excellence in Teaching Award in 2012.

In May 2013, Prof. Hartmann was named interim Dean of Quinnipiac’s School of Health Sciences. At her appointment, she said, “I believe that the students, faculty, and deans of the School of Health Sciences are devoted to excellence in learning and strong science education that develops superior biomedical and interprofessional health care providers.”

Tara Knapp, Gaylord’s Vice President of Development, says Gaylord is “pleased to welcome Prof. Hartmann to the Board. She has a wealth of knowledge and practical experience in the field of occupational therapy, and is also well versed in the most up-to-date technologies. Her contributions to the Board will enhance Gaylord’s position as a leader in rehabilitation, and in the care and treatment of medically complex patients.”
A smiling bride wheels her father out of Brooker after the wedding ceremony.