Welcome...........................................Jill Settlemyre
Master of Ceremonies .............Cammy Dierking

PRESENTATION OF CANCER FAMILY CARE AWARDS

Pauline Cohen Award .............. Walter E. Knox Jr.
Community Impact Award ........ Walter E. Knox Jr.

♦ Please enjoy your dinner! ♦

PRESENTATION OF UNSUNG HERO AWARDS

Introduction of the 2016 Unsung Heroes
Oncology Professional Awards presented by
Ed Crane, MD
Caregiver Awards presented by
Ben Nunery
Patient Awards presented by
John Kennedy, MD, MHA
Pauline Cohen Founder’s Award
In honor of our founder, recognizing outstanding contributions to Cancer Family Care and our mission.
Presented to the Cincinnati International Wine Festival.

Community Impact Award
Recognizing outstanding contributions to the lives of people who are touched by cancer.
Presented to the Young Professional Group of Cancer Family Care.
Joslin Haggart Yeiser
2016 Unsung Heroes

Oncology Professionals

Julie Behan
Rosanna Benson
Robin Boyd
Mary Casstevens
Dar Cook
Sara Gonce
Gail Greenburg
Jerry Heatherly
Jillian Hunt
Prasad Kudalkar, MD
Philip Leming, MD
Terri Meyer-Smith
David Ritter
Peter Ruehlman, MD
Patrick Ward, MD PhD
Sue Weber

Caregivers

Marsha Acheson
Jesse Ditmore
Susan Hargrave
Judy Hill

Robert and Renee King
Laurie Kirkwood
Mike Mangino
Ravi Ranatunga
Ride Cincinnati
Bonnie Zink

Patients

Michelle Becraft
Ramona Bittner
Tom Blankemeyer
Susan Canavan Flynn
Sandy Ditmore
Tony and Missy Duggan
Rodney Haley
J.P. Heiremans
Camdyn King*
Angela Pascale
Patricia Stone
Kimberly Watkins

*Posthumously
Oncology Professionals

Julie Behan is an American Cancer Society Patient Navigator. She was nominated by Barrett Center Social Workers, Casey Johnson, Sarah Lukey and Kristin Jordan. When a person hears the diagnosis of cancer, there is heaviness that can be difficult to move past. What is usually a referral to provide the patients and family with education & resources typically turns into much more. Describing Julie as dedicated and hardworking feels like we are short changing all the amazing work she does on a daily basis. She is the glue that keeps our patients on track. She manages the very large task of ensuring that those who have transportation barriers can get back and forth to their appointments without issue. Patients look forward to seeing her, talking with her and having the confidence that she is going to follow through when she offers them assistance.

Rosanna Benson, RN was nominated by Ashley Morris. Even after being an oncology nurse for over 20 years, Rosanna tirelessly cares for every one of her patients at Mercy Fairfield Hospital. As a new nurse in 2008, Ashley saw Rosanna walking in for her shift with a snowball in her hand. She asked her what she was doing and she explained that her dying patient had mentioned how much she used to love snow days as a child. She was bringing her elderly patient snow, because she wanted to give her a little joy in this dark time in her life. That night Rosanna had turned the patient’s bed sideways in the room so that it faced the window. She could watch the falling snow all night. Every time they checked on the patient, she was awake, sitting in her bed with a huge smile on her face and a peaceful look in her eye. It made such an impact on Ashley that she still remembers this interaction 8 years later and tries to live up to that example as a caregiver. Rosanna is definitely a role model on the oncology floor, due to her knowledge, expertise, and especially the kindness and love she gives to her patients.

Robin Boyd was nominated by Dr. Edward Crane. Robin is a wonderful person who has helped thousands of patients during her 15 years at OHC. She works as a clinical coordinator and has many roles. Her time spent fighting for appropriate medications to help patients has increased dramatically over the years. Recently, a patient could only find nausea relief with one particular medication which he needed several times a day, but his insurance company would allow less than one pill a day. Robin personally took this situation
by the horns. By the time she was done, the insurance company had approved three pills a day which provided tremendous comfort to the patient and his family. Robin is providing excellent support for patients in these situations many times a day. Although dealing with these issues is stressful, Robin is always smiling and positive. Sometimes she even will sing a happy song to the clinic with her amazing singing voice.

Mary Casstevens was nominated by Dawn Perrin. Mary is a Mammography Tech at West Chester Hospital. It is normal to have anxiety when being evaluated for cancer. Dawn is sure Mary sees this in her patients’ eyes every day, whether they are having a diagnostic mammogram or a biopsy. What gives her the strength to be so patient and empathetic after all her years in the field? A procedure that could easily be viewed as “routine” or “mundane” by a professional who encounters it daily did not affect her ability to treat Dawn as a special individual, an individual who had to experience another biopsy and pray the results would be in her favor. Thankfully the results were benign, but no one knew that going in for the procedure. (Mary didn’t even know that Dawn works for Cancer Family Care!) Mary treated Dawn just as she would have treated anyone else - performing her job with a high level of skill and handling the frightened patients she serves with gentle understanding and genuine empathy.

Dar Cook was nominated by Susan Powers of the TriHealth Cancer Institute. For the past 25 years Dar has been the first to arrive at the Cheviot location to unlock the doors. She arrives bubbly and enthusiastic and dedicates the next 8 hours ensuring the behind the scenes operations run smoothly. Dar is the person that ensures all the physicians and support staff are credentialed and all their licenses are renewed timely. She partners with the billing and coding team to ensure patients’ bills are accurate. When a patient calls about their bill, Dar takes the time to direct them to the correct person who may help, if she doesn’t know the answer herself. Dar is responsible for the beautiful landscape that greets patients with flowers and a well-manicured lawn. In the cold of winter, she ensures that the parking lot and walkways are clear of snow and ice. She is not afraid to fix the toilets, or to jump in the dumpster to retrieve items that were mistakenly thrown away! She is always there to help coordinate a meeting, special event or to solve situations that no one knows how to handle. If she doesn’t know the answer or can’t fix it herself, she gets it resolved. She takes care of everyone, their den mother, Dar.
Sara Gonce was nominated by Dr. Patrick Ward. For the last 10 years, Sara has worked tirelessly at OHC as a Clinical Research Regulatory Specialist. There would be no advances in cancer care without clinical trials, and there would be no clinical trials executed without appropriate regulatory oversight. If ever there was a difficult and important job that has gone unrecognized, it is the critical role of the regulatory specialist. Her expertise ensures that everyone involved in the clinical trial is appropriately trained, and that the regulatory documentation that allows the trial to move forward is complete. She has consistently been one of the first to arrive and the last to leave the office. She has even shown up on weekends, and never once has she complained or said a disparaging word. Sara not only leads within the research department, she also has been an incredible inspiration to her daughter. Sara has done all of this while supporting and rearing Hannah, as a single mother. Today, Sara’s daughter is at Miami University, following in the footsteps of her remarkable mother.

Gail Greenburg, RN was nominated by Kathy Teipen. Gail and staff of the Center for Women’s Health at Mercy Anderson have a history of doing whatever it takes to effectively assist their patients. They frequently make referrals to Cancer Family Care for counseling services. Gail and staff have used extraordinary skill and compassion to assess and navigate the physical, emotional, social and economic needs of their many patients. This group of fantastic professionals listens carefully to their patients and, when they learn of needs of any kind, they attempt to work with one another and other agencies/individuals to meet these needs. As a result people can keep their medical appointments and have necessary household products and clothing items. Gail’s retirement date was February 19, so this seems like the perfect time to recognize Gail and the group of professionals who worked so diligently to cure physical ailments as well as emotional and financial needs.

Jerry Heatherly was nominated by Jacqui Appel. When Jacqui and her colleagues first heard that Jerry had joined the TriHealth Cancer Institute and would be working with breast cancer patients, they all thought, “Oh, a MAN??” Now they all say, “Oh, what an angel!!” Jerry has the ability to counsel, encourage, and mentor the team as well as the patients. So many patients are in emotional crisis. As healthcare professionals it is a duty to separate personal feelings from work, but sometimes it is very difficult not to be affected. When a young new mother was
diagnosed with breast cancer, it hit very close to home. After several team members had met with the patient, Jerry made a distinct point of asking the team how they were handling this and what he could do to help them through this difficult situation. Jerry has an extensive background in ministry, presently serving as a part-time Pastor. Within the community he has helped others find employment, obtain housing, and even helped someone purchase a vehicle. He requires nothing in return. Though many of these things are part of his employment as a social worker, he continues his outreach well outside of the job. We are blessed to have this “Man” to work with on a daily basis. He is so humble….he is truly an unsung hero!

Jillian Hunt, CNP was nominated by Kym Ramsey in recognition of her exceptional efforts in caring for patients and their families as a Nurse Practitioner at the Christ Hospital. Jill provided great comfort to Kym’s mother, Georgia Ramsey, a stage IV lung cancer patient, and to Kym. When Georgia’s life was coming to an end, she had only a few requests – that Jill Hunt, and the amazing Dr. Philip Leming, remain her medical providers, that she be able to go inpatient to Hospice of Cincinnati in Anderson Township and, that Jill would not leave her until her journey was complete. Jill ensured all three of Georgia’s wishes were carried out which brought great peace and comfort. After a long day of caring for patients in her clinic and office, she came and sat with Georgia at her bedside, just like she promised and has remained available to talk with Kym after her mom died. Jill Hunt is a person of great character and honor who serves her profession with integrity and grace.

Prasad Kudalkar, MD was nominated by Jennifer Williams. Jennifer has worked with Dr. Kudalkar for 5 years and has learned he is not just a doctor who takes care of patients for a living; he’s a man like any other man who is kind, caring, compassionate and he ties that into his every day job which just so happens to be an oncology physician. Recently Jennifer sat in the exam room as he gave a patient and his family information that no one ever wants to hear. Dr. Kudalkar wasn’t in that exam room to be just a doctor, to just give the patient results, to just gain an office visit or a paycheck. He was in that room to give strength and hope, to help a patient understand the situation all while comforting not only him but his family. Jennifer recalls, “By the end of the conversation, I watched a man’s sadness and fear turn into strength that will prepare him for the battle to come. In that moment I knew I had just witnessed a hero in action; I had just seen what a true hero was.”
Philip Leming, MD was nominated by Carmen Pitman, RN, MSN of the Christ Hospital. Dr. Leming provides Oncology treatment and outstanding care to patients. He has a passion for research and works within the research department to advance the treatment of cancer. He is currently spearheading a movement towards precision medicine and genomics which could have significant implications to the future of oncology. Cooper Tyree RN, BSN adds, “I have seen him interact with his patients in a manner that only the most caring of doctors would.” Julie McIlvenna, RN, BSN states, “I admire Dr. Leming because I see firsthand the care and compassion he has for each of his patients. His dedication is evident through the time he spends with each patient making sure they understand what is happening to them and what the plan will be to help them. Many of his patients are very complex, and he strives to find the best options including clinical trials and new treatments. If he is perplexed by something, he researches it until he finds what he is looking for. His patients trust and adore him. His calm and jovial manner puts them at ease even under the most difficult circumstances.”

Terri Meyer-Smith, RN was nominated by Judi Houchens. For the past 5 years Terri has been OHC’s home infusion manager. Her leadership with the ever changing challenges in the healthcare industry has been met with zeal and the “we’ll make it work” attitude to provide for a cancer population where treatments are ongoing in their home. Starting out as a full time home infusion nurse for OHC in 1997, Terri has never lost her compassion, empathy and enthusiasm while administering care to patients. In the management role, she continually navigates insurance/Medicare coverage for patients, communicates between upper management, physicians, pharmacy, intake, chemo suite offices, and field RNs. She assures that each patient is scheduled for their cycle, assigns field RNs to patients, and does hands on care, and follow up calls too. She is her patient’s advocate and always with a smile!

David Ritter, Director of Procurement and Facilities of OHC, was nominated by Sheila Perkins. David started working at OHC 12 years ago and is a dedicated and loyal employee. Although David’s work is primarily behind the scenes, his faithful commitment and willingness to go above and beyond impacts all employees, clinical staff, providers, and patients. David became friends with Dr. Richard Levy the founder of OHC some fifty years ago. His friendship and bond with Dr. Levy has given him the drive to continue Dr. Levy’s vision of always putting patients first. David is at the OHC Administrative building seven days a week. He spends
countless hours on and off the clock making sure OHC is running smoothly. On any given weekend David is sitting behind his desk going over pricing, inventory or negotiating with vendors to help provide the best possible care for our patients at an affordable cost. David is without a doubt one of the hardest working members of the OHC team. He continues Dr. Levy’s focus on the important value of patients first and that, along with his humble nature, make him an Unsung Hero!

Peter Ruehlman, MD was nominated by Steve Feagins, MD. Dr. Ruehlman exemplifies the face of cancer care at Mercy Health – Anderson Hospital. He is the medical director for oncology, chairs each cancer committee, tirelessly advocates for teaching hospital and resident physicians, and creates opportunities for others to understand and learn. Dr. Ruehlman was the driving force behind four well-attended lectures in October 2015 on End of Life issues. He found local and national experts for the panels and facilitated the discussions. He is considered the expert and general “go to” physician by his colleagues on compassionate and educated cancer care. He has been providing excellent care to the Anderson Township community and has been a great colleague to physicians at Anderson Hospital long before Mercy Health and OHC formalized their clinical co-management agreement in 2012. Peter is truly an unsung hero on behalf of the many patients and colleagues he has influenced positively through the years.

Patrick Ward, MD, PhD was nominated by David M. Waterhouse, MD, MPH. Dr. Ward is the Assoc. Chair of the Department of Clinical Research at OHC and has been a champion of cancer clinical trials since first arriving in 2003. Dr. Ward also has a PhD in chemistry and he brings this expertise to the table in the development of new drugs in the fight against cancer. Recently, one of the drugs that he helped develop as a basic scientist has now weaved its way front and center, and is being tested in women with breast cancer. Dr. Ward loves the science of clinical trials and dedicates countless unpaid hours to the OHC research department. He also leads people. He cares deeply about the research team and tries to form meaningful relationships with all of the staff. His excitement over new therapies can be infectious, and is passed to his coworkers. Dr. Ward also deeply cares about his patients. Our nurses can often recognize how Dr. Ward’s patients are faring simply based upon his demeanor. He can be seen celebrating with his patients over their victories, and can be viewed in pain, with his shoulders slumped and head held low, when his patients suffer at the hands of their disease. Fighting cancer becomes very personal. It is for these reasons, and for many more that David felt compelled to write this nomination on Pat’s behalf. At the time of this writing Pat had no idea that he was being nominated, as he was focused on
making sure that Sara Gonce was seen in the same light. Isn’t that how we would like to view an unsung hero?

Sue Weber, RN was nominated by Mark Witte, Executive Director, TriHealth Cancer Institute. Sue began her career as the service line administrator for oncology and renal. In her career at TriHealth she has served on the board of Cancer Family Care and the American Cancer Society. She also helped develop the TriHealth Cancer Institute, serves as a cancer program administrator, oversight of the TriHealth Cancer Committee, Cancer Registry Department and helped develop the Genetic and Genomics Department. Sue has always been committed to developing a cancer program that is centered on the patients’ needs and the needs of their families.

Caregivers

Marsha Acheson was nominated by Jan Smith, Carol Wolf and Blair Schoen. Marsha walked with her wife, Ruth, through her journey with Pancreatic Cancer in a way that cared for Ruth’s physical, emotional and spiritual being, despite unspeakably difficult challenges. Ruth was a gifted and beloved interpreter for the deaf, artist, teacher and a mother. Her health began deteriorating rapidly after her diagnosis, but she had two goals for the life she had left. The first goal was to travel to Wisconsin to attend and interpret for a national music festival, and the second goal was to travel to Brazil to visit a spiritual healer. Ruth made it to both of her destinations, but collapsed before she was able to see the spiritual healer. Marsha completed the arduous journey and visited the healer as Ruth’s proxy. Tragically Ruth passed away half an hour into their flight home. The plane returned to Brazil where Marsha endured mounds of legal red tape on top of her grief. Ultimately, Ruth’s ashes were returned home after several weeks. Because of Marsha, Ruth had been granted her final wishes.

Jesse Ditmore was nominated by Judi Houchens. When Jesse’s mom, Sandy, was diagnosed with cancer in 2012 he created Sandy Strong, a project that has galvanized the K-6 students at six elementary schools in the Forest Hills School District to write nearly 1000 inspirational cards and letters. These messages of hope are then delivered to people suffering from Alzheimer’s, to families staying at the Ronald McDonald House, and to patients undergoing chemotherapy. Today, the Sandy Strong project, much like the woman it honors, continues to thrive and inspire. “I know for a fact,” says Sandy, “that Jesse’s goal in life is to make sure that other people are happy and that he sees the world through positive eyes.” Jesse, in
his own way, agrees. “I’ve learned that the happiest people don’t have the best of everything, they just make the best of everything. It’s like blessings keep coming to my Mom. We stay strong and thankful.”

Susan Hargrave was nominated by Patricia Franklin. Susan’s mother, Marie, was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago while living in Rochester, NY. Upon hearing her mother was sick, Susan traveled by car several times a year to help her mom adjust to her diagnosis and help her dad cope with the emotional burden of having a terminally ill spouse. Susan is 1 of 4 children in the family. Eventually she and her husband, Jim, took the responsibility to move her parents in with them. She mortgaged and remodeled her house to make room and allow for her parents to have privacy, feel part of the family, and receive care for Marie’s rapidly challenging and changing health. Susan is the sole bread winner in the family, as her husband is retired, yet she took many hours off from work to care for her parents, attending doctor visits, and finally establishing hospice care. Susan’s mom passed away with her loving daughter and husband by her side, all made possible by her tireless compassion and disregard for financial security and a comfortable retirement. Susan and Jim continue to live with her Dad, providing for him a home filled with memories and love.

Judy Hill and Laurie Kirkwood nominated one another as each other’s emotional caregivers. Having a cancer diagnosis is very devastating, and then, given a metastatic diagnosis (which is not a chronic disease but terminal) is life altering. As Judy sat in her oncologist office with all kinds of horrible thoughts in her head; he explained that with medication her life expectancy could be years. He had a patient who has the same diagnosis, has been on the same chemo, and this person travels the world and functions as close to a normal life. Judy felt comforted knowing she was not alone. Her former friend, Laurie, came to mind recalling she had breast cancer years ago. Judy phoned Laurie to see how she was doing. Laurie’s breast cancer had metastasized to her bones, and Judy was stunned to learn they shared the identical diagnosis. Additionally they shared the same oncologist! From that day on Laurie and Judy became best friends. They share their side effects, worries, and also recognize they are terminal. “What a comfort it is to have Laurie in my life and me in hers”, says Judy. “We cry on each other’s shoulders when we are down and rejoice when we have clear scans. To look at us one would never think anything is wrong, but deep down inside this horrible disease is taking our days, and our days are numbered. Without our friendship life would be so dark, so we rejoice in knowing we have each other.”
Robert and Renee King were nominated by Wanda Meriwether MSW, LSW, Brian Weiss MD, Katie Richardson NP, Rebecca Reckers RN and Beth Stockman RN. The King Family had been foster parents for other children, but when they were asked to foster a child named Camdyn, it was a different relationship. Camdyn had just finished cancer treatment when he needed placement in a foster home. The Kings lovingly took on the challenges of having a foster child with complicated medical needs. Robert and Renee and their three other children helped Camdyn adjust to being part of a family, even after his cancer came back. They were committed to making Camdyn’s life as normal as possible. They knew that Camdyn’s prognosis was not good yet they loved him so much that they “officially” made Camdyn a part of their family and in December of 2015, Camdyn was legally adopted and became a “King”. These loving and dedicated parents made Camdyn’s final days on Earth, full of love and joy.

Mike Magino was nominated by his wife, Jennifer Mangino, who has cancer. Jen states, “Perhaps the most important thing that Mike has done throughout this cancer journey is to normalize my life and the life of our family. He works full time, does laundry, cleans our house, makes dinners, and continues to coach our boys’ soccer teams… A life with cancer is still a life. And surviving takes strength, courage, and love.” Mike drives me to and from chemotherapy treatments and doctor appointments without making me feel like a burden. In fact, he tells me that it is just more quality time that we get to spend together.”

Ravi Ranatunga was nominated by Edward Crane, MD. Ravi is an amazing person, husband and father. His wife has been battling stage IV lung cancer for several years and was diagnosed with breast cancer in the midst of her treatment for lung cancer. Ravi is incredibly devoted and attends the vast majority of his wife’s physician visits with a list of many excellent questions geared towards ensuring his wife has the best care. He is thoughtful and caring in his approach. While helping to fully support his wife in her journey, he works full time and assists in the care of his two lovely and active teenage daughters. Certainly some of his wife’s success against her cancers can be attributed to the love, support and dedication from her wonderful husband.

Ride Cincinnati was nominated by William Barrett, MD, Elyse Lower, MD and Laureen McCorkle. Founded in 2007 by Dr. Harvey Harris, his family, and two friends whose families have
been touched by breast cancer, this event is dedicated to the life of Harvey’s wife, Marlene Harris and all others who have, and continue to be, touched by breast cancer. In nearly 10 years (Ride’s 10th anniversary is June 12) Ride Cincinnati has raised more than $2M and funded 34 research grants at the University of Cincinnati’s Cancer Institute comprehensive breast cancer center. We recognize the founding members of Ride Cincinnati for their countless hours spent around the kitchen table planning all the intricate details of a 60+ mile ride all the way down to the 1 mile kiddie ride, getting up at 3:00 am the day of the race to set up Sawyer Point...all of it to support breast cancer research efforts to spare someone else the pain of losing a loved one to breast cancer.

Bonnie Zink was nominated by Jane Schappacher RN & Kelley Gibson RN. Bonnie’s husband Brian was originally diagnosed with a spinal cord tumor in 1998. Brian is wheelchair bound and has no use of his legs. She has not only been his wife and best friend, but also his case manager, primary caregiver, and patient advocate supporting all of his needs. She does this while maintaining a full time job and caring for their two children. Bonnie assumes all the responsibilities that go along with her commitment without any complaints. She undoubtedly has no time to herself as she works tirelessly to care for her family and asks for nothing in return. Her dedication, love, and incredible strength are why we nominate her for the Unsung Hero award. We want her to know how amazing she truly is and that people like her don’t come along every day, despite her claim that she is “doing what anyone else would do” in her position.

Patients

Michelle Becraft was nominated by her care team of Dr. David Draper, Nancee Albright, CNP and Lisa Hackman, RN from the TriHealth Cancer Institute. For many years, Michelle has served the patients of TriHealth from the department of finance and revenue cycle management. She worked closely with physicians and then in 2015, ended up visiting the TriHealth Cancer Institute, not to review an issue in the revenue cycle, but as a lung cancer patient. She was under the care of Dr. Draper and Dr. Dan White. Michelle utilized so many services to help her through her treatment cycle and served as an example of how a cancer diagnosis is just a diagnosis and does not define who we are. She continued to carry on a significant workload and demonstrated grace and class throughout her treatment.
Ramona Bittner was nominated by her daughter, Melissa Cunningham, who refers to her as “a warrior, my hero, Mom… our unsung hero”. Ramona was diagnosed with Stage III B Colon Cancer in December 2014. Without complaint, she has remained positive with unimaginable strength. Her willingness to never give up, never give in, and to believe are attributes her daughter aspires to have one day. Ramona still manages to babysit her grandchildren, show up to school functions, sporting events, and would never dream about missing a birthday/holiday or family function no matter how she is feeling that day. Her determination, faith and will to win this battle shows daily. She enjoys life to the fullest and believes in the good no matter what. With a contagious smile and heart of gold, Ramona’s love for her spouse, children, grandchildren, friends and family is truly amazing.

Tom Blankemeyer was nominated by Lisa Kaminski. Tom was living the great life we all hope for - working at P&G, great family, traveling regularly and enjoying life. Until that sunny day when everything changed - seizure while in a canoe in rural Canada that resulted in him being returned to Cincinnati with a diagnosis of brain cancer. This was followed by surgery, chemo and radiation - not once but twice (yep - it came back 2 years later). During the 30 years Lisa has known Tom, he’s not been a complainer and that has remained true. Never has he uttered “why me?” or “this sucks”. As is typical of Tom, he’s thrown himself into getting involved and being a leader within brain tumor research, patient advocacy and fundraising locally. Team Tip A Canoe and Tom Too is consistently a large, vocal presence at the “Walk Ahead For A Brain Tumor Cure” every fall and Tom’s been involved with patient outreach and speaking regularly.

Susan Canavan Flynn was nominated by Kent Wellington. Susie has lived with breast cancer and now helps other women live more fully with breast cancer. She was a recipient of a vacation from the Karen Wellington Foundation for LIVING with Breast Cancer. Upon returning from that trip she became a dedicated member of the Karen Wellington Foundation Giving Committee, helping give some fun to numerous women LIVING with breast cancer. Part of a healthy cycle of receiving and giving, she volunteers with a smile and has great credibility with other recipients. Susie has “been there before” and recipients like seeing a smiling face that belongs to one of them. Susie has also gotten her family involved with helping others who are living with cancer.
Sandy Ditmore was nominated by Judi Houchens. Sandy’s positive spirit in the face of fighting her battle against stage IV colon cancer has been inspiring not only to all who meet her but especially to her family—especially her son, Jesse, who was moved to start the Sandy Strong project. Sandy was officially diagnosed in March 2012. One year later, Sandy was declared cancer-free. But in December 2013, she was diagnosed again with cancer in her liver and lungs. Regardless of the setback, Sandy remains positively spirited. Sandy says, “When I hear people say, ‘I wish I could be as happy as you,’ I say, ‘You can be. It’s a choice. The first thing to be thankful for every day is that you woke up.’” She adds, “Jesse is proof positive that this outlook I have, the way I’m living, is being reflected in the actions of my son.”

Tony and Missy Duggan were nominated by Jaimie Robinson. Tony and his wife, Missy, founded Project Peace. Tony was diagnosed with stage IV Squamous Cell Carcinoma (throat cancer) in July 2013. If not for the generosity of their support network, their journey would be incredibly different. After Tony was declared cancer free in 2014, they wanted to help others with head & neck cancer who may not have similar support. They took lessons learned from their journey and created a nonprofit whose mission is to promote hope and peace for families affected by head & neck cancer. This allows families to focus on what is most important – Winning the battle against cancer. They have made an amazing impact at the Christ Hospital Cancer Center over the past few months by donating the Peace Bell, a bell that symbolizes the end of treatment. All radiation patients ring this bell after they finish their final treatment. Almost every day someone is ringing that bell with huge accomplishment and reward. Additionally Project Peace has assisted patients with transportation and financial assistance. Tony and Missy both have full time jobs on top of their work with Project Peace; they are committed, generous and humble. Tony is still living with the side effects of radiation, and this has not stopped his energy to pursue more ways to help others during their fight.

Rodney Haley was nominated by Brooke Gillespie, RN. Rodney Haley has been a patient of Brooke at the Christ Hospital for the past two years. She has grown especially attached to Rodney’s fun-loving attitude and infectious personality. Even though he continues to battle stage IV lung cancer, he has been a warrior in his fight and has learned to live in the moment. He is very gracious to the staff and they feel so lucky to be able to take care of him. Even though he is going thru treatment every two weeks, he always makes it a point to remember their birthdays, and bring gifts after returning from vacations. He has
taught all of the staff to be selfless, and even when times are tough, sometimes the best medicine is paying it forward. #rockstrong

**JP Heiremans** was nominated by Joanie Manzo. JP was diagnosed in 2011 with metastatic lung cancer that quickly travelled to his brain. He fought back and enrolled in a clinical trial with the attitude, “whatever they learn from me hopefully can help others.” The trial drug made a difference and was approved 3 months in advance of schedule. JP’s data showed that advanced lung cancer can be treated, and patients can live a high quality life. JP was so grateful for the care from his “OHC family” he decided to give back and become a volunteer. JP comforts, teaches, listens, laughs, delivers his homemade brownies, and shows unconditional love to all the patients, families, and the staff he works with at OHC’s Blue Ash office. Recently JP loaned a patient his extra car because she did not have transportation. This was 6 months ago, and the patient is still using this car so she can go to her cancer appointments and provide transportation for her son. JP exemplifies the inner strength and determination we all hope for during a time of crisis and continually gives back because of his selflessness, or as he would say “gratefulness” for others.

**Camdyn King** was nominated by Wanda Meriwether MSW, LSW, Brian Weiss MD, Katie Richardson NP, Rebecca Reckers RN and Beth Stockman RN. Camdyn was diagnosed at the age of 3 with high-risk neuroblastoma. He was placed into the care of Children’s Services shortly after his diagnosis and spent over a year in the hospital while receiving treatment. After treatment he was placed with Robert and Renee King and his foster family soon became his forever family. Unfortunately, shortly after Camdyn went to live with the Kings, his cancer returned with a vengeance. Camdyn was fully aware that he would eventually die from the disease and relied on his faith and his family for comfort. Camdyn chose to be at home rather than in the hospital so that he could be with the family that adopted him and officially made him a King last December. Before he died Camdyn began writing a book about his cancer experiences. He was worried that he would not finish his book and asked his mom to finish it for him. On April 2, 2016 Camdyn passed away at the young age of 7. His courage and strength live on through his family.

**Angela Pascale** was nominated by Kevin Reynolds. Angela has taken on cancer with zeal, humor and positivity. A married mother of two and small business owner, a breast cancer diagnosis could have caused a lesser person to retreat in to fear and solitude. Instead, she shared her journey on Facebook. All of it – the hair
loss, the aching body from the Neulasta injections, the doctor’s visits, and finally, the amazing news that she was being released early from radiation treatments because she was in remission. She lifted everyone up with her perseverance and strength, with her total dedication to her family through the tough times, with a sometimes maudlin but always wicked sense of humor, and with her ability to still make some of the most creative and delicious cakes for her customers, moving her “Sweetly Wild” business to greater success. Kevin has never been more proud of a friend or fellow human being for her bravery and determination in the face of a cancer diagnosis. He knows that she will continue to be an inspiration for fellow cancer warriors and, more importantly, for her children who get to grow up with their mom, one tough broad and cancer survivor.

Patricia Stone was nominated by Dr. Edward Crane. Patricia previously dealt with breast cancer many years ago and now is battling stage IV lung cancer. Although she would prefer to receive no extra attention, she is an unsung hero for many reasons. She brings a positive force and energy to clinic. Her outlook and demeanor provides a sense of happiness to the staff that carries over to the staff’s interactions with other patients throughout the day. Regardless of her problems and issues, she always has a smile on her face and an infectious optimism. She supports her children and grandchildren by attending many of their events and ensuring that they know she loves and supports them. To help all cancer patients, Patricia entered a clinical trial over a year ago to evaluate a new drug for the treatment of lung cancer. Because of her participation, this drug was able to be approved for all patients and help so many others. Thank you, Patricia, for being a positive light for your caregivers, your family and all patients with cancer!

Kimberly Watkins was nominated by Linda Katsetos, RN of the TriHealth Cancer Institute. Kimberly was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer in 2010 and bone metastasis in 2012. Through the last 6 years she has also been diagnosed with diabetes, has had blood clots, kidney and cardiac issues. She has had significant left arm lymphedema for many years. In late December she developed extreme pain and swelling in her right arm. As this is her dominant arm, she had to rely on help from her family to bathe and get dressed. Kim is a very independent woman and unaccustomed to receiving help from others. Through all this pain and obstacles she never complains. Instead she worries about others who have to assist her with activities of daily living. She has a strong faith in God and prayer. She never hesitates to tell others to “have a blessed day.”
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**2016 Joslin Haggart Yeiser Unsung Hero Awards**

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Cancer Family Care fills a unique role for families that face cancer. We are the only organization in our area that provides services in a private, one-on-one setting. While some organizations concentrate on finding a cure for cancer, Cancer Family Care focuses on strengthening the well-being and alleviating the suffering of people who are battling cancer here and now, or who are grieving the loss of a loved one due to cancer.

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Joslin Haggart Yeiser

Joslin Haggart Yeiser was a quiet hero, according to her husband, Eric Yeiser. “She did it her own way, without a complaint. She accepted her cancer and did the best with it.”

Mrs. Yeiser was an active volunteer for numerous charities throughout her life. She was active on the boards of the Maple Knoll Home for Unwed Mothers and the Industrial Counseling Center, a pioneer organization in drug and alcohol rehabilitation. A mother of four, she adored music and nature. She was an acclaimed athlete who played basketball in college and enjoyed mixed doubles tennis with Mr. Yeiser, and together they won the Metropolitan Championship.

“It is fitting that the Unsung Hero Awards be named for Joslin,” explained Mr. Yeiser. “Even in her last months, when she was suffering from cancer and in pain, she was still able to maintain her smile and sense of humor.”