

life times

WINTER 2011



my going away party

It was Lynne's idea, the party. Months into her diagnosis of lung cancer, post radiation, she knew she wasn't going to get well. Never one to miss a celebration, Lynne certainly didn't want to miss the party that she knew would happen after her funeral. She decided to have her own "going away party" while she could be there to see and thank everyone she loved.

When her friends and family received the invitation, Lynne began receiving phone calls.

"People would call and ask, 'where are you going?'" said Lynne, "and I'd say, 'I'm going to heaven to hang out with Big Jim and Jesus!'"

Big Jim, Lynne's husband of 47 years, died 12 years ago. Their first date was on the night they graduated from 8th grade, and instead of joining their classmates on the senior trip four years later, they ran away to get married.

Blessed with three children, today there are 5 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren under the age of nine. "That gives you a little celebration stuff right there," said Lynne, "to have the '9 under 9' all together!"

It was a grand party, all purple (her favorite color), balloons and butterflies, something she'd always loved, and it lasted most all the day, a big dessert spread, with lots of friends and family, many of whom journeyed long distances to share in the celebration.

The party was just what Lynne wanted, and the mood was festive and joyful. "When they heard of my diagnosis, people would say, 'I'm so sorry,' and my response was, 'Don't be sorry—this is the highlight of my life. Going to heaven is what I've been waiting my whole life for!'"

Lynne became a patient of Hospice of East Texas in July of 2010, and found that her view of life and approach to death perfectly mirrored the hospice philosophy of living each day to the fullest and viewing death as a natural part of life.

Determined to make each day count, Lynne set about creating memories for her family. She sold her home so that she could have the money to do some things that were important to her. "I won't be here to go to my granddaughters' weddings, so I put aside some money for each of them to buy their wedding dresses. On the day they get married, their 'Nanny Goose' will be there with them," she said. She also created education funds for her grandsons to give them encouragement and a headstart on their future.

(continued on page 2)



(going away party, cont.)

“I’ve loved being who I am these last few months,” Lynne added. “I’m trying to get as much of me as I can on paper, saying who I am and what I’m doing and why. I think it matters. It matters to me now and it will matter to my family later on.”

Even when she was admitted to HomePlace, Lynne’s bright spirit shined through.

“There’s so much to enjoy here!” she exclaimed one fall afternoon as she shared her story. “Anyone who’s afraid of dying is a fool. We’re all going to die! It’s coming your way—don’t be afraid of it. Life is great! New things just keep happening to me, even now. I’m meeting new people, making new friends. I’m reading the most interesting book, and Beverly, the volunteer, is coming by later, and we’re going to watch a movie together.”

Quick to praise and always expressing her gratitude, Lynne was thrilled that we wanted to tell her story and capture something of her spirit for the Hospice newsletter. “I hope someone gets peace and joy from my story, because that’s what life is all about, isn’t it? Searching for peace and joy?”

*Lillian Bishop passed away at
Hospice HomePlace on
December 29, 2010, with her
family surrounding her.*

honoring Dr. Frazier



Keith Frazier M.D.

*Endowment for Pediatric Hospice Care
Hospice of East Texas Foundation*

Keith Frazier was a good man and a good physician. Board certified in Pediatrics, Internal Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Care, Keith served at Trinity Mother Frances Health System, at the Smith County Public Health District, and at Kijabe Hospital in Kijabe, Kenya. In 2006 he began his work with

Hospice of East Texas, where he was instrumental in developing the pediatric hospice program and was one of the founding medical directors of Texas Palliative Care.

Though he held impressive academic and board credentials, Keith saw his professional life as more than a medical practice – it was a ministry. In all that he was and all that he did, Keith was a living example of a man of faith. All who knew Keith Frazier and had the privilege of working with him were inspired by his gentle ways, his humility and his genuine concern for each person with whom he came in contact.

As his wife, Terri, shared at his funeral, “Keith was never a man to make much of himself, but always made much of his God.” He faced his illness and death with the certainty that God was in control, and his only desire was that his personal trials somehow caused others to turn to the faith that was the lodestar of his own life.

It is fitting that the first named endowment at The Hospice of East Texas Foundation be created in honor of Dr. Keith Frazier, beloved friend, colleague and mentor. Proceeds from the endowment will be used each year in support of Hospice of East Texas’ pediatric hospice program, providing comfort and support to families facing the death of a child. Caring for the smallest of hospice patients was dear to Keith Frazier. Our hope is that this small tribute will uplift the



example of a good man and a good physician whose legacy is his life as an exemplary servant to his God.

Rebekah, Amy and Terri Frazier with Hospice of East Texas President and CEO Marjorie Ream at the announcement of the Keith Frazier MD Endowment.

what do YOU want?

Committed. . .passionate. . . visionary. . .and generous are words used to describe Brooks Gremmels.

Widely known as the man who is bringing life back to Ben Wheeler, Texas, Brooks has made huge financial, creative and intellectual investments in the small East Texas community. Now the owner of most every property in old downtown Ben Wheeler, Brooks, his wife, Rese, and their staff are slowly turning a virtually abandoned town into a thriving center. Restaurants, a music venue, artists' workshops, and boutiques now occupy renovated space made available to them at virtually no cost. What does Brooks expect in return? That they will help him bring Ben Wheeler back to what it was when he was a young man growing up, a nice home-town community that anyone would feel proud to call home.

Brooks' passion and commitment extend beyond Ben Wheeler and include his devotion to Hospice of East Texas. When his sister was very ill a number of years ago, "my other sister and I just didn't know," said Brooks. "We had no idea about Hospice, and didn't know what to expect when our sister was admitted to HomePlace. All I can say is, 'I wish we had gone earlier'".

The last four days of his sister's life were a gift to Brooks and his family. "It was peaceful and beautiful beyond words," he said, "and we laughed and talked like old times." There was one thing in particular that Brooks found extraordinary. "The only question my sister and our family were asked was 'What do YOU want?' The staff were there to give us or do for us anything that we wanted. 'Do you want a cupcake? Do you need a pain pill? What do YOU want?' It was all about us."

Their experience has turned Brooks and Rese into strong advocates for hospice care and made them generous donors to Hospice of East Texas. "I couldn't believe that no one asked us for money or talked about what we would owe after my sister



died. The subject about who was going to pay for her care just never came up."

Brooks is on a mission to educate people about the benefits of early referrals for hospice care. "I'd like to tell people 'don't wait!' So many people like us hear about hospice at the last minute, and it's almost too late. Dying is a part of living. It is not an option. . . the option is to call Hospice of East Texas."

**Brooks and Rese Gremmels
in downtown Ben Wheeler**

sew be it

Donna Williams is finding her way to a "new normal" by returning to her love of sewing.



At age 5, Donna began sewing with her mother and sisters, and turned this creative outlet into a business in 1995. Grieving after a number of losses, including her mother's death at HomePlace in 2009, Donna found herself unable to sew.

But in a Hospice of East Texas grief support group, Donna learned a term that struck a chord for her—"a new normal." "Nora Gravois, the Hospice Bereavement Coordinator, uses this term all the time," said Donna. "My life is not the same as it was. It is not getting better so much as it is getting different. I have found a new normal, and that's okay."

Even though she had not sewn in a long time, Donna made a pillow for Nora, embroidered with "New Normal", and found herself back in business. Her company's name reflects her personal philosophy—Sew Be It. "Sewing is a wonderful outlet for me. It requires thought, creativity and purpose," said Donna. "The support group has been such a big help to all of us. No one should have to travel this road alone."

For information on Hospice of East Texas grief support programs and workshops, visit our website at www.hospiceofeasttexas.org or call the Bereavement Department at 903-266-3400. Programs are offered throughout Hospice's 23-county service area.

Hospice of East Texas Board Chair, David Nelson, cuts the ribbon to dedicate the Walk of Friends in Nacogdoches. The Walk offers residents of Deep East Texas an opportunity to remember a friend or loved one with a memorial brick.



For the third consecutive year, Hospice of East Texas is honored to be the recipient of a portion of the proceeds from the East Texas Triathlon. Pictured are the officers of East Texas Triathletes, Steve Farris, Gina Bolton and Duke Gill.

Toni Johnson brought lunch for the staff and families at HomePlace in memory of her husband and in thanksgiving for the care he received.



Hospice of East Texas volunteer Wayne Golden was recognized by his employer, Austin Bank, for his work as a hospice volunteer. Even with a busy work week schedule, Wayne finds time to volunteer two Saturdays a month, greeting volunteers at the front desk. Pictured with Wayne is Sissy Austin, Vice President of Austin Bank, who is also a Hospice of East Texas board member.

Hospice of East Texas and Hospice of East Texas Foundation welcome new board members (Front row: Todd Sigmon and Greg Kimmell; Back row: Thomas Smith, Mike Allen, Bob Dyer and Doug Bolles)



HOET thank you

I cannot adequately express the appreciation I feel for the care you gave my mother during the past year and the support you provided our family. Beyond the knowledge you shared with us and the physical assistance you gave my mother, the caring you showed her made a stressful time so much more bearable. Each member of your team seemed to have a special gift for doing their difficult job while still connecting on a personal level.

Thanks to you and all the many other folks at Hospice of East Texas. Thank you for remembering the one-year anniversary of my husband's home-going. You have been so helpful during this year, and at times my life-line to get me through a day or a week.

...

Please accept the sincere thanks and appreciation of our entire family . . . for the wonderful services that your organization and its extraordinarily talented staff provided for Gloria during her last time of life. She was comforted, loved and treated in an exemplary manner by the Hospice of East Texas and its representatives. . . These medical experts were not just care-givers, they became members of the family.



Volunteers who work the front desk at HomePlace attend a special training.



Families gather to place special ornaments on the Holiday Remembrance Tree in memory of their loved ones.



Tommie House, Charlie McCain and Bernice Griffin prepare acknowledgments for Light Up A Life donations.

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Each and every one of the 904 gifts received for Light Up A Life 2010 is deeply appreciated, and each will be used to further the mission of The Hospice of East Texas.

Sponsor level gifts are listed in this newsletter, but heartfelt thanks go to each of the friends and donors who made 2010 a banner year for the Hospice of East Texas Foundation's signature fundraiser. Proceeds from Light Up A Life help to fund the extras that make nonprofit hospice care so exceptional and ensure that Hospice of East Texas can serve all who need care and support at the end of life, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Thank you to our contributors!

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