



Left to right: Darline McCraw, Shirley Lasser, Tom Lasser, Elwood Stetson

life times

FALL 2008

for better, for worse . . .

Shirley and Tom Lasser stood together in the chapel at Hospice of East Texas' HomePlace and repeated these words for the second time . . . "For better, for worse; For richer, for poorer; In sickness and in health; To love and to cherish; 'Til death causes us to part."

Forty five years ago, when they first joined hands and hearts, Shirley and Tom had no idea where their life together would take them or what living out their marriage vows would require of each of them. Now, looking back at a life of both blessings and tribulations, they know what it means to comfort and honor one another through all that life can bring.

There were some very good times. Both Shirley and Tom built successful careers as business people and entrepreneurs. As they raised a family, became a part of their community, and enjoyed sharing travel and hobbies together, their love and devotion to one another deepened. And there have been some hard times. For twenty five years, Shirley has struggled with polycythemia, a blood disorder with a terminal diagnosis. She has been a hospice patient since July of 2007, with Tom right by her side every

day as her primary caregiver. They had planned to renew their wedding vows on their fiftieth anniversary, but Shirley and Tom have always been practical and honest with one another. They agreed that forty five years together were good enough for a celebration.

And celebrate they did, with family and friends from all over the country and Hospice Chaplain Elwood Stetson officiating. The "something borrowed" came from Darline McCraw, the nurse on whom they have come to depend and whom they love like family. It was the bouquet from the forty fifth anniversary ceremony at which Darline's own parents' renewed their wedding vows.

The family brought a cake all the way from Iowa, decorated with the figures of a bride and groom on a long, winding path "so like our lives together," said Shirley, "except the path on the cake was smooth and flat. Our life has had its long smooth stretches, but it's also had pot holes, fallen trees, even major boulders."

There was some discussion about where to put the bride and groom on the cake. Tom was adamant. They should be placed toward the end of the path, but not at the very end. "I know we have more behind us than in front of us," he said, "but we still have some things to hope for."

The hospice team has worked hard with

Shirley and Tom on those "things to hope for." "We can't say enough praises for Hospice of East Texas," said Tom. "They get done what we need to get done. Not only are they extremely professional, they are 'bend-over-backwards' nice, every single one of them."

Though their lives are now mostly confined to their home and a complex regimen of blood counts, numerous and ever-changing medicines, and the always-present oxygen, Shirley and Tom are where they love to be and where they want to stay—together and at home. "It's what I want for her," says Tom. "If it's not too hard on Tom," says Shirley.

Some days are a struggle, too much pain, an unexpected symptom, a new side effect from a necessary medicine, but each day for Shirley and Tom always ends the same way. "We have some words together at the end of the day," said Tom. "We thank God for the day, no matter what it's brought us, and then, greedy souls that we are, we always ask, "Can we have one more?"

For better, for worse. For richer, for poorer. In sickness and in health. To love and to cherish. Til death causes us to part. Shirley and Tom Lasser know what it means.

a note from Marji

WE OFFER THE VERY BEST...

The Hospice of East Texas takes great pride in being the region's center of excellence for hospice care. We



constantly search for new ways to provide the **very best** services to our patients and their families. The result is the expanding

excellence of our basic hospice services as well as the creation of new programs to serve East Texans at a difficult time in their lives.

As a part of the care we offer, The Hospice of East Texas provides the wheelchairs, hospital beds and other medical equipment which make it possible for families to care for their loved ones at home. This summer our organization took on the enormous task of bringing the provision of this durable medical equipment "in-house." This strategic business decision was designed to provide our patients with the **very best** equipment available and also create a cost-saving measure for The Hospice of East Texas.

Elizabeth Kidd coordinated the purchase of literally hundreds

of hospital beds, special mattresses, wheelchairs, and oxygen concentrators, equipped three vans for deliveries and hired three drivers. She and her staff began replacing the existing equipment in the homes of our 250 plus homecare patients and put procedures in place to insure that equipment was ready and available as soon as new patients were admitted. As this newsletter goes to print, Elizabeth and her staff have transitioned all of our patients at home and in nursing facilities to the new equipment, offering our patients the **very best**.

But the **very best**, as always, is about our people. Butch Miles, one of the drivers who delivers our state-of-the-art equipment, was recently the first Hospice of East Texas employee to

arrive at a new patient's home. He set up the hospital bed and demonstrated how to use it, put the wheelchair in place, and answered all the technical questions, but then he spent an extra hour, listening to and comforting the patient's wife. At that particular moment, she needed someone to talk to about her fears and concerns, and Butch was there.

I am excited about Hospice of East Texas' new medical equipment service, I am happy that it allows us to be careful stewards of our resources, and I am especially proud of Elizabeth Kidd, Butch Miles and all the staff at The Hospice of East Texas. They are the reason we can offer the **very best** to our patients and families.

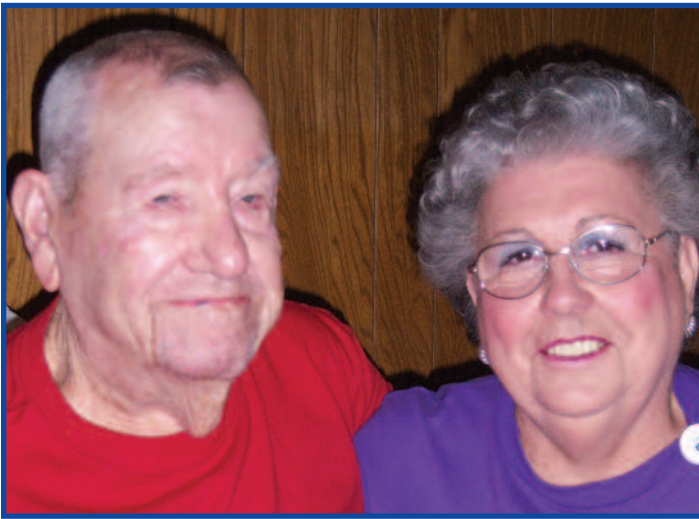


DME Program Employees left to right: Butch Miles, Elizabeth Kidd, Angel Avalos, Erin Kilgore and Kim Christiansen

beverly & bailey

Beverly Jimerson is a self-described “big talker.” For forty years, she worked in banking, talking and talking all day, enjoying every minute of conversation with customers and friends. Retirement seemed like a pretty quiet place.

Now Beverly is back in the talking business in her role as a volunteer for The Hospice of East Texas, and she’s met her talking match in Rolen Bailey, the patient with whom she’s worked for more than a year.



Though Mr. Bailey’s cancer diagnosis and blindness have largely confined him to his home, he still enjoys a good visit, and Beverly and “Bailey”, as she calls him, regularly talk their way through the hours. They have a standard routine. “I always wear the same thing, a purple t-shirt and blue jeans, and I park at the same spot in the yard so Bailey knows it’s my car when I come in the back door,” says Beverly. “Bailey greets me with the same question, ‘When did you get here?’ I say, ‘Yesterday’, and he says,

‘If you got here yesterday you would have been here before NOW!’ We have so much fun!”

But their visits are more than fun. Bailey’s wife, Minnie, uses the opportunity of Beverly’s visit to go to the post office, the bank, the beauty shop or the grocery store, things that are difficult in her role as primary caregiver. “While Ms. Minnie is gone, Bailey and I solve the world’s problems,” says Beverly, “and that can take us three or four hours.”

One of their favorite topics is the oil business and the current price of a barrel of oil, something Bailey keeps up with since his retirement from oil field construction work.

Clearly “Beverly and Bailey,” as they call

themselves, enjoy each other’s company, and though Beverly is obviously a big help to the Bailey family, she insists the blessing is hers. “God sent me this talker to talk to. Sometimes I have to give him a “time out” sign, so that he’ll stop talking and let me get in a word. I love volunteering!”

If you would like to join Beverly as a volunteer, please call The Hospice of East Texas at 903-266-3400 or 800-777-9860.

*“It was all wonderful.
We thank God for all of you!*

*It was perfect.
God’s hand on earth.
Thank you!”*

• • •

*“Like ours, many families
live out of town.
We found the facility patient
rooms and the common
areas very relaxing and
comfortable and allowed us
to be together and give each
other support.”*

• • •

*“The care, concern,
facilities and entire staff
were all such a blessing
to us as a family.”*

• • •

*“I would recommend
Hospice to anyone.
There was not one person
who came to us
that we didn’t love.”*



Christ Episcopal Church in Tyler provides lunch once a month to the families and guests of HomePlace. Pictured are **Betty Swann, Sue Deakins and Liz Shaw.**



Employees of **Bob Francis Ford** in Alto, TX came together to submit a donation in memory of **Lanita McDuff**, the wife of their co-worker **Mike McDuff**.



Employees of the **U.S. District Court** in Tyler volunteered their time for the **United Way Day of Caring** by washing visitor's cars at HomePlace.



When the teacher of **Erin Montalto**, daughter of HOET nurse **Anita Montalto**, gave each student in her class \$10 to "do something good with", **Erin** donated it to HOET. **Erin** is shown with HOET President/CEO **Marji Ream**.



Tracy Barnes from The Bullard Kiwanis Club proudly shows their donation of a PlayStation 2 game and children DVDs to the Kids Room at HomePlace.



The great grandchildren of a patient attend a ceremony for a brick in memory of Great Grandmother on the HOET Walk of Friends.



HOET's Dr. Keith Frazier was the celebrity chef of a weekly cookout at HomePlace for families, guests, volunteers and employees.



Flora's card for all the angels who work at HOET.



Edom United Methodist Church pastor, Russell Hall and Joe Cuthbertson, husband of HOET volunteer Marlis Cuthbertson, donate their time to renew the front flowerbeds at HomePlace.

*"You are the best.
I always recommend you.
Your nurses are wonderful.
They have taught me
so, so much."*

...

*"What a beautiful,
caring place for my Dan
to spend his last
ten days on earth.
The peace, quiet,
cleanliness, nursing care
and thoughtfulness
toward caregivers was
more than perfect."*

...

*"Dear Hospice Friends,
Everytime I see a quilt now
I think of Hospice and
what good care you gave to
my mother, Billie Shertzer
in June of this year. All of
your kindnesses are
remembered. Please accept
this quilt as a small token
of our appreciation.
P.S. My daughter Flora has
made her own card for all
the angels who work there."*

THE HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS FOUNDATION
PRESENTS

Light up a LIFE

As the holiday season approaches, we hope you will consider supporting The Hospice of East Texas by making a contribution to Light Up A Life, the signature fundraiser that has been an essential source of private donations for our programs for more than twenty years.

As you honor your friends or remember your loved ones, your

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A FRIEND OR RELATIVE



IN HONOR OF SOMEONE WHO LIGHTS UP YOUR LIFE



AS A HOLIDAY GIFT IN HONOR OF FAMILY, FRIENDS
OR BUSINESS ASSOCIATES

gifts to Light Up A Life provide the financial support essential to Hospice of East Texas' ability to offer extraordinary care at the end of life at no direct cost to patients and their families.

Watch your mail for Light Up A Life materials. What better way to give than to make a contribution that will directly touch the lives of people who need our care and compassion?



the source of a vision the power of a vision

The Hospice of East Texas was founded by the vision, generosity and caring spirit of East Texans.

In 1981, Mrs. Evelyn Lake visited a friend in Arizona and saw first-hand what

hospice care could mean to patients and families at a difficult time in their lives. Determined that her own community should have the same services, Mrs. Lake became the catalyst for the creation of The Hospice of East Texas when she shared her vision with community leaders and enlisted the support of The Junior League of Tyler.

The Evelyn Lake Society was created to pay tribute to those who have a vision for the future, as Mrs.

Lake did. Its members are generous friends who have made a commitment to The Hospice of East Texas through their estate plans. By naming The Hospice of East Texas as the beneficiary of a gift

through bequests, trust agreements, life insurance, retirement accounts or other planned gifts, members of The Evelyn Lake Society ensure that Hospice will be able to provide our caring services to all who need them for years and years to come.

Making a gift through your estate to The Hospice of East Texas enables you to create a legacy of care for all East Texans. There are no membership fees or minimum gift amounts to join the Lake Society. The size of your gift is entirely your choice and is kept strictly confidential.

We hope you will join other compassionate individuals with a vision for the future by making a planned gift to The Hospice of East Texas. The commitments of members of The Evelyn Lake Society help ensure the continued excellence of The Hospice of East Texas and guarantee that Mrs. Lake's gracious and generous vision will always endure.

If you have included The Hospice of East Texas in a bequest or other planned gift, we hope you will let us know. Your willingness to be listed as a member of The Evelyn Lake Society encourages others to follow your example. To find out more about joining The Evelyn Lake Society, please contact Nancy Lamar, Vice President of Community Relations at 903-266-3402.

The Hospice of East Texas Foundation

On October 1, 2008, fundraising to support The Hospice of East Texas will undergo an exciting change.

On that date, the newly created Hospice of East Texas Foundation will assume responsibility for the important task of raising money to support the exceptional end-of-life care provided by The Hospice of East Texas.

A HISTORY OF SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING

For the past twenty five years, Hospice of East Texas has raised private funds through a variety of appeals and events to help close the gap in revenue between what it costs to provide care to patients and families and what is received in reimbursement from Medicare and insurance companies.

Funds raised from Light Up A Life, memorial gifts and donations, special events such as the annual Hospice of East Texas Open Tennis Tournament, and the work of The Hospice Shoppe, are an important source of revenue for The Hospice of East Texas. They make it possible for Hospice to provide quality, compassionate care to everyone who needs it, regardless of their ability to pay, and to offer important services such as bereavement support for both hospice families and the community at large free of charge.

WHY A NEW ENTITY?

In establishing The Hospice of East Texas Foundation, the board of directors of The Hospice of East Texas has created an independent non-profit entity whose sole mission will be to

assume responsibility for these significant fundraising efforts and to effectively manage Hospice's endowment funds. All distributions from The Hospice of East Texas Foundation will be returned to The Hospice of East Texas to further its mission of providing comprehensive, coordinated care and support to persons with life limiting illnesses and the families who care for them.

Separating the fundraising and endowment management functions from the day to day operations of The Hospice of East Texas, will accomplish several things for the organization. It will add the focused expertise in fundraising, stewardship and fiscal accountability of a separate, volunteer board of directors, chosen for their fiduciary experience, their dedication to The Hospice of East Texas and their

commitment to our community. It will also allow the board of directors of The Hospice of East Texas and its staff leadership to concentrate on the continued growth and excellence of the programs and clinical services provided by Hospice.

A MILESTONE FOR THE HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS

The creation of The Hospice of East Texas Foundation is the most recent milestone in the organizational development of The Hospice of East Texas, known throughout our region as the key provider of hospice care. The foundation's focus on fundraising and stewardship of resources will help to ensure the success and stability of The Hospice of East Texas for years to come.



The Board of Directors of The Hospice of East Texas Foundation. Left to right, Glenn Collins, Marjorie Ream, Rick Allen, Barbara Bass, Steve Mills, Ann Lake and Jim Mazzu

board of directors

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VICE CHAIRMAN
Holly Boyd
SECRETARY
David Nelson
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Margo Adams
Sissy Austin
Britt Brookshire
Taylor Burns
Jeannette Calhoun
Mary Ann Cozby

Bob Evans
Genny Horaney
Keith Ingram
Mary Elizabeth Jackson
Rick Jett (Ex Officio)
Mel Lovelady

Dr. Jonathan MacClements
Dr. Michael Massar
Debbie Roosth
Ray Thompson
Marty Wiggins

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PRESIDENT/CEO

Myanh Bui
VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE

Danny Hardman
VICE PRESIDENT OF
CLINICAL OPERATIONS

Nancy Lamar
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COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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Shane Lee
DIRECTOR OF
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Kurt Lorenz
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Kim Reimann
DIRECTOR OF INPATIENT CARE

Christine Morawski
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COMMUNITY OUTREACH
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Christi Morris
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OUTPATIENT CARE