

The Vigil

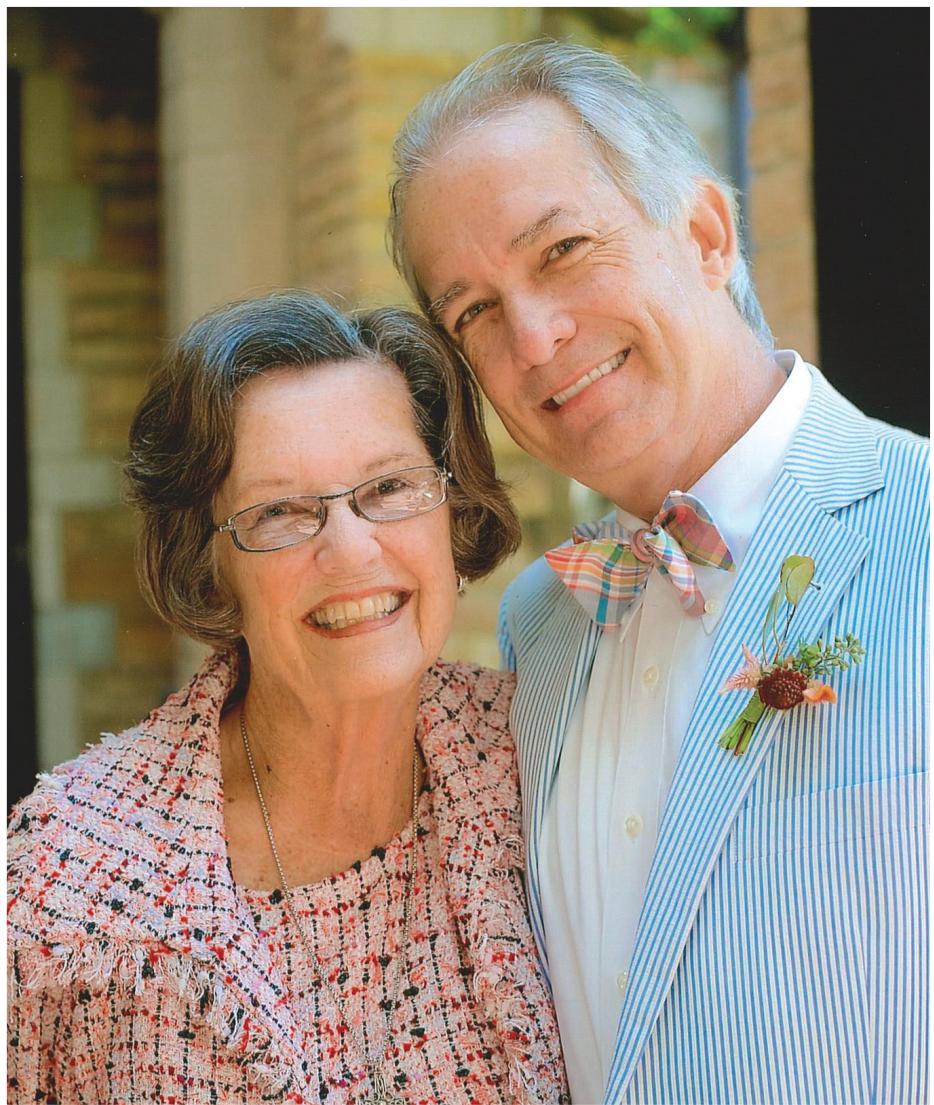


St.Vincent's
FOUNDATION
*A ministry of Ascension
St. Vincent's*

Sisters' Vigil

Fall 2020

The Newtons, the Foundation, and College GameDay: *How one family honored their loved one*



Sue A. Newton and Lamar A. Newton

While other football fans reminisce this fall about the pre-COVID joys of packed stadiums, tailgating, and campus-wide celebrations, Jane Newton remembers watching 2019 college football on a tiny hospital TV screen. She particularly recalls jumping from her seat one Saturday to see the replay of Tide running back Najee Harris hurdling over a defender. “I had to get close to the TV so I could tell Lamar what happened,” she says of that day and other Saturdays she spent with her brother during his hospital stays.

Like so many Alabamians, Lamar Newton was an avid sports fan. But unlike others, he spent most of the 2019 football season in St. Vincent’s Birmingham’s South Tower. “He and his wife Martha actually moved here from Atlanta in October, 2018 so he could pursue his medical care at St. Vincent’s Birmingham,” Jane says. “Moving here prolonged his life.”

Lamar was known for his zest for life. Like his father, the late attorney and St. Vincent’s Foundation Board Member Alex Newton, Lamar loved people—and people loved him. He could find humor in anything and warmly welcomed

(continued on page 2)

hospital staff and visitors. When his children, Katie Glover, Alex Newton II, and other family members visited on fall Saturdays, Jane would draw near to the TV, reading jersey names aloud so everyone knew who made the play.

And so, as Lamar went home late last year under hospice care, the family told him they were donating 32-inch TVs for every room on “his” fourth floor.

“It meant a lot to him to know that before he died December 27,” Jane says. “It may only be a TV, but Lamar knew that it brought people and conversation into the room, it offered a respite from medical issues. As a family, it means a lot to know we might be able to honor Lamar in this way, to make a difference in the lives of others.”

Lamar’s mother, Sue Newton, was more than willing to help with the gift. After all, St. Vincent’s Foundation is practically a grafted branch in the family tree. Son Dr. Rob Newton, of Newton & King Neurology, practices at St. Vincent’s. Granddaughter Margaret Manuel, daughter of Kelly Newton Hammond, is past-chair and current member of the Foundation’s Junior Advisory Board.

“They are a remarkable and generous family,” says Foundation President Susan Sellers. “For three generations this family has supported St. Vincent’s. While the Foundation must direct its critical funds toward medical needs, the Newtons’ support has repeatedly helped us better bridge aesthetic gaps that influence our patient and family experiences.”

“Because our father was on the Foundation board, we learned what the Foundation does for patients,” Jane says. “Even years ago, while our father was in the hospital, he was an advocate for St. Vincent’s patients. When your family is in this situation, you think about how to help others.” †



COVID-19 underscores importance of Foundation-provided C.A.R.E.

The Newtons had no way of knowing the providential timing of their early 2020 gifts. By late spring, when COVID-19’s infection risks prohibited general hospital visitation, TVs became a lifeline for many patients. Meanwhile the Foundation funded the C.A.R.E. Channel to provide additional comfort during these unprecedented times.

The C.A.R.E. Channel features peaceful, non-repetitive nature scenes and soothing music. The 24-hour format includes daytime/nighttime imagery to support circadian rhythm, enhance sleep, and reduce hospital noise. Ascension Alabama Chief Mission Integration Officer Wayne Carmello-Harper says that although C.A.R.E. supports all patients, it’s particularly helpful to patients on comfort care or if isolated due to the virus.

“Patients note that they feel less stressful due to the continuous music and images,” he says. “We are always shaping culture by our actions and words. The C.A.R.E. Channel is an important contributor in advancing a healing environment.”

Memorials *Lord, may our prayers come before you in memory of those we entrust to your eternal care.*

John P. Ansley
Ruby S. Ansley
Dudley “Red” Benson
Margaret H. Bernhard
Neva Brantley
James Bruno
Johnny R. Busby
Joe Butler
John A. Clopton
Linda M. Compton
Mrs. Cote
David C. Daigle
Mattie Davis

Henry G. Edmondson
Dr. John R. Faucette
William T. Ferguson
Jerry J. Fiveash
John C. Grabowski
James W. Griffitt
Mary E. Henley
Lee H. Holt
John E. Huie
Jean Iannacone
James L. Jackson
Dr. Shirley S. Letchman
Clive M. Mason

Hazel Mathews
Dr. James D. Moebes
Claude M. Moncus
Jack “Jackie” Andrew Monroe II
William M. Moran
Peggy Null
Madeleine G. Pak
Jeannie Petitjean
Margaret L. Philpot
Yvonne T. H. Porter
Juanita Reno
Helen E. Rozendale
Francis L. Sartain

Pat Schneider
Rosalee C. Sperando
Gary A. Stonicher
James C. Swindle
Emily Thimpson
Howard E. Tidwell
Barbara Townsend
Larry Vinson
Imogene White
John C. Wilburn
Leeann Willcutt

The Red, White, and Blue Initiative: Serving those who serve

November 11, 2020 will not be a normal Veteran's Day at St. Vincent's East. Due to COVID-19, local bands will not perform service anthems in the atrium. ROTC cadets will not present the colors. Staff and visitors will not line the second and third floor balconies to applaud the assembled veterans below.

However, Alabama veterans have not been forgotten. St. Vincent's East Chief Nurse James Epperson and his colleagues at each Ascension St. Vincent's facility are instead adopting the year-round "Red, White, and Blue" program initiated by St. Vincent's Foundation.

"When I saw the email from the Foundation proposing this initiative, I responded immediately. I knew it not only represented my staff's passions but fit the investment Ascension St. Vincent's wants to make in our community."

St. Vincent's Foundation will support each facility by providing veterans with red, white, and blue patient wristbands. In addition to providing that visual recognition of each patient's contribution, the wristbands are expected to provide a holistic care opportunity, as associates use the wristbands to prompt connections with veteran patients.



Madella Womack, RN served 35 years in the Air Force Reserve and Loyal T. Salmon Jr. served a combined 40 years in the Air Force and Army Reserve.

Perhaps the most meaningful connections will be made between those patients and veteran/Reserve associates, who will be identified by Foundation-funded lapel pins. "Until now we've not known which patients or associates have served," Epperson says. "I think if patients and staff members can identify one another it will strike connections and create

bonds. Having a friend-in-arms could be impactful to someone's physical and mental well-being."

The Foundation will also provide American flags for *Final Salute* ceremonies at the close of a veteran's life while in the hospital. Associates will line the hallways to pay their respects as the family follows the flag-draped remains out of the hospital.

"Incorporating the flag in the Final Salute gives an additional gift to the family to cherish in honor and in memory of their loved one," Epperson says. "It is a reminder of their loved one's sacrifice and our gratitude for their service."

The Foundation is now accepting contributions to support our veteran-focused program. **To donate toward serving those who served, visit us online at stvhsfoundation.org or call 205-558-3850. †**

ACT ON EXPANDED TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR YOUR 2020 CHARITABLE GIVING

During this unprecedented global health crisis, complex legislation was passed in March 2020 to help taxpayers, businesses, and non-profits. The following changes may affect your charitable giving strategy for tax year 2020:

- **New Deduction Available:** A reduction in taxable income is available in 2020 for donors who do not itemize their deductions through an above-the-line universal charitable deduction. The adjustment is available for cash gifts up to \$300 per taxpayer or \$600 for a married couple. There are exceptions, so check with your financial advisor.
- **Increased Charitable Deduction Limits:** A 100 percent Adjusted Gross Income limit is available only in 2020 for cash gifts to public charities by those who itemize. This is up from the previous limit of 60 percent. The increase does not apply to carry-over deductions from years prior to 2020. The 100 percent limit is reduced dollar-for-dollar by other itemized charitable deductions and allows donors who make the 100 percent of AGI election to carry over unused deductions up to five additional years.

Important Exceptions of which you should be aware:

- Gifts must be made in cash.
- Gifts must be made to a public charity, not to a supporting foundation, private foundation, or your donor advised fund.

As always, consult your financial advisor before making major changes to your charitable giving plans. For more information, contact St. Vincent's Foundation at 205-558-3850.

How donor dollars saved a “rock star:” “I never imagined it would be used on me.”

For more than a year J. Ryan Humphreys, M.D. campaigned for a St. Vincent’s East Emergency Department ultrasound machine. “It was kind of my baby,” he says. “I thought this would be a very valuable piece of equipment. So, the Foundation got it for us, and it was fantastic.”

Humphreys was so proud of the machine that he showed it to St. Vincent’s

East Cardiovascular Sonographer Kawitta Johnson. “Kawitta is one of my top colleagues; she is very savvy technically, but also someone who’s always smiling and has a great presence with patients. She’s also a marathon runner and just a rock star of a human being.”

Johnson was suitably impressed with how Humphreys planned to use the ultrasound. “I knew how he had advocated for it, and how excited he was to have it as a resource. Since ultrasound is what I do every day, I’ve read about using ultrasound in emergency situations.” And as a longtime Foundation donor and member of the 1898 Society (members give \$1,000 or more annually), Johnson had long seen the Foundation meet critical needs.

Those needs became personal October 21, 2019, when Johnson used her day off to run an errand and had no idea she would find herself in the St. Vincent’s East Emergency Department. Likewise, Humphreys was so busy the same day that he was surprised when the charge nurse interrupted him, saying he was needed urgently. Then she warned him he knew the patient.

“I got in the room, saw a patient who had blood pressure of 60/20 and got this gut feeling she was going to die,” he remembers. “Then I looked at her face and just stiffened. It was Kawitta. Meanwhile, five seasoned nurses – including a flight nurse – couldn’t get an IV started. We brought in the newly acquired ultrasound which enabled us to establish the IV within seconds. The fluids brought her blood pressure up. Then I switched the ultrasound to a different modality and looked at her heart.”

What Humphreys saw was indicative of pulmonary embolism. Within 45 minutes Kawitta received clot-busting drugs. “If I hadn’t had that machine there was no way I could have known what was wrong. The Foundation-provided ultrasound allowed me to save her life. To me, that piece of equipment was worth its weight in gold that day. That’s why I give to the Foundation.”

Johnson doesn’t remember entering the hospital but does remember walking out five days later. Within three months she ran a half-

marathon. She credits God, Humphreys, her St. Vincent’s East colleagues, and Foundation donors for her life and miraculous outcome.

“God works in funny ways. If I had stayed home alone, I would have died,” she says. “I’m just thankful Dr. Humphreys did what he did to get that equipment. Otherwise he couldn’t have made that diagnosis. I’m thankful he was there that day. I’m thankful for anyone who has donated money for this purchase. I never imagined it would be used on me.” †



J. Ryan Humphreys, M.D. and Kawitta Johnson

Why We Volunteer: *Junior Board Members Lucy Poole and Julia Taliaferro*



L-R: Lucy Poole and Julia Taliaferro

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas for St. Vincent's Foundation Junior Board members. The board's first-ever "Deck Your Halls" greenery sale is underway. Each Deck Your Halls swag set will include 25 feet of fresh garland, large red velvet bow, and decorating idea sheet. Board Event Chair Julia Taliaferro says she hopes the effort will bring both holiday cheer and support for the Foundation's COVID-19 Relief Fund.

"As a whole, Birmingham is such a thoughtful and giving community. We're all looking for ways to share our love

with our neighbors, our family, and just to celebrate, to help us heal from what we're going through. These swags are a celebratory way to do that while also supporting the really great work St. Vincent's is doing. I am glad to volunteer to support St. Vincent's Associates who are working hard to keep the community safe and well."

Sale proceeds will enable the Foundation to continue its efforts to fund meals and support for Associates working 12-hour shifts in COVID-19 units. The time-consuming safety protocols required to leave those units limit Associate access to hospital cafeterias. Foundation-provided meals and relaxation areas provide some relief for those workers.

Junior Board Chair Lucy Poole says area young people "are really eager to figure out how to help essential workers, because this has gone on longer than people expected, and those workers are stretched really thin. Our junior board has been eager to find a new initiative to support the Foundation's COVID-19 efforts."

Poole says she proposed the sale as a joy-filled way to support those who are saving others' lives. She credits her miraculous 2017 survival from a rare pregnancy complication to her St. Vincent's Birmingham medical team. She says Max, her son born during that crisis, is a healthy testimony to what donors can do to make such miracles possible. "That's why I volunteer. St. Vincent's is a passion for me." †

DECK YOUR HALLS GREENERY SALE



Celebrate the holiday season with 25 feet of fresh garland, one large red velvet bow, and decorating tips for \$75.

Order by November 15 at stvhs.com/philanthropy/give.asp or 205-558-3850.

Limited quantities are available. PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE COVID-19 RELIEF FUND.

DRIVE-THROUGH PICKUP is provided on Tuesday, December 1 from 8 am – 4 pm:
St. Vincent's Birmingham Bruno Conference Center • 806 St. Vincent's Drive, Birmingham, AL 35205

SPONSORED BY THE ST. VINCENT'S FOUNDATION JUNIOR BOARD

Why We Give: “A high-impact solution”

“Tiffany” graduated from high school unsure how to support herself and her baby girl. Jeremiah’s Hope Academy not only provided her with training as a phlebotomist, but childcare while she trained.

“Jasmine” began her healthcare career in an entry-level position, and now pursues advanced training. She hopes to become an RN. She credits her mentors at Jeremiah’s Hope for helping her recognize her potential.

“Whitney” starts her St. Vincent’s shift thanking God for her patients. She says the Jeremiah’s Hope hands-on learning approach and support of fellow students helped her overcome her fears.

Tiffany, Jasmine, and Whitney are pseudonyms representing hundreds of healthcare workers who have benefitted from the Foundation’s donor support of Jeremiah’s Hope Academy (JHA), an Ascension St. Vincent’s core community benefit program. One of those longtime JHA donors is The Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham, where President and Chief Executive Officer Melanie Bridgeforth facilitates research-based decisions on the best use of donor funds. The Women’s Fund supports JHA, Bridgeforth says, because its approach to higher education helps families achieve their career goals and builds pathways to economic

opportunity. She cites JHA’s provision of childcare, career coaching, healthcare, and peer support as proven assets.

“Jeremiah’s Hope actually embraces the whole-family approach necessary to dismantle the system that holds families back. The work is being done by the families

themselves, but with the support of Jeremiah’s Hope Academy.” Bridgeforth says JHA’s built-in community is also an important factor.

“None of us got where we are based on our own efforts. We all had someone else in our corner, opening doors, helping us navigate. Our experience in funding is that women who have a connection with a coach and classmates are more

likely to complete the program and help them achieve the goals they set for themselves.”

Bridgeforth says JHA provides building blocks for families who want nothing more than what donors want for their own families. “It’s getting to some of the root issues that hold women back. And that’s what we, at The Women’s Fund, care so deeply about. To us, and to our donors, Jeremiah’s Hope is a high-impact solution.” †



Jeremiah’s Hope Academy Students

What is Jeremiah’s Hope Academy?

Jeremiah’s Hope Academy (JHA) has prepared students for entry-level healthcare positions since 2003. Today JHA includes:

- Training at both St. Vincent’s Birmingham and St. Vincent’s East, with classroom instruction at Jefferson State Community College campuses.
- Six programs (mental health technician, patient care assistant, medical office assistant, sterile processing technician, phlebotomist, or clinical medical assistant) qualifying individuals for national certification exams.
- Scholarship assistance, childcare, and coaching in life skills, job searches, and other critical needs.
- Encouragement for graduates to pursue higher-level healthcare training.

Want to join The Women’s Fund in their support of Jeremiah’s Hope Academy?
Visit us at stvhsfoundation.org or call 205-558-3850.



THE WOMEN’S FUND
of GREATER BIRMINGHAM

Planned Giving: “*The importance of this healing ministry*”

Susan and Scott Sellers would not draw the attention of fundraisers seeking wealthy donors. Scott is a federal employee. Susan has devoted her career to serving nonprofit organizations. They will soon have two sons in college and do not foresee a significant financial windfall in the future.

“We are people of moderate means,” says Susan, president of St. Vincent’s Foundation. “We have saved for retirement since we started to work and saved for college since our children were born. We give to our church and other nonprofit organizations. And, like so many Ascension St. Vincent’s associates, we give back a portion of my paycheck to St. Vincent’s Foundation. But we also understand that even people like us can make a very meaningful gift.”

Since Susan has seen what other thoughtful donors have structured with the aid of the Foundation-provided Heaton Smith financial planning assessment, she wanted to explore what options she and Scott may have.

“We needed to redo our will and advance directives that were filed in another state, and I realized that although I talk with donors about our Heaton Smith services, I had not experienced them myself,” she says.

Heaton Smith’s process helped the Sellers identify their personal goals and how they could also make significant gifts that provided current

and future tax advantages. The resulting irrevocable gift agreement that is now part of their will reserves a portion of their IRA for St. Vincent’s Care of the Poor Fund. While the Sellers continue to support their church and other organizations with regular giving, they have now planned a major gift to continue the mission of Ascension St. Vincent’s. “Heaton Smith did not lead us in any direction; they remained focused on our values and how we could plan today to ensure that we made a gift to sustain St. Vincent’s future,” Scott says. “Every bit of this planned gift feels good and important to us,” Susan says, “because we just believe so strongly in the healing ministry of St. Vincent’s.”

If you are interested in exploring a gift to support the future of St. Vincent’s, call the Foundation at 205-558-3850. †



Susan and Scott Sellers

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We've Moved!

Amid all the changes of 2020—including St. Vincent's Foundation's new downtown Birmingham location at 1130 22nd Street South—so much remains the same. Our Foundation team (pictured here), though now masked, remains intact. Our donors remain faithful. Our board members still faithfully serve. Our volunteers still support patients, physicians, and Associates, though many now do so from home. Our dozens of Foundation-funded community initiatives continue to serve all persons, with special attention to the poor and vulnerable.

Another constant is that while St. Vincent's is proud to be affiliated with Ascension, one of the leading non-profit and Catholic health systems in the U.S., every single dollar donated to St. Vincent's Foundation remains in Central Alabama, fulfilling Ascension St. Vincent's local mission.

While one of our 2020 changes includes moving our office to better fulfill our mission, our focus remains constant. Call us at 205-558-3850 or visit our website at stvhfoundation.org to learn more. †



STAY CONNECTED! Please contact us with any questions, comments, or to share your story. We love to hear from you! 205-558-3850 or stvhfoundation@ascension.org. Visit us online and make a donation at stvhfoundation.org.