



WESTERN MARYLAND  
HEALTH SYSTEM

FOUNDATION



*Each One's  
Life Touches So Many...*

2023 ANNUAL GRATITUDE REPORT  
NEWS FOR DONORS AND FRIENDS



*Karen Johnson*

**Karen Johnson**  
President  
WMHS Foundation

## Friends,

After more than twenty years here, I find this work more rewarding than ever.

The Foundation has grown beyond the singular role of fund development to one of sharing responsibility for creating solutions to healthcare and social challenges. For me, working with colleagues across UPMC Western Maryland, a strong board of directors, and you – engaged community partners – remains an honor and a privilege ... with tangible, important results.

That was clearly evident in our collaboration with hospice this last year. The Foundation spearheaded and financed two innovative hospice care options that I believe will become a model for other places. For end-of-life patients who can remain at home with caregiver help, we offer that assistance. For those who cannot remain at home, we have created home-like suites in three local skilled nursing facilities, where patients and families can share their final days with privacy and dignity, without a financial burden.

This issue's article on hospice reflects my own personal discovery, a complete paradigm shift. While working closely with our UPMC Western Maryland Hospice team, I realized they know how to help us live – whatever number of days we may have – with the most joy, presence and comfort possible. I want to live that way, now and someday, and I'm grateful there are experts to walk that out with me.

I hope you will be rewarded, as I am, in knowing that your gifts have provided care and comfort to those who need it most. From our patients, their families, and me, thank you ever so much for sharing this journey with us.

## Each One's Life Touches So Many Others

It's hard to believe that 2024 marks our fourth year as part of the world-renowned UPMC network! We remain invested in the care of our region, and we continue to introduce breakthrough treatments that are saving lives. Our WMHS Foundation is an integral part of the equation, stepping up not only to support the health system and our patients in crucial ways, but also to bring the essential element of community access, to keep us accountable to those we serve.

Our staff accomplished many goals in 2023, and I couldn't be more proud. Here are a few of the highlights: ■ We earned our first-ever Leap Frog grade "A" for patient safety ■ launched the industry's leading medical software so that staff can retrieve complete patient records from any department ■ completed a full year of new structural cardiology services in our award-winning Heart and Vascular Institute – including the life-saving WATCHMAN procedure that prevents blood clots from entering the bloodstream ■ and adopted a new patient stewardship approach that is significantly reducing wait times for our patients as they enter and leave the hospital.

On behalf of our 2,100 dedicated employees, thank you for being there for us so that we can be here for you!



*Michele R. Martz*

**Michele Martz**  
President  
UPMC Western Maryland

# 2023 WMHS Foundation Board of Directors



WMHS Foundation Board of Directors, top row, from left: Betty Jo Gehauf, PRESIDENT; Kim Leonard, VICE CHAIR; George Lapp, SECRETARY/TREASURER; Carl O. Belt, Jr.; Larry D. Boggs; Richard "Doc" Daugherty; Thomas B. Finan; Marlee Gabriele.



Bottom row, from left: Chris Lockard; Dave Mathews; John "Jack" McMullen, Jr., Esq; Robert Paye, Esq; Keith Pirolozzi, PharmD; Liz Rhodes; Sandi Saville, Esq; Rameen Shafiei, DO, and Julie Westendorff, AUXILIARY PRESIDENT.



— **Betty Jo Gehauf, Chair**  
 WMHS Foundation Board of Directors  
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*"Our community comes together to support this hospital, which in turn, cares for us. I am so grateful to share this commitment with like-minded friends who are invested the care of our neighbors through vital equipment, scholarship support, and volunteer assistance. Working together, we are all better served!"*

## Financial Impact

Balance as of December 31, 2023

**Assets \$20.7 Million**



## Total 2023 Support for our Mission

**\$763,044**

(To invest in new providers, assist our patients in need, and support our Healthcare Heroes)

*Something to feel good about!*

# Showing Us How to Live



At an early age, Dewarren Junior's larger-than-life personality (left) earned him the nickname Hi Fi. He lit up a room when he entered, and true to his name, you could hear him before you saw him.

After school came the Army, marriage, a family, and a job at Kelly Springfield. He was a committed member of his church for 70 years and an avid golfer (six holes-in-one), and he never missed his kids' or grandkids' sporting events. **His wife says that in their 63 years together, there was never a dull moment.**

A 2004 kidney cancer diagnosis barely slowed him down. He continued to make every day count. When cancer appeared in 2022, the prognosis was grim. Hi Fi chose hospice without hesitation because he knew it would be best, both for him and for his family. Drawing strength from his faith in God, he said simply, "Well, I've had a good, good life. I have much to be thankful for."

## Walking Together

Hi Fi left the hospital on New Year's Eve 2022 and arrived home to all the supports he needed – some the family had anticipated and some they had not. A

hospital bed was set up and assistance provided with bathing, medication management, **whatever the O'Neals needed.** Hospice came nearly every day and were **available 24/7.** Compassionate and informative, they were called **Angels on Earth** by the family. "Our hospice team made something so awful somehow bearable," they said. "Every step of the way, their involvement gave us the strength to keep going."

In 1939 Cumberland, Maryland's "Queen City" was booming with manufacturing jobs – second in size only to Baltimore. Homes were springing up all over, brimming with stay-at-home moms and children who played outside as long as the sun was up. Into this Americana portrait was born Dewarren Junior O'Neal, aka Hi Fi, and this is his story – and ours.

## Larger than Life

Early on, Hi Fi was an overcomer, persevering through a significant arm injury and – against all odds – becoming an excellent, multi-sport athlete. One of his most cherished memories and oft-told stories was that of the 1958 Fort Hill basketball team, on which he played starting forward. The team won the state championship that year, a feat not accomplished in the decades since.

Dewarren O'Neal, Jr., five-year-old son of Pvt. and Mrs. Dewarren O'Neal, 132 Reynolds street, is a patient at Allegany Hospital, where he was admitted Sunday for a compound fracture of his left arm at the elbow and a fracture of the wrist, received when he fell from a tree. His father will arrive in Cumberland tonight from Camp Croft, S. C.



At left, Hi Fi at age five, sporting a cast after falling out of a tree; above, the 1958 Fort Hill state championship basketball team. FRONT ROW, from left: Thurl Roy, Donnie Lewis, Coach John J. "Bobby" Cavanaugh, Jerry Meeks, Charles Robinson, and DeWarren (Junior) O'Neal. BACK ROW: Bob McCarty, Jimmy Kline, Lehue Miller, Jack Weltman, Doug Metz, and Bob Fogtman.

His son said, “We naively thought we had more time with Dad. One day, I asked a hospice nurse how we would know when the time was near. She gave us realistic expectations, explaining we had a very narrow window at that point. I immediately called the family to come home, and what a gift that was to all of us! I know my father realized we were gathering around him – he knew he was loved to the very end.”

The hospice team continued to walk with the family after Hi Fi passed – calling the funeral home, checking in on family members, corresponding regularly, presenting a beautiful pillow made from one of Hi Fi’s favorite University of Maryland hoodies. The hospice medical director, Dr. Mary Ann Riley, and her husband, Dr. Jason Riley (also Hi-Fi’s physician) visited the funeral home.

### *Live Every Moment*

How fitting that this man, whose love for life and big personality touched so many, is helping us tell the story of hospice. **Hi Fi helped us see, with new clarity, that hospice helps us LIVE.** They know what to do. They have walked this path. And like Hi Fi, their presence helps us squeeze every sweet ounce out of life, just like he did. When it’s time to let go, what a gift to be at peace with that decision, right with God, and satisfied with a life well-lived.

*At the center of his family was where Dewarren Junior fit best. In all of the many ways he lived, these precious ones were his crowning achievement.*



*This hospice suite, in an area skilled nursing facility, provides privacy and comfort to hospice families.*

For years, our Hospice Care team has served the families of our area, supplying compassionate, excellent resources for end-of-life care in the patient’s home. Yet not all families are able to sustain in-home care.

The WMHS Foundation is underwriting the cost of three home-like hospice suites at skilled nursing facilities in different regions of the county, as well as funding in-home assistance for those who cannot personally care for their loved one.

“Nursing staff and patients have both glowed about the new hospice suites!” said Dr. Mary Ann Riley, medical director for the Hospice Care program. “The comfortable, homey feeling, the warm, leather couches and lamps and rugs and blankets, all provide room for family to gather and a perfect setting to promote family time and extended visits with their loved one.”

“The collaboration we have enjoyed with the Foundation is a godsend!” said Candy Adams, senior manager for Clinical Operations in our Hospice Care program. “I am not sure what we would have done without it. When we see the most vulnerable families struggling to care for their loved ones, knowing we have options – hospice suites and in-home care to offer them – is the best feeling. Over and over again, we hear how grateful these families are!”



**How do your gifts to the Foundation impact hospice families?** Through your generosity, we have invested **more than \$80,000 toward in-home care and home-like Hospice Care suites** and have made an **additional \$100,000 commitment in 2024. Help us continue to support hospice care** on page 9.

At left, Mrs. DeHaven taught science at Beall Jr Sr High School; center, her student, a bright, young Mark Nelson, smiling for the yearbook; right, Mrs. DeHaven returned home to raise her son, Jeff. Far right, Jeff grew up to save lives as a medic and a firefighter.



# Each One's Life Touches So Many Others

Jeff DeHaven's childhood was Smalltown, USA come to life, in a neighborhood with a dozen other children, mostly cousins. Dad coached his basketball and baseball teams, and their home was always full of kids and activity and laughter. His mother, a former schoolteacher, wouldn't have had it any other way. Just across the street was the volunteer fire company, and each time the whistle sounded, Jeff and his friends donned their little fireman hats, complete with lights, and ran to the end the yard.

Is it any wonder, then, that as soon as he was old enough, Jeff became a fireman? Not surprisingly, he soon earned **Rookie of the Year** honors. While still a teenager, following what could have been a serious automobile accident, Jeff found himself at the receiving end of care. As they strapped him into the ambulance, he remembers thinking, "I'm grateful that I'm going to be okay... and I think I could do this as my career." He continued to volunteer, helped to deliver his first baby at age 20, and after two years of college, began working on his medic certification.

## *Eyes on the Prize*

At just 22 years old, Jeff applied to become a City of Cumberland firefighter, one of nearly 300 applicants. Just 72 passed the exam, and Jeff was offered one of three positions available. He spent the next eighteen months paying his dues, working on the ambulance crew, a challenging stint that honed his clinical skills. Since then, he has cared for literally thousands of individuals and issues. To say he's seen it all is not an exaggeration.

## *A Bend in the Road*

One morning in June 2022, Jeff awoke before dawn with chest pain. He thought it was indigestion – after all, he was only 47. But the pain came back the next morning, and this time it didn't go away. Once again, the medic became the patient. His first two tests were normal, but a problem showed up in the Emergency Department. Dr. Chris Haas, cardiologist, caught the STL elevation, and immediately ordered a heart catheterization.

Knowing the City's strict guidelines about the heart health of its employees, Jeff thought he was watching the life he had longed for slip away.

Jeff was quickly scheduled for open heart surgery – the first patient of the day for Dr. Mark Nelson. By the following day, he was able to take small steps in the hallway. His nurse called his mother, who remembers she had never heard anything so sweet as that "Hi, Mom."

From Dr. Nelson's thorough explanation, drawn in detail on Jeff's personal heart pillow – to the nurses who cared for him non-stop, Jeff was extremely pleased with his care. Even the pain was surprisingly less severe than he had anticipated. He calls cardiac rehabilitation "life changing" and credits that extraordinary team with helping him get his strength and confidence back.

Dr. Haas had promised him, even before surgery, that he would do everything he could to get Jeff back to the Cumberland Fire Department. Ultimately, with a heart that worked better than before the surgery, Jeff rejoined his crew in December 2022. The following month, he was promoted to lieutenant.



It took dozens of individual touches at UPMC Western Maryland to get this fireman back to his team. He, in turn, estimates he will touch over 15,000 lives in his career. Every time you hear the fire whistle, it could very well be Jeff and his colleagues, answering the call.

### *A Page from the Past*

**But our story has one more twist...** Let's return to Jeff, in his room in the Cardiovascular Unit, a couple of days post-surgery.

As Dr. Nelson was completing his patient visit, he turned to leave ... and stopped. He looked closely at Jeff's last name and then over at his parents, focusing on his mother. "Are you Janet DeHaven?" he asked her. "Yes, I am," she said.

And with that, the physician and the mother were transported back in time to Beall Jr Sr High School, in 1974. Mrs. DeHaven was the science teacher, and a young Mark Nelson was her bright 8th grade student. Dr. Nelson recalled his fascination with the detailed drawings of the heart she had presented, even remembering that she showed the heart muscle being slowed down to undergo open heart surgery. He told her that he had looked for her when she didn't return to teach the following year, after having her son ... **the same son whose heart he had just repaired.**

And he told her that perhaps she had inspired him to go into cardiac surgery.

**A young science teacher sparked an exceptional student to become one of the nation's best cardiovascular surgeons, and half a century later, he saved her son's life.** Yes, each man's life touches so many others.

*Something to feel good about!*



## *Life Support*

Your Foundation has invested in our award-winning Heart & Vascular Institute through scholarships, like the one that allowed Heidi Race, PA (below, left) and a dozen other professionals to advance their careers in cardiac care here at UPMC Western Maryland. As Chief Physician Assistant in Cardiothoracic Surgery, Heidi is a vital member of Dr. Mark Nelson's (above, center) surgical team.

"I am the first in my family to be in the medical field," said Heidi, "and have always loved learning about the human body, especially the heart. After completing my rotation here with Dr. Nelson, everything fell into place to begin my career in CT surgery once I graduated. I've been here for 14 years now." Her work fills Heidi with pride – for the team, for the work ethic that Dr. Nelson models, and for the rewarding results. "It is such a good feeling to see our patients overcome and improve," she said. "The life-saving medical care we provide to this rural community brings such a personal touch."



Eric Williams (right) received the Foundation's support to pursue his Physician Assistant degree, and he is now an instrumental member of the multi-disciplinary team that launched the new TAVR (transcatheter aortic valve replacement) procedure at UPMC Western Maryland. "The TAVR program brings a highly needed service to our community," said Eric. It's rewarding for him to work with Dr. Nelson in surgery and Dr. Hani Alkhatib in Structural Cardiology to offer this life-saving treatment locally so that patients and their families don't have to travel, especially when the patient is very ill. Eric loves giving back to the community, and he credits his mom, a nurse for over 30 years at this hospital, with motivating him to go into healthcare from a young age.

### **How do your gifts to the Foundation impact heart patients?**

Through your generosity, the Foundation has invested in scholarships for cardiovascular unit staff and state-of-the-art equipment. **Help us continue to support heart health on page 9.**

# Our Generous Contributors

Our donors wholeheartedly respond to the needs of UPMC Western Maryland. In this 2023 Gratitude Report, we recognize their annual cash, pledged, sponsorship, Giving Circles, and in-kind gifts to UPMC Western Maryland, the WMHS Foundation, and the WMHS Auxiliary.



The WMHS Auxiliary has consistently met vital needs totalling \$3 million since its inception, including \$300,000 in emergency services. Shown here are, from left, Karen Johnson, Foundation president; Julie Westendorff, Auxiliary president; and Michele Martz, UPMC Western Maryland president.

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# Golf Classic 2023

## Another grand success!



Our annual tournament, dinner, and auction – a highlight on the Foundation calendar – attracts golfers and non-golfers alike! In 2023 our events netted more than \$140,000. Pictured, left to right, are our Hospice team (in purple): Melissa Harr-Kyle, Dr. Mary Ann Riley, Armond Rossi, Seth Wharton, Candy Adams, and Erin Staggers; and Wesley Heinz, our Masters sponsor, with the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad (center, in black).

### Masters \$25,000

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Mark your calendars!  
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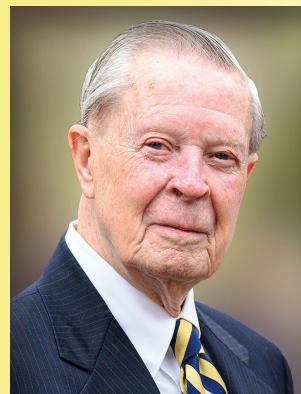
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UPMC WMD Hospice Services  
WMHS Auxiliary

\*\* All or part of these  
donations were in-kind  
gifts to our golf auction.

### Game & Hole Sponsors \$750+

Adams Funeral Home, PA\*\*  
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Dermatology



*"I have proudly served on the WMHS Foundation since its inception, and I can confidently state that no organization has done more to benefit our community. The Foundation has actively worked to improve the lives of our hospital's patients and employees and represents everything that is good about this community."*

— John "Jack" McMullen, Esq.  
Geppert, McMullen, Paye, & Getty  
Member, WMHS Foundation Board of Directors

## Will you support the WMHS Foundation today?

Let's continue to do the work that benefits us all – our families, our neighbors, and a community in need.

On the envelope below, you decide where your gift goes to help - whether you choose to support

- \* Hospice
- \* Cancer
- \* Heart
- \* or our Healthcare Heroes!

## You Don't Have to Be Rich to be Generous.

### YOU can make a real difference!

Leave a legacy without affecting your current budget at all. You and your financial planner determine what you feel comfortable sharing. Then we work with you to match your charitable intentions with real needs here at UPMC Western Maryland.

**Give us a call today to get started! 240-964-8003**  
or [wmfoundation@upmc.edu](mailto:wmfoundation@upmc.edu).



If you haven't already joined our **Circles of Giving**, consider an annual pledge of \$100 or more to bring you into the fold. Scan the above QR code to learn more!

**Truly, your investments are changing lives!**

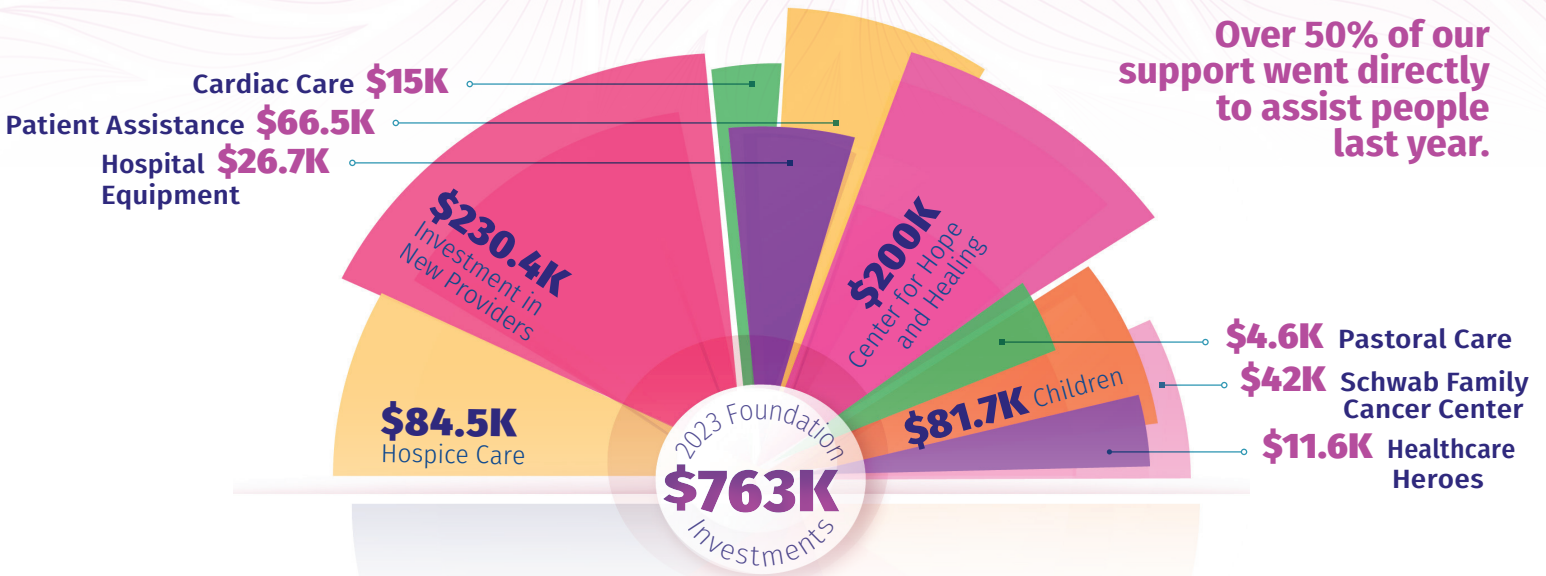
*"As a veteran of non-profit work, I understand how vital integrity is to an organization. The Foundation and the Auxiliary are both charitable organizations I can easily support, without hesitation. Together, we are filling gaps and finding solutions that improve the quality of care for our region."*

— **Julie Westendorff**, President, WMHS Auxiliary  
Executive Director, Allegany Arts Council  
Member, WMHS Foundation Board of Directors



# The Good We Do *Thanks to You!*

Annual Foundation Contribution to UPMC and Community of **\$763,044**



## Impacts - UPMC Western Maryland

2023 Performance Metrics

**\$15 Million**



Complimentary healthcare to patients in need.

**5,066**



Surgeries performed.

Annual economic impact.

**\$688 Million**

**856**

Babies born.



**10,148**

Patients admitted.

**48,834**

Urgent Care visits.

**34,506**



Emergency Department visits.

## Contact Us! WMHS Foundation Staff



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Scan the code to the left for more information about the WMHS Foundation.