

Wilson Society Members Recognized

May 20, 2009



The 2009 Wilson Society members were announced and extended appreciation during the sixth annual Friends of the Wilson reception held Wednesday evening, May 20, at Shelby Oaks. The event was hosted by the Wilson Memorial Foundation Board of Trustees and attendees included those who have given a substantial donation to the Foundation.

The event is held each year to extend the hospital's appreciation to traditional donors as well as formally recognize members of the Wilson Society. To become a member of The Wilson Society, couples and individuals declare their intention to include Wilson Memorial Hospital in their estate plans.

This year's reception included a special wine and cheese tasting where guests had the opportunity to taste a variety of different wines along with specialty cheeses and hors d'oeuvres. The Ron Meyer Quartet provided music for the evening's enjoyment.

Those welcomed into the Wilson Society this year include: Dr. Robert and Ollie Anthony and Michael and Mary Burns. Since the Wilson Society began six years ago, 33 members have joined the effort to name Wilson as beneficiary for the healthcare needs of future generations in Shelby County.

Tom Boecker, president & CEO of the hospital, welcomed guests and discussed the importance of Wilson to the community. "There are many reasons why the hospital is successful, but one of the most important reasons is the fact that we have ongoing community support," Boecker told the crowd. He then provided guests with an update on the hospital including news about the recent project focusing on the surgery suites. The suites were completely renovated over the past year and equipped with the latest technology that allows for images and patient information to be transferred electronically into each suite for surgeons to view on large, flat screen monitors while performing surgical procedures. "I challenge anyone to identify a community hospital that is as well-equipped with the latest technology," Boecker added.

Boecker next recognized Honda of America. Honda provided a grant to help fund the recent renovation of Wilson's surgery department. Boecker recognized Barry McClelland, who was present on behalf of Honda, for their support of this key project. The grant was contingent upon the hospital securing donations from within the community. "Many of you here this evening are among those who made a contribution to ensure that we received the Honda grant," Boecker said. "We appreciate your support and know that you'll be impressed with the new surgery department."

Following Boecker's presentation, Dan Bensman, Wilson Foundation board chair, shared his comments. "I am honored to be a part of Wilson Memorial Hospital and to have the opportunity to serve as chairman of the Foundation board," he said to guests. "As community leaders, our board members are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that Wilson Memorial continues to be a strong asset now and in the future. All of you have played a role in helping us meet that challenge. For all you have done and will continue to do, please accept our sincere thanks on behalf of the Foundation board," said Bensman. "As you all well know, our local, state and national economies are in the midst of some challenging times. However, our local businesses continue to hold their own despite the economic turmoil. Although there are many reasons for the continued prosperity of our local businesses, including good local school systems, strong community and family values, a strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit, the availability of affordable quality healthcare should not be overlooked. Wilson Memorial Hospital continues to be an important piece of the puzzle that makes our community a wonderful place to live and raise a family."

Bensman introduced the 2009 members of the Wilson Society: Michael and Mary (Gagn t) Burns and Robert and Ollie Anthony. Joining the Wilson Society means making a commitment to Wilson by including the hospital in personal estate plans. Mary (Gagn t) Burns is director of marketing for Wilson Memorial Hospital and has served in that position since 1992. Her husband, Mike, is a retired executive for AK Steel.

Robert Anthony, a dentist, is a member of the Wilson Foundation board, and also volunteers for Wilson Memorial Hospital. His wife, Ollie, is a volunteer member of the Wilson Foundation ball committee.

The Burns' offered testimonials of support for the Wilson Memorial Hospital Foundation. Michael Burns said the following to the crowd. "My relationship with Wilson Hospital began when I met my lovely wife Mary a few years ago. In the beginning, Wilson Hospital to me was just one of many fine healthcare institutions in the surrounding area. Over time, I began to meet many of the healthcare professionals associated with the hospital. What I noticed, as time went on, is that I could tell that the Wilson staff members were all truly dedicated to providing the finest healthcare in the area. I think it would be a loss if Wilson disappeared or was forced to dramatically change its ways, so when Mary and I considered supporting the Wilson Foundation, my growing understanding of what Wilson is to the community made that decision an easy one, and I would encourage everyone here to also consider the Wilson Foundation in their future planning."

Mary Burns offered the following comments. "This past year has been challenging and eventful. An exciting aspect of challenges is that they help us remember who we are. I think the challenges have helped us realize and understand the importance of our relationships. In any relationship there is give and take. By being a part of the Wilson family, we receive a lot. We can feel good because we are a part of a mission that helps people directly. We receive quality healthcare and compassion. Being a part of the hospital family also gives meaning to our lives. But we also know that it feels good to give. In our personal relationships, we want to give to those we love because they are important to us. In being a part of the Wilson family relationship, there comes a time when we want to give back more than we have received. This is that time for us. Mike and I are pleased that we can, for future generations, give back to a place that has been so good to me and now to us."

The Wilson Memorial Hospital Foundation exists solely to contribute to the financial support and betterment of Wilson Memorial Hospital. In doing so, the Foundation assists in maintaining and enhancing patient care services by providing funding for the purchase of essential technology and enhancing services. For more information about giving to the Wilson Memorial Hospital Foundation, please call (937) 498-5575 or (937) 498-5540.

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