



## Behind the scenes: *What Ascension St. Vincent's hospital presidents want you to know*



*Jeannie Fields arrives to her appointment at the Bruno Cancer Center in Foundation-provided transportation.*

It's 2 a.m. A patient arrives at an Ascension St. Vincent's hospital emergency department. He is met by a medical team fully trained on the newly-purchased equipment that could save his life.

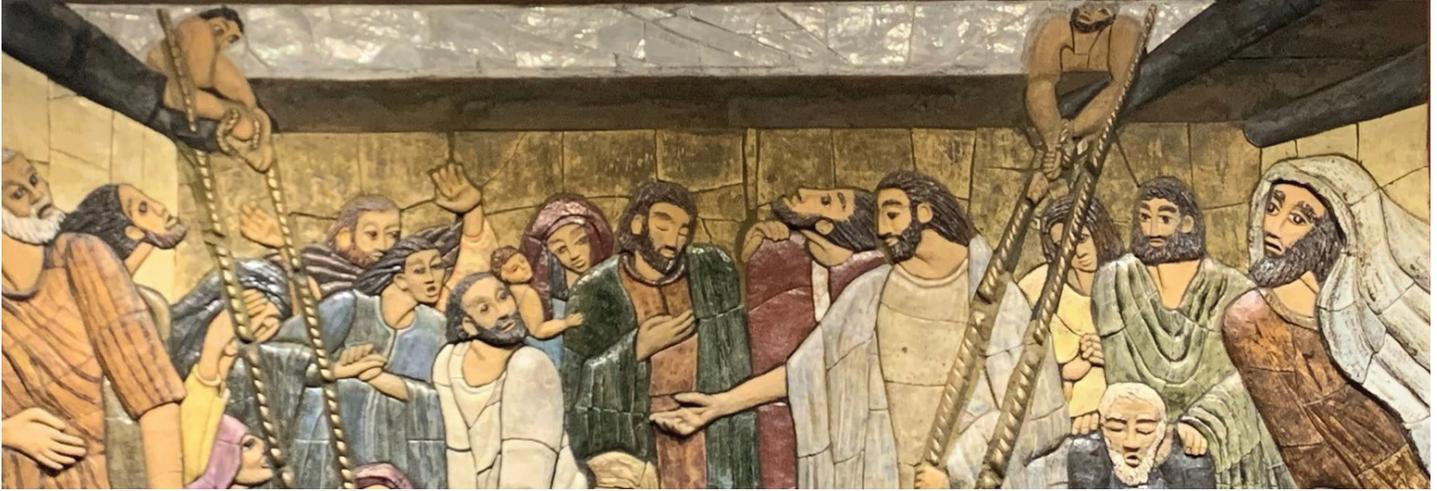
It's noon. A patient arrives on-time for her daily cancer treatment at Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham because St. Vincent's Foundation paid for her transportation.

It's 6 p.m. An Ascension St. Vincent's East ICU nurse stops to pray before an art wall featuring a hand-carved scene of Jesus healing the paralytic.

While such scenarios are commonplace throughout Ascension St. Vincent's, Andrew Gnann and Suzannah Campbell don't take any of them for granted. Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham/Chilton President Gnann and Ascension St. Vincent's East/Blount/St. Clair President Campbell know the behind-the-scenes stories of their hospitals' newly-purchased equipment, continuing education, patient assistance, and faith-bolstering art. And although they say a donor's name might not appear on a trauma stretcher or art wall, every donor dollar counts, as it helps Ascension St. Vincent's fulfill its mission.

"We are thankful that Ascension allocates discretionary capital to us each year, based

*(continued on page 2)*



Ascension St. Vincent's East art wall featuring a hand-carved scene of Jesus healing the paralytic

(continued from page 1)

on our needs,” Campbell says. “We also have departmental budget money to cover some costs. But healthcare is expensive. The latest technology is expensive – simply replacing one MRI will be a \$1.2 million project – and there are always needs that can’t be met. Discretionary dollars are not unlimited.”

Gnann says his hospitals’ Ascension 2021 allocations totaled less than half of what was needed. “It’s great to have those allocations, but this year’s allocation paid for 4 things out of the 23 items on our list. So, just like a family prioritizes their spending based on need, we must prioritize our spending based on patient needs and physicians’ requests. Then we ask the Foundation’s allocations committee for some of the other items that remain on our priority list.”

Several times a year the presidents present those priority lists to the Foundation’s Allocation Committee. Foundation Chairman Ben Tamburello served on that committee for two years. He wants donors to know how carefully their gifts are allocated, funding projects that range from security cameras to bone density scanners.

“The presidents tell us what’s on their list, and then we discuss the most urgent needs,” says Tamburello. “Our goal would be to have more donor funds so that we could say ‘yes’ more often to things like facility updates while also keeping money in reserve for emerging technology whenever it becomes available. The goal would be to deliver more.”

Campbell says Foundation donors might be surprised how far their money goes toward supporting their communities. “There are so many things the Foundation funds – not only advanced technology and updating equipment, but programs like behavioral health support, allowing us to place social workers in some of our clinics. One invaluable resource was the support the Foundation provided to our hospital associates as the pandemic started, with meals and snack baskets and a quiet place for these heroes to take a break. The Foundation provided the resources to support our associates mentally, physically, and spiritually, and that has really spoken to them.”

Many donors are actually Ascension St. Vincent’s associates—at every pay level—who support the Foundation out of their own paychecks. In 2020, associates gave \$630,000 back to the ministry they serve. “To me it’s very humbling when people choose to support the ministry we’re trying to continue here,” Gnann says. “I want donors to know how grateful we are for their willingness to donate to the Foundation, and how much we appreciate the time, effort, and commitment the Foundation board members give to this process, to make sure we have the resources to do special things.

“Our list of needs is long, but we just work down that list as donors give,” he says. “We want Foundation donors to understand that every dollar matters.” †

## TOGETHER IN FAITH AND HOPE:

### JOIN US IN PRAYER

God of our hope, we gather in the shadow of this global virus. We pray for those at the center of this outbreak, the medical personnel and those who have died and those who are committed to the containment and cure of this disease.

Grant us the memory of other hazards that have challenged the human family. Our founders St. Vincent and St. Louise cared for the people of France during the Black Plague. They stood in our same place of uncertainty and they used every resource to care for the sick including their deep awareness of your providence, the grace of our enduring solidarity with one another, and the unalterable dignity we share as bearers of your divine image.

You always call us beyond ourselves, inviting us to the wonder that unfolds when we are willing to share a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. What seems so inadequate you transform into exceeding what we dared to believe possible. Let this truth bend our fear, secure our hearts, and strengthen our hands to serve and be your healing presence in this time and place. **AMEN**

# Why We Give:

## *“To help them save other children’s lives”*

When Eleanor and Rob Nielsen took their second child, Knud IV, home from Ascension St. Vincent’s Birmingham on February 7, 2019, everything felt the same as when first-born child Elizabeth made the same journey two years before. But within one hour everything changed.

“He began having seizures,” says Eleanor. “We went straight back to Ascension St. Vincent’s and spent the next three weeks in the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit). In the first few hours they found out he had a very rare form of bacterial meningitis, was in septic shock, and his organs were failing. The next 72 hours we didn’t know, minute-by-minute, whether he would make it.”

Knud not only made it, but today is such a perfectly healthy boy that when the Niensens marked his first birthday by visiting their NICU nurse “family,” a physician watching Knud toddle down the hallway said, “This reminds me why I do this. It’s just so amazing.”

The Niensens agree. That’s why, after learning the NICU needed more Giraffe Omnibeds (incubator-warmers), they made a significant donation to the Foundation’s NICU fund.

“My family has always been very philanthropic,” says Rob, son of former Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham President Kate Nielsen. “We were taught to do

everything we could for the community. After everything Eleanor and I went through, we just wanted other families unfortunate enough to wind up in a similar situation to have the best outcomes possible.”



*Eleanor and Rob Nielsen, with children Elizabeth and Knud IV*

The Niensens didn’t stop with that gift. “One thing we noticed in NICU is there are many people who can’t take off work to be there with their baby,” says Rob, now a Foundation Junior Board member. “So, we were glad to help provide NicView Cameras, allowing families to see their babies.” Providentially, those infants’ bedside cameras (accessible through parents’ phones or other devices) became operational as COVID-19 began limiting extended-family hospital visits.

Although the pandemic prohibited the Niensens from re-visiting NICU for Knud’s second birthday, they requested Foundation donations in lieu of birthday gifts and sent board books for NICU moms. “They tell you to talk to your baby, but it’s hard to find words when you’re so scared,” Eleanor says. “Moms can read books to their babies instead.”

Rob says he and Eleanor always knew Ascension St. Vincent’s Birmingham was a “great” place. “But we didn’t know how great it was until we saw what they do for these families. It’s only right for us to support them, to help them save other children’s lives.” †

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

Deborah D. Albright  
Crew P. Allen  
S. Allen Baker  
Byron Baswell  
James R. Beard  
Christie Beard  
Linda H. Beard  
Tammie R. Bice  
Martha W. Brown  
Willie M. Byars

Doyle T. Chandler  
Martha Davis  
Louise L. DiChiara  
Gloria H. Edmondson  
Tillman T. Everson  
Bobby D. Files  
Christie P. Frierson  
Mary N. Glasscock  
Robert Henson  
Emily G. Herring

Sylvia M. Hill  
Joe Hollis  
George C. Horsley  
Perry Isaiah  
Betty Jones  
Josephine C. Jovings  
Harold G. Lucas  
James S. Mackin  
Christine McBryde  
Rosa McCafferty

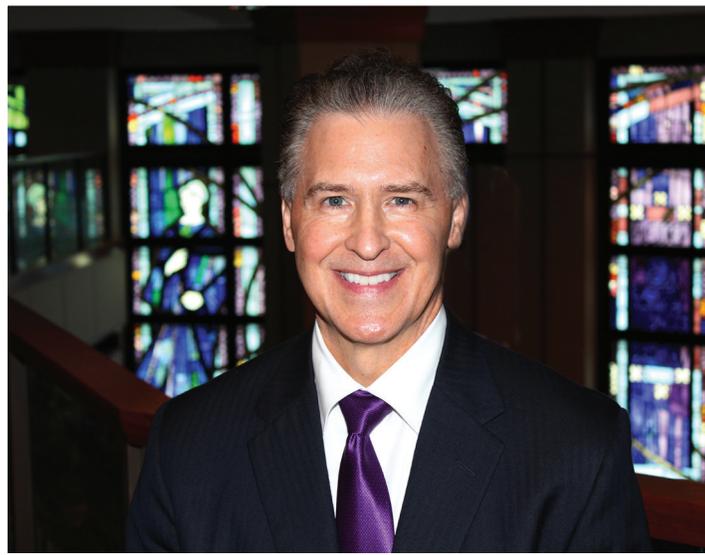
Claude “Mac” Moncus  
Holly B. Montana  
Robert S. Montana  
Jo Ann Palmer  
Julia Pope  
Robert Pryor  
Harry C. Reich  
Helen E. Rozendale  
Phillip Rumore  
Edwin A. Schwab

Ann Shattuck  
Carolyn G. Shurbitt  
Raymond G. Spears  
Imogene L. Taylor  
Barbara L. Townsend  
Reginald J. Wesson  
Beverly York

# Legacy and Leadership: Why Foundation President Bill Kotti accepted the call

Bill Kotti is the first to say he has big shoes to fill. This University of South Carolina Ph.D. became president of St. Vincent's Foundation last summer, after serving the Ascension Texas market as chief development officer and executive director of development at Dell Seton Medical Center/University of Texas in Austin. He says he accepted the Foundation's call to become its third president after seeing how Ascension St. Vincent's healthcare providers, leadership, and Foundation supporters have partnered to serve their communities in the past—and what expanded donor support could mean in the decades to come.

“The mission and ministry of Ascension St. Vincent's is important to me because of its 123-year community legacy,” says Kotti, who has also served as president/chief development officer at the Medical College of Virginia Foundation, associate vice president for academic development at Emory University, and as an executive at both The Johns Hopkins University and the University of South Carolina. “It's an honor to follow both Bill Moran and Susan Sellers in this role. I'm also mindful of the board members who have so



*Bill Kotti, St. Vincent's Foundation President*

Kotti says he has already learned much from past-President Susan Sellers, Ascension St. Vincent's Chief Mission Integration Officer Wayne Carmello-Harper, and the entire Ascension St. Vincent's leadership team. “In Bill we have found a proven mission-driven leader who will invite people to participate in sustaining our healthcare vision,” says Carmello-Harper, who served as interim Foundation

president earlier this year. “We are excited to see Bill and the Foundation continue the work of proclaiming our deeply held commitment to wellness and the health of our community.”

Ascension St. Vincent's is an exceptional place to serve because of its focus on providing high-quality medical care for all, with special attention to the poor and vulnerable, Kotti says. “I felt attracted to that combination. With my university background in

working for medical centers, I am motivated by Ascension St. Vincent's innovation and its commitment to service. The Foundation's role is to support healthcare providers, patients, and families by inspiring philanthropy and being excellent financial stewards of those assets. It's an awesome responsibility, and one that everyone here takes very seriously.”

Kotti says he and his wife Michelle, who both grew up in North Augusta, South Carolina, feel privileged to join the greater Birmingham community. These empty-nesters (daughter Blake recently began her career as an architect working in Houston) look forward to exploring Alabama's great outdoors this fall with their Chesapeake Bay Retriever.

“I'm also looking forward to meeting our current Foundation donors and inviting others to participate and invest in this mission,” he says. “Our goal is to help create the kind of future that allows Ascension St. Vincent's to continue its mission for years to come.” †

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**“The mission and ministry of Ascension St. Vincent's is important to me because of its 123-year community legacy.”**

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faithfully served in previous years. I'm grateful to be in a position to work with the current Foundation board, staff, and Ascension St. Vincent's leadership team to both support what is being done now and work to expand those ministries to meet future needs.”

# “Dynamic” impact: Why Foundation Board Chairman Ben Tamburello is grateful to serve

In 2005, Alabama Sports Hall of Fame Member Ben Tamburello joined the newly-opened Ascension St. Vincent’s One Nineteen fitness center. While this five-season Philadelphia Eagles veteran and former Auburn University center had worked with some of the best athletic trainers in the country, he was amazed by the expertise of the Ascension St. Vincent’s One Nineteen fitness staff—and Ascension St. Vincent’s integrated approach to healthcare.

“I saw Ascension St. Vincent’s One Nineteen become a real anchor of our community, not only in fitness, but everything from cardiovascular rehab to same-day surgery,” says this associate broker for RE/MAX Southern Homes 280. “I wanted to help them serve.”

Tamburello’s first service was to chair the St. Vincent’s Foundation Golf Classic. “This first-class tournament benefits Ascension St. Vincent’s cardiovascular services,” he says. “The participants, including our terrific sponsors, provide critical financial support to make this ministry even better.”

Tamburello was so impressed by the Foundation’s work on the annual tournament that he accepted its 2016 invitation to serve as a St. Vincent’s Foundation board member. This year he serves as board chairman.

“I serve because I’ve seen the dynamic impact Ascension St. Vincent’s has on all its communities. I’ve seen how the incredible Foundation staff are such great stewards of donors’ contributions. I’ve seen board members generously volunteering their time and talents. I was born at Ascension St. Vincent’s Birmingham, so there’s a special appeal in contributing to something other generations worked so hard to establish. But I think what makes Ascension St. Vincent’s different is that it is rooted in ‘the

loving ministry of Jesus as healer.’ As a Christian, I want to help the Foundation fulfill its mission to serve everyone, including the poor and vulnerable.”

While Tamburello says every Foundation contribution is important, this father of three (and husband to college-sweetheart Katy) was particularly touched by the Foundation’s recent Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) camera project. “Our Anna was a premie. She was three pounds at birth and was in a Montgomery NICU for weeks. So, to provide cameras allowing parents to see their babies at any time of the day or night tugged at my heart. Foundation donors provided that priceless opportunity.”

Anna is now an accomplished musical therapy major at Appalachian State. Son Ben, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate (“He played football and beat Army four times in a row!”), is a Marine Corps captain. Julia, a “terrific student” at Spain Park High School, is making college plans. “Each of them has raised the bar far above what Katy and I expected,” Tamburello says.



Katy and Ben Tamburello, with Anna, Ben, and Julia

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the dynamic impact Ascension  
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on all its communities.”**

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“We’ve raised our family in this community, and it’s an amazing privilege to support St. Vincent’s Foundation’s work here. It would be difficult to describe all the good things the Foundation has already done – and what more could be done with additional donations. That’s why I’m grateful to serve with this incredible board.” †

# Planned Giving: *Estate gift provides direction in uncertain times*

Joan Wright couldn't be more pleased that her late parents included Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham in their wills. She says Katherine and Emmett Ferretti would be delighted to know their gift, which will be used to build a "wayfinding" kiosk to help visitors navigate the campus, would provide direction in uncertain times.

"To me, this is a divine intervention," says Wright, one of the Ferrettis' six children. "This is a tribute to what was important to them—providing information others need. Generally, when you are in the hospital, it is a time of stress. While we only specified their gift be given 'to the greatest need,' it's very appropriate that my parents could meet this need."

In addition to providing for each child upon the couple's death, Emmett ensured the children knew several Catholic charities would be beneficiaries, including Ascension St. Vincent's. The family was so dedicated to their Catholic faith that when Emmett suffered a Sunday morning heart attack when Wright was seven years old, she was shocked to realize it would be the first Sunday in her life she would not go to Mass.

"Faith was extremely important to them, and after that heart attack, health also became a priority," Wright says. "My grandfather had died of a heart attack in his late-50's, and after my father had his first heart attack in his late 40's, he took his health very seriously."

Emmett so carefully followed his Ascension St. Vincent's physicians' instructions that he redefined his family's cardiovascular history, living to age 81. Katherine lived to age 94. Emmett participated in a cardiovascular exercise program at Ascension St. Vincent's as faithfully as the family attended church. Several of his grandchildren were so influenced by his dedication to wellness that they pursued medical careers.

"Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham nursed my mother back to health after her late-in-life stroke," says Wright.

"Some of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren were born there. That's why all of us were glad our parents not only specified Ascension St. Vincent's in their estate planning, but that my father made their wishes clear. None of us were surprised when we saw how the estate was distributed, because charitable giving as part of our Catholic faith was ingrained in us. This gift was a demonstration of how committed our parents were to their faith and to us."



*Katherine and Emmett Ferretti*

The Ferrettis' gift demonstrates the importance of what is often called "Planned Giving," says Foundation President Bill Kotti. "By designating Ascension St. Vincent's as a beneficiary of their estate, Katherine and Emmett Ferretti extended their legacy of faith and service to the entire community. We are very grateful for their generous gift."

The Ferrettis' wayfinding kiosk, staffed by a volunteer, will provide direction to patients and visitors, representing the direction they provided their children throughout their lives. "I would encourage people to think about their legacy gift or ways they would like their generosity remembered when they are not here," says Wright. "Knowing our parents' wishes helped us honor their commitment to faith, family, and health." †

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# Who's On Board: Meet our new Foundation board members

**Sheri Cook** is the senior vice president, human resources for Altec, Inc., where she also oversees the Altec/Styslinger Foundation charitable contributions. Cook shares her expertise on the boards of The World Games 2022, United Way of Central Alabama, and the McWane Science Center. She and her family are members of Independent Presbyterian Church. Cook says she accepted St. Vincent's Foundation's invitation to serve as a board member, "because of the important support this Foundation provides for Ascension St. Vincent's during such a critical time in healthcare. I look forward to serving with the tremendous board that is in place."

**Ryan Humphreys, M.D.** is an Ascension St. Vincent's East Emergency Department physician, medical director of Leeds and Irondale Fire and Rescue, and a Foundation advocate and donor. In addition to serving as a member of the Saint Luke Society since its inception, he has spoken to the hospital's medical staff on the Foundation's behalf. He has also briefed the Foundation board on how he saved a co-worker's life with Foundation-provided equipment. "I accepted the Foundation's invitation to serve as a board member because I can contribute my clinical perspective to the Foundation advocating for the needs of Ascension St. Vincent's patients and staff that I am privileged to serve."

**William Johnson, M.D.** specializes in obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN Associates of Alabama) at Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham, where he has served in numerous leadership roles, including medical staff president. He also proudly serves female veterans as section chief of gynecology at the Birmingham VA Medical Center. Dr. Johnson has supported the Foundation financially as a member of the Saint Luke Society since its inception. "I accepted the invitation to serve on this board because I have been at St. Vincent's for 17 years—and through each of those

years I've become increasingly aware of all the great things the Foundation does to serve our patients, hospital staff, and community."

**Tom Luckie** is chairman and chief executive officer of Luckie & Co. In addition to industry leadership, he serves a range of civic organizations, including United Ability, The Robert and Lois Luckie Charitable Foundation, the Bell Center, and Quarterbacking Children's Health Foundation. "I accepted a position on the Foundation board because I have a lot of admiration for the great work the board is doing," Luckie says. "Ascension St. Vincent's is one of the real jewels of our community. It is an honor to me that I can serve and make a small contribution to continuing the Foundation's legacy."

**Marian LaRussa Phillips** continues her family's multi-generational support of St. Vincent's Foundation as a board member and donor. Her family was instrumental in establishing both the original Bruno Cancer Center in 1989 and the new Bruno Cancer Center in 2014. Phillips and her husband Steven are dedicated to extending their family's legacy of community service and philanthropy. "Serving as a Foundation board member is important to me because St. Vincent's Foundation has a great reputation for providing support for the betterment of our community, and I am honored to serve on the board," she says.

**Owen Vickers** is the president/CEO of BHT Resources. Vickers not only supports the Foundation financially, but also serves as a strong advocate for Ascension St. Vincent's cardiovascular services. "Ascension St. Vincent's is like home to me," he says. "They have been taking care of me since I was six years old. They took care of me during my heart attack, and they took care of my parents. For me, serving on this board is really about that decades-long relationship." †

## St. Vincent's Foundation Board Members

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Kathryn H. Eckert  
Val Holman  
Ryan Humphreys, M.D.  
Rusty Hutson  
William Johnson, M.D.  
Tom Luckie  
Suzanne Perkins  
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Nick Pihakis  
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Owen Vickers  
James D. Wadsworth  
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Carter Wood  
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## Giving Thanks: *Opening hearts and wallets*

This is the Gratitude Season—time to give thanks for health, loved ones, and everyday blessings. In this and every season, St. Vincent's Foundation relies on grateful donors. While Ascension St. Vincent's own associates give more than \$630,000 annually from their paychecks to support this healing ministry, other area donors give to ensure those associates have everything they need to care for their neighbors when a medical issue arises.

Foundation donors open their hearts and wallets because they know every dollar they give remains in central Alabama. They give because they know the Foundation's operational costs are covered separately. They give because they want to make a lasting impact on their communities.

Would you help? Would you give a year-end gift of gratitude? Would you request donations to the Foundation instead of Christmas gifts? Would you honor or memorialize a loved one? Would you suggest your service club collect funds for this ministry? Every contribution counts. Your generosity heals. †

Learn more at [stvhfoundation.org](http://stvhfoundation.org) or call 205-558-3850.

