

# With Excellence at Heart

by Jon Caswell



If you measure success by longevity, Mended Hearts is a highly successful organization — 55 years of continuous service is truly an accomplishment. And when you consider that it's a volunteer operation, that achievement is even more impressive. The dedication of its members underlies much of that, particularly those who have taken leadership positions at all levels of the organization. Consistent and effective training has been another reason for MHI's success. And a third element that may be the result of both the dedication and training is the excellence of the volunteers and partners who have adopted MHI as the venue for their good works.

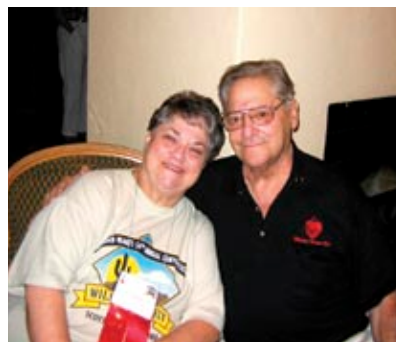
Every year this excellence is recognized in awards given at the annual convention. From nurses to newsletters, from corporations to cardiologists, MHI has been blessed by talented people and partners through the years. This year's award winners, like all those before them, have demonstrated their dedication to this cause by going beyond their normal duties. In many categories there was stiff competition and plenty of excellence represented so that the judges had a difficult time, and those who received honorable mention should feel honored.



*Executive VP Dale Briggs  
with wife Sandy*



*"Ike and Tina Turner" promote  
next year's event*



*CoChair Joanie Miller and  
Emcee Seymour Miller*



*Making the most of every moment...*



Harken Award Winner  
Dr. Jack Copeland

“To be included among such an outstanding group of previous recipients made me proud, and to be among the members at the convention and see them ‘in action’ was an inspiration.”

## Dwight Emary Harken Award

This award is named in honor of the founding father of Mended Hearts, pioneer heart surgeon and renowned cardiologist Dr. Dwight Harken. The award is given every two years to an individual or individuals or an organization who have demonstrated excellence in the field of cardiovascular medicine. Past recipients include the American College of Cardiology, Dr. Denton Cooley and the Texas Heart Institute, and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

This year’s recipient is Dr. Jack Copeland of the Sarver Heart Center at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Dr. Copeland’s accomplishments are of

such a high level that the university has endowed a chair at the heart center in his honor, the Jack Copeland Endowed Chair of Cardiothoracic Surgery, which he currently occupies. Dr. Copeland performed the first heart transplant in Arizona in 1979, making the University Medical Center one of only six heart transplant centers in the world. Dr. Copeland had come to the university as an associate professor in 1977 after completing both general surgery and cardiothoracic surgery internships at Stanford. He was named professor in 1981 and co-director of the heart center in 1986.

In addition to performing the first heart transplant in Arizona, Dr. Copeland was the first to use a totally artificial heart as a bridge to transplant. He was also the first to perform a double-lung transplant in Arizona, and the first in the US to use a “Berlin Heart,” a biventricular assist device made in Germany. The surgery was performed in 2000 on a 7-year-old boy who had restrictive cardiomyopathy. He also implanted the first implantable artificial heart approved for commercial use by the FDA.

In 2001 Dr. Copeland received the Barney Clark Award for advancement of artificial heart technology. He is the

author or co-author of over 390 peer-reviewed papers and chapters, including a 2004 paper reporting a five-center investigation of the use of artificial hearts as a bridge to transplant. His primary areas of interest have been adult and pediatric cardiac surgery, cardiac transplantation, artificial hearts and cardiac preservation.

“Receiving the Harken Award at the Mended Hearts’ Phoenix convention was a great honor,” said Dr. Copeland. “To be included among such an outstanding group of previous recipients made me proud, and to be among the members at the convention and see them ‘in action’ was an inspiration.”

## Hospital Award

It goes without saying that MHI could not fulfill its mission without its hospital partners, but it’s also clear that there are varying degrees of support and cooperation. Partner hospitals nominated in this category were evaluated in eight categories, from providing reasonable access to patients to providing a consistent contact person to recognizing MHI contributions. Judging by the reports of the nominated hospitals, many chapters have decidedly generous and helpful partners.

The committee selected Roper/St. Francis Healthcare of Charleston, SC, nominated by Chapter 266. Chapter president Edith Callahan was matter of fact in her assessment of her sponsor’s commitment to MHI: “They were instrumental in starting this chapter 11 years ago. We couldn’t ask for a better sponsor.

“When they opened the state-of-the-art Heart and Vascular Center, they gave us space where we could operate our visiting program. The director of the center is our liaison with the hospital, and the director of cardiac rehab and volunteer director also assist when we need it,” said Edith. “When HIPAA came in, we quickly reached an agreement that didn’t severely impact our operation. They gave us excellent support for last year’s convention, providing the gifts bags and the staff for medical checkups.”

Roper also feeds them a light supper at monthly meetings — “We have 45-50 people each month, and they give us space in the board room. They provide snacks at reaccreditation meetings and training sessions. They print and mail our newsletter, *Hearts by the Sea*, and they will always find a speaker for us if we need one.”

Additionally, Roper provides financial support when needed. “They provide funds every year so that our leaders can get to the national, regional and state conferences.”

Clearly anybody that provides you space, food and money believes in what you’re doing. Tim Kafer is the director of the Heart and Vascular Center and Roper’s direct liaison with Chapter 266. He understands the value

of MHI: “Our MHI volunteers are able to answer the real questions that patients have: Will I feel better and will I be able to improve my quality of life? Of course, who better to answer those questions than someone who has completed the same journey?”

“I have been fortunate to work with Chapter 266 since their inception in 1995. Over the past 11 years, this chapter (and this hospital) has been blessed with a group of people who are committed to their purpose, committed to the patients and committed to this hospital. Mended Hearts is an integral component of our Heart and Vascular Center, and we are proud to have them as partners in the care process.”

## Corporate Award

Much of the excellent work MHI performs is possible because of the underwriting received from corporations that support the mission. This award, new this year, recognizes corporations that provide exemplary support to MHI and serves as a model for other corporations to emulate. The committee evaluates monetary support, responsible and exemplary leadership in advancing quality patient care in general, leadership in fostering support to MHI from other corporate sources and the overall impact of the corporation’s support to the MHI mission.

Because MHI gets excellent support from many corporate contributors, the committee had its work cut out for it. At the end of their evaluation, Glaxo-SmithKline (GSK) was given the award for underwriting the “Heartfelt Wake-up Call” campaign.

GSK funded the initial survey of heart attack survivors. Many survivors said they lacked pertinent information for managing their heart health. To provide patients with critical information, MHI launched the “Heartfelt Wake-up Call” campaign. It is a multi-phased initiative to provide education, tools and support to heart attack survivors and their families. The goal is to empower patients and their families in coping with life after a heart attack.

With funding from GSK, MHI developed a brochure called “A Heartfelt Guide to Life after a Heart Attack” based on the survey’s findings. It provides an overview of what a heart attack is, risk factors, prevention and treatment, and even includes questions to ask your doctor. There are also tips for caregivers and survivors as well as heart-healthy recipes. The campaign was kicked off at the national convention by former professional golfer (and caregiver) Nancy Lopez and her husband, baseball star (and heart attack survivor) Ray Knight.

“As a committed partner in the fight against heart disease, it is a great honor for GlaxoSmithKline to receive the Corporate Award for the collaborative relationship we have established with Mended Hearts,” said Rob Perry, a

GSK manager responsible for the relationship. “We look forward to continuing to help develop programs and tools that will benefit the entire Mended Hearts family.”

For more information on the campaign, visit the MHI Web site and click the “Heartfelt” icon at the bottom of the home page.

## President’s Cup

The President’s Cup recognizes excellence at the chapter level. Each year the selection is difficult because there are so many outstanding chapters in MHI. In choosing the recipient, the president evaluates every aspect of chapter activity and responsibility. Just to be considered, chapters must turn in their annual reports on time. Other considerations include the content of chapter meetings, growth in the number of visits and visitors trained, attendance, growth, the number of scholarships awarded as well as local public recognition.

This year’s award goes to Chapter 127 of Cookeville, Tenn. The chapter president and dynamo is Tom Little, who is an 83-year-old bypass survivor. For a list of Chapter 127’s accomplishments, turn to “Chapters on the Move,” p. 16.

President Tom Little is absolutely passionate about Mended Hearts. “Three years ago we had 29 visitors, and today we have 89, which includes the five who joined yesterday during our membership drive at the hospital,” said Tom. “I’m hoping to have 100 members by the end of October.”

Tom’s tenure as president started reluctantly. “I never wanted to be president,” said Tom, “but when I saw the chapter dwindling to less than a dozen members at meetings, I knew something had to be done. When they asked if I would run, I said I needed certain things, like offices filled, and the members came through.”

One of the secrets to the chapter’s success is their membership drives at the Cookeville Regional Medical Center where they visit. They don’t just visit and hope the patients will



President’s Cup Winner  
Chapter 127 — Tom Little

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contact them later. “When you visit someone, they may say they’re interested, but they often forget when they get home,” said Tom. “That’s why we have membership drives at the cardiac rehab center. We have a table and bulletin board that has pictures and tells all about MHI, and of course, we talk to people. We also meet people at health fairs — we do about eight of those a year.”

Chapter 127 has learned that visibility is one key to success. In addition to recruiting at the rehab center, they give out MHI t-shirts that say “Mended Hearts 127” and “Cookeville Medical Center” to all new members. Tom has also learned the power of free publicity. “All our meetings and activities are advertised in our local paper, the *Herald Citizen*,” said Tom. “It’s also on our local TV and radio stations. I was interviewed just yesterday by the local TV and newspaper for our membership campaign. And every time we place an automated external defibrillator (AED), the newspaper covers the event. The mayor even proclaimed ‘Mended Hearts Chapter 127 Day’ last year.” Another opportunity for free publicity.

Chapter 127 is also entering the digital world with a new Web site. “One of our members, a fellow with a heart transplant, put it together for us and is paying the hosting fees for us. You can’t pass up a deal like that,” said Tom. The chapter also mails out 400 newsletters each month, courtesy of the medical center.

Certainly much of Chapter 127’s success can be attributed to Tom’s passion for the cause. He estimates that he works about 50 hours a week on chapter business. For instance, he makes individual phone calls to every member before each chapter meeting. “I have great officers working with me, and our members are outstanding,” said Tom. “It took all of us to earn this recognition.

“I have very seldom been turned down on any request in my 3½ years as president. For instance, two of us put on our first silent auction. The next year there were a few more who helped, but this year people were begging to participate. This is one of the best organizations I have ever been part of. I’m glad I had open-heart surgery so I could be part of this!”

## Mended Heart of the Year

Finally we come to the award that personifies the MHI mission in the world. Mended Heart of the Year is awarded for outstanding service given over many years. This year’s winner, Shirley Musil, has certainly been active for many years, having co-founded Chapter 79 in Orange, Calif. in 1972.

Shirley had her first surgery, to repair an ASD, in 1965 when she was only 40 years old, and then another operation in 1969. Since founding Chapter 79, she has helped establish several chapters in the southern California area. In addition, she has been an accredited

visitor all these years. “I’ve been a visitor trainer for 30 years, but I gave the job to someone else just this year.”

Shirley had held every office and chairmanship in Chapter 79 except for treasurer. “For 30 years I said I would never be treasurer because I can’t balance my own checkbook,” said Shirley, age 81, “but this year they couldn’t find anybody to be treasurer, and the chapter would have to disband, so I took it on. I’m struggling with it, but you know, we’re never too old to learn something new.” Shirley has been married to her husband Walt for 58 years. She retired from elementary school teaching, but she currently teaches English as a second language at a literacy program through her church. She also had a pacemaker implanted in January 2006.

In addition to her dedication to her local chapter, Shirley has been active regionally and nationally. She has trained visitors all over the Western Region as well as co-hosted two national conventions (1980 and 2000) in Anaheim — she has attended 23 conventions in all. “The conventions are my special vacations,” she said. “I think the best thing is the long-term friendships that we establish with each other. They’re sort of like another family.

“Being able to help others is what I love about MHI. I was supposed to die as a baby, but I think the reason I have stayed around so long is because I’ve helped others. I want to encourage people to forget about themselves and spend their lives serving others.”

After more than five decades of service, the excellence of MHI, reflected in these award recipients, is having a bigger impact than ever on the growing number of heart patients in the United States. Shirley Musil, along with the other award recipients at the 54<sup>th</sup> annual convention, is a living example of the MHI motto, “It’s Great to be Alive... and to Help Others!” ❤️



Mended Heart of the Year  
Shirley Musil

“Being able to help others is what I love about MHI. I was supposed to die as a baby, but I think the reason I have stayed around so long is because I’ve helped others.”



## Excellence in Grassroots Communication

**N**ewsletters are the most common form of chapter communication in MHI. Whether it's quarterly, bi-monthly or monthly, chapter newsletters keep members informed of chapter news and member highlights. This year's newsletter award winners — "Hearty Heart" (quarterly; Chapter 168, Baltimore); "Pulse Beat" (bi-monthly; Chapter 48, Buffalo-Niagara, NY); and "Aorta Reporter" (monthly; Chapter 81, Atlanta) – have demonstrated excellence in editorial content, distribution and general information.

"Aorta Reporter" editor George Waterhouse has produced an 8-page opus 11 months a year for the past nine years. Each issue highlights upcoming chapter events as well as a column by the chapter president, chapter notes, a visiting report, as well as information on medicines, nutrition and an AHA Connections department. "My philosophy is to get as many outside contributions as possible," says George. For instance, he recruited the Mercer School of Pharmacy to contribute a monthly

column. They also have a nutrition column contributed by dietitian volunteers. A retired FDA employee submits timely articles of interest from the FDA Web site.

For editor Betty Kassel Wade, of the bi-monthly "Pulse Beat," winning the award was bittersweet because she formally retired as editor after a run of five years. "I tried to keep our members connected with both local and national MHI news," says Betty. "In addition I really tried to educate my readers by visiting many Web sites with a variety of heart information, such as the Cleveland Clinic and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute."

Says editor Jeanne Bailey, of Chapter 168's quarterly "Hearty Heart," "I want to accomplish three things with each issue: 1) create a sense of belonging for chapter members; 2) produce an issue that will inform our members, particularly those who can't come to the monthly meeting; and 3) help spread the value of MHI to all our members. I think chapter newsletters are essential to bringing our members together around shared information."

# Award Winners from the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

## The Sydney & Helen Shuman Nurse Recognition Award

*For nurses who make a positive difference in the care of heart patients during treatment and recovery. The award is accompanied by a \$250 cash award.*

### **Kelly Pearce, RN**

from the Gateway Chapter of St. Louis (#120)

### **Kim Silva, RN**

from the Big Valley Chapter in Stockton, CA (#40)

## The Mary M. Amato Education Award

*For two students in the healthcare field. Each award is accompanied by a \$500 cash award.*

**Mawuli Ladzepko** who is studying Chemistry at Howard University and who is the granddaughter of Wilma Armstrong from Chapter #162, Hayward, California

**Randy Evans** from Decatur, Georgia who is at Emory University School of Nursing and was nominated through Chapter #81 (see related story on p. 12)

## President's Cup Award

*This award honors a chapter that has had significant achievements in many areas. Some of the key criteria include content of chapter meetings – variety of heart-patient related subjects, growth in number of visits and visitors trained, attendance at chapter meetings and other MHI meetings as well as growth in membership and local public recognition.*

### **Chapter 127**

Cookeville, Tennessee, Tom Little, President

*The four runners-up were:*

### **Chapter 51**

Zanesville, Ohio; Jack Hannon, President

### **Chapter 71**

Columbia, South Carolina; Tommy Barrett, President

### **Chapter 250**

Bloomington, Illinois; Marv Lueck, President

### **Chapter 302**

Gainesville, Georgia; Richard Sandoval, President

## The Mended Heart of the Year Award

### **Shirley Musil**

Chapter 79, Orange, California

## Dwight Emary Harken Award

### **Jack Copeland, MD**

Dr. Copeland occupies The Jack G. Copeland Endowed Chair of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the University of Arizona Medical Center.

## Corporate Award

### **GlaxoSmithKline**

## Hospital Award

### **Roper/St. Francis Healthcare**

Roper is the hospital for Chapter 266, Charleston, South Carolina.

## Newsletter Awards

*In recognition of those members who keep their fellow chapter members informed of local and national activities as well as provide important health and lifestyle information to improve patients' lives. There are three divisions: quarterly, bi-monthly and monthly.*

### **Monthly Newsletters**

Award of Excellence – *Aorta Reporter*  
George Waterhouse, Editor  
Chapter 81 (Mid-Atlantic)

### **Bi-Monthly Newsletters**

Award of Excellence – *Pulse Beat*  
Betty Kassel Wade, Editor  
Chapter 48 (Northeast)

### **Quarterly Newsletters**

Award of Excellence – *Hearty Hearts*  
Jeanne Bailey, Editor  
Chapter 168 (Mid-Atlantic)