

GBMC

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THE

GREATER GOOD

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2025



Walk A Mile in Their Shoes Celebrates 10 Years

With 10th Annual Event, Walk A Mile Builds a Bright Future



On a misty Friday afternoon in April, 675 generous and dedicated community members gathered at GBMC to Walk A Mile in Their Shoes and raise more than \$290,000 for GBMC's Sexual Assault Forensic Examination and Domestic Violence Program. Celebrating its 10th anniversary, Walk A Mile in Their Shoes has raised more than \$1 million since it began, all to support the SAFE & DV Program.

The funds support a program that helps some of GBMC's most vulnerable patients who are never billed for this care.

Honorary Walk A Mile Chair, Baltimore Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh, inspired the crowd, shining a light on the program's mission and inspiring them to walk the GBMC campus in honor and support of the program. As GBMC HealthCare Board Member and Walk A Mile Co-Chair Alexis "Lucky" Thompson has said, the increases in attendance and fundraising success are a testament to the momentum she and the committee are building.



Cover photo (from left): Baltimore Ravens Head Coach and GBMC Walk A Mile in Their Shoes Honorary Chair John Harbaugh; GBMC Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Stacey McGreevy, CPA; SAFE & DV Program Director, Laura Clary, MSN, RN; GBMC Board Member and Philanthropy Committee Chair Heidi Kenny-Berman Esq.; Walk A Mile in Their Shoes Co-Chair, Dr. Fred Chan; and Walk A Mile in Their Shoes Co-Chair, Alexis "Lucky" Thompson, gather to cut a celebratory cake marking the 10th anniversary of Walk A Mile in Their Shoes.

This page (from left): GBMC Walk A Mile in Their Shoes event chairs Dr. Fred Chan and Alexis "Lucky" Thompson with Baltimore Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh and Baltimore Ravens cheerleaders.



Photos (from top left):

Saint Frances Academy football team came out in support of GBMC's SAFE & DV program.

The rainy weather didn't crush the spirits of the walkers. They were there to walk and raise money for a great cause.

The team from GBMC Gastroenterology came together to participate in Walk A Mile and support the SAFE & DV Program at GBMC.

The Baltimore County Police Department participated in this year's event!

Before the walk, Coach John Harbaugh took time to chat with The Stingers, a community little league team.

Looking Back with Dr. Chessare

In his 15 years at the helm, John B. Chessare, MD, MPH, steered GBMC through a global pandemic and a malicious cyberattack. But these were not the greatest challenges he and GBMC leadership faced together.

We sat down with Dr. Chessare and invited him to look back and consider his time here and the legacy he has created. These are edited excerpts from our conversation.

In 2010 we created our vision phrase, ‘To every patient, every time, we will provide the care we would want for our own loved ones,’ so for 15 years I’ve been taking new employees through a reflection on what that care would be like if it really was your loved one.

I wanted to personalize it a bit so I made the question, ‘What if it was your daughter?’ and to this day, I show a photo of my own daughter, Caroline, and then I invite a new employee who has a daughter to reflect with me for the whole group.

And I tell the whole group, ‘If you don’t have a daughter, it’s okay. Reflect on somebody you love.’ Because in order to make this come alive, everybody really has to try to personalize it. I say at orientation, ‘No matter what your role is, do this. Do what you would want done for your own loved one and we’ll be fine.’

The vision phrase was created at a Board Retreat in 2010, right? Was it already your guiding principle?

The broad notion that we are in not-for-profit health care, and we are here to serve – that broad notion is my guide. And it irks me to this day when I see people in not-for-profit health care that are really acting about what is the best financial short-term move’ as opposed to ‘what is best for the people in the community.

The phrase was actually created by [former GBMC Chief of Staff] Dr. Melissa Sparrow, one of our physicians who was at the retreat. She said, ‘You know,



Photo: Governor Wes Moore and Dr. Chessare.

we ought to be trying to provide care that we would want for our own loved ones.’

And I’m very proud of the fact that we have stayed focused on that for 15 years.

What is your favorite part of your day?

I really enjoy watching people improve things. And I think as an organization we are not perfect, but many, many more people in our organization than in the average organization understand how to improve something and I really enjoy watching that. I’ve been part of setting that agenda and it’s fun to see people improving things for our patients.

What have been the toughest moments?

My toughest moments are when the finances don’t add up. Because I know in my very being what we should do for better health, better care, for lower cost with more joy for those providing the care, but it frequently doesn’t align with the financial incentives. People expect me to say, ‘oh, it was the pandemic,’ or ‘oh, it was the malignant cyberattack,’ but we have such a great team we got through both of those episodes pretty well.

Is there anything that surprised you?

There were two huge things that really surprised me

that I realized shortly after I got here. The first one was the incredible community support that GBMC has. It shouldn't have surprised me if I had reflected on the history, that GBMC was literally formed by people who wanted better health care for their friends and neighbors. And that is still palpable today.

The other thing that surprised me was – you know, I was in the Boston metropolitan area and when I had been running one of the community hospitals, I thought we were a pretty good place, and I thought our medical staff was pretty good.

I came down here and I was stunned at how good the medical staff was at GBMC. That is what makes GBMC head and shoulders above the other community hospitals. I don't want to minimize the importance of the rest of the clinical team, but the medical staff was – and remains – very strong.

Is there anything GBMC achieved that you are especially proud of?

The achievement of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was huge. I think one thing I will take a little credit for is that GBMC was known in the region prior to my arrival for phenomenal clinical abilities but didn't really have any profile outside of the region. Today, if you go to people outside of the mid-Atlantic who understand quality improvement in health care and say 'GBMC,' they will nod. And if you had done that in 2010, they wouldn't have known what you were talking about.

Any advice for GBMC's new leader?

Celebrate the wonderful people who are around you.

The best evidence that we've made progress – and I've said this many times – is our accountability for people who access care in our patient-centered medical homes who have diabetes. Our performance is now Hemoglobin A1Cs out of range for only about 13% of patients when the national average is 30%. And we didn't get there by wishing or hoping. We got there because we designed a system to do that.

It's what you would want done if it was your own daughter or son.

Which brings us back to your own family. You always speak of your wife, Dr. Tracey Chessare, and four adult children with pride. How did you and your wife meet?

Tracey was a nurse at the University of Massachusetts, and she was working evenings as a nurse in the Emergency Department because during the day she was a special student at Holy Cross, picking up her pre-med credits. I was the Senior Resident on for the night and the intern for the Emergency Department called me, concerned about this baby that was spitting up. Tracey was the nurse and it was love at first sight. The rest is history.

We got married and Tracey joined me in Toledo, where I was Vice Chief of Staff, the Chief in the Division of General Pediatrics at the Medical College of Ohio. My wonderful wife, who had had our two babies in medical school, graduated on time, was in Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society in her third year and won the medicine award at graduation. She commuted from Toledo to Detroit every day for three years to complete her residency in Dermatology. When she finished, we had four little kids.

In his tenure at GBMC, Dr. Chessare has embraced individuals who have invested their careers, volunteer time, and personal treasure in a shared vision of what a community health care system can be. Everyone at GBMC is grateful to Dr. Chessare for his dedication to the community we serve and for the foundation he has built for a strong future.



Photo: The Chessare family (from left) Tracey, John, Mike, Matt, Pat, Caroline, and Caroline's husband, Jason.

Honoring the Past, Building the Future: GBMC's 60th Anniversary and the Visionary Leadership of Jerry Focas



As GBMC approaches a remarkable milestone – its 60th anniversary on October 2, 2025 – we are embarking on a journey of reflection, recognition, and renewal. This is not only a moment to honor six decades of excellence, but also an opportunity to imagine the future of healthcare in our region. Leading this initiative is Jerry D. Focas, Esq., incoming Chair of the GBMC HealthCare Board, Chair of the 60th Anniversary and Founders Committee, and a longtime advocate and volunteer leader for GBMC.

Focas brings a unique combination of legal expertise, civic engagement, and personal connection. An estate and trust attorney, he has devoted more than three decades advising families and institutions to prepare for their futures. He shares his personal and professional belief in giving back, particularly to local healthcare systems:

“At some point, we all need to ask ourselves: what are we doing to strengthen the institutions that

serve our communities? GBMC has cared for generations of my family, and it’s where I want to help make a lasting impact.”

His commitment to GBMC spans nearly a decade. From 2015 to 2024, he served on the GBMC HealthCare Board of Directors, chairing both the Governance and Quality Committees. He currently chairs the GBMC Gift Planning Advisory Board, serves on the Philanthropy Committee, and is a proud member of the Elizabeth Duncan Yaggy Society, which recognizes individuals who include GBMC in their estate plans.

“I see every day how meaningful it is when people include their favorite organizations in their estate planning,” Focas said. “This anniversary is the perfect moment to remind our community of the legacy they can help shape.”

Under his leadership, the Founders Committee is guiding several anniversary projects that advance GBMC’s mission. Central to this

work is the transformation of Physicians Pavilion West into the Founders Pavilion. Renovations will include relocating, expanding, and modernizing the Departments of Ophthalmology and Urogynecology, both of which have outgrown their current spaces. A GBMC historical timeline will also be installed.

“This isn’t just about upgrading a building,” said Focas. “It’s about investing in the future of care and making sure our clinicians have the space, technology, and support they need to continue doing their best work.”

The 60th Anniversary celebration will also honor individuals who have embodied GBMC’s values over the decades. The “Visionary Women of GBMC” initiative will spotlight women who have shaped our mission and culture. This list will be unveiled during a special event when we will also recognize physician Titans of Care, highlight GBMC’s history, and welcome the organization’s next president and chief executive officer.

“We are stewards of a remarkable legacy,” Focas said. “It’s our job to honor it—not only by remembering where we’ve been, but by boldly preparing for where we are going.”

If you would like to support ophthalmology renovation efforts, please contact Philanthropy at philanthropy@gbmc.org.

RETIREMENTS

GBMC's Annual Joint Reunion: Celebrating Service, Legacy, and Retirement

This year's Annual Joint Reunion at GBMC was especially meaningful. More than 200 former patients gathered to celebrate not only their own journeys to healing, but also to honor two beloved physicians, Leroy M. Schmidt, MD, and D. Allan Lanzo, MD, as they step into retirement after decades of exceptional service.

Honoring Two Orthopaedic Leaders

Leroy M. Schmidt, MD, has been a pillar of GBMC since 1990. As Director of the Joint Replacement Center and Chief of the Division of Orthopaedics, he has treated thousands of patients for arthritis of the knees and hips. His expertise includes arthroscopic surgery, total joint reconstruction, partial and total knee replacement, and minimally invasive surgical techniques. Active in professional societies like the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Dr. Schmidt's influence has been profound both inside and outside the operating room.

D. Allan Lanzo, MD, completed his sports medicine fellowship at the prestigious Hughston Clinic in 1990 and built a distinguished career. As GBMC's Director of Sports Medicine, Dr. Lanzo has specialized in surgery of the knee and shoulder, performing advanced procedures in knee arthroscopy, ACL



reconstruction, and rotator cuff repairs. Notably, he has performed more Oxford Unicompartmental knee replacements than any other surgeon at GBMC, earning the trust and admiration of patients and colleagues alike.

A Special Celebration

The event was a moving tribute to the deep bonds formed between physicians and patients. The room was filled with gratitude as former patients shared heartfelt stories of how Dr. Schmidt and Dr. Lanzo restored their mobility and quality of life. A receiving line gave attendees a personal moment with each physician.

In honor of their service and leadership, GBMC announced the installation of a commemorative plaque recognizing both doctors. This lasting tribute reflects not only their clinical excellence but also their roles as mentors, healers, and pioneers in their field.

A Lasting Legacy

The reunion reminded everyone

that great medicine is built on more than just technical skill. It is founded on compassion, dedication, and human connection. Dr. Schmidt and Dr. Lanzo have set a standard that will inspire GBMC's orthopaedic team for years to come.

As they transition into retirement, their impact will continue to be felt through the thousands of lives they have changed and the high standards they leave behind. We offer our deepest thanks and congratulations to Dr. Leroy M. Schmidt and Dr. Allan Lanzo for a lifetime of exceptional service and care.

Photo: Celebrating with Joint Replacement Center patients were (from left): Joy Reynolds, MSN, RN, PCCN, Nurse Manager Unit 58 and Joint and Spine Program; Leroy M. Schmidt, M.D., Director Joint Replacement Center and Chief, Division of Orthopaedics; D. Allan Lanzo, M.D., Director of Sports Medicine; and April Asuncion Higgins, RN, BSN, CMSRN, Joint and Spine Clinical Program Manager.

GBMC Golf Classic at Turf Valley: A Day of Purpose and Play



Misty weather did not deter the 176 golfers who turned out to Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City for this year's GBMC Golf Classic, a day of fun, friendly competition, and meaningful impact. Participants enjoyed championship play, exciting prizes, and a strong sense of community.

This year's event raised more than \$170,000 to support the continuing education of GBMC's dedicated doctors and nurses. Co-chairs, Laurie R. Beyer, MBA, CPA, Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, and Yuliya Klopouh, PharmD, Vice President of Pharmacy Services, teed up the

event's outstanding outcome. The event drew many generous sponsors and donors.

We are grateful to all who participated. Together, we are making a lasting impact on the future of medicine - one round at a time.

Photo: GBMC's 36th Annual Golf Classic (from left): John B. Chessare, MD, MPH, President and CEO of GBMC; Ronald M. Cherry, Esq.; GBMC HealthCare Board member Harry S. Johnson, Esq.; and John L. Flowers, MD, FACS, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of GBMC and President of GBMC Health Partners.

GBMC's 10th Annual Art of Nursing

This year marked a special milestone for GBMC's Art of Nursing — a tradition now in its tenth year of honoring the incredible care, expertise, and leadership of our nurses. This year's honorees embody the best of GBMC nursing across all three work systems: GBMC, GBMC Health Partners, and Gilchrist:

- **Christine Guercio, NST** – Clinical Assistant – Inpatient Award, Surgical Intensive Care Unit
- **Britney McKnight, MA** – Clinical Assistant – Outpatient Award, GBMC Health Partners Primary Care Owings Mills
- **Victoria Niller, BSN, RN** – Nurse Clinician of the Year, Unit 42 – Medicine/Oncology
- **Connie Duke, BSN, RN** – Diversity in Nursing Award, Wound Care Center
- **Megan Olszewski, MSN, RNC-OB** – Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing Award, Labor and Delivery
- **Jessica Meyer, BA, ASN, RN** – Mrs. H. Norman Baetjer Jr. Nursing Graduate of the Year Award, Unit 36 – Medicine/Surgical/Telemetry
- **Savannah Dunivant, MSN, RN, CMSRN** – Nurse Leader

Award, Unit 42 – Medicine/Oncology

- **Brian Fikes, CRNP** – Patient- and Family-Centered Care Award, Gilchrist

The centerpiece of a special culminating celebration was the announcement of the 2024 Nightingale Award—voted on by the entire workforce and presented to **Ruby Victor, BSN, RN**, from Labor and Delivery.

At GBMC, our nurses are at the heart of all we do.

DONOR RECOGNITION

Meet Healthcare Leader and Philanthropist Sheila K. Riggs

To say Sheila K. Riggs has dedicated her career to improving health care requires an asterisk. While she once chaired the GBMC HealthCare Board, served on the Executive Council of the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA) Board of Presidents and on the Board of the Maryland Hospital Education Institute, all this work was done as a volunteer. She put in long days and long weeks, directly involved in the activities of the hospital.

“That was in the days when the Board Chair was more involved in the day-to-day workings of the hospital,” she recalls. “I was among the last chairs who could be here 8 hours a day.”

Joining soon after she moved to Baltimore from Boston in 1973, Sheila Riggs was the youngest to take up leadership when she became President and Chairman from 1978-1984.

To talk with Mrs. Riggs is to learn about the many individuals who, like her, were dedicated to building for GBMC's future. Jeanne Baetjer, after whom GBMC's Center for Nursing Excellence is named, invited her to the Board. She has fond memories of other GBMC founders like Mary Gwynn Erlandson, Virginia Sherwood, Virginia Kennedy (Karr), Michael Yaggy, and many more.

Sheila Riggs played a pivotal role in shaping GBMC's course, serving on the Finance, Strategic Planning,

Legislative, and Performance Improvement Committees. She was instrumental in establishing GBMC's Harvey Institute for Human Genetics. The program was the first of its kind in a community hospital and remains a cornerstone of GBMC's commitment to advancing genetic medicine.

Her work in the area of Performance Improvement led to substantial enhancement of several GBMC programs, including radiation oncology, prompting the Board to name the center in her honor as a gesture of gratitude in 1985. She invested in the redesign of the Sheila K. Riggs Radiation Oncology Center with a gift this year.

Her contributions benefited patients far beyond GBMC. In the early 1980s, Mrs. Riggs chaired the MHA's Long Range Planning Task Force, Target Tomorrow, which led to the establishment of the Quality Indicator Project. That project formed a basis for building quality assessment tools across medical specialties and had worldwide hospital participation before it was sold, years later, to Press Ganey. The team began by asking, "Are we doing the right things, and are we doing them to a high standard?"

In one year, 1983, in addition to chairing the GBMC Board, Mrs. Riggs' service in health care included membership on the Maryland Health and Higher Educational Facilities Authority,



the Advisory Council to the Department of Human Resources, and serving as the elected Secretary to the Maryland Hospital Education Institute, as well as chairing the State's Task Force on Aging.

In 1988, Mrs. Riggs was named to the Maryland Health and Higher Educational Facilities Authority where, during her 39 years of service, 20 as chairman, she oversaw the issuance of billions in revenue bonds to fund hospital and healthcare facility expansions. Her commitment to philanthropy and civic engagement has earned her numerous accolades, including the MHA's Distinguished Service Award and a Congressional Certificate of Merit.

Her service to Marylanders is not limited to healthcare, either. In 1982 Sheila Riggs was the first woman elected to the Board of Provident Bank of Maryland (now M&T). She also co-chaired the Maryland Council of Foreign Affairs and served from 1984 and then for the next 40 years on the Board of the Maryland Institute College of Art, chairing it from 1985 to 1990.

From Having Nothing to Giving Millions: Philanthropist Bob Parsons Shares His Story



Bob Parsons, the donor behind the Allan Parsons Integrative Wellness Center, made the gift in loving memory of his younger brother, Allan Parsons. Allan was a charming, gentle person with an infectious sense of humor who, for five years until his passing in 2020, was treated by the doctors and staff of the Sandra & Malcolm Berman Cancer Institute.

Bob Parsons is an American entrepreneur, well-known philanthropist, and now a best-selling author. In his New York Times bestselling book, *FIRE IN THE HOLE! The Untold Story of my Crazy, Hilarious, Traumatic Life and Explosive Success*, Bob Parsons describes his remarkable path and talks about the financial struggles his family faced, as well as the emotional neglect he experienced as a boy.

The descendants of coal miners, Bob and Allan Parsons, grew

up in the 1950s in a blue-collar, working-class neighborhood in East Baltimore. Money was tight, given their parents' shared fondness for gambling.

He writes: "We were just getting by when Pop's business failed ... my dad racked up so much debt from gambling and credit cards that everything came tumbling down. In the end, he practically gave the business away. And, when he did, we went from not having much to having nothing. I mean absolutely nothing."

An admittedly so-so student, he recalls the struggles he faced in learning, as well as the corporal punishment dished out by Catholic school nuns. But his early experiences reveal an innate resiliency that got him through a harrowing tour of duty in Vietnam, his early years at his first company, Parsons Technology, as well as his

bold business decisions that would eventually make him one of the wealthiest people in the world. With a net worth of \$3.9 billion, Parsons is No. 338 on the 2024 Forbes 400 list of the richest people in America.

Getting to know Bob Parsons, whether during his visits to GBMC or through his book, it's easy to see that he's an everyman who has made it. He's authentic. And his reflections on life, business, and giving back are heartbreaking, heartwarming, humorous, and inspiring.

GBMC is honored to have had the opportunity to care for Allan Parsons and is incredibly grateful for Bob Parsons' generous support which helps us meet our vision to provide every patient, every time with the care we would want for our own loved ones.

For those of you who would like to learn more about Bob Parsons and his remarkable life story, we highly encourage you to purchase a copy of his New York Times bestselling book, *FIRE IN THE HOLE! The Untold Story of my Crazy, Hilarious, Traumatic Life and Explosive Success*.

Purchase your copy today at a special price: <https://bobparsons.com/fire-in-the-hole/>.

REMEMBRANCE

A Lasting Legacy of Compassion and Leadership

Honoring Herb Belgrad's Lifelong Commitment to GBMC and Baltimore

Herbert J. Belgrad Esq., a beloved Baltimore attorney, civic leader, and philanthropist, passed away on April 6, 2025, at the age of 90. Best known as the first chair of the Maryland Stadium Authority and a driving force behind Oriole Park at Camden Yards, Belgrad's impact reached far beyond sports and law. Among his many community commitments, his enduring devotion to Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC) stood as a cornerstone of his legacy.

As a longtime member of the GBMC Board of Directors, Herb served nine years in various capacities and played a pivotal role in guiding the hospital's mission of delivering compassionate, high-quality care. His leadership was both strategic and heartfelt, ensuring that GBMC remained a beacon of healing for the region. More than a board member, he was a trusted advisor, advocate, and steward of the hospital's growth and values.

According to GBMC President, Dr. John Chessare, "Herb was an incredible leader, colleague, and friend. He never said no to a request for help. He was a mentor to many in our community, and he served GBMC for many years as a Board member, and he chaired a number of committees. We miss him dearly."

Belgrad's connection to GBMC was deeply personal. He believed in giving back to institutions that shape and support daily life. His work behind the scenes helped secure essential resources, enhance patient services, and expand GBMC's footprint as a regional healthcare leader. Friends and colleagues remember his quiet strength, sharp intellect, and unwavering commitment to the greater good.

According to Faith Thomas, Esq., fellow attorney and former Chair of the GBMC HealthCare Board, "Herb was a stellar attorney, deeply admired by his peers. He was particularly active in the Maryland Bar Association and frequently served as a role model for young attorneys. While his role as the first chair of the Stadium Authority brought him into the spotlight, he also served quietly on numerous

community boards. Herb was especially known for his generosity and dedication as a volunteer."

Alongside Herb throughout his life and philanthropic journey was his wife of 65 years, Joann Lott Belgrad. A devoted partner and matriarch, Joann stood as the steady foundation of the Belgrad family. Together, they raised three children—Steve, Susie, and Leslie—and nurtured a legacy carried forward by eight grandchildren.

Though not always in the public eye, Joann's influence was unmistakable. Her support allowed Herb to lead with confidence and grace. The Belgrads' partnership and philanthropy touched countless lives throughout Baltimore. Together, they exemplified the power of purposeful living and left an indelible mark on the institution they loved—and the city they helped shape.





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Lectureship Created to Honor Dr. Chessare's Legacy

We are proud to announce that GBMC's founding organizations joined several individuals to establish the Dr. John B. Chessare Public Health & Quality Lectureship. Former GBMC HealthCare Board Chair Charles Fenwick announced the fund at a celebration for Dr. Chessare's retirement. He explained that the lecture "will carry forward John's unwavering commitment to safety, clinical excellence, and public health."

Each year, according to Mr. Fenwick, "the lectureship will bring together national and local leaders to advance best practices, share new insights, and strengthen our pursuit of safe, equitable care for all."



Photo: Former GBMC HealthCare Board Chair Charles C. Fenwick, Jr., (left) is joined by Board member Dr. John R. Saunders, Jr., and Senior Vice President of Philanthropy and Marketing Jenny Coldiron in announcing the new fund.