Saint Simeon’s Bids Farewell to Kris of Kris’s Caring Champion

Kris Nichols, the woman behind Saint Simeon’s “Kris’s Caring Champion” Employee Recognition Program, passed away on May 16, 2014.

Kristin “Kris” Jean Bretz Nichols grew up in Seminole, Okla. and later moved to Oklahoma City and attended Putnam City High School. There, she met the love of her life, Jerry Nichols, with whom she would later enjoy more than 49 years of marriage.

After high school, Kris completed her first two years in biological sciences at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater and transferred to Baylor University, College of Dentistry, where she earned her degree and became a successful dental hygienist. Kris and Jerry established their home in Tulsa in 1967 and raised their children, Nancy N. Van Doren, Erin N. Peters, and Justin R. Nichols, here.

Kris and Jerry became actively engaged in the Tulsa community through their involvement in their church, St. John’s Episcopal Church, where Kris served as a member of the Altar Guild and Jerry a member of the Vestry. Kris and Jerry both served as trustees for their children’s school, Monte Cassino, and Kris served as a Trustee for Cascia Hall School. Kris was also active in the life of her sorority, Kappa Kappa Gamma, and also served as a chairperson for the Tulsa Antique Collectors Guild and Tulsa Opera Ball. Kris also enjoyed traveling, playing duplicate bridge, cooking and reading. She loved long weekends at Grand Lake and sharing good wine, food and stories with friends and family.

Kris was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer’s disease in 2001. After the diagnosis, her family became particularly involved in Saint Simeon’s and gained an awareness and appreciation for the employees and families of Saint Simeon’s. In 2010, Kris and Jerry Nichols made a generous gift to the Saint Simeon’s Foundation for the purpose of employee recognition. The program, called Kris’s Caring Champions Program, allows employees to be nominated by residents, colleagues, friends, and family members of residents.

The life of Kris Nichols will not be forgotten at Saint Simeon’s, as her “Caring Champions” continue to be recognized each month through this recognition program and in the Quill newsletter. Saint Simeon’s is very grateful for this special woman and the legacy she left behind.
“Bennett Link, son of Marilynn Lane, sent Donna Mayotte an email requesting that his Mom use her iPad and FaceTime to ‘talk’ to him in Australia. Mrs. Lane’s condition no longer allowed her to speak, so a phone call was not possible. Donna, Becky Ashwill, and Sandi, along with wonderful help from Fr. Holly, made it happen. The time difference of 17 hours required coordination, but it was well worth the time and effort. Mrs. Lane and Bennett were able to see each other and have a ‘conversation,’ with Sandi helping to answer questions. Bennett was able to show his Mom the early morning skyline of Melbourne, Australia. Though plans were made for another call, that was not to be. Mrs. Lane passed away in just a few days. For that mother and son, you helped provide a precious gift – their last chance to see and talk to each other.”

– Lindsay Fick, President/CEO

“I was born in Fresno, Calif. Throughout my childhood, we moved every single year to someplace else in California. I started Tulsa Community College when I was 28 years old after I was married and had two children. I earned an Associate Degree Child and Family Services, and then attended SNU where I earned a Bachelor Degree in Family Studies and Gerontology. Because I was raising two children and working, it took me a total of five years to accomplish my goal of earning a Bachelor Degree.

I’m divorced. I recently bought a mobile home and live in the Prattville, Sand Springs area. My son, Isaiah, is 13 years old and a very active Boy Scout. He recently earned his Life Rank (one rank away from Eagle Scout) and attends school in Sand Springs.

I enjoy spending time with my son and friends, cookouts, restaurants, movies, yard sales, thrift stores, and visiting museums and historical sites. I recently visited Robbers Cave with some friends over the 4th of July weekend. I also enjoy reading, gardening, and learning with herbs.

In Life Enrichment, we wear many hats. When Residents first come here, I interview them to prepare their social history. I do social service assessments to determine if they have any special

Sandi Uebelhart …continued on page 6
Western Days 2014 to Honor Resident Mable Rice

At Western Days: OKLAHOMA! Our Home is Grand! on Sept. 9, Saint Simeon’s will proudly honor Resident Mable Rice with the Pioneer Spirit Award. Mrs. Rice has lived at Saint Simeon’s since 2008. She is a valuable part of the Saint Simeon’s community and has a long history of building communities.

Mrs. Rice graduated from Tulsa Public Schools and attended higher education classes at Tulsa Junior College and the University of Tulsa. Although her career evolved around arts and health, Mrs. Rice was project director for the Minority Women Employment Agency and she was the first black woman to own a retail shop in the Williams Center Forum. Mrs. Rice worked as a founder and developer of Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame, North Tulsa Heritage Foundation, the Greenwood Cultural Center, and served on the Board for the Business and Industrial Development Corporation in an effort to preserve the rich history of the Greenwood District.

Before retirement, Mrs. Rice was the executive director for the Oklahoma Chapter of The National Association for Sickle Cell Disease, a position that she held for more than 12 years. During these years, she was one of the directors of the Tulsa Performing Arts and a Mayors appointee to the Tulsa Arts Commission. She lectured throughout the city and state primarily regarding problems minorities face in our society. Additionally, Mrs. Rice is a member of the League of Women Voters.

Mrs. Rice and her husband, Troy, have been married for 61. They have three daughters: Karen, Denise, and Gina.

Mrs. Rice is a great asset to Saint Simeon’s, contributing ideas for new events and ways to improve Residents’ life-enriching experiences. Mrs. Rice conjured up the idea for Saint Simeon’s first-ever Juneteenth Celebration. On June 19, Saint Simeon’s Residents, staff, and guests celebrated Juneteenth, the anniversary of when Union soldiers delivered the news of the slaves’ liberation to Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865.

During Juneteenth, staff member Cherie Richardson aided Mrs. Rice with the program and also helped gather African American art for a day-long Art Show in the Common Room. Residents enjoyed a horse show by Morrison’s Senior Dining manager, Micah Tucker. For lunch, Residents enjoyed a classic Southern meal, with fried chicken, baked sugar glazed ham, collard green, cornbread, peach cobbler, and more. Rosemary Powell with Rudisill Regional Library presented the history of Juneteenth for residents, staff, and guests. Resident Hazel Richardson booked the Metropolitan Baptist Church Men’s Choir, which made a spectacular musical performance.

Former Oklahoma State Senator and Saint Simeon’s Trustee Maxine Homer and Resident Mable Rice were awarded the Pathfinder Award by the League of Women Voters in 2009. The Pathfinder Award is given annually in recognition of individuals who have contributed significantly to the civic and cultural life of the Tulsa community.
Dear Residents, Families and Friends of Saint Simeon’s,

Recently, I was walking along a path through the woods of a local park with my grandson. The path is made of pea gravel, and my grandson noticed that there were blackened plants to the edge of the path. He asked me what they were. I told him, “Those are plants that sprung up in the spring, but the ground is too rocky there, and so they have died because they couldn’t get roots down to where they could get water.”

Jesus’ parable of the sower was immediately brought to mind. A sower goes out to sow grain and as he scatters it, some falls along the pathway and is immediately eaten by birds. Some falls on rocky soil and sprouts, but is not able develop root and the sun causes it to wither. Some falls among the thorns and sprouts, but the thorns choke it out. Some seed falls on good soil and plants grow producing an abundance of grain.

Jesus used this parable to talk about spiritual development and growth. I’ve heard some moralistic sermons on this where the preacher asks the congregation, “And what kind of soil are you? Are you rocky soil? Are you thorny soil? Or are you good soil?” The truth is, we are all those kinds of soil. At various times in our life, God touches us with important teachings. Depending on where we are at the time, we respond much like the grain in the parable. Sometimes, we hear something important to our lives, but it just goes over our head and is gone, like birds eating grain on the path. Other times, we may hear or see something important, and we may think to ourselves, “I’ve got to remember that!” However, we aren’t really able to give it the attention to incorporate it into our lives – like a plant that sprouts up in rocky soil, but doesn’t get the water it needs. There are times when we really get the message we need to get, but our lives become burdened or other interests capture our attention, and the message gets choked out by other concerns. Then, of course, there are the times when the message takes root, grows, and makes an impact not only in our lives, but in the lives of those around us.

The good news is that each of us has that good soil, just waiting for its chance to give birth to new and abundant growth. God is patient. God sows those seeds constantly in our lives. Sometimes we’re unaware. Sometimes we get it briefly. Sometimes we get it and get excited about it, but later forget. Sometimes, our lives are changed forever! Yes, we need to be aware of what God is doing in our lives, but we also need to be patient with ourselves. As long as your heart is open to love, you will get there!

God’s Blessings to you,
Fr. Bill Holly †
I love all the rain we’ve had so far this summer. For those of you living at Saint Simeon’s, isn’t it nice to not have any housework! Everything is so green, our vegetable garden is flourishing and we have all the new “babies” (turtles and peacocks). We would love to have you join us at our next Friends of Flora and Fauna Meeting on Saturday, August 9th at 10:00. Everyone who loves either plants or animals or both is invited. We have fun. We learn something. And, something unexpected always happens – as is always true with plants and animals! At our July meeting, Carolyn Jordan brought a native Oklahoma thistle from her pasture for us to see, but not touch (it is much too prickly). It is a very undesirable plant that can take over a field since none of the livestock will eat it. On the other hand, its flower is celebrated on the flag of Scotland and is often used by artists. She passed around an example of this with a beautiful pressed glass bowl. At the same meeting, Simone and her “baby peachick,” Penelope the Guinea Pig, and four baby turtles were most entertaining. Read all about Simone and her chick in her column this month on page 6.

Also, due to one of our little thunderstorms, we had to reschedule our Linnaeus Garden Tour, so you didn’t miss it after all. That will be in the fall when it is cooler, so mark your calendar now for Tuesday, September 9th at 9:00. It will be my first time on our new bus, but we can also take a car or two, if needed. The more volunteers who go, the more Residents can participate.

After one of our recent meetings, Lois Gatchell invited us to her room to see a remarkable orchid. Orchids are amazing flowers, but this one truly is glorious. It was a gift from Meredith Brokaw. Betty Hitzman, our resident botanist, told us that despite their tropical and exotic appearance, there actually are orchids native to Oklahoma. She has the documentation, too! An article from the Garden Center tells us all about them. Oklahoma has 33 kinds of wild or native orchids. Also, did you know that the orchid family, with its over 20,000 species, is either the largest or second largest of all the families of flowering plants? Only sunflowers may exceed it. And one last fact about orchids. There is only one orchid of importance as a food plant, and that is the Vanilla orchid (grows as a vine), which produces the vanilla bean. Just think what a poor world this would be without vanilla ice cream!
Simone’s Sentiments

Simone is . . . a mom?!

I am a momma! That’s right . . . a momma to a furry, yellow bundle of joy! Only this yellow bundle of joy is not a Golden Retriever puppy . . . it’s an adorable, peeping baby peachick!

In my free time, I have been helping raise one of the baby peacocks hatched on our campus. This peachick is no ordinary peachick either . . . nope! Rocky (we don’t know the gender yet!) has overcome all odds to get a chance at this beautiful thing called life. This chick’s momma had left her nest because only one of her eggs hatched, and she had to leave with her chick so it could get something to eat and drink, or it would have died.

Kathy Hinkle, my wonderful Mom/Saint Simeon’s Education Director, decided to bring the eggs into her office. It never occurred to Kathy that any of the eggs could hatch, since the momma had done all she could. Lo and behold, a couple days later, she heard peeping coming from the egg, and noticed the baby peachick’s beck had begun to emerge! Kathy called Carol Crews in the Wellness Center, who has experience hatching eggs, and she brought a shoebox, lamp, and towel in order to make a homemade incubator. The very next day, Miracle Peachick emerged!

Kathy tried repeatedly over the next two days, not only with that chick’s momma but all the other hens, to get them to accept the chick, but even its own mother did not recognize it and drove it off. So I decided I may as well help raise it! We have had the best of times! I’ve even let Miracle Peachick take a nap on my back!

Channel 6 caught word of how cute Rocky and I are together, and journalist Rick Wells came out to film a news segment on July 15. Be sure to check my Facebook page at facebook.com/simone.saintsimeons if you missed the broadcast!

Sandi Uebelhart . . . continued from page 2

needs. I may also end up talking to the family. Bringing a loved one home is one of the hardest things they will ever do. I can help them understand that when it is time, it is the best choice for their loved one. If a Resident is anxious about something, I will talk to them and see what can be done to help them. I also assist Residents with voting. We all pitch in with activities, transports, appointments, and shopping.

I love working with the elderly. A good day for me is going home to my son and knowing that I possibly made a difference in someone else’s life that day. In truth, our Residents give me far more than I could ever give them. Who else is going to tell me that I’m “a good girl” or that they “love me” just because I did my job? I feel blessed to get to be a part of a team who cares for such special people (our Residents) every day.”
2 Bedroom Cottage Available!
Saint Simeon’s has a newly renovated, two bedroom, independent living cottage available!

- Remodeled kitchen with granite countertop and new appliances
- Stylish living room with fireplace
- Two bedroom, two bath
- Spacious, wooded back yard with deck
- Covered carport

Call 918-794-1900 with any inquiries about the cottage.

DID YOU KNOW?
Saint Simeon’s guests may join Residents for a meal for $5/ticket.

The Assisted Living front desk sells meal tickets. Guests should bring their tickets to the dining room. The server will ask for the ticket before presenting a plate.
Oklahoma! Performed by Saint Simeon’s Staff

On July 2, Residents gathered to watch Saint Simeon’s staff members perform songs from Oklahoma! the musical. Since only one male performer was on hand, staff member Teresa Reno donned a mustache during some parts of the performance, playing Will for the song “Kansas City” and a cowboy for the “The Farmer and the Cowman” and “Oklahoma.” Some of the other highlights of the performance included Chris’s beautiful voice on “I Can’t Say No,” Becky and Andy’s funny duet on “People Will Say We’re in Love,” and Angel and Andy’s equally hilarious duet on “All ‘er Nothing.”

The performance was a great way to prepare Residents and staff alike for Western Days 2014: OKLAHOMA! Our Home is Grand! on Sept. 9. Be sure to visit westerndaysevent.com for all the event details!

If you no longer wish to receive the Quill by mail or if you wish to switch to a color, e-newsletter subscription, please contact Lindsay Morris at lmorris@saintsimeons.org or 918-794-1945.