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Leading by example: Residents win community's heart with legacies of service

James D. Hundley Sr., an orthopedic surgeon, has played many roles as a Wilmington doctor. For 22 years, he was team physician for the athletic teams of the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

He attended all the basketball games and became a huge Seahawks fan. In one game, an opposing player dislocated a finger late in the game. Hundley reset it, only to see the player score the winning basket. As a doctor, he did the right thing. But as a UNCW fan, he shakes his head ruefully at the memory.

The former chief of staff at New Hanover Regional Medical Center is one of three community leaders named as winners of this year's *Star-News* Lifetime Achievement Awards. The other two are Howard Loving, retired Navy captain and former Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce vice president for community development; and Linda Pearce, founder and executive director of Elderhaus.

The *Star-News* Lifetime Achievement Awards were created in 2003 to honor people making outstanding contributions to Southeastern North Carolina.

Robert J. Gruber, publisher of the *Star-News*, said this year's honorees are community-minded people whose achievements and contributions go beyond this region.

"They are people who care," he said.

The three will be honored at a private dinner tonight.

One aim of the annual awards is to raise money and awareness of the newspaper's Future Corps, which makes grants through area schools for community-improvement projects. It has disbursed nearly \$25,000 since it was started in 2003.

This year, a partnership between the *Star-News* and the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce allows contributions to be tax-deductible. Call Anita Thomas, the publisher's assistant, at 343-2297 for more information.

James D. Hundley

Hundley is not the kind of doctor his father was. Deane Hundley Jr. was a country doctor from Wallace, black bag and all. People showed up at the house at all hours, often wounded members of what doctors jokingly call the "knife and gun club."

But James Hundley, 66, did follow his father into medicine, graduating from medical school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and returning after a Florida internship for four years of orthopedic training.

In 1975, he joined Wilmington Orthopaedic Group, becoming the fourth doctor in a group that now has eight doctors and five physician's assistants.

He was drawn to orthopedics because he liked the mechanical nature of it - knee bone connected to the thigh bone and so on. But he has seen the field become far more complicated.

Technological advances have encouraged growth in joint-replacement surgery and made arthroscopy much more manageable. When he started, he was guiding a metal scope with a small light bulb attached. He was afraid he'd break the bulb "and fill the knee with glass." Today it's thin optical fibers, computer chips and video screens.

Medical imaging now makes it possible to look inside a patient without having to break the skin, and there's greater knowledge about bone disease and what causes it. Being a "bone doctor" wasn't a prerequisite for being team physician for the University of North Carolina Wilmington, but it didn't hurt in a world of torn tendons and broken bones. In 22 years there, he estimates he treated from 200 to 300 athletes in all kinds of sports. Hundley served as chief of staff at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in 1991-92, a demanding experience he calls "gratifying but prickly." Today he is helping develop a Web site, Orthopaedicist.com, to help connect orthopedists with needed resources. And he is working on the N.C. Osteoporosis Foundation to raise awareness of the importance of exercise and proper diet, including calcium, to ward off osteoporosis, a disease of low bone mass.

Howard Loving

Shortly after Loving moved to Wilmington in March 1994, he met Connie Majure-Rhett, who had recently moved here to become the top administrator at the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce.

"How'd you like to come work at the chamber?" she asked.

"I wouldn't have thought a crusty old man like me could work for a woman 20 years my junior," he said. "It was one of the best jobs of my life."

He was the chamber's vice president for community development from 1995 to 2003, helping the chamber lead a series of meetings on infrastructure growth and working as its liaison to local governments.

A 30-year Navy career prepared Capt. Loving for the discipline of organizational life. The Kansas City native joined the Navy in 1960. He served on eight ships, and commanded the *USS Nitro*, an ammunition ship. Later, he was in charge of the Military Sealift Command of Southeast Asia, with headquarters at Subic Bay, Philippines, and then taught at the U.S. Naval War College.

An early stint as commanding officer of the Navy Internal Relations Activity, a public affairs job that included revamping *All Hands Magazine*, helped prepare him for his last posting, commander of the Naval Imaging Command, a photographic and video facility.

After retiring from the Navy, he headed the U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation, which administers the Navy Memorial Heritage Center on Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue.

In addition to his work at the chamber, Loving, 69, served as board president of the Children's Museum of Wilmington, and as its capital campaign chairman during the effort to fund the museum's move into the old St. John's Museum of Art.

He is also past board chairman and campaign chairman of the Cape Fear Area United Way, a board member at the Wilmington Rotary Club and a member of UNCW's board of visitors and its Marketing Committee.

He's now New Hanover County leader of the statewide "Land for Tomorrow" initiative, urging the General Assembly to provide \$1 billion over five years to protect the state's land, water and cultural resources.

Linda Pearce

By the time Pearce was 6, she had lost her mother, father and twin brother. So she moved from her native New York City to Wilmington to live with her 74-year-old grandmother in the house where she resides today.

Her grandmother suffered from dementia. Her aunt eventually came to help care for the elderly woman.

"That is what shaped my life," Pearce said at Elderhaus, the adult day-care facility she founded.

She left for the N.C. College at Durham, now N.C. Central University, then moved back to

New York to work for New York Telephone Co. After a few months, she took a job at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., proofreading abstracts. She was there for 13 years.

"Ten years into the 13, I realized it was not my life's work," she said. "I realized I wanted to help families trying to take care of elderly relatives."

She studied gerontology and interned at a nursing home, but decided she was looking for an alternative to housing people in nursing homes.

That's when she discovered adult day care. She enlisted the help of community leaders and in 1980 created Elderhaus. It was housed in churches and a shopping center until 1998.

Today, Elderhaus leases a building at 1950 Amphitheater Drive, near Greenfield Lake, from the city for \$1 a year.

Elderhaus (Elderhaus.com) provides daytime therapeutic and social activities for adults who are physically or mentally challenged, primarily those older than 60. Medication is given out, meals and snacks are served, and various programs challenge participants both mentally and physically.

Elderhaus provides transportation and accepts people who are at least semi-ambulatory and able to get by without constant assistance.

Pearce, 61, serves or has served on the boards of New Hanover Regional Medical Center, the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce and the UNCW Board of Trustees. She also serves on the board of the New Hanover Community Health Center. She calls its North Fourth Street health center "another pragmatic solution to a problem."

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