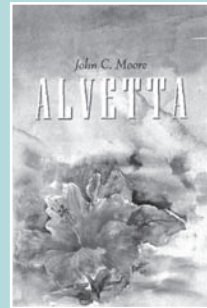


“ALVETTA” a Touching Tribute



Toledoan John Moore, an African American who lost his wife, Alvetta, after 50 years of marriage, has written a poignant memoir of the months she spent on the Hospice of Northwest Ohio program. Written as a diary that recounts the details of his daily visits with her — as well as his many memories of their lifetime together — it is a beautiful tribute to an amazing woman, as well as a testimony to the care she received from Hospice. Books are available for purchase at all area book stores and on Amazon.com. Watch for local book signings in upcoming months including Sunday, November 30 at St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church from noon to 3 p.m.

An excerpt...

I had so many flashbacks during this final Saturday, June 16, 2007 at Alvetta's funeral services. None, however, was as vivid as our 1,100-mile trip from Florida to Toledo [after learning of her terminal diagnosis]. As I look back over our life together, I can truly state that our greatest love affair took place during those 1,100 miles. We talked, laughed, confessed, shared and made plans. We came as close as two people could come together. I learned more about life, living, love and the fear of dying during this trip than I had in the 70 years before. ■

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Please contact us at 419-661-4001 to have your name removed from the “Passages” mailing list. ■

Continued from front

to contact Hospice of Northwest Ohio. “I thought Hospice was only for white people with money,” admitted Willie. “Hospice has been a blessing — it is the best kept secret in town.” Added Reverend Brown, “It is not just the day-to-day care for me. After the Lord calls me home, Hospice will be here for my wife...and she is going to need it.” ■

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Passages

More African Americans Finding Comfort in Hospice Care

Despite the misconceptions of friends and relatives about hospice care, two African-American men overcame their fears and ultimately became Hospice of Northwest Ohio's biggest fans before passing away this summer. Nathaniel Stewart and Reverend Frederick Douglas Brown are examples of the small, but growing number of black Americans who are finding comfort in hospice care.

It has been well documented that, like other forms of health care, African Americans don't access hospice and palliative care services nearly as often as caucasians do. This is a national concern that is exemplified in Lucas County, where about 17% of the general population — but less than 8% of Hospice of Northwest Ohio patients — are African American. That's why Hospice is reaching out to the African-American community with education and awareness programming to help them understand the benefits of hospice care.

Fighting Fears

Both Nate Stewart and Reverend Brown agreed that many African Americans are afraid to accept help from organizations like Hospice of Northwest Ohio because of a lack of understanding that leads to fear. “I thought they were going to come in and give me shot and put me out,” said Nate. But, as he explained shortly before he died, that was far from what he experienced.

Nate's Story

“When the doctor told me there was nothing else he could do for me, he encouraged me to call Hospice of Northwest Ohio. But,” Nate admitted, “I was afraid. I was extremely painful and not able to eat. I couldn't hold down any food because I was nauseous all the time and had lost over 30 pounds. I slept with my feet up on a tray table in an effort to get some relief from the pain. Basically,” he said, “I had given up. But my wife knew we had to do something.

“When the Hospice nurse came, she immediately had a special lift chair brought in so I could sit comfortably and sleep. And she worked with the doctor to adjust my medication so I wasn't nauseous any more and I could eat. Now I can go to church and,” he happily reported, “out to my favorite restaurant.”



After receiving care from Hospice, Nathaniel Stewart felt good enough to go back to church on Sundays and out to breakfast at his favorite restaurant afterwards.

Not Just for Rich White People

Reverend Brown explained, “I think folks are ill-informed about what Hospice of Northwest Ohio can do for them. I came home to *live* and it is with the help of Hospice that I can do that.” Despite suffering from end-stage COPD, Reverend Brown

said, “I am pain free and want free. Hospice of Northwest Ohio has removed all the pitfalls and concerns from my life and now I can live.”

Similar to Nate Stewart, it was in the hospital where Reverend Brown and his wife, Willie, were encouraged

Continued on back cover

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High Tech, High Touch

Hospice Team Helps Patient Experience Far-Away Wedding

After helping raise her grandson following the death of his mother, Helen Dean of Bowling Green was heartbroken when her illness prevented her from traveling cross country to attend his wedding. However, with technology and teamwork, she still got to share the experience...from 3,000 miles away.

Temporarily staying at Bowling Green Manor while the rest of the family traveled to Washington, her Hospice nurse worked with the Manor staff and the Hospice volunteer department to orchestrate a video feed of the wedding that — on local time — would not occur until 10 p.m. that Saturday night.

Hospice volunteer Jay Gates went to Bowling Green Manor that evening to assure there were no technical difficulties with the video feed. And to make the occasion even more festive, he brought Helen a corsage and a cake, complete with bride and groom topper. Several friends and family members who did not travel to Washington also joined Helen for the distant wedding.

Making a Wish Come True

"It was wonderful how everyone worked together to make it possible for her to have her wish come true," said Joanne Decant, Helen Dean's daughter. "Kiki and Jeff, the bride and groom, really wanted Grandma to attend the wedding and when



Patient Helen Dean (seated) and her friend, Carol Black, got to experience Helen's grandson's Washington wedding two weeks before she died.

they had to accept that she couldn't travel, they were determined to still make her a part of it. They even called Grandma before leaving for their honeymoon to make sure she'd been able to view the ceremony.

"Mom is still talking about it," said Joanne. "Nothing could have made her happier than to see her grandson's wedding!"

Note: Helen died two weeks later, back in her own home. ■

Federal Law Extended IRAs May Be Used for Charitable Gifts (Tax Free!)

Again this year, federal law allows charitable gifts from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) without paying taxes on the distribution. Here are a few of the key features of this gift option:

- IRA investors who are at least 70 1/2 years old can make direct charitable transfers up to \$100,000.
- Gifts may be designated to support programs or areas of your choice.
- The gift (money directly transferred to the charity) is not included in the IRA owner's income and is not taxed. In Ohio, you also avoid paying state income tax.
- This law is an extension of a bill signed into law last year and applies to distributions made throughout both the 2008 and 2009 tax years.

If you would like more information about this opportunity or would like to discuss another type of year-end gift to Hospice of Northwest Ohio, please contact Ken Frisch, Director of Development, at 419-931-3189 or email him at kfrisch@hospicenwo.org. ■



LIGHT UP A LIFE

Please watch your mail for your annual "Light Up a Life" request. It gives friends of Hospice the opportunity to make a year-end gift to support patient and family care and/or community education and outreach programs. If you don't receive a request in the mail prior to Thanksgiving, and would like one sent to you, please contact Beth Nowak at 419-931-3119.

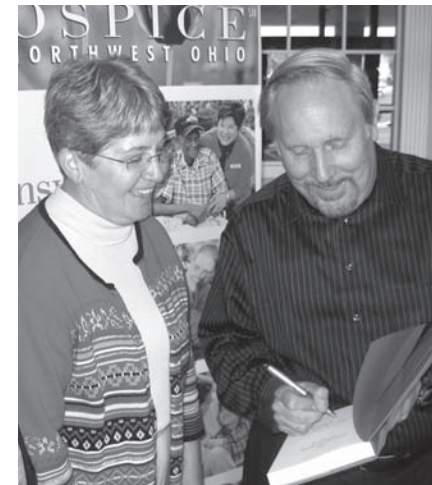
How to Cope with Holiday Grief

If you are concerned about making it through the upcoming holidays while still grieving the death of someone close to you, consider these tips from the Hospice of Northwest Ohio bereavement team:

- **Think about the life you had with your loved one** before the holiday season begins and make a list of all the things you shared and are thankful for. Stay in touch with your feelings throughout the season by keeping a journal or by writing letters to your lost loved one expressing how you feel, how much you miss him or her, and sharing news of the holiday. And remember: If good feelings come at this time of year, it's okay to enjoy them. You do not show disrespect by finding happiness.
- **Plan ahead to remember your loved one in a special way.** Ask your family to share old photographs and memories as part of a holiday gathering; light a candle, have a holiday toast or say a special prayer before a holiday meal; buy a special holiday ornament in his or her memory and display it prominently. Each family is different — do what would be most meaningful for yours.
- **Determine ahead of time who will perform traditional tasks** that were always your loved one's "job." For example, decide who will carve the turkey, pass out presents or say the family prayer. If he or she always sat in a certain chair at the dinner table, determine who will sit there now.
- **Protect your emotional well-being** by managing how and where you will spend your holidays. Strive to see people you truly enjoy, whether or not you have traditionally celebrated with them. If family conflict is likely in certain situations, avoid them. Do not feel obligated to accept every invitation you receive, or to stay for the entirety of every event. Let people know ahead of time that you may be leaving early or that you will only be coming for dessert. Discuss your feelings ahead of time so that your hosts will understand and plan to be flexible.



For more insight and suggestions, attend the **free holiday grief workshop** on Sunday, December 7 from 2 to 4 p.m. For registration information, contact 419-661-4001. ■



Barb Colvin was among the 300 people who came to hear one or more of Richard Groves' presentations during this year's Dr. Sharon Erel Lecture series.

From Aging to Sage-ing Erel Lecture Focuses on Living the Last Half of Life

— take time to process what they've learned in life and get in touch with their inner wisdom — so they can become an elder sage to their families.

Why is it, then, that in America we tend to dishonor the aging process? According to internationally known author Richard Groves, who spoke to audiences three different times during Hospice of Northwest Ohio's third annual Dr. Sharon Erel Lecture series, western medicine has largely been responsible for the separation of the body, mind and spirit. He theorizes that — ever since the Industrial Revolution — when the body becomes dysfunctional, little value is placed on the other elements of a person's being...their wisdom, their

spirit and their ability to be an agent of transformation for those around them.

"The elderly," said Groves, "are the wardens of our precious human heritage...our sacred stories, and the essential rites of passage that are so important to our psyche." And yet, in this country, they are often living in pain and/or they are suffering from afflictions of the soul and spirit. He validated this comment by sharing the fact that 91% of seniors living in nursing homes are suffering from depression.

Patterns of Spiritual Pain

Groves said that it is the task of the elderly to teach hope and possibility in spite of their physical limitations... and to realize that those who do not

fear *death* can embrace *life*. In order to do this, however, they need to work through the four most common causes of spiritual pain that often prevent them from doing so:

- Forgive those who have hurt or disappointed them;
- Find meaning in their life, despite physical limitations;
- Nurture meaningful relationships with people of all ages;
- Maintain a hopeful outlook on life, even if it re-defines *what* they're hoping for.

Likewise, the younger people who love and care for the elderly must help them meet these goals and, most important of all, value their inner wisdom. ■