NMHC Surgeon Recognized For Heroism

A truck driver traveling along Interstate 55 and the Missouri State Highway Patrol are thankful that general surgeon Jimmy Hamilton, M.D., is accustomed to making life-saving decisions. His actions helped save a man’s life and earned him the designation as honorary trooper.

In November 2005, Hamilton and his wife, Kathy, were traveling north on I-55, following a 2005 Freightliner pulling a steel dump trailer, when they witnessed a southbound sports utility vehicle cross the median out of control. According to the officer’s report, the SUV crashed into the left side of the truck, striking the fuel tank below the driver’s door. The SUV was ripped and torn apart, and the four occupants were ejected from the vehicle and killed instantly. The Freightliner traveled off the right side of the roadway, caught on fire and was quickly engulfed by the flames.

Dr. Hamilton drove through the accident debris and stopped on the northbound shoulder near the front of the truck. The truck’s driver had remained in the truck and was trying to rescue his dog. Smoke from the fire was overcoming the driver, so he stepped outside his vehicle to get some fresh air. The driver had every intention of going back into the truck and rescuing his dog.

“The SUV looked like a bomb had gone off,” Dr. Hamilton said. “When I saw that car coming across the median, I was stunned by the suddenness and severity of the wreck.”

The truck driver was so determined to save his dog that he did not realize the extent of his injuries — a severely broken right leg and a severed right foot that was attached only by a piece of skin. The driver fell to the ground next to the rapidly burning truck.

When the driver fell, Dr. Hamilton rushed to his aid and pulled him away from the burning vehicle, across the northbound lanes, to a safe location in the median.

“I had never seen anything like that in person, and never want to see anything like it again,” he said. “Fortunately, I knew what to do in this type of situation.”

The Hamiltons weren’t the only ones to come to the man’s assistance. One individual called 911 on a cell phone, while another provided a blanket to help the victim stay warm on that cold and windy day. During this activity, Mrs. Hamilton relocated their vehicle a safe distance from the burning truck. Dr. Hamilton remained with the injured man until Emergency Medical Services arrived on the scene.

Continued on page 8
Baldwyn Nursing Facility Seeks Nursing Assistants

Certified nursing assistants and mentors Tyesha Davis (left) and Lisa Davis (right) show Thomas Cook of Pontotoc a display during Baldwyn Nursing Facility’s Nursing Assistant Job Fair at North Mississippi Medical Center-Tupelo’s Education Center on Jan. 20. For more information about job opportunities or the mentor program at Baldwyn Nursing Facility, call Teresa Norfleet at 377-3059.

Heart Institute Earns National Designation

MMC has been designated a UnitedHealth PremiumSM cardiac specialty center, reflecting national recognition for its cardiac care.

“We are honored to receive this designation, which offers further evidence of the high standard of care we are proud to deliver every day,” said Chuck Stokes, NMMC-Tupelo president. “We are pleased to measure favorably against nationally recognized quality and cost efficiency benchmarks for the outstanding cardiac care we provide to our patients.”

The UnitedHealth Premium designation program identifies hospitals and specialists nationwide that are leaders in providing cardiac care. Hospitals are invited to apply for designation. NMMC in Tupelo and Forrest General Hospital in Hattiesburg are the only two Mississippi hospitals on the list.

“Patients who require cardiac care need to know that they are getting quality treatment “said Lewis Sandy, M.D., an internist and executive vice president of clinical strategies at UnitedHealthcare. “Our goal is to enhance the overall quality of care for our customers and enrollees. The UnitedHealth Premium designation signals to all consumers that North Mississippi Medical Center meets or exceeds nationally recognized standards of care.”

NMMC’s Heart Institute, located on the second and third floors of the East Tower, is home to four state-of-the-art cardiac catheterization labs, as well as labs for echocardiography, electrophysiology and nuclear studies. The Heart Institute offers advanced cardiac treatment procedures, as well as cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation services to help patients rebound physically and emotionally. Pediatric cardiologists from Le Bonheur Children’s Medical Center in Memphis see pediatric patients weekly at NMMC’s Heart Institute by physician referral.

Continued on page 8
Physical Therapist Selected For December EOM

Alison Farley of Pontotoc has been named North Mississippi Medical Center’s Employee of the Month for December.

An NMMC employee since 1999, Farley serves as a physical therapist with the NMMC Outpatient Rehabilitation Center. She previously worked in the NMMC Acute Rehabilitation Services Department.

Commenting on the monthly honor, she said, “This is such a surprise and such an honor.”

In her nomination for the monthly honor, one of her coworkers wrote, “Alison is a wonderful example of a loyal, committed employee. She promotes and achieves excellence in all she undertakes. She recognizes the needs of others and responds with great compassion. Alison has shown a consistent devotion to personally further NMMC’s mission, vision and values.”

In her current position, Farley works with adult neurological patients and is also specialized in the treatment of vestibular disorders.

She received her bachelor’s degree in physical therapy from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

She and her husband, Craig, are residents of Pontotoc.

Medical Technologist Selected For January EOM

Whitney Williams Payne has been named North Mississippi Medical Center’s Employee of the Month for January.

An NMMC employee since 2002, Payne serves as a medical technologist with the NMMC Pathology Department Blood Bank.

In her nomination for the monthly honor, one of her coworkers wrote, “Whitney’s willingness and eagerness to learn and her ability to get along with everyone is the reason she works so well in the Blood Bank section of the Pathology Department. The Blood Bank can be a very stressful department, and the area demands technologists that are extremely competent in their skills.

Whitney exhibits extreme competency daily while dealing with fellow employees, nursing staff and, most of all, her patients.”

In her current position, Payne draws blood samples from patients for compatibility testing. She also assists with training students in the NMMC Medical Technology program.

Payne received her bachelor’s degree in clinical laboratory science from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

A native of Nettleton, she and her husband, Ryan, are residents of the Carolina community. They attend West Main Church of Christ in Tupelo.
Balloons Released In Recognition Of Special Heart Week

Dr. Bryan Darling, a neonatologist at NMMC Women’s Hospital, helps congenital heart defect patient Carson Bell, 7, prepare to release 85 balloons Feb. 14 in celebration of Congenital Heart Disease Awareness Week. About 45 area parents and children gathered at Women’s Hospital as a balloon was released to represent each area baby born with a congenital heart defect. Dr. Darling and pediatric cardiologist Dane Douglas, M.D., spoke at the event. A special heart-shaped balloon was released in memory of Dr. Stuart Birnbaum, a pediatric cardiologist who treated many patients from this area before his untimely death in 2004.

Social Work Month Recognizes Special People

MMC, along with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), proudly announce the kickoff of National Social Work Month 2006.

This year’s theme, Life’s Journey: Help Starts Here, focuses on how social workers help people at every stage of life, while promoting dignity for everyone, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Social workers help families deal with the stress of placing loved ones in nursing homes and assisted living communities. They refer family members to support groups and encourage them to participate in care plan meetings.
The following employees recently received service pins in recognition of service milestones.

Five Years
NMHS
Melissa Wilemon

NMMC
Anthony Azlin, Leslie Beane, Tracie Bohannon, Jerry Gregory, Kathleen Hunt, Sharon Johnson, Aletha Justice, Lecha Miller, Kellie Moore, Jennifer Odom, Luther Prather

Clinics
Margaret Barnes, Lakeshia Dean, Charlene Grissom

Home Health
Jason Armstrong, Nina Reeves, Sandra Stanton, Shelley Stewart, Janice Wade

Tupelo Service Finance
Dorothy Brown, Patricia Sheffield

NMMC-Eupora
Jennifer Allred

Women’s Hospital
Twila Chandler

Ten Years
NMMC

Baldwyn Nursing Facility
Cindy Billiot

Home Health
Jennifer Johnson, Pamela Tyer

NMMC-Hamilton
Amy Harper

NMMC-Pontotoc
Allen Maxey

Women’s Hospital
Debbie Dabbs, Carolyn Mathis, Pamela Mayhan, Cnthia Stanford

Fifteen Years
NMMC
Lisa Brown, Vickie Cheney, Lorrie Chunn, Alice Johnson, Cindy Kimble, Greg Parham, Blake Stein

Behavioral Health
Tracy Lawson

Clinics
Denise Pugh

Home Health
Semmie Wicker

NMMC-Eupora
Shirley McCain

Twenty Years
NMHS
Leigh Dillard

NMMC
Pamela Farris, Debra Monaghan, Betty Pannell, Karla Roland, Vicki Shouse, Rhonda Turner

Behavioral Health
Rodney Rogers

NMMC-Iuka
Gwendolyn Jones

Twenty-Five Years
NMMC
Margaret Pickard, Elizabeth Sherfey

Behavioral Health
Susan Schuh

Clinics
Mary Ervin

Thirty Years
NMMC
Richard McDuffie

Thirty-Five Years
Keith Stephens
The Women’s Hospital gift and floral shop now offers plants; a variety of door wreaths, including announcement bows, grapevine and feather designs custom-made by an onsite florist; balloon bouquets; Ty and Ganz plush animals; and photo frames. Offerings include the Willow Tree Angel collection, Carriage Boutique newborn/infant clothing, preemie outfits, colorful insulated totes from Two’s Company, Midnite Pottery and the Blue Bird of Happiness collection. Get well, special occasion and newborn cards, candies and gifts are available. The shop features a large selection of Medela breastfeeding pumps and accessories. NMMC employees receive a 5 percent discount on any order. The shop is open from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Telephone orders may be placed by calling 377-4939 and using a credit/debit card. Free delivery is available to Women’s Hospital patient rooms.

Stars Online

Tony Comi was recently recognized by Stars Online for his outstanding dedication.

Two NMMC Wellness Center employees spoke to residents of the S.A.F.E. domestic violence shelter in Tupelo the week before Christmas about relieving stress. Upon returning, the employees shared with Comi that one of the residents had five children that she would reunite with at Christmas, and how sad the situation was.

Comi donated the Wal-Mart gift card he had received from NMMC to buy gifts for the children. He also persuaded Toys R Us to donate a bicycle for a young boy who was staying at S.A.F.E. Leaving no stone unturned, he contacted the local Wal-Mart and got another $50 donation for gifts.

“Tony was so compassionate about this,” his nomination stated. “He really has a heart for giving, and these kids wouldn’t have had anything had it not been for him.”

To recognize someone for a kind deed like this, nominate him or her for Stars Online.
Southern Living Treats Spirit of Women Participants

N
orth Mississippi Medical Center is well-represented among the leadership of the Mississippi Association of Diabetes Educators (MSADE).

Mary Bowens, RN, BSN, holds the position of past president for MSADE. Bowens is a 15-year employee and works for NMMC’s Home Health Agency as a certified diabetes educator and diabetes outcomes manager. Bowens was named the 2005-06 Diabetes Educator of the Year for the American Association of Diabetes Educators. She has one son and two granddaughters.

Kitti Parman, RN, holds the position of president for MSADE. Parman has worked as a certified diabetes educator and diabetes outcomes specialist at NMMC for six years. She provides education on diabetes self-management skills, pump training and diabetes medication. Parman has two sons, one daughter and two grandchildren.

Teresa Tittle, RNC, is serving as historian for MSADE. Tittle is certified in pediatrics and is a certified diabetes educator for NMMC’s Diabetes Treatment Center. She also provides education on self-management skills, pump training and diabetes medication. Tittle has been employed at NMMC for 22 years and has two daughters.

To learn more about NMMC’s Diabetes Treatment Center, call (662) 377-2500 or 1-800-THE DESK (1-800-843-3375).
and he was airlifted from the scene by a medical helicopter.

Sgt. R.M. Walker wrote in his report: Without his quick thinking and actions, the driver “would have been burned alive next to the truck he had been driving. Dr. Hamilton responded heroically, without regard for his own personal safety. Unknowingly, he upheld the motto of the Missouri State Highway Patrol of service and protection.”

**Heart Institute** Continued from page 1

Criteria for selecting UnitedHealth Premium designated cardiac specialty centers were developed with input from a panel of nationally recognized independent cardiology experts and based on published guidelines set by the American College of Cardiology, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the Heart Rhythm Society and Leapfrog Group, a coalition of more than 150 public and private organizations that provide health care benefits.

“The UnitedHealth Premium program evaluates and recognizes specific hospital and physician capabilities,” said Dr. Sandy. “These capabilities include their quality processes, adherence to evidence-based approaches, compliance with nationally recognized guidelines published by clinical societies and their broad capabilities to handle cardiac illness and its treatment through a continuum of stages.”

Among the program’s criteria:

- **Breadth of Care** – Hospital offers a full range of cardiac care including diagnostic procedures, cardiac surgeries, interventional procedures and electrophysiology (EP) capabilities.
- **Depth of Care** – Hospitals must track volumes of cardiac procedures for diagnostic catheterizations, PCI procedures, EP studies and EP ablations, cardiac rhythm management device implants and open-heart surgeries.
- **Staff Experience** – Cath Lab directors have advanced training and/or minimum number of years of experience. There must also be dedicated units for cardiovascular surgery patients or intensivists for ICUs, eight hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Emergency Care** – Hospitals must track Emergency Room treatment times for PTCA and thrombolytics for ST elevated myocardial infarction patients; hospitals must also have cardiologists, thoracic surgeons and cardiac cath lab staff available within 30 minutes or less for emergency care.
- **Quality and Data Management** – Hospitals must track morbidity and mortality for all interventional and open-heart surgery procedures and CABG procedures. Hospitals must also submit outcomes data to the American College of Cardiology and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons.

The program also measures hospital efficiency by analyzing the aggregate cost of care at an individual patient level for a complete treatment episode. Costs include related physician diagnostic testing, inpatient procedures and follow-up care.

“Three weeks after the accident, the gentleman called me and thanked me,” Dr. Hamilton said of the accident victim, who now lives in Kentucky and is still undergoing physical therapy.

In recognition of his heroism, the Commanding Officer of Troop E of the Missouri State Highway Patrol presented Dr. Hamilton an Honorary Trooper Certificate recently in Portageville, Mo.