

Honoring a Bright Star: Tennessee Hospital Association honors two from River Park Hospital

Two River Park Hospital (RPH) associates were honored with Awards of Excellence at the Tennessee Hospital Association's annual membership meeting in November. Homer "Trey" Kirby III, DO, received the Healthcare Hero award while Heather George, RN, received the Nurse of Distinction award.

Dr. Kirby was honored for his heroic service as a primary care physician and his 14 years as an active member of the U.S. military. Dr. Kirby most recently served a three-month deployment with the Tennessee National Guard earlier this year, stationed at a 40-bed mobile emergency room 75 miles from the Iranian border. In 2002, as a major in the Army, Dr. Kirby was a battalion surgeon on the front lines with the American troops who rolled through Baghdad and stormed the palace of Saddam Hussein.

He described the battlefield experience of being on the front lines as intense. "I should have been killed four times, but I wasn't," he said. His job on the battlefield was to keep wounded soldiers from dying, whatever that entailed. "It was 24 hours a day of adrenaline," he said. "You didn't know from one moment to the next if it was going to be your last moment or not, literally."

Dr. Kirby has also gone above and beyond in his calling as a physician, according to McGill. "As a member of our Physician Leadership Group, Dr. Kirby gives his time to help make our hospital better. He also serves as the medical director for a local nursing home. He is known for his dedication to the patients he serves and he has made a lasting impression on so many individuals."

Heather George was recognized for her passion for patients, coworkers and the community as a registered nurse. Working in RPH's Intensive Care Unit, George is known for her leadership skills and her willingness to always lend a hand. As a member of the hospital's Nurse Practice Council, she headed a project to create an open visitation policy for all patient care areas. She also serves as the Council's treasurer and helps raise funds and awareness in the community for scholarships and education opportunities for fellow nurses.

Equally impressive is George's dedication to supporting the community and bringing awareness to causes such as Multiple Sclerosis (MS), which she was diagnosed with in 2007. After her diagnosis, she quickly became involved with fundraisers for MS research, including walks in Nashville and Murfreesboro for the MS Society. In 2010, she began the process of coordinating a walk event for Warren County. Under her leadership, the inaugural Warren County MS Walk raised over \$30,000 and set a new record for the MS Society as the highest growing, first-time even held in the mid-south.

"Heather is a caring, compassionate individual who goes above and beyond the call of duty in whatever she does," McGill said. "Her nursing skills and her enthusiastic personality generate regular compliments from patients and their family members. She is a great asset to our hospital and our community."