

# 2005 Values in Action Awards

## Dignity

### Mark A. Wohlgemuth, MD

Chief of Staff, 2004

You can always count on Mark Wohlgemuth, M.D., to take the high road, regardless of how difficult it may be, how long it might take or the potential personal cost. A member of the medical staff since 1985, Dr. Wohlgemuth has served Mission Hospital in several capacities. He has become known for his high personal integrity, as well as for the respectful way he always treats the hospital staff, physicians, patients and their families. Dr. Wohlgemuth believes in doing the right thing -- the right way.

Conflicts arise in healthcare, and Dr. Wohlgemuth knows there is always more than one side to the story. During his tenure as Chief of Staff, he made a concerted effort to listen to everyone involved with conflicts, spending up to an hour interviewing those involved. This included other physicians, nurses, technologists, other healthcare workers and, on occasion, security staff. As tempting as it might have been, he never jumped to conclusions or put much credibility in gossip.

"Dr. Wohlgemuth always assures the most vulnerable are heard. In the cases he deals with, that is our employees," says Markie Cowley, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. "He gets their side of the story, validates it if there are



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## Justice

### Dalida Dwyer, MPT, OCS

Orthopaedic Clinical Specialist  
Rehab Services/Sports and Wellness

Dalida Dwyer has the advanced training and impressive credentials you would want to find in a physical therapist, but she also has something else that cannot be taught. Dalida truly understands what it means to be a patient. This fundamental understanding infuses everything she does. Dalida puts her empathy into action as a tireless advocate for patients and staff alike at Mission Hospital. She does whatever it takes to ensure they receive the best possible care.

Dalida thinks outside of the box. If someone comes in with a specific diagnosis and another issue arises, she calls the patient's doctor, case manager or both. "One patient came in with a new back injury and Dalida thought it was a disc. Then she found out the patient wouldn't be seeing the doctor for two weeks. Somehow that patient was seen within two days," says Michelle Chee-Darrow, Rehab Services. "Dalida will do whatever it takes to make sure the next phase of treatment occurs faster."

Another example of this "outside the box" thinking is Dalida's work with young breast cancer survivors. Lymphedema therapist Karen Wehner, Rehab Services, referred several patients to Dalida who were experiencing back problems as a result of



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## Excellence

### Joe Parelli, RT

Radiologic Technologist  
Interventional Radiology

No, it was not in Joe Parelli's job description to get involved with the coding for new interventional radiology procedures. A hands-on technologist, Joe was strictly clinical. He didn't even have a DRG manual, let alone a desk to work from. And no one was offering to pay him any more for his efforts.

But Joe realized the hospital was losing revenue on these procedures and maybe he could do something about it. So Joe decided to step up to the plate.

Interventional radiology has taken many procedures out of the operating room. As radiologists keep finding ways to do more for patients interventionaly, the coding for these procedures must be continually updated. Every procedure has a general code. But once the procedure starts, different types of interventions may be performed according to the patient's needs. These interventions require modifiers to the general code. Otherwise, the hospital cannot bill for them.

Joe realized this. Even though coding was not in his field of expertise, Joe started gathering information about coding on his own. Whenever he had time between patients, he would pore through coding manuals to be sure the previous procedures had been coded correctly.

Several Radiology managers realized what Joe was taking on. They encouraged



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## Service

### Donna Kendig

Employee Relations Manager  
Human Resources

What does fun have to do with work? Everything, Donna Kendig knows. It contributes to the healing environment when the hospital staff enjoys coming to work. As Employee Relations Manager, Donna has found innumerable ways to create a balanced workplace atmosphere where employees have fun and feel genuinely cared for. Whether it is planning a major event, holding a 2 a.m. inservice for the night shift, or mediating an employee/manager conflict, Donna radiates a positive energy that is positively contagious.

They call her the "fun meister" because everyone who attends her events knows

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Mission Hospital   
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Sisters of St. Joseph  
of Orange

witnesses, and always makes sure the loop is closed."

Marcello Borzatta, M.D., who was Chief of Staff prior to Dr. Wohlgermuth's tenure, says the more delicate the issue, the more time Dr. Wohlgermuth actually dedicates to making sure he hears everybody's side of the story. "When he comes up with a decision, he takes action regardless of what might happen to him personally," Dr. Borzatta says. "He was in rocky spots a few times where people really took it personally against him, but he did what was right and stuck by it."

Last year, in addition to his already considerable duties as Chief of Staff, Dr. Wohlgermuth became involved with the hospital's multidisciplinary palliative care committee. Palliative care had long been an interest of his because of his concern for ensuring the dignity of patients at the end of life and that of their families. Dr. Wohlgermuth not only became involved with the committee, but enlisted the support of other hospital physicians to provide critical insights.

Dr. Wohlgermuth sincerely believes that everyone's contributions are significant and of value. According to Markie Cowley, he is never too busy to meet with the staff. "I am amazed at the amount of time he spends working with the staff on the floor and with the palliative care program," she says. "He listens to their suggestions because he really sees them as equal members of the team."

While he was Chief of Staff, Dr. Wohlgermuth invited a speaker from the health system's mission and mentoring program to the annual medical staff retreat to present a program on communication skills. According to Denise Rollins, Medical Staff, Dr. Wohlgermuth saw this as an opportunity to educate the physician leadership to be more attuned to not just what is said, but how it is said, and the impact gender may have on conversations.

"He really went out of his way to educate himself in preparation for his tenure as Chief of Staff. He read all kinds of materials and was always willing to share them," Rollins said. "He was willing to mentor new leaders, not necessarily because he was going to reap any benefit out of it, but because it was the right thing to do. He wanted to make the medical staff leadership better."

On the floor, Dr. Wohlgermuth brings respect to those who work directly with his patients. Nurse Manager Mary Noakes, R.N., 3West, recently observed how he handled an issue that came up with her staff.

"Dr. Wohlgermuth has always been very good at working with my nurses. He helps them understand the processes his patients are going through and why the care needs to be the way he wants it to be," Noakes says. "He uses these situations as teaching opportunities."

Before his term as Chief of Staff was over, Dr. Wohlgermuth developed a novel way to acknowledge the contributions of the many hospital physicians who provide medical staff leadership. He developed a job description for each position and recommended compensation. In June 2005, approximately 25 physicians will begin formal training as part of their preparation for medical staff leadership.

"Dr. Wohlgermuth won't personally benefit from this, but he knows that doing these jobs effectively takes a personal toll on the private practice," Rollins says. "His goal is to have leadership that has not only been taught some management skills and educated in how hospitals run, but will do so happily because they are being compensated for the position. He was looking out for the medical staff and the impact this could have on the success of the hospital."

Dr. Wohlgermuth is deeply committed to Mission Hospital, and he recognizes that others are, too. He has used his position to model collaborative working relationships, always welcoming and listening to other viewpoints because he believes that everyone, regardless of status, has something of value to contribute. He knows we're all using our talents toward the same thing: the very best possible care for our patients.

## *The Dignity Award Nominees*

**Maria del Pilar Aguero**  
CHEC Family Resource Center

**Victoria Aguilar**  
Environmental Services

**Marla Alvarado**  
Patient Accounting

**Maria Ayala, RN**  
CHEC Family Resource Center

**Janice Bacon**  
Rehab Services

**Nadine Baskin**  
Credit & Collections

**Heather Beall, RN**  
Cardiac Telemetry

**Michael Beck**  
Administration

**Judy Belkin**  
Acute Rehab Unit

**Susie Birtja**  
Rehab Services

**Neenah Bohler**  
Credit & Collections

**Eva Boratyn**  
Surgical 3 East

**Connie Bowin**  
Rehab Services

**Duane Briones**  
Rehab Services

**Haley Buckley**  
Rehab Services

**Daniel Carratturo, RN**  
ICU

**Judy Carrillo, RN**  
CICU

**Linda Cevatli, RN**  
Acute Rehab Unit

**Golda Champagne, RN**  
Acute Rehab Unit

**Nancy Christensen, RN**  
Medical 3 West

**Julia Cipolla**  
Nutritional Care (Patient)

**Bethany Coffey, RN**  
Care Management

**Sherry Cortese**  
Patient Accounting

**Anne Crowe, RN**  
LDRP

**Dolly Curley, RN**  
Risk Management

**James Cushing, MD**  
Physician

**Michelle Chee Darrow**  
Rehab Services

**Paul Dompas**  
Acute Rehab Unit

**Richard Dorenstreich**  
Rehab Services

**Sharon Druce, RN**  
Intermediate Care

**Muriel Dubin-Motoja, RN**  
MHAP Care Management

**Leslie Duffy**  
Professional Education Dept

**Barbara Dulaney**  
Surgical Services

**Karen Easter**  
Credit & Collections

**Deborah Frey, RN**  
Care Management

**Christina Gardner, RN**  
Cardiac Telemetry

**Giselle Godwin, RN**  
Acute Rehab Unit

**Gina Guevara**  
Nutritional Care (Patient)

**Irene Gutierrez**  
Nutritional Care (Patient)

**Mary Harb, RN**  
Medical 3 West

**Elizabeth Hiestand**  
Senior Services

**Delana Higley**  
Sports & Wellness

**Joseph Hilliardo**  
Short Stay Unit

**April Hurley**  
Rehab Services

**Daryl Indes**  
Respiratory Care Services

**Richard Jacob, MD**  
Physician

**Violet Janssen**  
ARU Social Services

**Catherine Jenkins-Hall, PhD**  
Physician

**Maryam Kakavand, RN**  
Acute Rehab Unit

**Cathy Kang, RN**  
MH Health Ministry

**Sandy Kantrowitz**  
Materials Management

**Joanne Kisling, RN**  
Obstetrics

**Ellen Kovacevich**  
Rehab Services

**Pierina Larioza**  
Pharmacy