

Vol. 21, No. 1 / Winter 2025



Heart to Heart

A publication of St. Tammany Health System



TAKING FLIGHT

New \$75M same-day surgery center
a state-of-the-art blend of form, function, p. 11

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**CELEBRATING OUR
PLATINUM ANNIVERSARY**

How the Northshore gets well – and stays well – has changed in MANY ways since we first opened our doors as St. Tammany Hospital 70 years ago, but much has stayed the same. We still treat every patient as if they were family. Since 1954, St. Tammany Health System has been on your side, on this side of the lake. And like our patients, we just keep getting better.

A CULTURE OF CARING FOR 70 YEARS AND...

ST. TAMMANY MORE



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We are the heartbeat of our community, caring for our patients and their families with excellence, compassion and teamwork.

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Gratefully Yours

Welcoming the new year with a new surgery center



Joan Coffman, FACHE

“Every opportunity we get to expand access for our patients is a big deal. That is particularly true, however, with the 126,000-square-foot surgery center, which represents a \$75 million investment in our Northshore community.”

Here we are, at the dawn of another year — and, as the cover of this issue suggests, we are starting it with a bang.

To be clear, it’s not the kind of bang you might expect from New Year’s fireworks. It’s better.

Just before Christmas, we cut the ribbon on our new St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center, a purpose-built facility adjacent to our Cordes Outpatient Pavilion on Bootlegger Road.

Of course, every opportunity we get to expand access for our patients is a big deal. That is particularly true, however, with the 126,000-square-foot surgery center, which represents a \$75 million community investment packed with some of the most leading-edge medical technology available.

Designed with input from our own surgery team to handle those procedures that can be completed within a 23-hour window, it will serve as a perfect complement to our main hospital campus, opening capacity there for more complex surgical cases.

In the process, it will also create more than 100 jobs right here at home.

Like I said: better than fireworks.

Our chief medical officer, Dr. Patrick Torcson, described the new STHS Surgery Center as “a monument cutting-edge healthcare,” and I have to agree. I think you will, too.

You can read more about it inside this issue, alongside a raft of photos and other headlines from our always-bustling St. Tammany Health System newsroom.

Here’s wishing you and your loved ones a happy and healthy 2025 — and thank you, as always, for trusting St. Tammany Health System with your family’s care.

Gratefully,



Joan M. Coffman, FACHE
St. Tammany Health System president and CEO



And many more!

St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman welcomes guests to a Dec. 1 celebration of the anniversary of St. Tammany Health System’s founding — exactly 70 years from the day it first opened its doors. *Read more about the event on page 6.*

Ask the STHS Experts

How to make a healthier Super Bowl tailgate

By STHS Communication Department

Got healthcare questions? We've got answers, thanks to the local medical experts who have appeared as guests on our "Northshore Healthbeat" podcast.

With Super Bowl LIX set to kick off Feb. 9 in New Orleans, we thought it only appropriate to revisit our episode on healthy tailgating, with tips from Clinical Dietitians Sarah Brignac and Jessica Greer of St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center.

Find edited excerpts from that episode below.

What are some strategies for tweaking traditional tailgate foods to make them healthier but still delicious?

Sarah: First, maybe replace the red meat, which *does* include pork, by the way. Some people think it's a white meat; it is actually a red meat. It's not "the other white meat." Lamb, pork, beef are all red meat, and all those are healthy but in small quantities.

Easy changes would be doing shrimp skewers, chicken skewers, a turkey burger. Those things all reduce saturated fat and your cholesterol intake. And then in terms of barbecue sauce, you have to be really careful with added sugar, so try to find one that is lower in added sugar – or make your own.

What about those plant-based meat substitutes, like Beyond Burgers and Impossible Burgers?



St. Tammany Health System Clinical Dietitians Sarah Brignac, left, and Jessica Greer chat with 'Northshore Healthbeat' hosts Tim San Fillippo, second from left, and Mike Scott for an episode on healthy tailgating. (Photo by Amy Bouton/STHS)

Jessica: I think it's a great alternative for vegetarians.

But even if you're not a vegetarian, it's still a healthier option than a regular hamburger, right?

Jessica: Not necessarily, because they do put a lot of coconut oil in there, so it does have just as much saturated fat as red meat does. So, really, it's more for vegetarians. But if you do choose to have more vegetables in your life, that is an option to get more veggies and more fiber in there. Mushrooms are also a great alternative, especially if you want to put something between a bun. Black beans are another great option – you can do black bean burgers. Lots of fiber there, and you can really make it your own by adding your own spices. So you can really make things different.

Sarah: And the fiber in beans is a natural way to lower your cholesterol, so for people who are trying to avoid getting on statins, trying to up your fiber intake is a great way to try and do that first – hopefully to prevent you from getting on a statin – but it can probably delay that as well. Fiber is great for a lot of things: digestive, cardiac, all kinds of good stuff.

Any ideas for sides?

Jessica: One of my favorite side dishes is actually a Buffalo chicken dish, and I make it healthier by putting yogurt in it. The key is, we still want to get those really good tailgate flavors in. We don't want to make it so healthy that everybody's like, "Eh, we're going to the next tailgate." ■



Find our podcast on most major platforms.

1:20



4:17

FLOWER POWER

Every quarter, St. Tammany Health System recognizes nursing excellence with the Daisy Award and non-nursing colleagues with the Sunflower Award. Here are the latest to earn the honors.



Nurse Paula Schindler is congratulated on her Daisy Award by colleagues following a surprise ceremony. Paula was nominated for the award by colleague Emily Horvath, who wrote, 'Paula Schindler is an extraordinary nurse who deserves to be recognized for her nursing excellence, compassion and extraordinary care she has provided.' (Photo by Tory Mansfield / STHS)



St. Tammany Health System nurse Trey Henderson is all smiles as Chief Nursing Officer Kerry Milton reads his Daisy Award nomination form. They received two separate nominations for the award, including from patient Sharon Montalbano, who wrote 'Trey has earned my trust in every way possible.' (Photo by Tory Mansfield / STHS)



STHS Cancer Services Manager Lindsay Gomez is surrounded by family members after being surprised with a Daisy Award in November. Lindsay, who works at St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center, was nominated for the award by colleague Arlyn Arseneaux. (Photo by Mike Scott / STHS)



A stunned Chasity Washington reacts upon being informed by STHS Director of Med-Surg Mathilde Lyon that she had been honored with a Sunflower Award. Chasity, a nursing assistant on the Telemetry Medicine unit at St. Tammany Parish Hospital, was nominated by Carol Devenport Gaynell, a patient's family member. (Photo by Tory Mansfield / STHS)



Oncology Medicine Nursing Assistant Jeralyn McKay (back row, third from left) celebrates with members of her team after learning she earned a Sunflower Award. Jeralyn was nominated for the honor by Jennifer Hernandez, a patient's family member. (Photo by Joy Derise / STHS)

STAT!

Quick hits from the STHS newsroom

By STHS Communication Department

In December, the New Family Center at St. Tammany Health System's flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital was named to **U.S. News & World Report's list of Best Hospitals for Maternity Care** for 2024-2025. ... Also in December, Women's Choice named St. Tammany Parish Hospital one of the nation's **100 Best Hospitals for Patient Experience**. It also earned recognition as a best hospital for **patient safety, heart care, stroke care, minimally invasive surgery, obstetrics, cancer care, comprehensive breast care, mammogram imaging and women's services**. ... In November, St. Tammany Health System earned its 18th consecutive **"A" grade for patient safety** from the Leapfrog Group. No other Louisiana health system has received as many consecutive A's. ... Also in November, the Louisiana Hospital Association honored the health system's **Communication and Marketing Department** with Team of the Year honors at its 2024 Golden Pelican Awards. ... In September, St. Tammany Health System AVP of System Quality Management **Julie Nevers** and STQN Performance Improvement Coordinator **Jennifer Gray** were awarded a **Vizient Brilliance Award** for their work on leveraging demographic data to address disparities in healthcare access and quality. ... Congratulations to 23-year STHS colleague **Mary Hidalgo**, who retired in September after 23 years with the health system. ■



Is there a St. Tammany Health System employee you'd like to honor? Find out how at StTammany.health/ThankYou or by scanning the code at right.

Happy birthday to us!

STHS celebrates 70 years of caring for the Northshore

By Mike Scott, miscott@stph.org

Exactly 70 years to the day of its 1954 opening, St. Tammany Health System celebrated its history, its mission and the community it serves with a festive anniversary event Dec. 1 in the lobby of Covington's St. Tammany Parish Hospital.

In addressing those gathered, health system President and CEO Joan Coffman recalled the words of then-Parish President Fred Mizell, who, upon dedicating the original hospital building in 1954, said, "May this key never be used to close it; may it always remain open to suffering humanity."

"And here we stand today, 70 years later, with our flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital open ever since," Coffman said, speaking roughly on the site of the hospital's original maternal delivery room.

"We haven't lost sight of our 'why,' even as our commitment to the community has demanded we grow to keep up with the local population and lead the way with the latest technological advances," Coffman continued. "Even with all that growth and our evolution into a modern health system, our colleagues have continued to place our neighbors and the needs of our community at the center of everything we do."

That unique, decades-long connection between the hospital and the people it serves was evident throughout the evening.

Providing music for the event, for example, was the Covington High School Jazz Band, a tuneful nod to the hospital's 1954 dedication,



St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman delivers remarks at the health system's 70th anniversary celebration on Dec. 1. Surrounding her are members of the health system's executive leadership team. (STHS photo)



The Covington High School Jazz Band provided the music for St. Tammany Health System's 70th anniversary celebration, a nod to the 1954 dedication of St. Tammany Parish Hospital, at which the Covington High School Band played. (STHS photo)

at which the Covington High School Band performed.

In addition to local dignitaries and health system colleagues in attendance, also present was Rebecca Mohr Carter, whose Great Aunt Emma Porche Wetherbee — one of the hospital's first nurses — was featured prominently in the health system's 70 for 70 history project.

To commemorate the night, attendees were invited to pose for a photo which was then printed

on a keepsake 70th anniversary St. Tammany Health System Christmas tree ornament.

They also took home an assurance from Coffman that the health system's well-established culture of caring will remain a central part of how it operates.

"From the moment you step through the doors of St. Tammany Health System, from the curbside to the bedside, we deliver compassionate, world-class healthcare. I can't see that ever changing, and nor would I ever want it to," Coffman said. "We will always remain true to our roots. Whether seven decades ago, tomorrow or 70 years from now, our paramount priority is connecting with and hearing the voices of our community.

"So, tonight we celebrate the beautiful people and the principles that have guided our path for 70 years — and the beautiful people and principles that will continue to guide us as we embark on our next 70." ■

Scan the QR code or visit StTammany.health/70th to browse all 70 installments in the health system's 70 for 70 history project.



STHS welcomes homegrown hand surgeon Dr. Grayson Terral

By **STHS Communication Department**

Hand surgeon Dr. Grayson Terral is no stranger to St. Tammany Health System.

The Covington native was born at the health system's flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital. When he was a kid, he used to round there with his father, local pediatrician Dr. William L. Terral. After graduating medical school and moving back to the Northshore, he became accredited by the hospital to care for his patients there.

But beginning Jan. 9, Dr. Terral truly became a member of the St. Tammany Health System family, with the relocation of his practice to the St. Tammany Physicians Network's growing clinic on St. Ann Drive in Mandeville.

In addition to Dr. Terral's hand practice, the STPN Mandeville facility also boasts cardiology and primary care services, with full lab and imaging services at the adjoining Mandeville Diagnostic Center.

"This is a very familiar place for me," Dr. Terral said. "I decided to leave and train, and when it came time to find a place to return to work and raise a family, I couldn't think of a better place."

After graduating from St. Paul's School in Covington, Dr. Terral earned his undergraduate degree at Louisiana



Dr. Grayson Terral

State University in Baton Rouge and his medical degree at LSU-Shreveport. He followed that with general surgical training with Ochsner in New Orleans and a hand surgery fellowship in Jackson, Mississippi.

It was early in that journey that Dr. Terral settled on hand surgery as a specialty.

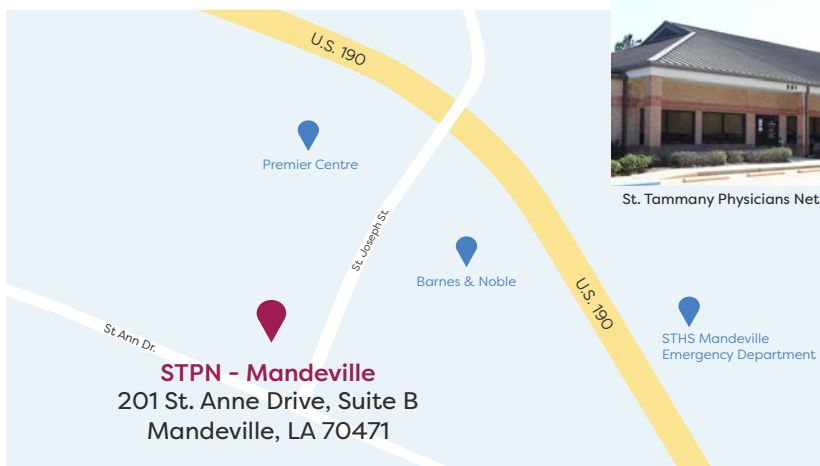
What convinced him? "I love to tell everybody I broke my finger playing football at LSU, but it

was intramural flag football – it was not varsity," he said with a laugh. "It needed surgery, so I had it treated and then, as I needed to figure out what I was going to do long-term as a career, that lingered in the back of my mind and came to the forefront."

At the Mandeville clinic, Dr. Terral will address ailments from the fingertips to the elbows, including vascular, nerve, tendon, muscle, bone and joint issues. The clinic includes in-office imaging capabilities, including X-ray and ultrasound, as well as on-site certified hand therapists specializing in hand injuries.

"It's certainly exciting," he said, "as someone who was born in this hospital, raised in Covington, to now come back and provide care to those who need it." ■

Call 985-898-HAND (4263) to schedule an appointment with Dr. Terral.



St. Tammany Physicians Network - Mandeville



STHS Women's Pavilion ranked among nation's best for patient experience

By **STHS Communication Department**

The St. Tammany Health System Women's Pavilion has earned Press Ganey's prestigious Human Experience Pinnacle of Excellence Award and Guardian of Excellence Award for 2024, putting it in the upper echelon of U.S. healthcare providers for patient experience.

The Guardian of Excellence Award, which places the health system among the top 5% of healthcare organizations nationwide, honors performance in key patient experience survey measures in 15 award subcategories.

The Pinnacle of Excellence Award, awarded to just four organizations in each category, recognizes sustained performance on patient experience measures over a three-year period.

"Putting patients first has long been central to everything we do at St. Tammany Health System, and this lofty recognition is evidence of that," STHS President and CEO Joan Coffman said. "I offer both my congratulations and my deep gratitude to our talented Women's Pavilion team, which provides professional, compassionate care to every patient, every touch, every time, year after year, on a level that is unmatched in our community."

The Guardian of Excellence Award and Pinnacle of Excellence Award are bestowed annually upon standout healthcare organizations that demonstrate their dedication to putting the human experience at the heart of healthcare and setting a high bar for patient experience. ■

‘A monument to cutting-edge healthcare’

STHS cuts ribbon on most advanced same-day surgery center in region



St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman is surrounded health system executives, members of its surgical team and local dignitaries at the Dec. 17 ribbon-cutting of the new \$75 million St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center, which will focus on same-day procedures. (Photo by Tory Mansfield / STHS)

By Mike Scott, mscott@stph.org

The Northshore welcomed the next generation of local healthcare on Dec. 17 with the grand opening of the new St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center, a \$75 million, same-day surgical facility described as the most technologically advanced of its kind in the Gulf South.

Located adjacent to the health system’s Paul D. Cordes Outpatient Pavilion on Louisiana 1085 (Bootlegger Road), the 126,000-square-foot facility was designed with local surgeons’ input to meet the current and future demand for same-day surgeries, which is in turn fueled by technological advances that have expanded the number of procedures available in the 23-hour arena.

“Just a few weeks ago, on Dec. 1, we celebrated our health system’s storied 70-year past. Today, with the

opening of this peerless facility, we celebrate the future,” health system President and CEO Joan Coffman said at a ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Conveniently located less than two miles south of St. Tammany Parish Hospital, the St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center will employ 123 people when fully staffed. That will include a round-the-clock presence from the health system’s Anesthesiology Department. (Photo by Tim San Fillippo / STHS)

“This surgery center has long been a strategic goal of ours, and I am brimming with gratitude for all those people – and, trust me, there are a lot of them – who helped us to once more deliver on our promise of providing world-class

healthcare close to home for our Northshore friends and neighbors.”

In addition to creating more than 100 local jobs, the surgery center’s completion will also open capacity at St. Tammany Parish Hospital for more complex surgical cases.

Following her remarks, Coffman invited guests to tour the new facility, which includes 12 surgery suites, 24 private pre-op rooms, 18 recovery rooms and 15 rooms with overnight-stay capabilities. They are joined by a host of supporting departments and services including pre-operative and post-operative care, surgical sterilization, imaging, lab, pharmacy, physical therapy, food service, environmental services and more.

“Some buildings are a monument to architecture. This surgery center, which is among the most technologically advanced of its kind in the region, is also a monument to cutting-edge

healthcare,” STHS Chief Medical Officer Dr. Patrick Torcson said. “From the robotic systems that will assist our surgeons; to the advanced surgical instrument processing equipment installed therein; to the robust IT presence throughout, every square inch of this building incorporates technology and innovation on a scale unmatched in the community.”

Among the procedures to be performed at the center starting in February 2025 will be an array of pediatric and adult general surgeries, including orthopedic and gynecological procedures; hand surgery; ear, nose and throat surgery; breast reconstruction; and a wide array of others.

Assisting local surgeons in those procedures will be some of the most state-of-the-art surgical

equipment available, including the Da Vinci robotic surgical assistant, which is used in pelvic and urologic surgeries; and the Stryker Mako system, used in knee and hip replacements.

Additionally, all wet areas – including patient bathrooms –

are equipped with patented Indigo-Clean lighting, which use visible light to kill a wide variety of viruses and bacteria.

Similar leading-edge technology is in use throughout the building.

Conveniently located less than two miles south of St. Tammany Parish Hospital, the health system’s flagship 281-bed acute care facility, the St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center will employ 123 people when fully staffed. That number will include a round-the-clock presence from the health system’s Anesthesiology Department.

Clinical capabilities planned for the center and scope of the project are being developed according to national best practices for high

reliability, efficiency and safety for patients, STHS team members, visitors and vendors.

The new St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center is located at 16282 Louisiana 1085 (Bootlegger Road) in Covington. ■

“Just more than two weeks ago, on Dec. 1, we celebrated our health system’s storied 70-year past. Today, with the opening of this peerless facility, we celebrate the future.”

– St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman



A look at one of the 12 state-of-the-art surgery suites at the new St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center, which also boasts 24 private pre-op rooms, 18 recovery rooms and 15 rooms with overnight-stay capabilities. (Photo by Tim San Fillippo / STHS)



To paint the lobby mural at the new St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center, artist Zac Maras spent the better part of four days on an elevated boom lift. (Photo by Tim San Fillippo / STHS)

State of the arts

Abita muralist leaves mark on new surgery center

By Mike Scott, mscott@stph.org

With the opening of the \$75 million St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center on Bootlegger Road, the Northshore is now officially home to one of the most technologically advanced surgery centers in the region – and, indeed, in the Gulf South.

But that’s not the only thing to admire about the new facility.

It is state of the art, no question – but, thanks to St. Tammany Hospital Foundation’s Healing Arts Initiative, it boasts its share of good old-fashioned visual art, too.

Upon opening, the surgery center will boast five separate art installations and featuring works of such local artists as Cindi Guillot, Inga Falterman and Craig McMillin. More are expected in the future.

It also includes the single largest piece in the foundation’s collection, a mural by Abita Springs artist Zac Maras measuring 18 feet by 20 feet that adds a can’t-miss-it splash of Louisiana flavor to the new facility’s atrium lobby.

Depicting a swamp scene, Maras’ mural is dominated by a detailed pelican in flight. Filling out the frame are intricately depicted Louisiana irises and a trio of vibrantly colored butterflies.

(Continued on next page)



A close-up view of the 18-foot-by-20-foot original mural painted by Abita Springs artist Zac Maras in the lobby of the new St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center. The state-of-the-art facility was designed and built to focus on same-day surgeries. (Photo by Tim San / Fillippo / STHS)

Such bayou-born nature scenes aren't unusual for Maras, whose work can be found throughout the metro area, and particularly on the southshore. Getting a commission from a medical facility, however – and one in his own backyard – was a first for him.

"It means a lot to me to have my art displayed in a hospital, because usually you're down on your luck or having a hard time if you're coming in to seek treatment," Maras said, taking a break from finishing off a blooming purple iris. "So if you can see something colorful and some art that resonates with you, that gives you a good feeling going into something that's not so comfortable, that's great."

Working from an elevated boom lift, Maras started by projecting a rough version of his composition onto the lobby wall that would serve as his canvas and sketching it in.

From there, he used cans of professional-grade spray paint to bring the scene to life, utilizing a color palette chosen to harmonize with those colors already used in the building.

It was slow, deliberate work. Starting on a Sunday and finishing on the following Thursday, Maras estimated the entire project took in the neighborhood of 40 hours,



Artist Cindi Guillot poses with one of her paintings, which is among the works on display at the new St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center. (Photo by Mike Scott / STHS)

start to finish.


Upon seeing the finished product, St. Tammany Hospital Foundation Executive Director Nicole Suhre said every minute Maras invested in his mural was well worth the time.


"Our Healing Arts Initiative is built on the idea that art of all sorts, big and small, plays a positive role in patient outcomes," Suhre said. "To be able to feature a beautiful mural like Zac's here, reflecting our local culture and showcasing the work of a homegrown artist at the same time, makes me just so happy – and I know it will make our patients happy, too." ■


Visit STHfoundation.org/HealingArts to learn more about St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's Healing Arts Initiative.

Paint by numbers

Quick facts about the artwork on display at the new St. Tammany Health System Surgery Center, provided through St. Tammany Hospital Foundation's Healing Arts Initiative:

5  Number of art installations currently at the surgery center, featuring the work of local artists Inga Falterman, Cindi Guillot, Zac Maras and Craig McMillin.

 **27** The number of individual pottery pieces included in one of two installations showcasing McMillin's work.

 **18x20** The size in feet of Maras' mural in the surgery center lobby.

40 The estimated amount of time in hours that Maras spent atop an elevated boom lift to complete his mural.

James L. Core, member of STHS Board of Commissioners, dies

By Mike Scott, mscott@stph.org

James L. Core, vice chairman of the St. Tammany Health System Board of Commissioners – a body on which he served with distinction for more than 41 years – died Oct. 26 2024. He was 82.

A retired businessman and co-owner of Covington Paving Co., Mr. Core leaves behind a legacy as a dedicated public servant, having served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and for six years as a St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's deputy.

Mr. Core later served for two decades as the superintendent of the city of Covington's Streets department and director of Public Works starting in 1973. He also served for a time in the 1970s as a member of the St. Tammany Parish Exhibition Authority.

Mr. Core was first appointed by the St. Tammany Parish Council to the health system Board of Commissioners on July 14, 1983. He remained a member for the rest of his life, serving on its Executive Committee and, for the past 21 years, as the chairman of

its Facilities Committee.

At the time of his 1983 appointment, Mr. Core was hailed by several Parish Council members for his integrity.

It is that same quality for which he will be largely remembered, St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman said.

"Over 41 years on the board and two decades as chair of Facilities speaks volumes about how Mr. Core approached his role of commissioner, in which he served with the same pride, dedication, love and unwavering support that he offered his own family," Mrs. Coffman said.

Mr. Core was a fixture at health system events and celebrations, Mrs. Coffman noted, and he was in particular awe of the dedication of its workforce, including its small army



James L. Core

of volunteers and the medical staff.

"His guiding vision – with the community's needs at the center – was instrumental in influencing our master facility plan for responsible growth," she said. "He was the greatest of ambassadors for St. Tammany Health System, living our core values to the end. May God rest in knowing he has just gained a true and humble servant leader into his kingdom of heaven – a true man of honor."

Mr. Core is survived by his wife, Susanne O. Core, DDS; his children, Joseph "Joe" Core, Christina Core DelVescovo, Amy Strain and Marshall Core; six grandchildren, Erika Erwin, William Strain, Anthony DelVescovo, Skylar DelVescovo, Easton Dagro, and Francesca Core; siblings Janet Susan Core and Patricia Ann Core; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents, James "Jim" J. Core and Juanita Hazel Bruhl Core.

Interment was at Core Cemetery in Folsom. ■

S. Dale Jenkins, business expert, appointed to STHS Board of Commissioners

By STHS Communication Department

S. Dale Jenkins of Covington, a retail and consumer business expert with experience across the retail, consumer goods, technology, healthcare and financial services spheres, has been appointed to serve as a member of the St. Tammany Health System Board of Commissioners.

He fills the seat previously occupied by longtime board member James L. Core, who died in late October.

"Dale is a seasoned and proven leader whose sheer breadth of experience will be of enormous value to St. Tammany Health System and the people it serves," board Chairman John A. Evans said. "I think I can speak for the entire board when I say we welcome him with both eagerness and

confidence that his contributions will serve us well in our mission to continue providing world-class healthcare close to home for our neighbors across the Northshore."

A seasoned and proven leader, Mr. Jenkins retired from the professional services firm

Deloitte after 41 years. In his time there, he advised executives from an array of globally recognized businesses including Walmart, Dillard's Department Stores, Neiman Marcus and JC Penney.

Over the course of his career, he has also served on the Board



S. Dale Jenkins

of Directors of Goodwill Industries International, including time as chairman and vice-chairman of the board, in addition to serving on the governing boards of numerous charitable and civic organizations.

"In this period of unparalleled growth for St. Tammany Health System, we are exceedingly fortunate to have someone with Mr. Jenkins' expertise link arms with us," St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman said. "In addition to his vast knowledge and experience, he also brings to the table a genuine sense of compassion, which I consider the hallmark of our health system. The future is bright here, and I am grateful to have Mr. Jenkins' guidance to depend upon as we work toward it." ■



A cancer center team member loads up a Christmas food box into a patient's car at the center on Dec. 18. The boxes were sponsored this year by the IJN Foundation (In Jesus' Name), Winn-Dixie, the Northshore Food Bank and St. Tammany Health Foundation.



Santa Claus was joined by the Grinch and Cindy Lou Who at a cancer center holiday celebration and gift distribution made possible by the nonprofit Ruby's Kids.



In addition to a gift card to cover the cost of patients' protein of choice, the 125 Christmas food boxes distributed this year included all the fixings for a full holiday dinner, right down to the hot cocoa.

Spirit of the season

The team at St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center recently embraced the year-end holidays (and their patients) with their traditional trio of outreach events. That included two food box distributions for qualifying patients – one for Thanksgiving and another for Christmas – as well as a gift giveaway hosted by Santa himself, all made possible by generous donations to St. Tammany Health Foundation. Relive the magic with this collection of photos, and thanks for all who opened their hearts this year!



Santa Claus and friends pose with a group of cancer center staff and volunteers at the annual holiday event at St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center.



Students from St. Scholastica Academy in Covington were among those volunteers who helped brighten the holidays for patients at the cancer center's annual Christmas celebration.



Acquistapace's of Covington sponsored this year's Thanksgiving food boxes, which were given to the families of more than 100 local cancer patients.



A row of Thanksgiving food boxes await distribution outside the cancer center on Nov. 21.



Members of the cancer center team are all smiles at their 2024 Thanksgiving food box distribution.

‘Celebrations in Bloom’



The work of local artist Mary Helen Seago, pictured Nov. 13, is the focus of ‘Celebrations in Bloom,’ a solo exhibition on display at St. Tammany Parish Hospital as part of St. Tammany Hospital Foundation’s Healing Arts Initiative. (STHS photo)

Gallery exhibit highlights work of Mary Helen Seago

By STHS Communication Department

Spring is still weeks away, and it feels like it given the winter chill recently blanketing South Louisiana – but with one notable exception.

The soothing landscape paintings and oversized florals of local artist Mary Helen Seago have been adding a dash of springtime warmth for staff and visitors to St. Tammany Parish Hospital as part of “Celebrations in Bloom,” a solo exhibition continuing through Feb. 5 as part of St. Tammany Hospital Foundation’s Healing Arts Initiative.

“The idea is simple but profound: to promote healing and mental well-being through the arts,” foundation Executive Director Nicole Suhre said. “And I have to say, Mary Helen’s stunning work, with its emphasis on natural beauty, is a perfect illustration of that.”

For the 85-year-old Seago, who grew up in New Orleans and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Newcomb College, being asked to show her work at St. Tammany



WANT TO GO?

What: “Celebrations in Bloom,” a free public art exhibition featuring 34 paintings by local artist Mary Helen Seago.

When: Daily through Feb. 5, 2025.

Where: St. Tammany Parish Hospital lobby, 1202 S. Tyler St., Covington.

Details: STHfoundation.org/HealingArts

Health System’s flagship hospital is both humbling and satisfying.

“I just think there’s so much beauty in the world that people don’t see,” she said. “So it really inspired me to paint happy colors and pull your eye to all the different colors.”

And if there’s one thing the curated selection of 34 works included in the “Celebrations in Bloom” exhibition has, it’s happy colors.

That’s by virtue of Seago’s long-held fascination with natural beauty, which is perhaps best epitomized by her close-ups of delicate blooms blown up to fill oversized canvases – a process she said took time to perfect.

“Now I can’t go back,” she said. “It’s all in teaching your brain to see things differently or do proportions differently. It’s all about allowing your brain to express itself.”

That distinctive style has earned her fans at the health system, which has featured her work previously as part of multi-artist shows. Additionally, the Healing Arts Committee’s permanent collection contains several of her works. That includes one in the hospital’s executive board room, another in STHS President and CEO Joan Coffman’s office and another in a third-floor patient area.

Now, “Celebrations in Bloom” puts it front and center.

“This program really appeals to me,” Seago said, “because I think the people who come through the hospital want something happy to look at, something joyful – and that’s what I do.” ■

View “Celebrations in Bloom” for free through Feb. 5 in the first-floor lobby of St. Tammany Parish Hospital in Covington.



Wicked witches aren't the only ones who can defy gravity, as this high-flying young wizard proves at the 36th annual Monster Mash.



A pint-sized princess, resplendent in lavender finery, greets her adoring subjects with grace and adorableness.

Halloween magic

Wizards and princesses and ghosts — oh, my! St. Tammany Health Foundation and an army of community volunteers treated local families to the 36th annual Monster Mash on Oct. 19, and, as always, it was a magical day of games, rides, crafts and, of course, trick-or-treating. Special thanks go to presenting sponsor Metairie Bank Northshore for their continued support of the event, which raised \$90,000 for the STHS Parenting Center. (Photos by Chuck Billiot)



A restless spirit casts a suspicious eye toward a camera-wielding mortal.



Jinkies! Where are Fred and Daphne? Fear not! Velma, Shaggy and Scooby-doo are on the case!



For the eighth consecutive year, Metairie Bank Northshore served as presenting sponsor of October's Monster Mash festivities, held at Bogue Falaya Wayside Park in Covington.



Marshall and Britni Core with daughter Francesca. (STHS photos)

Angels of Light

In an annual Northshore holiday tradition, St. Tammany Health Foundation on Dec. 5 illuminated its 2024 Hospice Tree of Life, adorned with Tribute Angels representing special people honored or memorialized by a friend or family member. This year's tree was dedicated in loving memory of longtime STHS Board of Commissioners member James L. Core. As always, proceeds from Angels of Light benefit programs of St. Tammany Health System Hospice.



From left, STHS President and CEO Joan Coffman, Susanne Core and St. Tammany Health Foundation Executive Director Nicole Suhre.

Raising the bar

Local residents stepped up in 2024 for a healthier Northshore



Nicole Suhre, STHF executive director

“I speak for our foundation’s Board of Trustees and health system leadership when I say we are deeply grateful for your trust you have placed in us.”

Happy New Year!

I can hardly contain my excitement as I share that, through the generosity of our donors and friends, our foundation raised more than \$1.8 million in 2024. Look at you!

From student fundraisers and month-long awareness campaigns to impactful grants and six-figure commitments, our community demonstrated its resounding support for healthcare excellence in the healing work performed at St. Tammany Health System every day.

I speak for our foundation’s Board of Trustees and health system leadership when I say we are deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in us.

St. Tammany Health Foundation’s motto is Connecting People to Purpose. As we begin this new year, it is our sincerest hope to work with each of you on accomplishing your philanthropic goals as they relate to the health and wellbeing of this incredible community we live in. Together, we can accomplish great things!

I wish each of you, your families, and loved ones a happy and healthy 2025.

Sincerely,

Nicole Suhre, CFRE
STHF executive director



Happy New Year

Happy New Year from the St. Tammany Health Foundation team! From left, foundation Guild Volunteer Mary Rose Shaw, Emily Revere, Nicole Suhre, Doug Walker, Melanie Rudolph, Kathleen Thomas.

Foundation calendar Save the dates!



Get Lucky! Golf Tournament

March 13 | Beau Chene Country Club

St. Tammany Health Foundation’s annual golf tournament offers locals a chance to get back into the swing with the return of spring. Join fellow golfers on the greens as they play for a purpose and enjoy excellent food and beverages on the course as well as a fully catered golfer afterparty.

Details: STHfoundation.org/golf
(985) 898-4141

National Doctors Day

March 30 | 24 hours of giving

National Doctors Day is a time to celebrate the contributions of physicians who serve our community. Our recognition of this special observance provides you the opportunity to make a donation to the foundation in honor of a physician of your choosing.

Details: STHfoundation.org/DoctorsDay
(985) 898-4174

Autism Acceptance Month

April 2025

St. Tammany Health Foundation invites the community to join us as we shine a light on autism acceptance. Proceeds raised through our awareness efforts will support St. Tammany Health System’s efforts to better care for those with autism.

Details: StTammanyUnited.org/Autism
(985) 898-4141



1202 S. Tyler St., Covington, LA 70433

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All-Star Cancer Care Your Home Team



Gordon Wadge, MD
Hematology Oncology

Cancer care is a team sport. It's that simple. It's also the driving philosophy behind everything we do at St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center, where we leverage our community and clinical partnerships to provide local patients leading-edge cancer care. Delivered by an array of oncology specialists working together to help you achieve your goals, we think you'll agree: It is something worth rooting for.



St. Tammany Cancer Center
A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center

