

Hills doctor's practice focuses on pain management

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Imagine trying to live a life with constant pain and no hope for relief in the future.

That's what David Wingerter of Farmington Hills said he faced not long ago, with back pain he'd endured for nearly 30 years. His life was returned to him, thanks in part to Farmington Hills Dr. Dennis Dobrilt.

"They've given me back my quality of life. I can live with what I have enough to keep me happy and busy," said Wingerter, 54.

Dobrilt leads the Tri-County Pain Consultants in an office in the lower level of Providence Hospital, 30055 Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills. The practice that opened last fall is solely dedicated to treating chronic pain through a holistic approach.

Wingerter said his life before being treated by Dobrilt was reaching the point of hopelessness, after a job that required heavy lifting eventually left him with back pain. As years went by, the severity of pain increased to the point where his regular doctors were clueless as to how to treat him,

even after several back operations.

Since seeing Dobrilt 11 years ago, he's been granted a new lease on life. He calls Dobrilt a "phenomenal doctor."

Wingerter also pointed out that Dr. Peter Ianni, the psychologist on staff, plays a role just as important as Dobrilt's.

"Chronic pain, year after year, is emotionally devastating," he said.

By treating the pain with technology, medications and therapy, Wingerter said he can once again lead a productive life even though he is disabled.

Team effort

"It's the team effort here," he said. "The people are nice here, they understand."

Though Eve Hovarter is now a nurse at the pain management facility, she was referred to the doctor after typical diagnoses failed to locate the cause of her pain. Working previously at a local hospital, putting in long hours and lifting patients, she experienced back pain that became so severe she couldn't move.

Hovarter discovered she had three cracked discs in her vertebrae that were looking fluid,



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BIERLEY

Targeting the pain: Dr. Dobrilt performs a procedure on a patient's spine.

which was causing the pain.

Instead of fusion techniques, she agreed to a new procedure called IDET that didn't require surgery. The cracks were sealed and she walked out of the office the same day the procedure was performed.

The burning pain ceased immediately, she said.

"It progressively got better," she said. "I have my life back. I work full time. I'm busy. I want to be busy."

After a follow-up appointment,

she agreed to Dobrilt's request that she work for his office.

The doctor, who is a nationally recognized lecturer and editor, has participated in frequent meetings and conferences on the subject of pain management. He said chronic pain is a growing field that has finally gained acceptance as a medical ailment in itself, though it still has many hurdles to overcome in acceptance, even politically.

He was appointed by Gov. John Engler to the Advisory Board on Pain and Symptom Management, where he served as subcommittee chairman on professional education.

In the '80s, he accepted the first pain management fellowship at Providence Hospital and was a primary care doctor.

"I felt there was a better way to do things and developed an office base," the 48-year-old doctor said.

Combined effort

He felt it was important to make the management of pain a community-based resource, as opposed to treating pain as an emergency issue.

"We combine the psychology and spiritual support," he said.

Dobrilt said he was the first to use implant spinal cord stimulators. And he is also among the first to focus on using nerve blocking and radio frequency lesioning, among other techniques.

He said he enjoys his job because, "We give people hope."

Many of his patients have followed the doctor to his new practice since meeting him years ago.

"We try to isolate the source of the pain and do something conventionally. We integrate different procedures, medicines and therapy as part of the treatment," he said.

He said there are pain specialists at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia and at Garden City Hospital.

There's still many pain treatment technologies left to be developed, he said. "There are limited resources, we've got a ways to go."

Assisting him at Tri-County are Dr. Mario Roveda and Dr. Timothy Wright and physician assistant Jim Gilson. Tri-County Pain Consultants is affiliated with Michigan Pain Consultants, which has 14 locations in Michigan.

Call Tri-County Pain Consultants in Farmington Hills at (248) 626-8200.

OBITUARIES

SISTER MARY FRANCINA FABIANO

Sister Mary Francina Fabiano, RSM, a Sister of Mercy of 67 years, died March 9 at McAuley Retirement Center in Farmington Hills. She was 88 years old.

Baptized Ervina Mary Fabiano at St. Francis de Sales Church, Holland, Mich., she was the daughter of Patey and Mary Fabiano. She entered the Sisters of Mercy in 1935 in Dubuque, Iowa, and as Sister Mary Francina, made her perpetual vows on August 16, 1940 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Sister Mary Francina earned a BA degree from Mercy College in Detroit in 1949. Following that, she began a 49-year career of elementary school ministry in Catholic Schools in Grand Rapids, Parnell, Cadillac, Bay City, Lansing, Traverse City, Big Rapids, Muskegon, and in her home town of Holland. In addition, she taught one year in Cleveland, New Mexico.

She received recognition from local police departments and the Michigan State Police for the "Safety Patrol Guidelines for Children," which she developed and taught at a number of schools in Michigan.

She loved teaching, especially math. "She had a mind for math, a skill she learned from her dad when she worked in his store before she entered the Sisters of Mercy," said Sister Margaret Platte who was her principal in Holland for nine years.

Sister Francina was also deeply loved by her family who were, and continue to be very good to the Sisters. Her love for the city of Holland and St. Francis de Sales parish was evident in her Saturday walks downtown. When visitors came to the convent, her spirit of hospitality made people feel comfortable and welcome.

In her later years, Sister Francina continued her ministry to children by tutoring at St. Francis de Sales School in Holland. She moved to McAuley Retirement Center in 1988.

Sister Francina's love of God and her deep spirituality was apparent in the warm way she greeted people and in her affection for the sisters and her family. She dearly loved the younger sisters and would often connect with them. Sister Francina had a direct way of speaking and a wonderful sense of humor.

She is survived by members of her religious community, and by two brothers, Paul and Bill, and two sisters, Ben Stokes and Rose Muto, as well as by nieces, nephews and cousins.

A welcoming service was held on March 11, at McAuley Center in Farmington Hills, followed by a prayer service at 7 p.m.

The funeral mass was celebrated in McAuley Center Chapel on March 12. Burial followed at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Southfield.

Memorial tributes may be sent to the Mercy Retirement Fund or the Mercy Ministry Fund, 28000 Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48336-1405.

Funeral arrangements were under the direction of McCabe Funeral Home in Farmington Hills, Mich.

JOSEPH JOHN OBIJINSKI

Funeral services were held March 11 for Joseph John Obidinski, 78, at St. Gerald's Church in Farmington, with Father Gerald McEnhill officiat-

ing. Burial followed at Holy Sepulchre Mausoleum.

Mr. Obidinski was born Oct. 27, 1923 in Detroit, Mich. He died March 7. Mr. Obidinski was a resident of Farmington Hills.

He is survived by his wife, Josephine; a son, Joseph (Michelle); a brother, Stanley; sisters, Wanda and Irene; and two grandchildren.

The family requests memorials be directed to the Alzheimer's Association or Hospice of Michigan.

Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington.

ROBERT HADDO HARRISON

Funeral services were held Tuesday, March 12, for Robert Haddo Harrison, 77, of Farmington. They were officiated by Rev. Larry Austin. Burial was at Ft. Custer National Cemetery in Augusta, Mich.

Mr. Harrison was born July 29, 1924, in Hobart, Mich., and died March 9, in Farmington. Before moving to Farmington, he was a resident of Waterford for 20 years.

Mr. Harrison was a tool and die engineer, and served in the Navy during W.W.II. He enjoyed painting.

He is survived by sons, David (April) of Flint, Mark (Michelle) of Pontiac, Matthew (Monica) of Livonia; daughters, Sherri Daniels of Walled Lake, Mary (Jeff) Allen of Ortonville, and Bonnie of Brooklyn, Mich.; a sister, Kathleen; brothers Pat of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., and Mike of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.; 11 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

The family requests memorials be directed to the Farmington Health Care Center (recreation department), 34225 Grand River Ave., Farmington, MI, 48335.

Arrangements were under the direction of Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington.

HERMAN JAMES GIOVANNI

Funeral services were held Tuesday at Our Lady of Sorrows Church for Herman James Giovanni, 78, of Farmington. Entombment followed at Glen Eden Mausoleum.

Mr. Giovanni was born April 8, 1923, in Columbus, Ohio, and died March 8, 2002 in Southfield.

He was self-employed as the owner of Bob and Herm's Standard Service in Detroit from 1952 to 1984.

Mr. Giovanni was a member of Our Lady of Sorrows, Monaghan Council of the Knights of Columbus and American Legion Post #271 in Redford.

He is survived by his wife, Doris; sons, Vincent (Suzanne), James (Colleen), Michael (Debbie), Joseph (Theresa); daughters Patricia (Cassara) and Maria (Christopher) Franklin; sisters, Josephine Gibson, Yolanda Felle, and Mary Carroll; a brother, Thomas; and 20 grandchildren.

The family requests memorials be directed to the American Lung Association.

Arrangements were under the direction of Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington.

DONNA LOU NEFF

Funeral services were held on Sunday for Donna Lou Neff, 68, a lifetime resident of Farmington. Burial was private.

She was born Donna Lou Cox on March 3, 1936 in Farmington Township. She died March 8 in Farmington.

A graduate of Farmington High School, Mrs. Neff was employed as an office clerk for the City of Farmington Hills.

She is survived by two sons, David of Denver, Colo., and Tod (Lois) of Novi; a daughter, Leslie (Lloyd) Johnson of Vail, Colo., and four grandchildren.

The family requests memorials be directed to Hospice of Michigan, 16250 Northland Drive, Suite 212, Southfield, MI, 48075.

Arrangements were under the direction of Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington.

LYNN LOWELL SZTANYO

Funeral services were held today for Lynn Lowell Sztanyo, 67, of Howell. Rev. Frank Graves of Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church in Brighton officiated. Burial followed in Oakwood Cemetery in Farmington.

Mr. Sztanyo was born Dec. 21, 1944, in Detroit. He died March 11.

Nicknamed "Mr. Trucking, Inc.," Mr. Sztanyo began work at age nine sweeping docks for his father, Rudy, the owner of Bucks Express Service, Inc. He later worked as a dispatcher before starting his own trucking business. He was most recently affiliated with Rush Trucking in Wayne.

Mr. Sztanyo was a 27-year member of the Western Golf and Country Club in Redford. He was a sportsman who enjoyed golf, hunting, deep sea fishing, archery, nature, and was very active in Boy Scouts.

Mr. Sztanyo is survived by his parents, Rudy and Dorothy of Farmington Hills; four sons, Jordan, Zachary, Cheyenne and Chance; sisters, Gloria Jean and Linda Jane Abidin; and one grandchild.

The family requests that memorials be directed to the Boy Scouts of America.

ELAINE LOUISE OLDFORD

Funeral services were held March 11 for Elaine Louise Oldford, 82, of Farmington Hills. The Rev. Trent Fraser, Redeemer Episcopal Church, Southfield, officiated. Interment was at Roseland Park Cemetery in Berkley.

Mrs. Oldford was born Elaine Louise Vroman, Aug. 27, 1919 in Jasper, New York. She died March 7 in Farmington Hills.

Mrs. Oldford was a secretary for 20 years for Southfield Public Schools before retiring in 1972. She had also worked as a secretary and sales clerk for the J. L. Hudson Company.

Mrs. Oldford was a member of the D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution) and the Mayflower Society.

She is survived by her husband of 62 years, McDonald Oldford; a son, John Oldford of Arizona; a daughter, Dorothy (Frank) Donnellon of Sterling Heights, Mich.; five grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

The family requests memorials to Redeemer Episcopal Church, 18140 Cornell Road, Southfield, MI, 48075.

Arrangements were under the direction of Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington.

MARGARET T. MUCCINO

Funeral mass will be held Saturday, March 16, at 11 a.m. at

St. Joseph Catholic Church, 830 Lafayette, in South Lyon for Margaret T. Muccino, 83, of South Lyon. Visitation will be Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. and Friday from 1 to 3 p.m. at Phillips Funeral Home, 122 West Lake St., South Lyon.

Mrs. Muccino was born Margaret T. Cosco on July 30, 1918 in Detroit. She died March 11, 2002.

Mrs. Muccino was a resident of Farmington Hills before moving to South Lyon 20 years ago. She is survived by daughters, Joyce (Don) Wahl of Howell, Janice (Ronald) Miller, of Florida; sons Raymond, Jr. (Diane) of South Lyon, Craig (Colleen) of Farmington Hills; a brother, Raymond Cosco, 13 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by

her husband Raymond, two brothers and one sister.

The family requests memorials to the American Heart Association, Dept. 77-3968, Chicago, IL, 60678; or the Alzheimer's Association, 17220 W. 12 Mile Road, Suite 100, Southfield, MI, 48076.

DONALD F. JEWESBURY

A celebration of life service was held Thursday at Shalom Lutheran Church in Pinckney for Donald F. Jewesbury, 71, of Gregory, Mich. Burial followed in Pinckney Cemetery. The Rev. Kurt Hutchens officiated.

Mr. Jewesbury was born Aug. 11, 1930 in Detroit. He died March 8 in Chelsea. He lived in Farmington Hills for 30 years before moving to Gregory.

He retired in 1988 as design engineer for General Motors truck plant, after 35 years of service.

Mr. Jewesbury was a member of Shalom Lutheran Church in Pinckney, the Masonic Lodge in Hazel Park, and a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Garrison; sons, Steven of Florida, Tim (Dennis Snyder) of California; a daughter, Suzanne Conlon of Lakeland, Mich.; a sister, Jean McClain of Columbusville, Mich. and two grandchildren.

Mr. Jewesbury was preceded in death by his first wife, Pauline, in 1997.

The family requests memorials be sent to the Huntington's Disease Society of America, 107 Mark Dr., Mt. Clemens, MI, 48043.

Arrangements were under the direction of Bell-Borek Funeral Home, in Hamburg.



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