



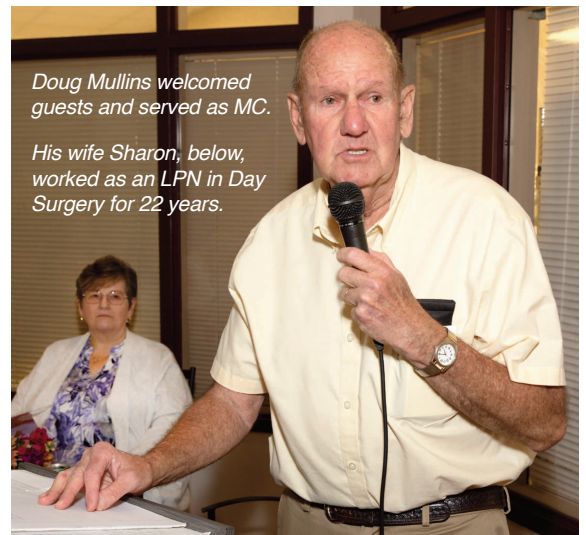
PCH MS Support Group Celebrates 36th Anniversary



After an MS diagnosis in the 1980s, Doug Mullins recognized the great need for a local support group. He called the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine for advice. Surprisingly, the first woman he spoke with at the school had MS. She graciously provided helpful guidance, and Mr. Mullins was soon on his way to establishing the Princeton/Bluefield MS Support Group.

April 20, 1987, was selected as the meeting date. Princeton Community Hospital offered their cafeteria annex for the venue and newspaper, television, and radio ads were placed. Of the 20 people that attended the first meeting, six original members remain with the group. Doug and Sharon Mullins, T. W. and Shirley Brown, Billie Shyrell Quessenberry, and Oliver Dillion (not in attendance) were honored with plaques and flowers on September 9 at the 36th anniversary celebration of the MS Support Group, held in the Parkview Center atrium.

(continued)



Doug Mullins welcomed guests and served as MC.

His wife Sharon, below, worked as an LPN in Day Surgery for 22 years.

The MS Support Group is the longest running group in the hospital's history.

Founding member Doug Mullins welcomed group members, family, and guests, and thanked WVU Medicine Princeton Community Hospital for hosting the 36-year celebration.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Mullins said, "We had a very good first meeting back in 1987. We sowed seeds that continue to develop today. I believe this support group has lasted 36 years because we believe in the power of God and prayer.

We believe in the power of love and laughter.

We believe in the power of a smile and a hug.

We believe in the power of talking and sharing.

We also believe that what we talk about is to be kept within the group. When someone shares something personal with the group, we know that information does not belong on Facebook.

"I wish I could give each one of you a plaque today because of how you've touched my life. The one thing I can give you is a heartfelt thank you. Please know that each one of you is precious to me. Time flies. Here we are in our 36th year as an MS Support Group. God has blessed us to have six of the original members still with us."

After Mr. Mullins recognized the original members, the group honored him with a plaque that read, "Presented to Doug Mullins in sincere appreciation and recognition of your dedication, outstanding service, and support to the members of our local support group for the last 36 years. We love you. Your support group members. September 9, 2023."

Several members offered personal testimonies of how the group enriched their lives.

Tammy Keen, Medical Imaging employee and daughter of T. W. and Shirley Brown, discussed her father's journey with MS. She said, "Dad got sick in 1981. He was in his 40s and the disease progressed slowly at first. By 1987 when the support group was formed, his condition had worsened. He joined the group and loved it. His support group friends became more like family. My dad has been a warrior through years of MS, cardiac issues, and cancer. He has never given up, and his support group friends have always been there for him to cheer him on. I thank each one of you for the love and support you've given Dad over the years, and I wish you all continued years of grace."

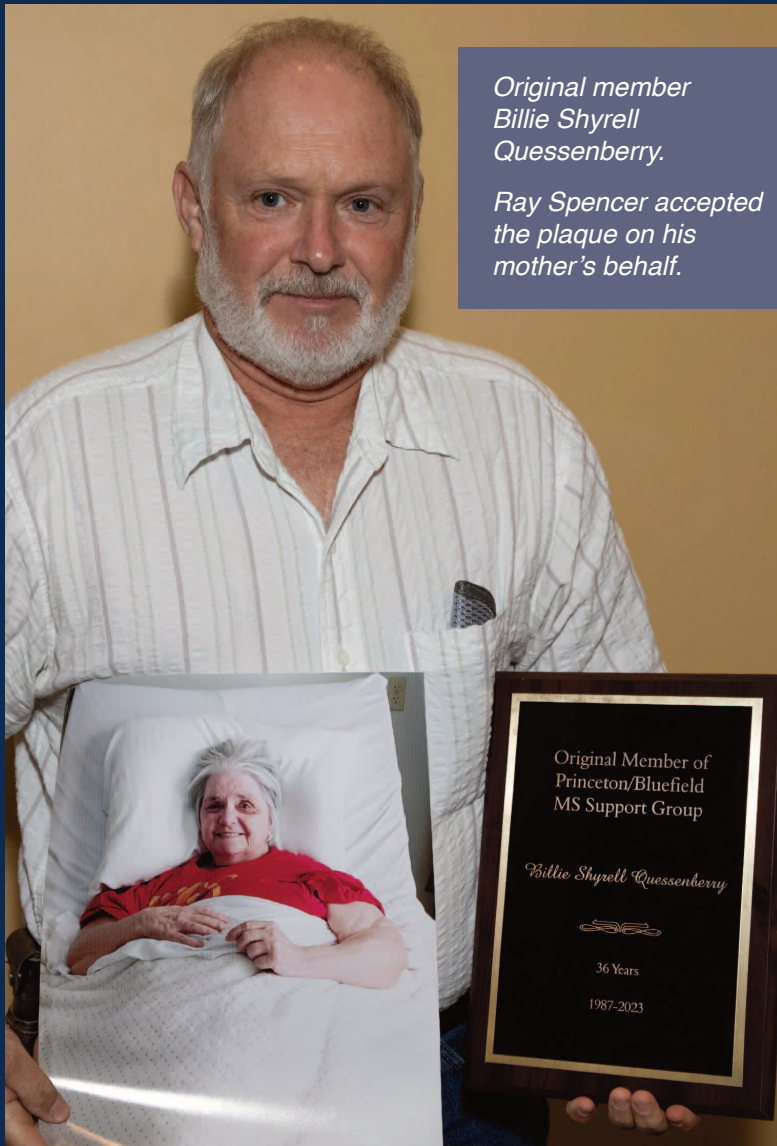


Original members
Doug and Sharon Mullins.



Original members
T. W. and Shirley Brown.





Original member
Billie Shyrell
Quessenberry.
Ray Spencer accepted
the plaque on his
mother's behalf.



Several generations of T. W. and Shirley Brown's family attended the anniversary celebration including daughter and PCH employee Tammy Keen, far left.

Donna Shay, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech Language Pathologist, Retires September 14, 2023

Where are you from originally?

DS: I was raised in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. I decided I wanted to be a speech pathologist when I was in high school volunteering at a local residential facility for mentally challenged children in Lewisburg. I had regularly worked with a brother and sister who were nonverbal. It fascinated me how the two had established their own means of communication between themselves. With my limited abilities at the time, we were able to establish rapport, and they both learned some basic sign language and started to exhibit some simple verbalizations. I was so proud of them and often wonder if they were able to excel with professional help.

Where did you study speech therapy?

DS: I received both my bachelor's degree in speech pathology and audiology in 1981, and my master's degree in speech language pathology in 1982 from WVU. Within three weeks of my graduation, I married my husband Greg, moved to Princeton, and started my first job as a speech language pathologist at Bluefield Community Hospital. In 1985 I joined Blue Ridge Hearing and Balance Clinic, along with Dr. Lee Smith and Dr. Robert Jones' ENT practice. My duties included seeing outpatients for the practice and evaluating and treating inpatients here at PCH.

When did you join PCH?

DS: In 2014 I approached CEO Wayne Griffith with the idea of starting an inpatient/outpatient ST department within PCH. With Administration and Board approval, our PCH ST department was established. My caseload quickly grew as the patient consults increased. A second ST was added within a year. Most recently we had four speech therapists on staff. I have been very proud of our ST team, our department growth, and the services we provide for both our outpatients and inpatients. My patients and their treatment have always been my top priority.

What memorable events/changes have you witnessed during your tenure?

DS: I have witnessed growth and physical expansion of PCH/WVU Medicine over my 38 years of affiliation and employment as a SLP. Several years ago, I was involved (along with the Medical Imaging department) with the development of modified barium swallow studies and dysphagia treatment, which continues to be an integral diagnostic and treatment tool.

Another memorable event during my years with PCH was the conversion from paper charting to digital charting. This has proven to be a much more efficient way to access patient information and for the documentation of patients' assessments and treatments. Of course, the cyber hacking of our Meditech system in 2017 was devastating. Our IT department did an excellent job building and re-establishing our digital documentation system with added security measures.

Are there certain individuals that had a positive or significant impact during your career?

DS: My ST patients have provided a significant impact on my career. There have been many, many



Donna Shay, MS, CCC-SLP
Speech Language Pathologist



challenges, triumphs, tears (both joyful and sad), friendships made, laughs shared, and goals and treatments completed.

Also, the many doctors, nurses, therapists, technicians, and dietitians who have helped me better treat my patients, have definitely impacted my career. As they say, it takes a village, and with our PCH team working together, our patients' needs and goals are better met.

Please tell us a bit about your family.

DS: My husband and I have been blessed with three children, Lindsay, Garrison, and Christian. We have two grandchildren, Keagan, eight years old, and Harper, five years old. Both are such a joy to us.

In 1993, we brought home our tiny six-day-old son, Christian, whom we adopted. As months progressed, I noticed he was not meeting some of his developmental milestones. He exhibited low body tone and sensory integration issues, especially with tactile defensiveness around his head and mouth. This caused issues with feeding resulting in him being diagnosed with failure to thrive. We could not advance his diet beyond pureed foods and liquids for he would spit out anything with any consistency. He was also diagnosed with a growth hormone deficiency.

As if that were not enough, his communication skills were extremely limited and not progressing. I introduced some basic sign language which helped open the door to a very limited communication system. During this time, we went to numerous doctors seeking a diagnosis. It was discovered he had a severe hearing loss in his left ear and was judged to be mentally challenged. It was decided to stop searching for a diagnosis and to start aggressive treatments to help improve his speech and swallowing development.

We decided to have him fitted for a hearing aid and an auditory trainer to enhance his limited hearing in his left ear. This proved to be beneficial, along with the ST we initiated, as he started to babble and vocalize more.

He was enrolled in an early intervention program that provided us with a team including occupational, speech, and physical therapists that specialized in sensory integration deficits. This team worked diligently to improve his speech, swallowing, and physical deficits. His treatments continued at home and within in the school systems to help with his progress.





We are grateful to have had Christian placed in our lives. He has climbed many mountains for which we are very proud. He challenged me as a professional, which I feel has enhanced my skills over the years. I have been able to share our experiences with numerous parents with hopes of helping improve their children's deficits.

If you ever met our soon to be 30-year-old Christian, you would never guess he was ever diagnosed with failure to thrive and a growth hormone deficiency. He will also talk one's ear off if they are willing to listen. He has a part time job with Mercer County Opportunity Industries' "Shark Shredding" service. He loves to golf, take daily walks, and play sport video games.

When will you retire and what are your plans after leaving PCH?

DS: I will be retiring September 14, 2023. My initial plans for retirement are to work on many house projects that have been neglected over the years. I plan to get into a better exercise routine and take advantage of my membership at the Princeton Health and Fitness Center. With the extra time, I want to be more active with our church. I want to work on my cooking skills and be able to provide healthier meal choices for my family. I want to rekindle my past love of sewing and doing crafts. I love to travel and I have some short trips scheduled over the next couple of months. Our daughter and her family moved to South Carolina in June. I look forward to many trips their way, too.

I am very grateful for all the opportunities PCH has provided me for the past 38 years. I have been blessed with a job I have loved for many years. I truly appreciate all the PCH coworkers who have been a part of my professional journey. I wish each and every one all the best.

Thank you, Donna, for 38 years of caring, dedicated service. We wish you great happiness in retirement. You will be missed!