



STEEL MAGNOLIAS

Of Stramski Children's Developmental Center
Miller Children's Hospital

WINTER 2002

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Open House to Highlight Stramski Center, Introduce 2002 Honorees

For the second year in a row, the Stramski Children's Developmental Center will open its doors to the Steel Magnolias, guests, and honorees to acquaint them with the Center's goals, operations and personnel.

The open house will be held on April 8 in Houssel Forum at the Long Beach Memorial Medical Center.

Exhibits will be featured for each of the Center's departments, and staff members will be on hand to explain the functions of the departments and to answer all questions. A new video highlighting the Center's operations will be shown, and a tour of the Center will be provided.

The 2002 Steel Magnolias honorees, who will be presented at the gala on Sept. 14, will be introduced. The honorees are **Tom Hennessy, Diane Creel, Dr. Douglas and Sandra Jackson, Dr. Nelson Gatov, and Keesal, Young and Logan.** Past honorees will also be introduced.

As with last year's open house, several parents whose children are being treated at the Center will relate their real-life experiences.

For more information on this event, please contact **Anthony Gagliardi** at (562) 439-2020.

The 'Real' Magnolias

The magnolia blossom, from which the Steel Magnolias derive their name, is one of the most magnificent, most fragrant of all spring flowers.

It is produced by the stately *Magnolia grandiflora*, an evergreen tree found throughout most of the Gulf states and on the east coast from Florida to North Carolina.

The delicate magnolia blossom is creamy white, with petals that turn brown when bruised. When playing, children of the South sometimes use magnolia petals as "pages" for messages. Words written there with a sharp instrument appear brown against the white petal. In Victorian times, bouquets containing magnolia blossoms often carried a lover's message, written in the same manner.

Steel Magnolias became the name of our committee when Chair **Anthony Gagliardi** saw whom Steel Magnolias Founder **Shirley Wild** had recruited as charter members. "These are some of the strongest leaders in the community," he said. "They are made of steel and are as soft as the petals of a magnolia." Hence, the name Steel Magnolias.

SAVE THE DATES

Stramski Center
Open House
April 8, 2002

'Y'all Come'
Pre-auction Party
May 19, 2002

Gala Dinner-Dance
and Auction
September 14, 2002



2001 Honorees. Last year's honorees at the Steel Magnolias gala were (from left) **Candice Stacy, Betty Eastman Todd, Dr. Santos Cortez, and Jim Gray.** The Boeing Company was also honored for community service at the event.

Magnolias Busy on 2002 Gala

It is never too early to get started on an important project. The annual gala benefit for the Stramski Children's Developmental Center is six months away, but the Steel Magnolias are already busily preparing for it.

Honorees Dedicated to Center, Community

The Steel Magnolias will present individual, corporate, and spirit and dedication awards at the 2002 gala.

• **Individual Awards:**

Dr. Douglas Jackson, internationally known orthopedic surgeon, and **Sandra Jackson**, a dedicated community volunteer in health, education and the arts.

Tom Hennessy, a long-time *Press-Telegram* columnist who writes on a broad range of community activities.

Diane Creel, President and CEO of Earth Tech, for her leadership and support of a multitude of Long Beach activities, ranging from the arts to special health needs.

• **Spirit and Dedication Award:**

Dr. Nelson R. Gatov, who brought dental expertise and loving care to Stramski patients.

• **Corporate Award:**

Law firm of **Keesal, Young and Logan**, consummate supporters of the Long Beach community.

The Hyatt Regency Long Beach has again been selected as the site of the dinner-dance on Sept. 14, honorees have been chosen, and a preauction party has been scheduled to gather auction items (see accompanying story).

Besides silent and live auctions, the gala will feature a gourmet dinner and dancing to the music of the 17-piece Blue Pacific Swing Band (see story on page 4).

Last year's gala netted over \$86,000. **Anthony Gagliardi**, chairman of the Steel Magnolias, says he expects to raise at least \$150,000 at this year's event.

Honorees, selected for their contributions to the community, are **Tom Hennessy, Diane Creel, Dr. Douglas and Sandra Jackson, Dr. Nelson Gatov, and Keesal, Young and Logan.**

Last year's honorees were **Jim Gray, Candice Stacy, Betty Eastman Todd, Dr. Santos Cortez and the Boeing Company.**

South Will Rise Again at Preauction Party for Gala Fund-raiser

A southern theme (well, what else, honey child?) has been chosen for the Steel Magnolias' bring-in-the-auction-items party on May 19.

Purpose of the soirée is to gather auction items for the Steel Magnolias annual gala, which will be held on September 14 at the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach.

Admission is an auction item valued at \$100 or more. Cash is always welcome, too, if you don't have an item handy.

Southern belles and their beaux will sip mint juleps and iced tea and munch on "simply deelishush" hors d'oeuvres, while being entertained by a lively Dixieland Band. If that's not southern enough for you, we're giving special prizes to the ladies carrying the prettiest parasol and wearing the prettiest hat.

The festivities will be held on May 19 from 4 p.m. till who knows when on the veranda of **Howard and Elaine Davis'** Magnolia Manor in beautiful Park Estates. Hosts are **Mary Alice Braly, Anthony Gagliardi, Mari Hooper, Mary Klingensmith, Bob Maney, Karen Wells, and Shirley Wild.**

Everyone is welcome. Contact **Anthony Gagliardi** at (562) 439-2020 for an invitation or more information.

Y'all come, now. Hear? And bring your prettiest parasols and hats, ladies.

If you have a spiffy auction item you would like to donate to the Steel Magnolias gala (preferably \$100 or more in value), please call **Jim Silknitter** (562) 438-2769 or **Cyndie Kalina** (562) 799-4533.

KIDS Helps Defray High Diagnostic Costs for Children

The cost of medical diagnosis is high—too high for many of the parents of Stramski Center children. That's why the Steel Magnolias created KIDS (for Kids in Diagnosis at Stramski).

KIDS is a way for caring people to help defray those high diagnostic costs. That's why KIDS has become an important part of the Steel Magnolias annual dinner-dance. On Sept. 14, the Steel Magnolias will once again include KIDS in the evening's live auction.

During the auction, guests will have the opportunity to raise their bid paddles and sponsor a child in need of diagnostic and clinical care at the Stramski Children's Developmental Center. Minimum cost of a diagnosis is \$250, although lesser bids are acceptable and larger contributions are certainly encouraged.

Invited guests who are unable to attend the event, will be able to participate in KIDS by sending in a donation when they RSVP to the Steel Magnolias.



Executive Suite. Members of the Steel Magnolias executive committee take time out from a recent meeting to pose for a photo. Committee members are (from left) Mary Klingensmith, Shirley Wild, Mary Alice Braly (seated), Karen Wells, Bob Maney, Mari Hooper, and Anthony Gagliardi.

Magnolias Aid Young Stramski Mother

The children aren't the only brave ones at the Stramski Center. One mother—who is hardly more than a child herself—has shown maturity and bravery far beyond her years.

Johnny (a pseudonym), was born about 2-1/2 years ago when the mother was just 15 years old. Johnny was born with holoprosencephaly, a rare birth deformity that has left him in a virtual vegetative state. He cannot walk or talk. He cannot even roll over or sit up on his own. Children with holoprosencephaly rarely survive.

A teen-aged girl might be expected to desert a child with such a severe deformity, but Johnny's mother was determined to give him all the love she could for as long as she could. Her efforts have paid off. Johnny, who normally does not respond to people's touching and talking to him, recognizes his mother's face, voice and touch.

Because of the loving care Johnny has received at the Stramski Center, his mother has decided to become a nurse when Johnny is gone and she has time for herself

and her education. In the meantime, she is earning a high school GED.

Johnny and his mother first came to the notice of the Steel Magnolias when the mother asked Stramski Center social worker **Kay Chun** if she could buy life insurance on Johnny to provide a decent funeral for the boy when he dies. Realizing that life insurance was not obtainable under the circumstances, Chun wrote a memo to the Steel Magnolias explaining the mother's plight. The Magnolias responded immediately. One of the Magnolias, **Mari Hooper**, went to the Westminster Memorial Park and Mortuary with the story, and they agreed to provide a funeral without cost for Johnny.

In addition, Steel Magnolias founder **Shirley Wild** took Chun's memo to **Tom Hennessy**, *Long Beach Press-Telegram* columnist, who responded with a moving front-page story on Johnny and his mother. Hennessy's story elicited an outpouring of support.

There are many more children like Johnny at the Stramski Center. Your tax-deductible donation will go a long way toward giving them the medical and developmental treatment they need to take their place in society. Make your check payable to the Geraldine A. Stramski Children's Developmental Center (GASDC) and mail it to Memorial Medical Center Foundation, P.O. Box 1428, Long Beach, CA 90801-9961. An addressed envelope is included with the newsletter for your convenience.

I was so touched by the importance of their cause, by what they could do for the children, I made a long-term commitment to the Steel Magnolias.

Anthony Gagliardi
Chair, Steel Magnolias

Behind-the-Scenes Tour Offered for Stramski Donation

Do you have a little bit of greasepaint in your blood? Have you ever wondered just what it is like to be backstage at the theater? Well, you're in luck. The Steel Magnolias have arranged a behind-the-scenes tour of Musical Theatre West's *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* at the Carpenter Performing Arts Center on Friday, April 26.

For a \$50 donation to the Stramski Children's Developmental Center, a limited number of people will be taken on a backstage tour of the theater, meet the actors of *I Love You...Now Change*, and participate in a discussion of the play and musical theater in general with Executive Producer/Director **Paul Garman** at a champagne reception.

Following the reception, participants will enjoy the evening's performance of the play.

Contact **Anthony Gagliardi** a (562) 439-2020 to learn how you can be a part of this one-of-a-kind theatrical experience while at the same time supporting the important work of the Stramski Center.

Gala \$ Support Center

The \$86,000 netted from last year's gala for the Stramski Center was distributed as follows: 50% to the Stramski endowment account, 30% for case management of cranio-facial and chronic disease programs, and 20% to supplement clinic revenues to assist parents with multiple problems by providing counseling, anticipatory guidance, and coordination of services. The ultimate goal is to enable each patient to function as meaningfully and as independently as possible in the community.

Steel Magnolias of Stramski Center
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Gala Guests to Swing to Blue Pacific Band

Guests at the September 14 gala will dance to the rhythms of the 17-piece Blue Pacific Swing Band, one of many performing ensembles from the Long Beach Community Band.

The band's repertoire features traditional arrangements of original swing era tunes from the libraries of Benny Goodman, Glen Miller and Louis Prima, along with big band jazz, latin jazz and dance tunes from the '40s through the '90s.

Directed by Rick Berry, the Blue Pacific Swing Band is brought to life by local musicians who love to SWING and contribute their talents to their community.

When you tell a parent their child has cerebral palsy or other serious disorder, as much as you might want to say, "Okay, here is where we are now, we need to move on," that just doesn't happen. The grieving process starts right at that point. You still need time to dry their tears and hold their hand. And that's what the Center is about.

Dr. Anju Khanijou
Medical Director
Stramski Center

Kudos to Photographer

Kudos to Ambrose Martin—Steel Magnolias photographer par excellence. Martin's stunning photographic depiction of Great Jazz Musicians was featured at the Long Beach library in January. The show was a great success and a tribute to Martin's artistic achievements.

The Steel Magnolias

Shirley Wild, Founder*
Anthony Gagliardi, Chair*
Mary Alice Braly, Co-Chair

Jeanne Bader	Lisa Koeller
Judy McNulty Black	Linda Lassers*
Shirlee Bouch*	Bob Maney
John Britt	Carolyn Stramski Maney
Letizia Britt	Patty McCarty
Kitty Brown	Elizabeth Minor
Elaine Davis	Kathy Newton
Michele Maney Davis	Joanne Pearson*
Stephanie Davis	Sande Rice*
Shirley Dixon	Jill Rosenberg*
Lyn Epstein*	Leslie Schlauch
Eline Fudge	Lynn Shrum
Barbara Gaylord	Jim Silknitter
Jeri Goldstein	Jan Simonian*
Gail Gray*	Candice Stacy
Shell Whitney Grossman	Julie Soares
Doris Hauser*	Alice Thompson
Mari Hooper*	Maureen Vastardis
Sandra Janich	Kathy Wade
Judie Johnsen	Gail Webster
Cyndie Kalina	Karen Wells*
Mary Klingensmith*	Myrna Wigod*
Joan Knight*	

*Charter Member