



NEWS RELEASE

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BOB & ALICE SIMON – CHAMPIONS FOR CANCER PATIENTS IN NEED

Cooperstown, N.Y. – Patients and their families who battle cancer face significant emotional and physical impacts. Many also must cope with the effects of an overwhelming and often unexpected financial impact. The cost of cancer care can deplete a family's resources and strain their ability to cope at an already stressful time, even for those with insurance.

Bob and Alice Simon and their young family experienced these challenges when Bob was diagnosed with lymphoma in the early 1970s. Both Bob, who worked as a manual arts therapist at the FDR Veterans Hospital near Peekskill, and Alice, an EKG technician, witnessed others going through the same crises.

In 1990, with his cancer in remission, Bob retired, and he and Alice moved to West Winfield. When Bob was diagnosed again with cancer in 1995, they once again observed patients and their families who were in need of financial assistance. It was then that Bob and Alice decided to start a fund to help people who found themselves in financial distress during and after treatment for cancer.

“We believed that such a fund could ease the burden of cancer patients and their families and allow them to focus their energies on healing,” said Alice. The Simons created a modest fund at Bassett so that money could be available for mammograms, medications, transportation and other medical necessities. “We saw a need and went ahead and did what we could for people like ourselves, those who didn't have a lot of resources and were not eligible for other programs.”

At first, the Simons remained anonymous donors, and the fund was referred to as the Patient Assistance Fund. The Simons continued to make contributions every month. Despite the care he received, Bob's cancer recurred and he passed on in 2000. Alice continued their commitment to making monthly installments to the fund, often traveling to Bassett Healthcare's Cancer Institute to personally drop off her payment. “You wouldn't believe how many people can't afford to fill their prescriptions or who can't take time off from work to care for a patient undergoing debilitating treatment,” Alice said. “I know from experience that those who really need help are so appreciative of any aid given to them.”

Alice credits staff members of the Cancer Institute for the progressive and compassionate care they give, care that accords true dignity and respect for all patients, especially the poor and the underserved.

The Bob Simon Fund was augmented by Mr. John Anagnost in memory of his wife Loretta, who also was a cancer patient at Bassett. Today, dozens of donors, including Cancer Institute employees, support the fund in recognition of their own stories. Many donors make memorial or honorary gifts, enabling the Bob Simon/Loretta Anagnost Fund to help cancer patients and their families during and after the patient's treatment. Since the fund is managed by the Friends of Bassett, there are no administrative costs.

Support of the Bob Simon/Loretta Anagnost Fund assures that patients with a cancer diagnosis who are in need will have access to care. The fund also is a living legacy of Bob and Alice Simon who always will be remembered as champions for cancer patients in need.



Alice Simon, who with her late husband Bob Simon created the original Patient Assistance Fund for cancer patients in need (now the Bob Simon/Loretta Anagnost Fund), visits with Scott A. Barrett, executive director of the Friends of Bassett, and Dr. William J. Richtsmeier, director of Bassett's Cancer Institute.