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Contact: Sandy Burnett, (650) 678-0149, [sgburnett@comcast.net](mailto:sgburnett@comcast.net)

Or Executive Director Dwight Wilson, (650) 554-1000 [dwilson@missionhospice.org](mailto:dwilson@missionhospice.org)

### **Mission Hospice Celebrates 30 Years of Compassionate Care Service to San Mateo County Residents**

Mission Hospice, the oldest hospice program on the Peninsula, will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary during a gala reception Sunday, Feb. 8, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Peninsula Golf and Country Club. Please call (650) 554-1000 for reservation information.

During the event, Marian Soss will receive the Lotus Award for outstanding support of Mission Hospice, and Carol Gray, former longtime executive director, will receive a special recognition. (Digital photos of Marian Soss and Carol Gray are available on request.)

Marian Soss combines a personal passion for antique embroidered samplers with her longtime support of Mission Hospice. Most recently, she dedicated the profits from a new book, "Let Love Abide, The Marian Soss Sampler Collection" (available at [www.inthecompanyoffriends.com](http://www.inthecompanyoffriends.com)) to Mission Hospice. Over the years, Mrs. Soss has given hundreds of talks and presentations on her collection, and has donated the honoraria to Mission Hospice. An early member of the Mission Hospice board of directors, she also was a charter member of the Auxiliary.

Carol Gray, RN, was one of Mission Hospice's first volunteers. She became its second executive director in 1980. Her 25 years at Mission Hospice saw the organization's evolution from a nearly all-volunteer program to a professional organization which includes a significant volunteer component. She also oversaw Mission Hospice's transition to becoming a Medicare-certified hospice in 1995.

Mission Hospice was started by Marguerite "Mac" Nash, who became the organization's first patient, and Helen Lagen, who continues today to support Mission Hospice as a life member of the Board of Directors. They incorporated Mission Hospice in March, 1979, with the help of Dr. Pierre Salmon, Evelyn Grant, Edith Morris and Helen Campbell. Their contributions created an ongoing tradition of compassionate care that continues to this day at Mission Hospice. The current Board Chair is Mary Chigos and the CEO is Dwight Wilson, RN.

Mission Hospice, the first hospice program on the Peninsula and only the second in the entire Bay Area, has a full staff of paid professionals in addition to its large volunteer staff who provide around-the-clock services. Today, several hospice programs operate on the Peninsula, but Mission Hospice remains the only independent hospice that serves residents in San Mateo County. Mission Hospice started with a commitment to providing end-of-life services at no cost to patients. That continues today as donations and grants help support patients not covered by insurance, Medicare, or when insurance doesn't cover the real cost of providing service, as often happens.

Since its founding, Mission Hospice has served thousands of patients. That doesn't include all the family and friends who also benefit from hospice's holistic approach, which includes follow-up grief support, community education and a myriad of other services that indirectly impact the terminally ill patient. New programs include the Transitions pre-hospice program and special outreach to diverse communities. Staff and volunteers also now work with patients who live in nursing homes and other facilities, in addition to those living in private homes.

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