



St. Mary's presents 2025 highest awards to leaders, colleagues

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Athens, Ga. – St. Mary's Health Care System recently honored three staff members and leaders with the ministry's highest annual awards while recognizing 250 colleagues for attaining levels of tenure from 5 to 45 years.

The award recipients were chosen by their peers for their outstanding commitment to St. Mary's Mission and Core Values and for their dedication to the ministry's patients, colleagues and community.

"It is truly an honor and a blessing to serve alongside such dedicated and committed people," said Stonish Pierce, President and CEO of Trinity Health Georgia. "These individuals exemplify our Mission, Core Values and regional vision to be the best place to work, practice medicine and receive care in Northeast Georgia."

Receiving system awards were:



Ashley Woodall

Ashley Woodall, a Breast Health Nurse Navigator at St. Mary's Hospital, received the Catherine McAuley Service Award for frontline staff. Woodall, who resides in Watkinsville, is a trusted and empathetic resource for women facing breast cancer. She provides comfort, education and guidance as patients undergo follow-up testing and personally calls patients with biopsy results. Sometimes, this involves telling the patient they have cancer. She handles these moments with tremendous respect and compassion.

"Ashley truly wants her patients to feel cherished regardless of race, financial status, or religion," said Sister Patricia Pepitone, a member of the Sisters of Mercy, reading excerpts from Woodall's nomination. "She makes all her patients feel safe and eases their anxiety. She is always there with a hand to hold and a calming environment."

Tina Crawford, a resident of Buckhead, Ga., and Director of St. Mary's Hospital Emergency Department, received the Sister Antonette Excellence in Leadership Award for directors. Crawford joined St. Mary's in 2012 when the system acquired what is now St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital, serving as a staff registered nurse, manager, and most recently, director of St. Mary's Emergency Department. She is an exceptional listener and a powerful advocate for her staff and patients.



Christine Crawford

“As the team’s greatest cheerleader, she continually motivates nurses to pursue self-growth, advance their competencies, and achieve professional certifications that elevate the quality of care,” said Holley Fontaine, St. Mary’s Regional Chief Nursing Officer, reading from one of Crawford’s six nominations. “She expects and encourages our team to be the best we can be! She is a role model of integrity, honesty, and the highest of all standards for all other managers without a doubt.”



Thomas Nguyen

Thomas Nguyen, a resident of Oconee County and manager of St. Mary’s Pharmacy Services, received the Edward J. Fachtel, Jr., Excellence in Leadership Award for managers. Nguyen was recognized for his compassionate spirit, friendliness, energy, knowledge, ability to listen, and his commitment to the highest levels of safety and professionalism.

“He is a great leader who cares about his staff, not just as colleagues, but as human beings,” said Jeff Brown, Senior Vice President of Operations. Reading from Nguyen’s nomination, he added, “He is always there for us and tries to understand our personal stories. He is great with his staff. All have his trust and he has our backs. He includes us all in collaboration when problems occur so that they can get fixed. He works well with other departments as well.”

In addition to honoring the recipients of the ministry’s highest honors, St. Mary’s celebrated 254 colleagues and leaders for reaching tenure milestones in 5-year increments. Together, the colleagues who were honored have devoted some 2,800 years of service to St. Mary’s. In all, St. Mary’s honored:

- 5 years – 115 colleagues
- 10 years – 79 colleagues
- 15 years – 16 colleagues
- 20 years – 20 colleagues
- 25 years – 6 colleagues
- 30 years – 3 colleagues
- 35 years – 11 colleagues
- 40 years – 2 colleagues
- 45 years – 2 colleagues