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**SIGNATURE GIFT TO NORTHEAST GEORGIA HEALTH SYSTEM FOUNDATION
NAMES NEW SPIRITUAL CARE CENTER**

GAINESVILLE, Ga. – During their 60-year marriage, Verdis C. and Mary Puckett lived by the values of faith, humility, kindness, service, stewardship and most of all, love. Now, through a signature gift to the Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) Foundation, Mary and her late husband have ensured those same values continue to be carried out within Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) Gainesville through the V.C. and Mary Puckett Center for Spiritual Care.

“Verdis always cared so much about the people around him — friends and family, church members, customers and especially his employees,” said Mary. “I wanted to make sure that together, even after he passed, we could do something to help care for those around us. Having the Puckett Center for Spiritual Care carry our family name is a great honor, and I know Verdis would be proud.”

V.C. served in the United States Army, rising to the rank of First Lieutenant, while Mary had a successful career as an executive secretary for several businesses. Together, they owned Gainesville Iron Works from 1961 to 1995, and the business grew from a local steel supply firm to one with product and service distribution throughout the Southeast. They also owned Power Cranes, Inc.

“It’s hard to find words to express how grateful we are to the Pucketts,” said Chris Bray, president and chief development officer of the NGHS Foundation. “Their generosity and passion

for helping others is evident as these renovations and enhancements will pay dividends for all who walk through the hospital doors for years to come.”

The Puckett Center for Spiritual Care reopened after being refurbished to meet the needs of the program. With 20 volunteer chaplains, four chaplain residents and seven full-time staff chaplains, the space needed an enhanced lobby, larger reception and conference space, lockers and bathrooms for round-the-clock chaplains, as well as a few new welcoming touches that reflect the services provided. The renovated space offers a more calming and hospitable environment for the volunteer chaplains and other guests.

“This is really for all of the people we come in contact with as a Spiritual Care department,” said Chris Jennings, director of Spiritual Care at NGMC. “We want to serve them in the best way possible, and this renovated space will help us achieve that.”

Along with the renovation, what used to be known as Pastoral Care at NGMC will now be known as Spiritual Care. As the department has grown, it has become apparent that NGMC serves a wide range of people with myriad religious backgrounds — making Spiritual Care a more fitting name. Members of the department providing spiritual care will be identified as chaplains, instead of clergy or pastors.

To learn more about the Spiritual Care department at NGMC, call 770-219-5077 or visit nghs.com/spiritual-care-services.

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ABOUT NORTHEAST GEORGIA MEDICAL CENTER

Since 1951, Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) has been on a mission of improving the health of our community in all we do. With hospitals located in Gainesville, Braselton, Winder and Dahlonega, the four NGMC campuses have a total of more than 700 beds and more than 1,100 medical staff members representing more than 50 specialties. NGMC is part of Northeast Georgia Health System, a non-profit that cares for more than 1 million people across more than 18 counties. Learn more at www.nghs.com.