

Patient Stories

Three individuals, with three different conditions, share in their admiration for the care they received at Northern Michigan Regional Hospital.

Pat Hylant of Toledo and Harbor Springs knows something about running a business — as CEO (now retired) of the Hylant Group, he guided his company to its current position as the 6th largest private brokerage firm in the US, and, in the process, was named Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst and Young. But the calculated risks Hylant took in building his firm pales in comparison to the risks of surviving infectious streptococcus, (a very serious blood infection.) His grandchildren had sore throats all winter, and he unknowingly picked up the strep A virus from them. Interestingly, the virus entered his blood stream after he bit his tongue while working on his tractor.

“Unfortunately, I don’t remember a good part of it,” says Hylant, “but I do remember that the staff was phenomenal, both in the regular Hospital and in ICU.” Originally, the family had decided to move Hylant to the Cleveland Clinic for treatment, “but they were so impressed with Dr. Deery, they decided to keep me here.” Hylant was in the Hospital for over 10 days, and then had follow-up care at home.

The Hylant family has contributed to the Foundation for years, but now they have a newfound impetus. “After our experience in the Hospital, we’re obviously going to step it up a few notches,” Hylant says. “I think [the Hospital] has the most superior staff of any Hospital its size.”



Pat Hylant
Infectious Disease Patient

PHYSICIAN

H. Gunner Deery, MD — INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Donald Hodgkiss
Cancer Patient

PHYSICIANS

Mark Antonishen, MD — INTERNAL MEDICINE

Peter Levanovich, MD — CARDIOLOGY

Donald Roth, MD — NEUROLOGY

Edward Smith, MD — HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY

“I feel like I grew up with the Hospital,” says 81 year-old Donald Hodgkiss, a Petoskey resident since 1938 when his father founded the road building company Hodgkiss and Douma (now H&D). But Hodgkiss’ personal experiences grew serious in 1976, when he had his first heart attack at age 49. Treatments were simpler then and he was encouraged to walk, a pastime he pursued for many years. In 1993, Hodgkiss had a defibrillator — the first of four — implanted by Peter Levanovich, MD, after an episode on the Hospital walking track. “Dr. Levanovich says I’m the oldest member of his club.” In 2004, Hodgkiss was diagnosed with CVA (cerebrovascular accident, commonly known as stroke) and was treated by Mark Antonishen, MD. “They really do a great job,” he says. “They watch you like a hawk watches a chicken,” he recalls about his rehab. In between Hodgkiss’ heart conditions, he has been treated for many ailments, from prostate cancer to hernia surgery. Today, he is battling blood cancer, first diagnosed in 1999 by Donald Roth, MD. “Dr. Smith and I are fighting that,” he adds.

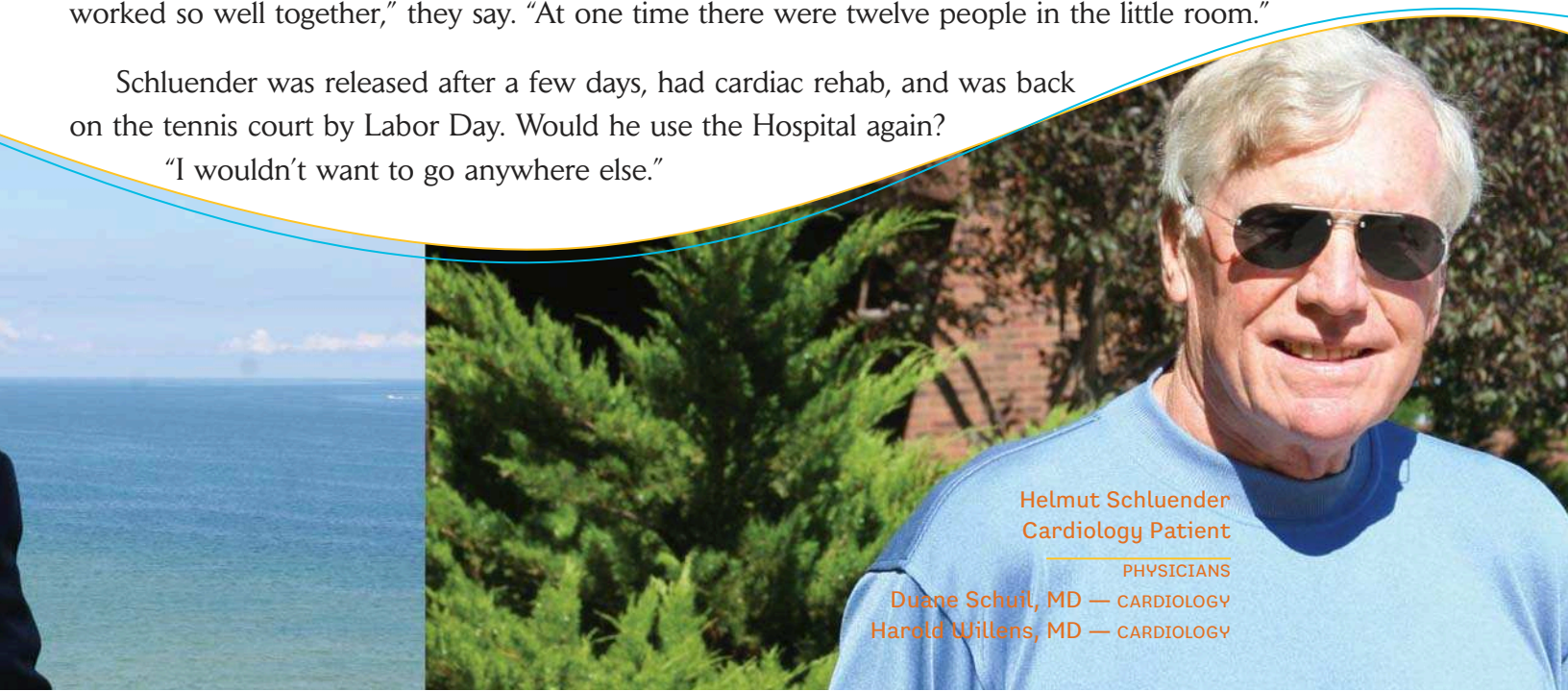
Thanks to the caring treatment Hodgkiss has received over the years, both he and his wife are devoted Foundation donors. “We’re also talking about moving some of our assets into a CRT (charitable remainder trust),” he explains. “We are not giving up current income with a CRT which as retirees we need.” Mrs. Hodgkiss adds “We would encourage people to help in any way they can. It’s really remarkable that we have this marvelous facility in this little town.”

Helmut Schluender seems to live on the tennis courts; the 73-year-old plays seven days a week. But a series of incidents in July of 2005 almost ended his game. Schluender had noticed some breathing difficulty and, days later, he almost passed out on the court. Wife Nancy was at Petoskey’s Art in the Park at the time, but had a feeling of something amiss. “I felt compelled to go home,” she says. Her hunch was well-founded; Helmut was in the throes of a heart attack. The drive to the Hospital was fortuitous as Nancy made every green light. “We were so lucky,” she adds.

Cardiologist Harold Willens, MD, treated Schluender (who thought he had an ulcer) in the emergency room. Within forty minutes, Schluender was in the heart cath lab with Cardiologist Duane Schuil, MD, who inserted medicated stents. “Next to the good Lord, there’s Dr. Willens,” says Schluender. Both Helmut and Nancy credit the medical staff and Hospital Colleagues for his survival. “They were fabulous and everyone worked so well together,” they say. “At one time there were twelve people in the little room.”

Schluender was released after a few days, had cardiac rehab, and was back on the tennis court by Labor Day. Would he use the Hospital again?

“I wouldn’t want to go anywhere else.”



Helmut Schluender
Cardiology Patient

PHYSICIANS

Duane Schuil, MD — CARDIOLOGY
Harold Willens, MD — CARDIOLOGY