

*'Mary Rose had a huge heart.'*

**Help and hope**—Inspired by the kindheartedness of his late wife, Mary Rose, Barry Slemmer is continuing her legacy by supporting a program to help cancer survivors cope with survivorship issues.



## Support for Survivors

**Mary Rose Slemmer's legacy: helping cancer survivors transition to a new life**

Mary Rose Slemmer never missed a chance to bring cheer to others. She visited shut-ins and made soup for bingo night at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church in Upper Hanover Township, where she lived. Friends at the Upper Perkiomen Senior Center enjoyed her baked goods, flower arrangements and favors for special occasions. She was known for her generosity and kindness toward everyone she met.

"Mary Rose had a huge heart," says her husband, Barry Slemmer. "She never missed a birthday or holiday. I still have a closet full of gifts she picked out for others."

What makes Mary Rose extraordinary is that she continued to bake, shop and deliver gifts despite tremendous medical hardships. She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 1983. Aggressive treatment saved her life, but left her with other problems. She needed nightly intravenous feedings and dialysis three days a week. After 26 years of fighting a courageous battle, Mary Rose passed away last year. "Through it all, she never complained, and always had a smile," Barry says. "She was a survivor."

Mary Rose was honored for inspiring others by being named Grand Marshal of the Upper Perkiomen Relay for Life fundraising event for the American Cancer Society in 2007. Her legacy and support for survivors continues through an endowed gift from the Slemmer family to Lehigh Valley Health Network. The Mary Rose Muhr Slemmer Survivor PLACE (Programs for Living After the Cancer Experience) is a new health network program to help people cope with survivorship issues.

"I hope we can make life a little easier for people who have gone through cancer and are living with the after-effects," Barry says. "Mary Rose would have wanted that."