



OSF HealthCare Mourns the Passing of Longtime Supporter Board Member

FOR IMMEDIATE REALEASE

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(Rockford, Illinois / October 14, 2021) – OSF HealthCare has lost one of its most loyal and dedicated supporters in Charles “Chuck” Thomas, who passed away on October 8.

Born and raised in Rockford, Thomas once aspired to be a Catholic priest but pursued a law career instead. During his notable legal career, Thomas was a longtime partner with Hinshaw & Culbertson, LLP, a law firm that has represented OSF HealthCare in a variety of ways including mergers and acquisitions. He also spent 40 years as legal counsel for the Rockford Catholic Diocese and represented the City of Rockford before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Thomas has a long history serving OSF HealthCare. In 1984, he became president of the Board of Directors for OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford, Illinois. He was a member of the OSF HealthCare Foundation Board of Directors from its founding in 1989. In the 1990s, Thomas served as the chair of the Saint Anthony College of Nursing Board of Directors and received an honorary degree from the college.

“Chuck has been a fixture on the OSF Foundation Board spanning five decades,” said Tom Hammerton, president of the OSF HealthCare Foundation. “His passion for life was infectious, as was his passion for serving our Sisters and their beautiful Mission. Chuck and his wife, Sue, worked as a team and utilized their time, talent and treasure to the fullest to do all they could to support OSF HealthCare and our Sisters. Chuck will be missed desperately by our entire OSF family.”

One of his greatest contributions came in 2019, when the Thomases gave a \$1 million gift to the OSF HealthCare Foundation for the creation of The Charles and Sue Thomas Autism Endowment for Innovative Solutions.

The gift enabled groundbreaking autism research that focuses on solutions for improving early detection of autism, dramatic improvements in care and treatment, development of supportive technology enhancements and other innovative solutions to improve the lives of children and families living with autism.

At the time of the gift, Thomas revealed his passion for supporting work surrounding autism. “Our granddaughter, Graciela, is on the autism spectrum,” he said. “Our family is thrilled to be part of research being doing at OSF HealthCare to help her, and other families like ours, get the care needed for a life lived without limitations and uncertainty.”

Thomas had many passions and pursued them to the fullest. He was an avid aviator, piloting airplanes, gliders and hot-air balloons. He competed in international balloon competitions and was the first person

to navigate a balloon across the Great Wall of China. Thomas was also a swimmer and bicyclist, played polo, ran four marathons and competed in more than 150 triathlons.

“Chuck impacted so many people during his extraordinary life,” said OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center President Paula Carynski. “His commitment to OSF HealthCare was unwavering. No project or endeavor that he ever touched was too big or too time consuming for Chuck. He had a heart of gold and we are all better off for having Chuck in our lives. Our prayers go out to his wife, Sue, and the entire Thomas family.”

Learn more about Chuck Thomas’ impressive life and career [here](#).

To make a donation in his memory, please click [here](#).