

CAREGIVER CHRONICLE

Connections for Caregivers

November, 2012

Linda Tucker: The Epitome of Caregiving

By David Greenberg

I know it is a cliché, but if you look up caregiver in the dictionary, you should see a picture of Linda Tucker. She was indeed, the epitome of caregiving.

Linda came into our lives about a decade ago. Unfortunately, she left us earlier this year, when she passed away.

My parents had moved to Gainesville from South Florida when my mother began to show signs that she was either suffering from dementia or mini-strokes. Either way they were reaching the point where they needed to be closer to one of their sons, and I was the logical choice.

They were fine for a few years with my father serving in the

role of primary caregiver. But as my mother's health began to deteriorate, we knew it was time to do something.

A f t e r consulting with Dr. Alan Goldblatt, who took great care of my parents after they moved here, it was clear that there was only one of two options – a long-term-care facility or caregivers coming into my parents' home. My father would not consider option one. Through a member of our synagogue, we met Linda, who had previously cared for this friend's mother.

But we didn't just get Linda. We got a team all because of Linda. She and another women, Evelyn (who



Linda was always keeping an eye on Ben, even at his 90th birthday party.

A Message From Cheryl Robinson

I would like to thank all our readers for being part of the first issue of *Caregiver Chronicle*. It is our goal to provide you state-of-the-art caregiver information. But not only is *Caregiver Chronicle* for you, we want it to be by you as well. We want your contributions – poems, recipes for comfort food or anything else that helps you get through your challenging days that you would want to share with other caregivers.

We understand the impact that caregiving can have on an individual, whether it is social, emotional,

physical, financial or legal, and we hope that this newsletter will give our readers a sense of community and support as they face these daily challenges. Within these pages you'll find information on community resources, workshops, support groups, conferences, as well as a calendar of our local events. We hope that our readers and caregivers will respond to the newsletter to make this an interactive place for participation, growth and development to build a sense of camaraderie for this network of care giving individuals.

Cheryl Robinson, LCSW

has since gone to nursing school), started coming into my parents' home daily – six hours each – between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. On the rare occasion one of them was not available, Linda arranged backup. Two other women – Barbara and Joyce – would come in their place.

And under Linda's leadership they all became something more than caregivers. Led by her example, they became trusted and honored members of the family. It was a great comfort to me and my wife that they were there. We knew that as long as they were around, we had nothing to worry about.

They did everything. They fed my mother (and made sure my father ate too), they cleaned her, did her nails and her hair, took them to

continued on next page

Resources

Websites: www.caregiver.com: free on line caregiver supports, articles of interest, question and answer, interviews with caregivers, etc.



Publications: www.usaaedfoundation.org for elder care related information in PDF form as well as pamphlets that can be ordered.



North Florida Medical Sales

Linda Tucker

(continued from previous page)

doctor appointments, cleaned (even though there was cleaning service where my parents lived) and did just about anything else that was needed.

Life continued that way for a little more than a year, But eventually, because of my mother's continuing deteriorating health and the family finances, we had to face the reality of a long-term-care facility. Little did we know that changed nothing for Linda.

Instead of going to their home, she showed up at the nursing home, where she cared for my mother and insisted on taking her laundry home so nothing would get lost. She even continued to go to their home to check on my father. The remarkable thing about all this is that when they were going to my parents' home, they were getting paid. Once my mother moved to the nursing home that was no longer the case. But that didn't change anything for Linda. She was doing what she had been doing for a year – taking care of my parents.

Linda even became recognized at our synagogue. Anytime there was a special event that my mother should attend, she did. Linda would simply bring her in her wheelchair.

My mother passed away a little more than four years ago. Even that did not change anything. She simply started focusing on my father, who was in his early 90s.

Linda's daughter worked in housekeeping where my father lived. Whenever she sensed any problems, she was quick to tell her mother, who was over to check on him in a jiffy. Not that she needed any prompting. Linda visited my father at least once a week, often to take him to lunch or do his laundry, or just to make sure he was drinking enough water as required by Dr. Goldblatt.

My father passed away almost two years ago, a few months shy of his 95th birthday. But our relationship with Linda never skipped a beat. We kept updated about her family, and she kept updated about mine. We went to the funerals of her mother and husband, and sadly, we went to her funeral earlier this year. I didn't lose a family caregiver at that funeral. I lost a big sister.

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From the Desk of Sam W. Boone, Jr.:

Why Do You Need an Elder Law Attorney?

By Sam W. Boone, Jr.

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of columns that will be presented in this newsletter by Sam W. Boone, Jr., a local attorney whose primary practice areas include elder law and estate planning. It is hoped that the information will be valuable for caregivers and family members dealing with issues related to elder law.

Wills, revocable trusts, powers of attorney, health-care-surrogate designations, living wills, qualified retirement-plan benefits, business-succession planning, estate and gift tax, probate and trust administration – are you feeling overwhelmed yet?

What about Medicaid, Medicare, special-needs trusts, long-term-care issues?

It's hard enough to consider all those things before you get too old. What happens when you have to deal with them during crisis – when one partner is no longer able to make decisions and is in need of special care? Then it becomes overwhelming.

Ideally, life-care planning like this should be done as early as possible. But often people wait until they are in crisis before thinking about these legal issues and the financial obligations connected to them.

That's why everyone needs to consider an elder-law attorney sooner rather than later. There are great attorneys in Gainesville who practice in various specialties. But when you are thinking about elder-law and estate-planning issues, you need an attorney who focuses on life-care planning. Just like you wouldn't do your own dental work, you want an attorney who is well-versed in

these issues.

An attorney who specializes in elder issues focuses on the laws, statutes, regulations and decisions which impact the lives of older Americans and their families. Elder law encompasses elder-care planning issues, including all those mentioned above, as well as wills, trusts, advanced directives and much more.

The most important issue related to elder law is to plan well enough in advance to avoid making decisions during a crisis.



So the only question regarding the decision to consider an attorney who focuses on elder law is when – not if. When do I seek out the services of an attorney who practices elder law and estate planning?

Would you do it when you are in crisis as the primary caregiver of a partner who needs constant care at home or is ready to go into a care facility? Or do you do it when

you are both still healthy enough to plan effectively? The answer seems self evident.

Sam W. Boone, Jr. is a Gainesville-based attorney practicing elder law and estate planning. To learn more about elder-law issues, go online to [www. http://boonelaw.com/](http://boonelaw.com/), or call (352)-374-8308.

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This is Your Newsletter

It only works with your contributions

Poetry

Stories

Recipes for Comfort Food

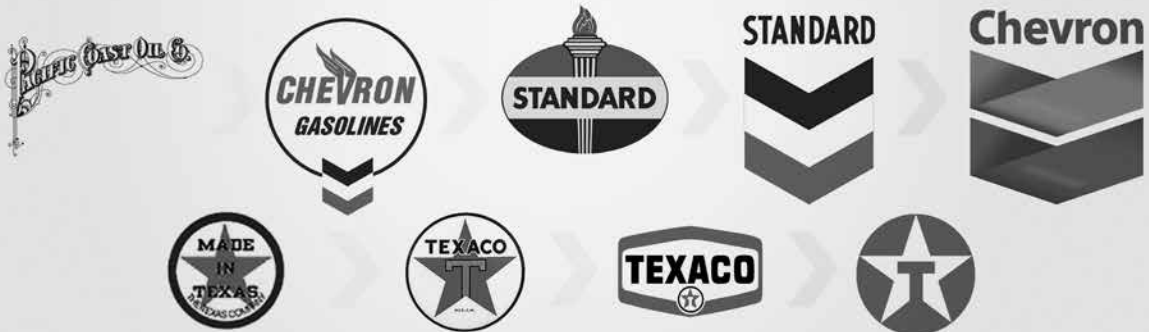
Information About Meetings or Workshops

Whatever Helps You Make It Through the Day

**Send your contributions to
david@greenbergcommunications.com**

**We will publish every other month around the 15th.
November, January, March, May, etc.
Deadline for each issue is the 5th of the month of publication.**

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Calendar of Events

Sunday, Nov. 18 at 2:30 p.m.: Caregiver Support Group at Senior Healthcare Center at Spring Hill, 3720 NW 83rd St. Contact Flory at 336-3050 for more information.

Tuesday, Nov. 20, 10:30 a.m. to noon: Maintain Your Brain at the Alachua County Public Library - Tower Road Branch, 3020 SW 75th St. Call 800.272.3900 to register or for more information.

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 3-4 p.m.: The Basics: Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease, a workshop presented by The Alzheimer's Association, Central and North Florida Chapter at the Alachua County Public Library - Alachua Branch, 14913 NW 140 St. Call 800.272.3900 to register or for more information.

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