

Easing grief through giving

The Dibble Family and Bulkley Richardson give back through endowed gift

In 1996, seven-year-old Caitlin Dibble Ross was diagnosed with cancer. Caitlin's heartbroken parents, Ann and Tim, her four-year-old brother, and her extended family – including her uncle, Bulkley Richardson Attorney Francis Dibble, Jr., better known as Sandy – looked for every opportunity to bring joy to her days as the disease took its toll.

Caitlin's care providers from Baystate's Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice – now Baystate Home Health & Hospice (BHHH) – also looked for ways to brighten her days. One day, Caitlin shared with her visiting nurse that she loved horses. A few days later, she was delighted to find that her nurse had gone “above and beyond” in her care – bringing some horses to visit. Caitlin had a perfect view of their temporary backyard paddock from her bedroom window. The nurse's actions brought much joy to Caitlin, and her family was grateful.

The Dibble family's connection to Baystate Home Health & Hospice continued when Sandy and Ann's father, Francis (Frank) Dibble, Sr., a lifelong educator and active community member, received care from the health care professionals of BHHH before passing away in 2014 at age 91. The excellence and compassion of the care team inspired the family to make a generous gift to Baystate Health in memory of Caitlin and Frank.

“It was so comforting for my father and niece – and our family – to experience Baystate's extraordinary care and compassion. My father was able to die with dignity and in as little pain as possible,” notes Sandy.

The Francis D. Dibble, Sr. and Caitlin Dibble Ross Memorial Fund, an endowed fund held at Baystate Health Foundation, will provide annual support to Baystate Home Health & Hospice for generations to come. Bulkley Richardson colleagues joined Sandy and his family by making a generous gift, on behalf of the firm, in support of the new fund.



COO of Baystate Home Health Martin Degen, Bulkley Richardson Attorney Sandy Dibble, Bulkley Richardson Managing Partner Peter Barry, and Baystate Home Health Chief Clinical Officer Heidi Landers (left to right) meet in Sandy's office.

Regional impact, personal experience

Sandy's connection to Baystate Health is both personal and professional. As a leader at the law firm of Bulkley Richardson for more than 30 years, he has worked closely with Baystate, and is well-acquainted with the challenges facing healthcare organizations today – as well as the need for philanthropic support.

“I feel privileged to work in this community and feel it is my responsibility to give back,” Sandy says. “Baystate Health is the most important non-profit organization in our community because it has an impact on people's lives across the region. It provides a level of superior healthcare that our family, neighbors and friends rely on.”

Peter Barry, who succeeded Sandy as Managing Partner of Bulkley Richardson, also understands the importance of Baystate to the health and well-being of western Massachusetts. He sees the difference it makes for the oldest to the youngest patients, including his nephew, who was in the care of Baystate Children's Hospital Neonatal Continuing Care Unit when he was born.

“Thanks to the quick thinking and skilled care of the team, my nephew is alive and well,” says Peter. “Without the appropriate care, that may not have been the case. We are so fortunate to have this level of life-saving expertise in our region.”

Sandy sums it up well: “Our community relies on Baystate Health for life-saving care. Our family is honored to join so many others in providing philanthropic support to ensure its continued excellence. In return, we have an obligation to provide financial support, where we can, to ensure its continued excellence.”