



For Immediate Release – Photo Attached

Hunter to Serve as Great Strides' Honorary Chair

Cleveland business leader Beecher Hunter will serve as honorary chairman of the 2012 “Great Strides: Taking Steps to Cure Cystic Fibrosis (CF),” according to campaign officials at Lee University. The twelfth annual walk and 5K road race will be held March 31.

“Beecher Hunter has offered his work and goodwill to so many causes over the years, we are thrilled that he has agreed to serve as Community Chairman of our Great Strides event in 2012,” said Lee president Paul Conn in making the announcement. “No one in our community is more highly respected, and there is no one in town with whom people more enjoy working. It’s going to be a terrific year with him on our team!”

Hunter, a Cookeville, Tennessee native, was appointed president of Life Care Centers of America on August 16, 2006. Prior to that, he was the executive vice president for corporate and community relations at Life Care.

He is a former editor of The Cleveland (Tennessee) Daily Banner, a post he held for 13 years. During his tenure, The Banner was a frequent winner of first-place prizes for editorial writing and community service projects in statewide competition.

Hunter is a frequent speaker at workshops, seminars and after-dinner occasions. He delivers motivational and inspirational addresses, and also does presentations on communications, public relations, marketing, and customer service.

A graduate of Tennessee Tech, Hunter is a former president of the Cleveland/Bradley Chamber of Commerce and the Cleveland Family YMCA. He and his wife, Lola, are members of First Baptist Church in Cleveland.

“As one who works in the health care field, few developments are as thrilling to me as advances in medicine that effectively deal with illnesses that beset us,” Hunter said. “Cystic fibrosis (CF) is an inherited disease affecting the lungs and digestive system of children and adults, and thanks to advances in research and medical treatments, lives of victims are being enhanced and extended.”

The Great Strides event will mobilize hundreds of community participants and Lee University students to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. In 2011, the event drew

300 walkers, 524 5K runners, 20 “fun run” participants and over 80 volunteers to the downtown festivities. More than \$57,000 was raised for CF research.

The Cleveland Great Strides is sponsored jointly by Lee University students and a group of community volunteers. Serving with Hunter to lead the effort are Lee administrators Dr. Mike Hayes, vice president of student development, and Vanessa Hammond, who directs the school’s office of grants.

The 65 Roses 5K road race will be directed by Dr. Bill Estes, a department chair in the Helen DeVos College of Education at Lee.

The route for the 2012 walk and 5K run (3.1 miles) will begin and end on the Lee campus and will travel throughout Cleveland’s historic downtown area. The road race begins at 8:30 am and the walk at 10 am.

Great Strides is the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation’s largest national fundraiser, raising nearly \$38 million in 2011 and involving over 600 walk sites across the country.

According to Leigh Ellington, east Tennessee development manager for the CF Foundation, “The Cleveland/Bradley County community has been incredibly generous and supportive of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation through Great Strides, raising more than \$478,000 since 2001. Everything we do today makes a difference in the tomorrows of our CF patients, and Cleveland has done a lot.”

About this year’s event, Hunter adds, “More needs to be done, and – not surprisingly – the people of Bradley County and Southeast Tennessee have literally stepped up to be part of the solution. I am privileged to be a part of this important endeavor.”

More information about the Cleveland Great Strides is available by calling Tori Jessen, walk coordinator, at 614-8406 or at the local Great Strides website at www.leeuniversity.edu/cf.

PHOTO CAPTION: (left to right) Hammond, Hunter, Hayes

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Thank you,

Kendra

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