



## **The Hance Award**

With a history dating back 114 years, St. Barnabas Health System takes time to remember its selfless and visionary founder, Gouverneur Provoost Hance, who would have celebrated his 143rd birthday on March 28, 2014. Each year the Hance Award, St. Barnabas' highest honor, is presented to a person of national acclaim who exemplifies Hance's ideals of benevolence, patriotism and service to others.

## **Named for St. Barnabas founder Gouverneur P. Hance (1871-1954).**

From an early age Hance knew he "wanted to do something for God." The New Jersey native, born in 1871, spent his early life praying and volunteering at rescue missions. His compassion for others prompted him to join the Church Amy in 1897, an organization similar to the Salvation Army, which led him to relocate to Pittsburgh. There, Hance discovered his life's mission while reading the book "Have Faith in God," which describes a doctor's accounts of establishing a home in Boston for women and children suffering from Tuberculosis. Hance realized he wanted to do something along the same lines and in 1900 opened the St. Barnabas Free Home for convalescent men and boys in downtown Pittsburgh. With three rooms and no more than four beds, a table and some chairs the groundwork was laid for the future multimillion dollar health care system.

During these early years Hance began his Brotherhood with the Episcopal Church gaining the title of "Brother Founder." Even with Hance's extremely devout lifestyle St. Barnabas was open to any sick and destitute man regardless of his beliefs or backgrounds and it the care was completely free. To gain the necessary supplies for providing free care Hance begged for food, clothing and volunteers. "Faith and Work" magazine, which is still in print today, was established in 1903 to report "the news and needs" of St. Barnabas. When all else failed Hance turned to prayer. Combined, these methods led to extraordinary results.

Quickly the St. Barnabas Free Home outgrew the small space and throughout the next two decades it moved locations more than a half dozen times, often doubling in capacity with each move.

Hance was appointed manager of the St. Barnabas Free Home for life in 1908, the same year St. Barnabas was incorporated with a board of trustee comprised of Pittsburgh businessmen. With the purchase of 31 acres of land in Gibsonia, St. Barnabas relocated one final time to its current location. The newly constructed three-story brick structure, now known as St. Barnabas Nursing Home, officially opened on June 11, 1919 with a capacity to house 100 men. Throughout the years Hance continued to help St. Barnabas thrive at its permanent location. After a lifetime of service Hance passed away at the age of 82 in 1954.