THE LAURA MARIA VIE TOR AWARD

In the spring of 1982 the Women's Council of Sheltering Arms decided to present an annual award called the Laura Maria Vietor Award to the employee of the hospital who best exemplified the character of this exceptional woman. Today's winner will be the thirteenth, but before introducing our recipient, I would like to recognize those who have formerly won the award.

Would you please stand as your name is called, and we will hold our applause until all have been introduced.

Nancy Barret
Ann Stitzer
Anne Sullen
Jo Helmick
Faye Johnson
Becky Mahler
Dee Couvelha
Mary Cobb
Irma Meade (She isn't here today)
Diane Sweeny (Now lives in Northern Va., but sent greetings to all)
Sandra Gaskins
Sandra Voskeritchian

Thank you. This is a very special group!

Many of you are familiar with the name Laura Vietor, but since she is such an inspiration to all of us who knew her and because this special award is in her honor, I would like to briefly sketch her life story.

She was born in 1890 in Bon Air, Virginia and received her education, first at home and then at what is now St. Catherine's School and then in Switzerland.

She had always wanted to be a nurse. Family opposition to a career was strong at first, but she prevailed and entered the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in 1914. In 1917, as soon as she graduated from nursing school, she volunteered to help in the influenza epidemic and went to the remote areas of Cumberland County to assist. A short time thereafter, she founded the nursing school at St. Elizabeth's Hospital where she was night superintendent.
Her religion, love for her church and a desire to be of service to others were the hallmarks of her life. And it was at Sheltering Arms Hospital that Miss Vietor found the caring place where her selfless desire to care for others was to be fulfilled. For 32 years this remarkable woman as head nurse set for herself and others the highest standards of nursing.

The last ten years at Sheltering Arms she worked full time without pay—unbeknownst to her associates. She considered this her "donation to the hospital." She also spent countless hours after a full workday sorting drugs—which in those days were donated to the hospital—thereby saving hundreds of dollars in drug bills.

She still managed to remain active in church and community affairs. She was named "Volunteer of the Year" in 1963, and in 1977 the Red Cross recognized her fifty years of service. Two years later she was honored by the City of Richmond and elected to the "Senior Citizens Hall of Fame."

In the last ten years of her life, when her frail health prevented her from coming to her beloved Sheltering Arms, she wrote hundreds of thank you notes for donations and continued to sew for the Red Cross.

Of course, times have changed, and we realize that is it not possible to work full time without pay, or to spend countless hours at the hospital after the work day, but we can still strive to emulate and to be inspired by this unforgettable woman's dedication to duty in her profession, which she elevated to a calling.

Our 1995 Vietor Award Committee thanks members of the staff who submitted excellent letters of nomination and urges each of them to re-nominate his or her candidate next year if he or she was not chosen today. The committee's decision was an extremely difficult one, but your informative and well thought-out letters helped us greatly in making our choice. Many staff members are deserving of the Vietor Award, but, unfortunately, only one can be chosen.

Each year, we try to present information on the recipient in such a way that he or she cannot be identified until the final comments are being made. That might not be the case this year, but even when you have identified this year's winner, please continue to listen carefully as you are sure to learn things about the recipient that you didn't know before.

Here are some comments made about this year's Vietor Award recipient:
- This person's sole mission is to help patients and their families and treat patients as people, not as patients, with dignity and respect and individual acceptance.

- Because of the nominee's dedication, which is in the true spirit of Sheltering Arms and Miss Vietor, many lives that had been previously written off as hopeless by other well-trained professionals, have been transformed.

- This individual was "patient centered" long before it became the current "buzz word" and is not unduly concerned about being politically correct because the main concern is the patients and their outcome.

- The nominee does not stop work at the end of the office visit or work day but strives hard to ensure that patients are integrated into the community and works weekends and nights to assist in this process. Friday nights are spent at "Solo Discovery" helping clients re-enter the social world, and another project is an assisted living program on Chamberlayne Avenue for which the nominee is using personal time and funds.

- The nominee's understanding of brain injury and skill in dealing with patients is extraordinary and has helped to give Sheltering Arms' Brain Injury Program the excellent reputation it has statewide.

- Last April the nominee was involved in a rather serious accident, but the next morning, believe it or not, telephoned his patients from his ICU bed to let them know he wouldn't be in that day. Now that's dedication!

- By now you have probably guessed who the nominee is, but we want to read one more statement by his co-worker, Pam MacMillan. Pam writes, "On a personal note, I have always respected the nominee's expertise and compassion and feel very fortunate to have had him as a mentor. I certainly know that he has been invaluable in my training and career as well as in others' training. He has a saying that everyone eventually gets those things that they deserve. This award is long in coming and well deserved, and I frankly cannot think of anyone more deserving of it."

The 1995 winner of the Laura Maria Vietor Award is -

**MICHAEL F. MARTELLI**  
Director, Psychology Department

Sandy Voskeritchian, last year's winner, will pin the boutonniere on Mike.
Mike, your name will be added to the Vietor Memorial Plaque, and these checks and gift are given with deep appreciation by the Women's Council and hospital. You will receive a reserved parking space at the hospital and there will be a reception in your honor following the meeting for you and your guests.

We have invited Mike's family and some of his special friends and associates whom I will introduce:

- Mr. Fred Martelli, Mike father, is here from Maryland with his wife, Chris
- Mike's sister, Susanna Brewer, has come from Texas to be with us
- His brother, Tony, had to be out of the country on business, but he and his family sent a written message
- Dr. Albert Jones, Medical Director of Sheltering Arms and Mike's supervisor
- Dr. Nathan Zasler, Co-Medical Director of the Hospital's Brain Injury Service and Medical Director of its Transitional Rehab Program.
- Mr. John Marion, one of Mike's patients

I'd like to introduce Mike's co-workers in the Psychology Department here at the hospital and ask them to come forward:

- Pam MacMillan, who has been so helpful to us in planning this event, Ivan Kulis, Dr. Jim Braith, Dr. Mark Wilde, and Susie Bodenheimer who has been serving as secretary to the department

- If other members of the Psychology Department and Transitional Rehab Services are here from Hanover and Bon Air, please join us.
Vietor Acknowledgement.
by Pam Mac Millan

This individual was "patient centered" before it became in vogue and the current "Buzz Word." He is not always politically correct and might be interpreted as abrupt by others who do not know him well. HOWEVER, please understand that this a man with a mission that has NEVER WAVERED! Luis sole mission is to help patients and their families PERIOD. I my eight years of working with him he has never seen a patient or family member who was "too difficult or untreatable." He always dives right in, now matter how hard the situation is, and he helps. ALWAYS. He has never been afraid of intensive work or getting his hands dirty.

And because of this individual's dedication, that is in the true spirit of Sheltering Arms and Ms. Vietor, this man has transformed lives and believe me, many of these lives had previously been written off as "hopeless" by other well trained professionals. I have heard countless patients report how lucky that feel to have found Dr. Martelli and how much their lives have been changed in a positive direction by him. Furthermore, his work does not stop at the end of the office visit or work day. He strives hard to ensure that patients are integrated into the community and works weekends and nights to assist in this process. He also personally makes sure that all of his patients have home computers in order to reinforce treatment gains made in therapy and to help them compensate for their deficits.

Dr. Martelli's dedication, amazingly, has not wavered at all in his tenure with Sheltering Arms, if though this past year has not been an easy one for him!! In April of this year he was involved in a rather severe accident. Even through this, he remained very concerned about the welfare of his patients. Believe it or not, the morning after his accident, he was found in Neuro ICU personally telephoning his patients to let them know he would not be in!! Now that's dedication !!!!

On a personal note, I have always respected Dr. Martelli's expertise and compassion and feel very fortunate to have had him as a mentor. I certainly know that he has been invaluable in my training and career, as well as in other's training. Dr. Martelli has a saying that everyone eventually gets those things that they deserve. This award is long in coming and well deserved, and I frankly can not think of anyone more worthy of it.
Memo

To: Betsey Terrell/ Community Services
From: Diane York/Transitional Rehab Program at Bon Air
Re: Employee of the Year Award

Betsey, I am faxing this to you since I am somewhat late in getting it out. Please call me at 320-2609 or page me at 257-1848 if you need additional information. I will send you the hard copy in interoffice mail. Thanks, Diane

I am nominating Mike Martelli as employee of the year for the following reasons:

1) Mike's understanding of brain injury and his skill in dealing with patients is extraordinary. He has helped give the SA Brain Injury Program the excellent reputation statewide that it has. Numerous families have expressed to me their feeling that Mike sustained them during the most trying experience of their lives as they attempted to help a loved one survive brain injury and its' effects on the family.

2) Mike is well known for the hours he keeps. He gives far more in time and energy than what would be expected of someone in his position. I know I can call him anytime (including nights and weekends) to discuss a referral or the problems of a patient or family.

3) Mike treats the patients as people not as patients, with dignity and respect and individual acceptance.

4) In addition to his regular work at the hospital, Mike extends his attempts to find solutions to his patients needs on a community level as well. Two examples of this are:

   a) His Friday nights spent at 'Solo Discovery', helping clients re-enter the social world.
   b) His new project, an assisted living program on Chamberlayne Ave, for which he is using personal funds and personal time.