



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2003

CONTACT:
Ed Mintiens
607-547-3567
Diane L. Wells
607-547-6354

COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS JOIN FRIENDS OF BASSETT'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

COOPERSTOWN, NY ... Friends of Bassett President Karen M. Elting recently announced that five regional community and business leaders have joined the Friends' board of directors for the new term.

"If you live in Delhi, Herkimer or Hamilton, you may wonder if you and your corner of central New York have any effect on the way Bassett Healthcare develops. The answer is yes, through the Friends of Bassett and its board of directors, which Bassett uses to determine local and regional interests as well as raise funds to advance its regional mission," said Ms. Elting, an Oneonta resident.

The Friends, Bassett's volunteer-driven support group, has organized the Bassett Heart Care Campaign, Bassett's \$12 million fund drive in support of Bassett's new cardiac care services and programs, and the renovations being made to support them.

"I'm proud of all of the people who have stepped forward to demonstrate their desire to have accessible heart care programs and services available to them, close to where they live and work," said Ms. Elting, who is also Campaign chair. "Today, living in rural communities, as so many of us do in central New York, is no excuse for not having lifesaving programs like angioplasty and heart surgery within reach."

"I'm also proud that each of the four new members who have joined the Friends will contribute their talents to help improve the quality of life in our communities by increasing support for the Bassett Heart Care Institute's cardiac programs and services and experienced cardiac team," said Ms. Elting. "We need the financial support of everyone who wants the assurance of knowing that advanced care for those suffering from heart disease and preventive programs for those at risk are minutes away. I hope when our friends and neighbors throughout our regional communities are contacted by a Friends' representative, they will make a contribution or multi-year pledge to help assure that this important resource will be available to all."

The following five business and community leaders have joined the Friends of Bassett Board of Directors:

Ralph L. Blanchard, a past president of the Rotary Club of Herkimer, volunteers at the information desk at the Louis Busch Hager Cancer Center.

-more-

Thomas J. Cleary is a partner in Rhodes Associates, an executive search firm in New York City. He divides his time between Darien, Conn. and Fly Creek. Earlier, he served as a director at G.Z. Stephens, Inc., where he recruited executives in the commercial and investment banking, equities and fixed income sectors of Wall Street.

Erna McReynolds is the first vice president of investments and financial consultant for The Tom Morgan Group at Smith Barney Inc., in Oneonta. Ms. McReynolds sits on estate, retirement and investment planning councils on the national level. She advises foreign government social security systems on their investments and advises individuals, endowments, foundations, and corporations.

Michael W. Otis of Cooperstown is an agent and director of the Gordon B. Roberts Agency, Inc., in Oneonta. He belongs to the Society of Financial Service Professionals and National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors. Mr. Otis is past president of the Rotary Club of Cooperstown.

Art collector **Elizabeth C. Wright**, an alumna of the New York School of Design, lives in Cooperstown and is a board member of the Cooperstown Art Association.

The Friends of Bassett works closely with Bassett's Fund Development department to secure philanthropic support from individuals, regional businesses, corporations and foundations.

Visit the Friends' colorful, new Web site www.friendsofbassett.org to find out more about the volunteer organization and the Bassett Heart Care Campaign. See what's new and upcoming, like the new special fundraiser, the Heart of the Matter Benefit Luncheon on September 6. You also can make a donation through secure on-line giving. Call the Friends office at (607) 547-3928 to learn more.

###

Bassett Healthcare is a leading provider of health services in the central New York region, offering quality primary and specialty care services targeted to address this region's health care needs. For more information about Bassett, visit www.bassett.org