

# A Rhea of sunshine in 'Boro

By JIMMY HART • Daily News Journal December 7, 2008

When I arrived at the Stones River Country Club on this cold, dreary December morning, the passion and energy that I found inside provided immediate warmth, the source of which would soon be obvious.

Dr. Liz Rhea was awarded the YMCA's 2008 Humanitarian of the Year award on this day, and it became clear to me throughout this benefit breakfast that this community is blessed to have such an inspirational woman in its midst.

Her involvement in local charitable and nonprofit causes is legendary, as is her willingness to call on those who have the means to financially support the critical work that these various organizations, including the Y, provide to this community.

"She does it so pleasantly and so sincerely," explained Jack Weatherford, longtime friend and last year's award recipient, during a video tribute to Dr. Rhea.

The Eagleville native held the packed room in the palms of her hand Thursday morning, and when she ascended the stage to accept the well-deserved award you could feel the anticipation for the words of wisdom she was sure to speak.

"I really think people should give their time and resources to those who are economically disadvantaged," she said matter-of-factly.

As this country and community navigates its way out of a challenging economy littered with lost jobs, foreclosures, dwindling 401Ks and leaking family budgets, the giving spirit that has been a beacon in this community for

so many years must shine more brightly.

Dr. Liz Rhea represents that beacon, and the light of her spirit has clearly spread to many others who volunteer their time, talents and resources to the Y, United Way and the many other nonprofits that make our communities so much better.

She calls us all to a higher place.

Throughout the breakfast, Dr. Rhea interacted with the various speakers who sung praises to this high achiever — a high school valedictorian, university double major, doctor and dedicated community volunteer.

"She really is one of a kind," commented longtime friend and DNJ contributor Joyce Taylor.

She battles her cancer head on, leaning on her friends and her faith to continue her work as a servant leader with a plainspoken, divinely inspired dedication.

"I trust in you O God," she said, quoting the Bible verse she stands on, "my time is in your hands."

This community is blessed to have someone so willing to use that time to help so many others and to spread a burst of sunshine through the prism of a servant's heart.



Ken Strawbridge, YMCA Executive Director, Jean Moser, co-chair of the event, Carolyn Dobbins, Dr. Elizabeth Rhea, John Ellington, J.I. Hay, and Don Moser, co-chair of the event

## From Little Sister to Big Sister

(lovingly penned by Carolyn Hay Dobbins for Elizabeth Hay Rhea November 15, 2008)

This story begins in a lovely, little place not too far away  
When a brilliant little girl was born named Ira Elizabeth Hay.  
The little town that would never be the same was Eagleville, Tennessee,  
And I understand that Eliz was totally in charge of everything by the time she was three.

Of the six children of Ira and Alice Hay, she was number one,  
The example she set for us all was the best from the rising and setting of the sun.  
She was best all around at everything at the Eagleville School,  
Adored by her teachers and fellow students, she was quite a jewel.

When she went away to college—then MTSC  
She immediately rose to the top as one who gave so diligently.  
After college, it was on to med school where excellence did continue to prevail.  
Everyone who knew her was heard to say, "She does everything so well."

She did not realize as I admired my big sister from afar  
How she had inspired me to hitch my wagon to a star.  
Her life of excellence became one of service to others,  
And she never forgot her family, her sisters and brothers.

Because of her sacrifice, she made it possible for us to college go.  
It's a beautiful family love story that few do know.  
As her little sister, I can now humbly proclaim  
The deep gratitude I felt when each month from her a check came.

Just enough money each time to see me through,  
And, oh, the gratitude for my big sister that did—and still does—ensue.  
I can remember thinking during the journey of my college career,  
Without this dear sister I would not be here.

And today where would any of us who love her be without this precious soul?  
Just having her in our world makes us all a little more whole.  
She is an unselfish, incredible giver—always putting others first,  
Possessing that indescribable something for which others thirst—

The something—the joy, love, faith, optimism that doth abound,  
Nowhere in the history of the world can another quite like her be found.  
Can you image the stardom if she had chosen show biz?  
I can see her now walking on the red carpet to adoring cries of "Liz, Liz!"

Or what if she had chosen the military—  
No doubt about what she would now be.  
I can hear it now from near and far,  
Oh, that Liz—she's now a general, five-star.

How grateful we are that she chose right here in the Boro to stay,  
And with great joy a red carpet of words I place before her today.  
Thanking her for a myriad of momentous moments that enrich our lives superbly,  
Her siblings call her Queen Elizabeth for she truly is the queen of our family.

With undying devotion, admiration, gratitude, and love,  
We give thanks for you to the Lord above.  
Through the years, much has changed in this world, but one thing holds true.  
Dear, dear Sister, when I grow up, I want to be just like you.



Jean Moser, Dr. Elizabeth Rhea and Don Moser