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Dexter's Retired Nephrologist Paul Smith Among Honorees At Annual NKFM Kidney Ball

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Celebrating the “grit and glamour” of Detroit’s ongoing renewal, nearly 500 area movers and shakers enjoyed the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan’s signature fundraising event, the Kidney Ball. Held on Saturday, Dec. 7 at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center, “the most fun black tie event in metro Detroit” raised over \$430,000 through a silent auction, donations, and an exciting live auction.

One highlight at the 15th annual Kidney Ball was learning about and meeting 9-year-old Jaxson Scott and his family from Ann Arbor. A video told Jaxson’s story about being born premature and losing the use of his legs at one-year-old. Continuing medical issues resulted in Jaxson’s kidneys failing at age 8. Fortunately, his mother, Grace Yount, was a match and Jaxson received a kidney from his mom in August 2018. In 2019, Jaxson’s family and friends formed Team Jaxson to raise money at the Kidney Walk at the Detroit Zoo. After the video, emcee Steve Garagiola from WDIV-TV interviewed Jaxson and his mom onstage.



(<http://www.msventures.com/>).

Another highlight was the presentation of the 2019 NKFM Kidney Crusader Award to retired nephrologist Paul Smith, MD, who served on the NKFM’s Scientific Advisory Board for many years. This award is presented to a health care professional who has not only practiced in the area of kidney disease but also advocated for patients and donated time and resources to support NKFM programs and services. Smith graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School, where he also did a fellowship in Nephrology. During his career, he practiced at Michigan Medicine and several area hospitals in the St. Joe’s and

Promedica health systems. In addition to a 30-year private practice in Nephrology and Hypertension at St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor, he was also medical director of DaVita dialysis units in Westland and Ypsilanti. He is now retired and lives with his wife Carol in Dexter.

During the pre-dinner cocktail reception, guests perused over 250 eclectic silent auction items in the hallways, including the popular “kids auction” area filled with toys and treats. Attendees posed in front of a colorful graffiti-embellished wall, visited the photo booth, and posted on social media using #KidneyBallDetroit. Guests also sampled wine, beer and spirits at several tasting stations before dinner.

During the program, Garagiola introduced remarks from the Kidney Ball Committee Co-Chairs: John Magee, MD, Professor of Surgery, Section Head of Transplant Surgery, and Director, University of Michigan Transplant Center; and Duane McLean, Detroit Tigers Vice President of Business Operations. Honorary Chair Scott LaRiche, Executive Manager and Vice President, Lou LaRiche Chevrolet, also welcomed the crowd.

This year’s live auction featured sports ticket packages for the Detroit Tigers, the Detroit Red Wings, the U.S. Tennis Open, the Super Bowl and the Final Four. After dinner and the live auction, guests indulged at the popular candy “bar”, then danced until 1 a.m. to Your Generation in Concert, pausing only for late night Coneys.



9-year-old Jaxson Scott

“Our staff and volunteers outdo themselves year after year to make this event more magical. Everyone should feel proud about helping to support the NKFM programs to prevent kidney disease and the services that support those with kidney disease,” states NKFM CEO Linda Smith-Wheelock.

The 2019 Kidney Ball was sponsored by Meijer, Adrian Steel, General RV, Morley, Michigan Medicine, VTC Insurance Group, Miller Coors, Greenfield Health Systems, Fresenius Medical Care, Northwest Detroit Dialysis, Mars Wrigley Confectionery, The Skinny Butcher, and many others.

For more information about the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan’s programs and services throughout the state, please visit nkfm.org or call 800-482-1455.

About NKFM

The mission of the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan is to prevent kidney disease and improve the quality of life for those living with it. The NKFM is widely known for providing more programs and services to more people than any other region or state. The organization is recognized for its success in sound fiscal management by receiving a 4-star rating, for the last 12 years in a row, from Charity Navigator—the nation’s leading charity evaluator. nkfm.org

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