

# Family admires Man of the Year's heart, dedication

When my brother-in-law, Kevin Shimp, was nominated this year for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's 2011 Virginia Chapter Man of the Year, it had special meaning for my family.

About three years ago, my father, Billy Snead, was diagnosed with leukemia.

Leukemia is a cancer that develops when blood cells produced in the bone marrow grow out of control.



**Sande Snead**

Being should have to endure. At times, he seemed to be nearly at death's door between lost weight, appetite and interest in living. However, after months

My father spent about 30 days at VCU Medical Center, then underwent more treatments, shots; pills and chemotherapy than any human

of superior medical care and love, support and prayers of friends and family, especially my mother, he was in remission.

Despite this near-miracle, Kevin was a reluctant candidate for Man of the Year. The registered nurse at VCU Health Systems is clinical coordinator of the in-patient bone marrow transplant unit, is a full-time master's degree candidate at the University of Virginia and father to two busy teens. He

hardly had the time to take on a nearly full-time fundraising job to vie for the title of Man of the Year.

But it's a cause he believes in, so he took up the challenge.

The two candidates who raise the most money are awarded the title of the Virginia Chapter's Man and Woman **SHOES, Page G6**

Read more in My Shoes columns at Times Dispatch.com, search: shoes.



**In My Shoes**



SANDE SNEAD

Kevin Shimp and his family — daughter Casey, wife Jill and son Logan — celebrate at the society's Grand Finale Gala.

## Shoes

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of the Year. They raise money for blood cancer research in honor of local young people who are blood cancer survivors, the Young Man and Young Lady of the Year.

Kevin held benefit nights at local restaurants and at The Byrd Theatre, asked for auction items and solicited corporate sponsorships as well as donations from friends and family.

Tragically, in the midst of the 10-week fundraising campaign, his father, John Shimp, died of complications due to diabetes.

Grief-stricken Kevin packed up his family and headed to New Jersey to help his devastated mother deal with the loss of the man she had been married to for 47 years.

After spending a week in his hometown of Piles Grove, N.J., helping with funeral arrangements and notifying family and friends, Kevin came back to Richmond for yet another fundraiser just two days after burying his father.

When Kevin learned he had won the title on May 13, his heartfelt speech mentioned how a CO-worker responded to his first email request for support within seconds. When he said

that the first family member who responded was his father, there weren't too many dry eyes in the house. When he added that we also had found out during the campaign that my father's leukemia is no longer in remission, even he couldn't help but shed a tear.

It's tough to be the brother-in-law in a family with three strong (and strong-willed) sisters, and while we have all always admired his drive, determination and work ethic, I dare say we have a newfound respect for this most remarkable Man of the Year.

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