A Generous Spirit

Joyce Hill receives the 2026 ACBL Charity Foundation Volunteer of the Year Award

By Amy Casanova

On a Friday evening years ago, Joyce Hill began feeling ill. A neighbor who was a doctor examined her at home and urged her to go to the emergency room.

"My husband took me, and every room had people in them, with many more waiting in the lobby," Hill recalled. "But I was in agony, so they gave me a room."



Joyce Hill of St. Augustine FL is the 2026 ACBL Charity Foundation Volunteer of the Year

Even then, help didn't come quickly.

"I was hurting so much. I crawled out of my bed and saw policemen guarding the door across the hall. I crawled to the nurses' station. They finally recognized that I really needed help. Within 45 minutes, I was in surgery, and they removed my appendix. Luckily, they got to me before it burst, and I lived to tell the tale."

Many people would have simply moved on after such an ordeal. Joyce turned the experience into a mission.

"I learned that a lot of the people who come to the emergency room are mentally ill patients or people who rely on the ER for primary care," she said. "Because they take up so much time, people with medical problems don't get seen, and often crucial time is lost."

Determined to improve the system, Hill traveled throughout the U.S. studying emergency departments. Her research eventually led to a lasting legacy. In 2013, Prisma Health opened a new emergency mental health center bearing her name, inspired by her vision of improving care for patients experiencing mental health crises. Hill donated $800,000 toward the project and helped the Palmetto Health Foundation raise another $800,000.

That accomplishment is only one chapter in a lifetime devoted to serving others. For her extraordinary commitment to volunteerism and philanthropy, Hill has been named the 2026 ACBL Charity Foundation Volunteer of the Year. "I want to thank Patty Tucker for her nomination of Joyce Martin Hill," said Paul Cuneo, president of the foundation. "Joyce is an example of the best in bridge who donate to both bridge-related charities and to charities in their communities."

Hill's commitment to service began early.

"I started out doing volunteer work in grammar school, collecting newspapers," Hill recalled. "Every Thursday they'd have a paper drive. My friend and I found a house where the people had been saving newspapers for 20 or 30 years, so we ended up having the most successful collection of any class. That was fun."

In graduate school, Hill worked at a crisis center called Hassel House in Durham. "We had mostly phone calls and some walk-ins," she said. "I was so glad to be able to help people. It was good training about listening – not just wanting to solve people's problems but really listening to them."

Over the years, Hill has served on numerous nonprofit boards, including the South Carolina Ballet, the Columbia Museum of Art, Historic Columbia, the U.S. Equestrian Team and the U.S. Eventing Association.

Her faith has also shaped her outlook.

"I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Hill said. "In our religion, we tithe, so giving back is a cornerstone of my faith. Our members are very good at helping people around the world and supporting the arts. It's a wonderful religion. I would hope that everybody would learn about it. I think we're put here on earth to learn and grow."

Hill has been one of Patty Tucker's earliest supporters in bringing bridge into schools. She believes bridge gives academically minded children an opportunity to excel, especially those who may not find their niche in athletics.

"Joyce's faith and community have benefited enormously from her generosity over the years," Tucker said. "She was one of the first to recognize what bridge could offer youth and has supported Atlanta Junior Bridge and now Jump Start Bridge for more than a decade. However, it is her unfailing kindness, interest and generosity of spirit that will be remembered forever."

Bridge has been part of Hill's life almost from the beginning. She learned the game from her parents as a child and continued playing while attending college, where she studied English, creative writing and philosophy.

"I also had minors in acting and home economics," she

laughed. "So, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do."

After earning degrees from Northwestern University and Duke University, she taught English at Durham High School for three years while directing the senior class production of "The Unsinkable Molly Brown."

Marriage, raising a family and community service followed. Along the way, she remained active as both a competitive tennis player and equestrian.

Then, in 1998, after taking two world cruises where she learned duplicate bridge, she decided to pursue the game seriously.

Her first national championship came in the 2008 0–5000 Mini Spingold, partnering Lucas Lebioda and playing with Jon Rice, Mike Rice and David Grainger.

After that success, Hall of Famer Steve Weinstein helped her build competitive teams.

"I formed a women's team with Jenny Wolpert because I wanted to become a Grand Life Master," Hill said. "And I did."



Joyce Hill and Jenny Wolpert

The partnership flourished. Hill and Wolpert won the Marsha May Sternberg Women's Board-a-Match Teams in 2009, successfully defended the title in 2010, and added two more women's team championships in 2011.

"Joyce was a big part of my early life's work," Wolpert said. "She is one of the most determined bridge players I have met. She sets goals, and she gets them done. She is an impressive lady who is loyal and hardworking. One of my favorite memories was when we were at a regional and she got Steve Weinstein and Jeff Meckstroth to play us in tennis doubles."

Today, Hill plays with Kevin Dwyer Rimstedt, who, she jokes, "was just a boy" when they first became partners. "And he's turning 38 soon," she said. "So, a long time. He's unbelievably polite and thoughtful and has never criticized me. He has a great sense of humor."



Team captain Joyce Hill, third from left, with teammates Signe Buus Thomsen, Mikael Rimstedt, Kevin Dwyer Rimstedt, Amber Lin and Shan Huang. This was Hill's first national win in an open event.

Together they finished second in the Keohane North American Swiss Teams in 2018 and won the Freeman Mixed Board-a-Match Teams in 2022, then finished second in the event the following year.

"Having had the pleasure of playing as Joyce's bridge partner for over 15 years, I've seen firsthand what makes her special," said Dwyer Rimstedt. "She is a fierce competitor who has worked relentlessly to stay at the top of her game, and she truly deserves every bit of her success. Joyce always brings warm, pleasant energy and genuinely cares for everyone she meets. She has a massive heart, and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this recognition."

The pair recently earned more than 100 masterpoints at a regional. "It's exciting for me – at age 78 – to think that I am still improving," Joyce said. "I really feel blessed." ■

Call for Nominations



Nominations are now being accepted for the 2027 Goodwill Member of the Year. This honorary title shall be given to the ACBL member who has exhibited unselfish dedication to the causes of good conduct, worthy participation and ethical behavior. Any unit/district official in good standing may nominate a candidate.

Please include the name of the candidate, contact information and why you believe he or she deserves recognition as the Goodwill Member of the Year. Also, include your own name, contact information and unit/district affiliation.

An online form is available for your nomination at acbl.org/goodwillnominations. Nominations are open until Oct. 15.