



Honoree Spotlight

Susan and Bill Reilly Caregivers & Founders, The Sean Reilly TBI Fund

Susan and Bill Reilly have been married for nearly 45 years and raised their two sons, Brendan and Sean, in Summit, NJ. Their younger son Sean, at age 21, sustained a severe traumatic brain injury in March 2004 while studying abroad in Europe. Sean was treated at both The Kessler Institute and JFK's Extended Recovery Unit, part of the Head Injury Program at their Hartwyck facility in Edison, NJ. He survived for nearly 5 years in a minimally conscious state before he passed away at age 25 in January 2009.

Throughout those 5 years, the Reillys experienced firsthand the many difficulties and obstacles facing TBI patients and their families here in New Jersey – including placement in appropriate therapies, access to sufficient rehabilitation therapies, medical insurance/Medicaid funding challenges, etc. During this time they met many families who, like them, spent countless hours caring for their loved ones. While the stories of how each individual injury was sustained may have differed, there was a consistent theme for every family of having to constantly battle against a lack of funding and services. A full year of their experience was shared in HBO's documentary entitled "COMA," which premiered in 2007.

Following Sean's death, as a way to honor Sean's memory, the Reillys established the Sean Reilly TBI Fund, dedicated to improving the quality of life for TBI victims and their families in New Jersey. With the support of a dedicated volunteer Board of professional colleagues and close friends, they began to raise funds to support their mission with a focus on some of NJ's most severe victims, those who are minimally conscious or in a vegetative state. To date, they have raised over \$1 million and every dollar in their charity goes to assistance; their Fund prides itself on being a pure charity with zero administrative costs. Everything, including legal, accounting, tax and regulatory is volunteered by a committed volunteer base of support. In nearly 10 years the Fund has focused much of its support on the JFK Rehabilitation Institute's Extended Recovery Unit in Edison, NJ, where Sean resided for nearly 4 years. As examples of their work, they have provided countless numbers of specialized wheelchairs, an accessible van for use by patients and their families allowing transport of patients to their homes and into the community, outfitted gyms and therapy facilities with much needed equipment, fully refurbished wings of the Unit with state of the art equipment and comfortable furnishings for family members, various physical, occupational, music and massage therapies for patients, etc, etc. They have also partnered with the Brain Alliance of New Jersey, through their Family Helpline, to support individuals who might benefit from supplemental therapies and equipment not covered by medical insurance or other resources. Their giving mission is open-ended as long as it improves the quality of life for the patient or their families.

Bill is a member of the Ansell Limited Board of Directors, having recently retired as its Sr. VP, General Counsel and Company Secretary. In 2017 he was awarded NJBIZ's Lifetime Achievement Award at its General Counsel of the Year Awards. Additionally, Bill serves on other non-profit Boards. Bill is an avid golfer and a member at both Baltusrol and Morris County Golf Clubs.

Susan retired to assist with Sean's care after a successful career as a kindergarten teacher in Millburn-Short Hills. Bill and Susan spend much of their time with their beautiful twin grandchildren, Ashlyn & Braeden, and son and daughter-in-law, Brendan and Melissa. They look forward to great travels and time with family and friends in the years ahead.