

# Terri Ashmore

## *A Reflection of Dedication and Appreciation*

*Celebrating more than 30 years of service at The Basilica of Saint Mary*

BY SUE HAYES

“We’ll work through it.” Terri Ashmore spoke these words about what seemed to be an intractable dilemma. Little did I know that these words would become a mantra for countless situations involving the creation and execution of special events at The Basilica.

Our collaboration began the week Terri began to work at The Basilica in April 1993. Over time we developed a friendship based on trust, confidence, and a determination that anything is possible.

Michael O’Connell had decided that to raise \$10 million for the restoration of The Basilica dome, attracting people to The Basilica who had no reason to come was the obvious solution. The parish membership alone could not be the sole source of funds to reach the goal. Special events were the path to producing the fundraising revenue. He listed the four audiences he wanted to attract. Lynn Pirner, a long-time active parishioner; Terri; and I formed the core of the group. Lynn recruited a number of parishioners as volunteers on a Special Events Committee to advance the effort.

The fundraising events began in 1993 with a Guthrie performance and later the first performance of *Messiah*. The first Basilica Block Party took place in 1995. Over time the events evolved. The goals were achieved to grow the parish membership and raise visibility of The Basilica’s mission to welcome all people in the community.

Terri’s contribution to the success of every effort undertaken over the years is significant beyond measure. In addition to her innate intelligence and ability to work with people, she also possessed patience to listen to multiple sides of a discussion to arrive at a decision or resolution. Always strategic and decisive, she understood the interests of the people she was working with as staff, professionals, volunteers, or members of other groups—legislative, political, or commercial—in the normal course of advancing The Basilica’s goals and interests. Resolute and determined, Terri was always open to compromise, as long as accommodation didn’t compromise integrity to advance or achieve a goal. Hard work is in Terri’s DNA. That work ethic, combined with boundless energy, perseverance, and an ability to negotiate to reach a reasonable conclusion, never interfered with who she is. At her core, Terri is a faith-filled woman dedicated to the pillars of The Basilica mission that embody outreach, welcome, and an open heart to all people.

The Basilica of Saint Mary is a very different place after 30 years because of Terri’s selfless contributions. I consider the partnership we shared and the friendship we developed over six years to build awareness of The Basilica as one of the most valuable of my life.

Wherever Terri shares her time and talents in her retirement is in for a

wonderful experience they could never have imagined. The Basilica will continue to benefit from Terri’s years of service and those of us who knew and worked with her have memories that will last forever. My heart is filled with love and gratitude and hope and trust that the future holds many blessings, Terri. God bless you always.

*Sue has been a friend of Terri’s since joining The Basilica in 1993 and was a volunteer colleague from 1993-99.*

If you would like to make a gift in honor of Terri Ashmore’s 32 incredible years of service at The Basilica please go to [mary.org/give](https://mary.org/give).

**All gifts in Terri’s honor will go to support The Basilica Fund.**



Sue Hayes and Terri, 1996



“Terri is not only bright but one of the most dedicated, hard-working, and humble people I have ever had the privilege of working with as a colleague.”

—Michael O’Connell

I have not worked with a colleague more committed to a parish community than Terri was to The Basilica. One of things that stands out about Terri is that when good things happened, she always pointed beyond herself to her colleagues. And when challenging things happened, Terri was the first to accept responsibility. This is a combination that is rare indeed. I thank Terri for her extraordinary contributions to The Basilica and wish her rest from her labors.

—Fr. Daniel Griffith, Pastor and Rector

In regard to Terri, it was great to work with her for 15 years. She worked hard, but also could laugh at some of the crazy things that happened every now and again. I wish her well in retirement. She will be missed.

—Fr. John Bauer

It was in the summer of 1998 when I moved into my office at The Basilica, Terri appeared at my door carrying an armload of files. Initially I thought, “It doesn’t take long for the new kid on the block to be given his workload.” Fortunately, I soon found out that Terri was the “heavy lifter” who kept her files and was responsible for making The Basilica work. In all the years I have been associated with The Basilica, I never saw her without her files as she efficiently moved from one meeting to another, always acknowledging colleagues with a smile and an invitation to “Let’s get to work.”

—Fr. Joseph Gillespie, O.P.

Two years after I became pastor of The Basilica, I met one of the smartest people I have ever known — Terri Ashmore. I hired her in 1993 to become Development Director to raise funds for the restoration of The Basilica — an enormous task. Our beautiful and inspiring church was falling down.

Terri led our faith community in raising millions of dollars! The success of those improvements have allowed us to go forward today to “a future full of hope” with confidence.

Terri is not only bright, but one of the most dedicated, hard-working, and humble people I have ever had the privilege of working with as a colleague. She has a rare gift of being able to work with people to find consensus to pursue a common goal. Terri also lives her faith every day in everything she does. The depth of her faith is the bedrock of her integrity and guides her in every endeavor.

As you begin the next chapter of your life, we wish you *ad multos annos* — many more years of good health with her generous and loving husband, Paul.

God bless you, dear soul friend.

—Michael O’Connell

Continued

## Basilica Block Party 1995-2024

One of the signature fundraising events Terri was instrumental in creating.



Fr. John Bauer, Michael O'Connell, and Terri, 2009



Terri and Emily Carlson Hjelm



Gail Dorn and Terri, 1995



Basilica Block Party 1995

# Reflections from The Basilica community

## PARISH TRUSTEES/ BASILICA LANDMARK BOARD

I worked closely with Terri as a trustee and appreciated her commitment to The Basilica, her sound judgement, and ability to stay even keeled when faced with challenges and roadblocks. Her dedication and love of The Basilica was at the core of all she did, serving in whatever capacity was required at the time. She was able to make tough decisions while handling difficult situations with empathy, care, and consideration.

—Joanne Provo

I had the privilege of working with Terri for seven years on The Basilica Landmark Board. Terri's dedication to her role as Executive Director, her vast institutional knowledge, and her commitment to excellence made her a singular leader of our organization. The Basilica stands today, as a Beacon of Hope, in large part due to Terri's tireless dedication to both the building and to our community of faith.

—Deirdre Palmer

I had the pleasure of working with Terri over more than 10 years, first as a parish council member and then as a Trustee. As a true servant leader, Terri's dedication to and passion for The Basilica community and mission was always an inspiration to me. What a joy it was to work alongside her. I was always impressed by Terri's ability to simultaneously manage immediate crises while also continuing to push ahead big dreams for the future.

—Kathy Noecker

Our wish for Terri is that her retirement will be filled with blessings that she has bestowed upon the Basilica, the Landmark, and all of those around her. Our beloved Basilica would not be what it is today without Terri's hard work, dedication, and perseverance, over these many years.

—David and Susan Link

The Basilica community has been blessed with extraordinary people that are committed to creating the greater good. Terri is one of those individuals who has selflessly given of her time and talent to make our community a better place to experience God, nurture spirituality, find hope, and realize comfort. She may be seeking new adventures in her personal life but she will never be forgotten for the contributions she has made to our Parish community, our historic campus, and the lives and hearts of those touched by her generosity of spirit.

—Tom Paul



### Retirement Party January 2025

A celebration of dedication and service

Block Party Committee Alumni at Terri's retirement party



STAFF LEADERSHIP

Terri brought deep knowledge and experience in business, fundraising, strategy, and professional development to The Basilica community. Her sharp mind helped cultivate and maximize partnerships and ministries. Importantly, even in the business side of The Basilica, Terri brought a strong and intentional desire to grow in faith.

Terri embodied the Benedictine motto: *Ora et labora: Pray and Work*. Through my decades of work with Terri, I continually

experienced a strong and courageous woman leader in the church—as well as a humble servant, always seeking to keep a spiritual focus in her work.

I learned so much from Terri—in direct and indirect ways. She made a strong and positive impact on my life and my ministry. She will be deeply missed. Thank you, Terri!

—Janice Andersen,  
*Director of Christian Life*

Working with Terri was a joy. She always responded with candor, good sense, and humor, and always in a timely manner. I will miss her. When I first arrived at The Basilica in 1995, I knew no one. Terri was one of the first people to welcome me warmly and guide me in the ways of The Basilica. She has been an amazing professional support and a good friend these past 30 years. Her love for our community and her dedication to our mission has been simply exemplary. I am very grateful and wish Terri well in her retirement.

—Johan van Parys,  
*Managing Director of Ministries,  
Director of Liturgy and the Sacred Arts*



Fr. Daniel Griffith and Terri



Fr. Joseph Gillespie and Terri



Johan van Parys and Terri



Volunteer thank-you, 2019