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Kenmore Mercy Foundation Announces Tribute to Angels Honorees for 2021

The Kenmore Mercy Foundation is pleased to announce its 2021 Tribute to Angels honorees. Joseph A. Ralabate, MD, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award while Eric J. Koch, DO, and Michael S. Gough, MD, will receive the Sister Mary Mechtilde Memorial Award. New in 2021 is the Angel of Care Award, which will celebrate the outstanding contributions of Kenmore Mercy Hospital's nurses.

Dr. Ralabate has been a member of Kenmore Mercy's family of surgeons for more than forty years, and more recently took on the role of chair of surgery for Catholic Health in 2015. Prior to that, he was chairman of the hospital's surgical department since 2005. His experience and expertise has been integral in the success of the surgical program across all of the Catholic Health, especially over the course of the pandemic as guidance frequently changed.

Dr. Gough, a pulmonologist and intensivist, and Dr. Koch, a hospitalist, have been key contributors to a successful patient experience at Kenmore Mercy Hospital for a number of years, and during the height of the pandemic in Western New York both experienced new challenges that they faced head on.

When Kenmore Mercy's intensivists were called to action at Catholic Health's dedicated COVID-19 Treatment Center at the St. Joseph Campus of Sisters of Charity Hospital, Dr. Gough shifted his focus to there, treating patients suffering from the virus in its Intensive Care Unit. His role as an intensivist has been integral in treating countless critical care patients since joining Kenmore Mercy Hospital in 2010. He also regularly sees patients with respiratory illnesses at the Kenmore Specialty Center.

Dr. Koch, a highly regarded internist, has made a significant impact as he cared for patients at Kenmore Mercy for the last 15 years. With the hospital's ICU team assisting elsewhere during the peak of the pandemic, Dr. Koch, stepped up to the challenge of caring for Catholic Health's most critical patients in the ICU and also guided residents in the care of these critical patients. He is a managing partner with Buffalo-Niagara Hospitalists, a group which is dedicated to the care of hospitalized patients from admission to time of discharge.

With 2020 designated by the World Health Organization as the Year of the Nurse, then extended into 2021 because of the impact of the pandemic and the increased visibility of nurses' contributions, choosing Kenmore Mercy's nurses to honor with the new Angels of Care of Award was an obvious choice.

The Kenmore Mercy Foundation celebrates the 40th anniversary of its A Tribute to Angels on November 19, 2021 at Salvatore's Italian Gardens. A Tribute to Angels features a night of fine cuisine, auctions, recognition and achievement, while raising funds to benefit Kenmore Mercy Hospital. For more information, call 447-6777.

Honoree photos can be found here: <https://chsbuffalo.canto.com/b/M8JJ7>