



2017 MercyOne Legend John Cookman, Director of Imaging

The MercyOne Legend Award honors a colleague who lives MercyOne's Mission, Values, and Guiding Behaviors. For 40+ years, John Cookman has challenged himself and leaders under him to change their thinking and improve upon their own management style. What John has done is not something that comes naturally. Leadership through empowerment means giving up control – giving up excuses – giving up blame - and focusing on mentoring & support.

I can think of no other individual that exemplifies the **Mission, Vision, and Guiding Behaviors** more than our own John Cookman! As our leader he constantly reminds Radiology, Dialysis, & CV&P leaders to strive for better, bolder, more creative, and out-of-the-box thinking. John empowers all staff to do what is right for the patient. He has said numerous times, "Sometimes we ask for forgiveness and not permission." This has created a culture where staff feel engaged in the decision-making, and have a voice within the department. This has had a daily impact on patient care.

Reverence - One of many stories that I love about John involves a dialysis patient that left without treatment. John got wind of the situation and asked the gentleman to meet for coffee. John drove 60 miles to meet with him; listened to his concerns; and was able to convince him to return to dialysis. That was several years ago and that patient and his wife still stop to see John when they are at MercyOne. Recently John made a point to be at the Algona Dialysis Center to see this same gentleman because he wanted to share pictures of a family wedding, and photos of the family farm - - things he no longer takes for granted, knowing that he would not be alive today if it wasn't for John Cookman.

John is extremely passionate and strives for all patients to receive the very best standards of care from staff and physicians, as demonstrated by his **Commitment to Those Who are Poor**. We once had a patient that did not have insurance and desperately needed a defibrillator. John worked with the company rep, physician, and hospital to get the majority of the costs waived so the patient could receive the device.

John is a steadfast and constant **support** in the pursuit of being a **Continuous Learner**, encouraging many technologists to acquire a Bachelor degree. He has sought out funding to train staff, knowing how important it is to stay current in our fields.

To John, **Stewardship** is at the forefront of decision-making. There have been times where additional staffing is needed in other areas of the hospital and John never hesitates to offer a helping hand. Radiology has helped in dialysis, lab, registration, Cath Lab, RIE's and 3P's. John frequently speaks of the importance of tearing down silos - truly believing that we are all part of one big organization.

I don't think there is anyone who questions John's **Integrity**. You can count on him to answer truthfully, even if the answer is difficult to hear. You never have to wonder where things stand. He is very black and white and will share his **honest** opinion at all times. Leaders feel safe when sharing, without being judged. John is a champion for **Justice** - he is

open-minded and will fight for what is right. If he says he will take care of something, he will absolutely follow through. He takes responsibility for everything happening in his departments without excuses.

Assuming Goodness in Intentions is the most difficult and important guiding behavior any leader must face. Even though John has 130 staff in 18 areas, he always seems to know what is going on in each. He is never too busy to help put out a fire or listen to you vent. He is humble enough to disagree, but I have witnessed him on countless occasions take the time to investigate a situation rather than jumping to conclusions. As a leader, he helps us look at the bigger picture and take into account what is best for the organization. By setting specific expectations, he holds us **accountable**. John empowers leaders to take ownership and trusts us to do a great job. John would never want acknowledgment for what he has done, but his empathy and compassion have made life-long connections with both patients and staff . . . and it has been an honor to be on this journey with him.

Angela Culliton