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## Popular Campus Administrator Joe Belle to Receive Award for Contributing to UD's Marianist Character

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**NEWS RELEASE****POPULAR CAMPUS ADMINISTRATOR JOE BELLE TO RECEIVE  
AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTING TO UD'S MARIANIST CHARACTER**

DAYTON, Ohio — People in the Dayton community and on campus used to call Brother Elmer Lackner “Mr. UD.”

“When I was a UD student, I asked, ‘Why is he Mr. UD?’” remembers Joe Belle, assistant vice president for student development. “They’d say, ‘because he’s out in the community, and he’s a caring person.’”

The same can be said of Belle, who’s now spent three decades at UD — first as an education student in 1969, then as a resident assistant in Stuart Hall to positions with progressively more responsibilities in the student development division. The 49-year-old Bronx native sets a pace few can match — even today, nine months into a courageous battle with an incurable brain tumor.

On Friday, March 3, at a 7 p.m. dinner in the Kennedy Union Ballroom he’ll receive UD’s Lackner Award, which is presented annually to members of the faculty or staff who have made significant contributions to the Catholic and Marianist character of the University. He shares the honor with Sister Nancy Bramlage, S.C., director of UD’s Center for Social Concern. The award is named after a Marianist brother who served UD for more than 40 years in various supervisory roles, including fund raising, alumni relations and public relations.

“I told Gino (Father Gene Contadino, S.M., UD’s rector), ‘Hey, I don’t want this award if you’re just giving it to me because I’m sick,’” says Belle, who’s undergone two surgeries and a regimen of radiation and chemotherapy treatments since May while mostly maintaining a full-time schedule. “There are many people at UD who deserve this award. Hopefully, I’ve earned it by my 26 years of chaotic work here.”

Contadino assured Belle that his work ethic and can-do attitude earned him a spot on the list of recipients of the award. “As a representative of the University of Dayton on campus and in the community, he exemplifies the Marianist presence, the Marianist spirit,” Contadino says.

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Before Belle's life turned upside down last May when he "went to war" and underwent a lengthy, delicate operation to remove a cancerous tumor in his brain, he'd be the first person to arrive in his Gosiger Hall office in the mornings — sometimes just before the sun poked out. Although he arrives at a more reasonable hour these days, his evenings are still punctuated with meetings with students on campus or with the Brown-Warren Business Association or the Kettering Planning Commission, which he serves as vice-chair. He's tried hard not to miss a beat.

"I'm a doer," Belle says. "I can't be productive if I'm sitting at home. It's that Italian upbringing. You get to church and you get to school. One of my sons once asked me, 'Why are you always in the office, Dad? Aren't you the boss?' Well, the boss leads."

Belle is playing "the hand I was dealt" with the same take-charge attitude he uses when negotiating prices for house purchases in the student neighborhood or helping students open their own convenience store or talking to reporters about plans to prevent out-of-control parties on St. Patrick's Day. In mid-March he will undergo experimental gene therapy treatment that only a handful of people in the country are trying.

Belle, like Lackner, plays to win. The day after undergoing gamma knife surgery at Kettering Medical Center in February that left his head feeling "like a bowling ball hit it," Belle reflected on Lackner — particularly his competitive spirit on, of all places, the bowling lanes.

"When I joined UD's staff, I used to bowl against him in the faculty-staff bowling league," he says. "He was a competitive guy. When I'd see him practicing earlier in the day before the league games, I'd tease him and say, 'Sure wish I could get some practice time in.'"

"He demonstrated so much of the UD spirit. I'm humbled by this award, but maybe I've learned something from him. Hopefully, I've done the right work for UD. Every decision I've made, I've tried to do the right thing for UD," he says.

Then with characteristic Belle wit, he quips, "That comes from the Brother Elmers of the world, between the fifth and sixth frames of bowling."

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For interviews, contact **Joe Belle** at (937) 229-3317. He's a resident of Kettering.