

# Johns Hopkins Bayview

Health and Wellness News

## Dealing with Dementia

Sylvia Mackey and her husband, NFL legend John Mackey, find courage in memories.

Finding “gridiron strength” with the help of the Johns Hopkins Memory & Alzheimer’s Treatment Center *(page 4)*



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# Dealing with Dementia

## Finding “gridiron strength” with the help of the Johns Hopkins Memory & Alzheimer’s Treatment Center

**M**emories. They’re what make us who we are. They guide, entertain, teach and help us in our everyday lives. So holding on to and recalling memories are essential, especially as we ease into our golden years. But millions of Americans have been robbed of the ability to call upon their memories because they suffer from dementia, the most common cause of memory loss.

“Ten percent of people age 65 and one third of those 85 and older have some form of dementia,” says Constantine G. Lyketsos, M.D., MPH, chair of the department of psychiatry. “And the older you get, the greater your chances are of developing dementia or caring for someone with the disease.”

Alzheimer’s disease, the most common and well-known form of dementia, affects as many as five million people in the United States (and is expected to rise to 13 million by 2050). In fact,

**Constantine G. Lyketsos, M.D., MPH**  
*Chair, psychiatry*  
*Director, Memory Center*



statistics show that every 72 seconds someone develops the disease, which is characterized by symptoms of memory loss, confusion, impaired judgment, personality changes, disorientation and loss of language skills. There is no known cause or proven cures, but there are treatments that could help stave off the symptoms of the disease.

The new Johns Hopkins Memory & Alzheimer’s Treatment Center at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center is designed to offer the latest in diagnostic technologies and research-driven treatment modalities. The Memory Center, led by Dr. Lyketsos, is staffed with psychiatrists, neurologists, psychologists, social workers and specially trained nurses.

Patients and their families will benefit from some of the most innovative approaches and research on diagnosing and treating dementia. For example, Johns Hopkins researchers are currently working on a new blood test that would be able to determine who’s more vulnerable to Alzheimer’s. They also are working on developing MRI and PET brain imaging approaches that will help determine how fast the disease might progress.

The Memory Center not only offers diagnosis and treatment options to those suffering from Alzheimer’s and dementia, but also provides information and support for their loved ones, the “caregivers.”

“Studies show that there’s a greater increased risk of mortality in those family members or friends who are the caregivers of Alzheimer’s patients,” says Dr. Lyketsos. “So it’s just as important to treat those caring for the dementia patient. We teach them ways to care for their loved ones and tend to their own mental health needs.”

In addition to the Memory Center’s outpatient and support

services, Johns Hopkins Bayview offers a post-acute medical inpatient unit with dementia consultation. Psychiatric rehabilitation and psychiatric outpatient services for elderly adults also are provided by the Community Psychiatry Program at the Medical Center.

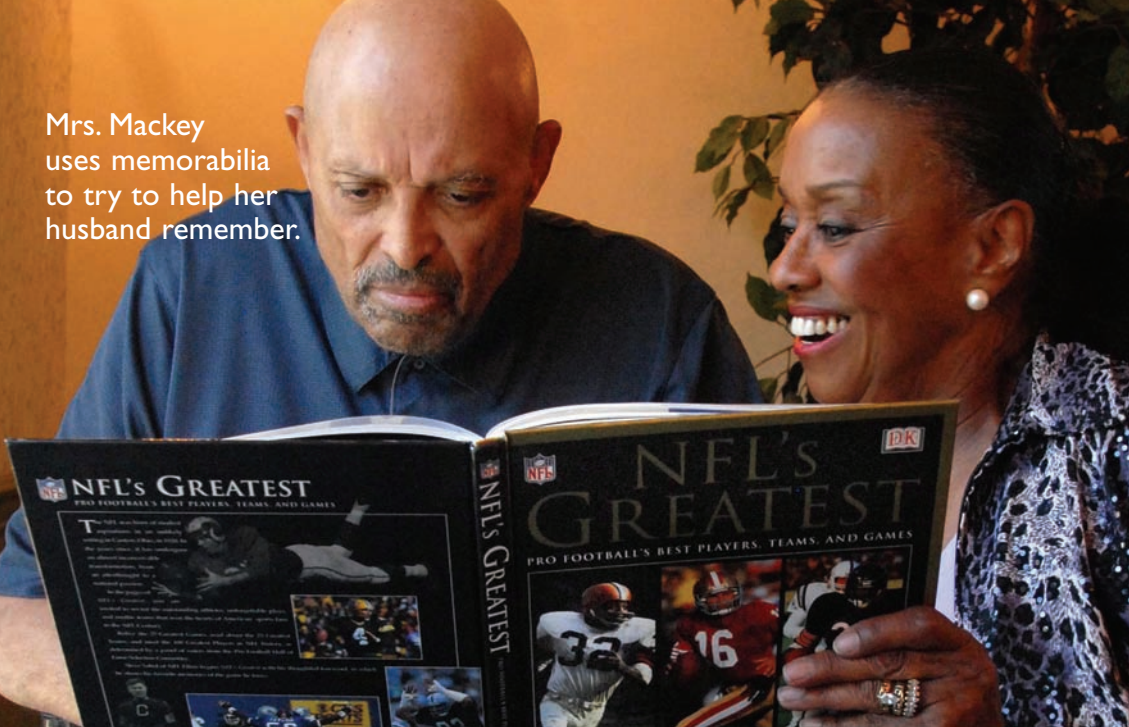
For more information or to make an appointment with one of the memory specialists at the Memory & Alzheimer’s Treatment Center, call 410-550-6337.

### Highlights of the Johns Hopkins Memory & Alzheimer’s Treatment Center

- Provides interdisciplinary evaluation and treatment by a large team of neuropsychiatrists, neurologists and geriatric medicine specialists
- Promotes consultation and ongoing care in close collaboration with the primary care physician
- Conducts thorough evaluations, including cognitive testing, which allow for efficient assessment of individuals who may or may not have progressive memory disorders
- Offers state-of-the-art 3-Tesla MRI scanning and an on-site brain PET scanner to assist in the difficult diagnoses
- Develops and implements comprehensive treatment plans for patients with all forms of memory disorders and associated conditions, such as depression
- Provides caregiver and family support, and education by nurses, occupational therapists and social workers who specialize in the care of these patients
- Offers access to clinical trials that research therapies for Alzheimer’s disease and related conditions

For more information or to make an appointment with one of the memory specialists at the Memory Center, call 410-550-6337.

Mrs. Mackey uses memorabilia to try to help her husband remember.



Sylvia Mackey remembers the moments she's shared with her husband, NFL legend and former Baltimore Colt, John Mackey. Her husband, who suffers from frontotemporal dementia, remembers some, but not everything and not always. So every now and then, she reminds him.

They talk about his younger days playing football and when their daughters were children.

Mrs. Mackey shows him old game tapes, hoping to jog his memory. "He remembers that he played for the Baltimore Colts and that he wore #88. And sometimes he thinks he still does," she says with a smile.

Describing the day his alma mater, Syracuse University, retired his jersey a year ago as "wonderful," Mrs. Mackey explains he understood everything that happened in that moment. "At the end, John shook everyone's hand in the front row," she says. "Later that night, though, he did not remember."

Dementia, which affects almost 7 million Americans, is defined as impairment in memory and a loss in at least one area of complex behavior, such as language, visual and spatial abilities, and judgment, which significantly interferes with a person's daily activities. However, dementia does not just affect the person who is diagnosed—it affects everyone around them.

Mr. Mackey was diagnosed in 2001 in California, where the Mackeys lived at the time. Immediately, Mrs. Mackey sprung into action, knowing that their life would change. "It was inevitable that there would come a time when he wouldn't remember

where he was or how to get home," Mrs. Mackey says. "Moving back to Baltimore was the best decision because John still was familiar with the city."

It is that positive attitude which has enabled her to get through this tough time in their lives. Mr. Mackey's form of dementia has affected both his behavior and judgment. Mrs. Mackey explains that he has his quirks, but is still the same sweet and gentle man he has always been. "I've learned to look

## Helping Memories Last a Lifetime

*"A moment lasts all of a second, but the memory lives on forever."*

at things through his eyes," she says. "Eating cereal with orange juice may not make sense to me, but I have to look at the benefits—he's eating it and it's healthy for him."

As co-chair of the newly created Patient Family Council for the Johns Hopkins Memory & Alzheimer's Treatment Center, Mrs. Mackey will listen to patients and their families voice concern, give praise and share input on the daily happenings of the Memory Center and its research components.

"Sylvia Mackey is a great person to help lead this group because she is an example of someone who was able to greatly benefit from the Johns Hopkins dementia care approach upon which the Memory Center is based," says Dr. Lyketsos.

The Council is a welcoming forum for someone who has spent most of the last seven years caring for her husband 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "I remember having such a helpless feeling," says

Mrs. Mackey. "If I can share what I know now with these families, then I can make a difference."

What she knows now is a lot. In addition to learning how to be a caregiver to her husband, Mrs. Mackey has learned the value of caring for herself. "It's important that I take time to step away and do something for myself," she says. "Fortunately, I have my daughter who lives in Baltimore to help me with John, but just going to the gym for an hour and catching up on the news makes a world of difference in how I go about my day."

Mrs. Mackey and her daughter spend time with each other, going to dinner and taking trips.

*"If I can share what I know now with these families, then I can make a difference."*

"But the three of us still go out together," she says. "We have a special restaurant we take John to where everyone knows who he is and what he's like. They all have so much respect for him, even now. We were able to find a place where he is comfortable, which is so important."

Looking ahead to the future is another piece of advice she offers. "If you prepare yourself for what

is to come, when it actually gets here, it probably won't be so bad," says Mrs. Mackey.

Although the future may be hard, you can bet she will keep smiling. "I have enough memories to last both of us a lifetime."

—Katie Kuehn

### Caregiver Support Group offered twice a month

**Second Thursday of every month**  
12:30 - 1:30 p.m.  
Hopkins ElderPlus

Mason F. Lord Building, East Tower, 1st Floor

**Second Wednesday of every month**  
6 - 7:15 p.m.  
John R. Burton Pavilion  
Plaza Conference Room

*Support groups are free and open to the public.*

**For more information call 410-550-0270.**