

hale to the chief

LEADERS ARE MANY THINGS. THEY ARE inspirational, strong, driven and visionary, and most importantly, not afraid to run swiftly in chasing down their dreams—so they had better have a great pair of running shoes. Fortunately, Joe Hale has the shoes covered, because Joe Hale is a leader in many ways.

One of the most self-effacing individuals in corporate America, the native of Indianapolis has more energy than the company where he is the Chief Communications Officer—Cinergy. Hale is also the president of the Cinergy Foundation, where he works tirelessly to better the lives of residents of his adopted home of Cincinnati.

Hale has volunteered and served on countless boards and led capital campaigns of a number of deserving organizations, but his latest selfless act will put even his running shoes to the test.

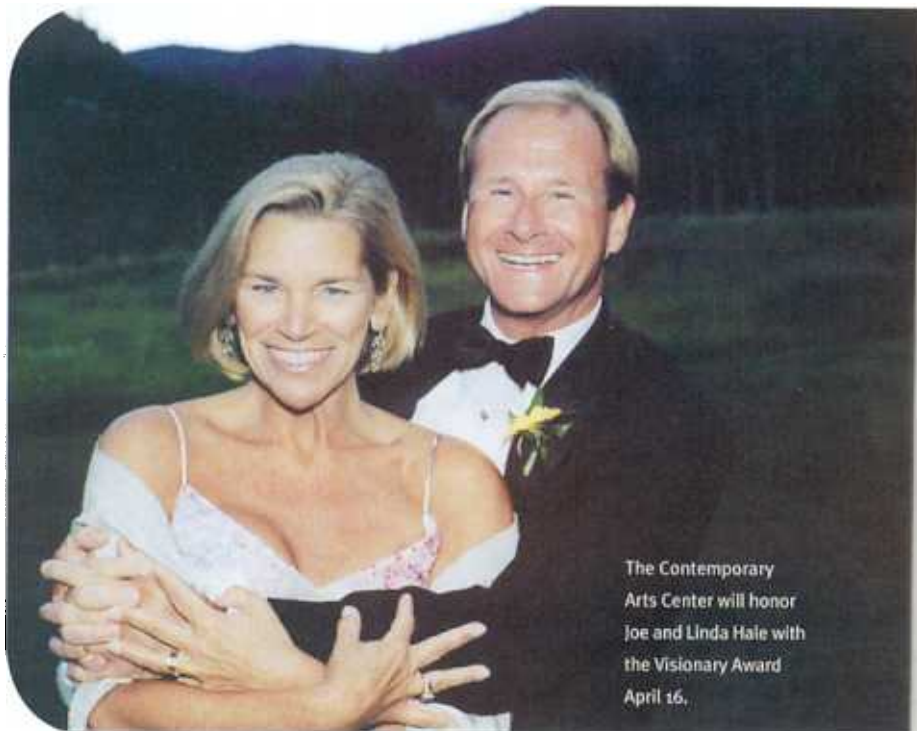
A veteran of more than 80 marathons, Hale has dedicated himself to raising \$100,000 in 2005 for the March of Dimes by running in seven marathons in seven months on seven continents.

“When my mother was diagnosed with polio a few weeks before I was born and immediately became paralyzed from the neck down, her first visitor was a representative from the March of Dimes,” Hale explains. “This volunteer provided support, and, eventually the March of Dimes paid for her rehabilitation [where] she regained use of her upper body and learned to live and function independently in a wheelchair.

“My first volunteer memory is pushing my mother’s wheelchair down Scheller Lane in New Albany, Indiana asking neighbors for contributions to the March of Dimes,” Hale continues. “Now, half a century later, I’ve been selected to chair the National Office of Volunteers for the March of Dimes.”

Hale says he chose the March of Dimes because he wanted to give back to an organization that has helped so many people, including his own family. He says that he grew up rather modestly, “but what we lacked in creature comforts were more than made up for with a strong, loving family that instilled strong values.”

Hale started his career as a teacher, espousing the virtues of English literature when he found that the movement of Shakespeare wouldn’t necessarily make him a mover and shaker. “Honestly, I did the best I could, but I discovered that no matter how good of a teacher I was and whether I did



The Contemporary Arts Center will honor Joe and Linda Hale with the Visionary Award April 16.

all the right things, I was going to get the same \$300 a year raise,” says Hale. “I guess I just wanted to be rewarded for all the hard work and all the time that I put in.

“So, I got into real estate, because there was no limit to reward—it was all a matter of how hard you wanted to work,” he continues. “I remember my first day and my boss came in and said here’s your desk, here’s a phone and threw a phone book on my desk. The first day, I made 100 calls. The second day, I made a 100 calls. I kept making 100 calls everyday but all I heard was ‘no,’ but I always looked at that as being one step closer to a ‘yes.’

“But even with all the investment of time, I never stopped being involved in the community,” Hale says. “I have always felt it was very important to stay a part of the community, and Cincinnati, a city where I am not a native, has been so open to be people that want to be involved and want to make a difference. If you have the opportunity to get involved, get involved and don’t rely on someone else to make that difference that you yourself can make.”

By all accounts, Hale has a magical influence on the things he touches, having played critical roles in so many of the things Cincinnatians see and enjoy everyday—notably the pig sculptures and Bats Incredible! pieces. He is also a father of three children, and shares his life marathon with wife Linda. —RODGER ROESER, APR