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Saint Mary's

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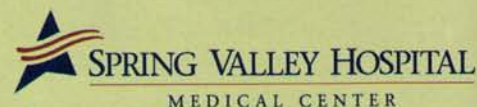
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2006 Healthcare Heroes

Administrator

Southern Nevada: Don Kwalick, M.D.

Northern Nevada: Charlie Myers

Care Provider

Southern Nevada: Tyree Carr, M.D.

Northern Nevada: Paul Katz, M.D.

Educator

Southern Nevada: Mitchell Forman, D.O.

Northern Nevada: Dan Spogen, M.D.

Community Partner

Southern Nevada: Larry Ruvo

Northern Nevada: Annette and Harvey Whittemore

Humanitarian

Southern Nevada: Christine Petersen, M.D.

Northern Nevada: Gerald Ackerman

Entrepreneur

Southern Nevada: Roger Faselt

Northern Nevada: Deb Girard

Innovator

Southern Nevada: Michael Crovetti, D.O.

Northern Nevada: Kathy Barlow

Non-Profit

Southern Nevada: Heather Murren

Northern Nevada: Linda Smith

Technology/Research

Southern Nevada: William Zamboni, M.D.

Northern Nevada: John Packham, Ph.D.

Lifetime Achievement

Southern Nevada: Marietta Nelson, M.D.

Northern Nevada: Noah Smernoff, M.D.

Introducing the 2006 Healthcare Heroes

Welcome to our Special Report on Nevada's Healthcare Heroes, 20 remarkable individuals who have made positive contributions to the status of healthcare in our state. Their dedication and tireless efforts have improved the quality of life in their communities and are helping to create a healthier future for Nevada.

Together with our corporate sponsor, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, we are happy to honor the Healthcare Heroes at special events in Northern and Southern Nevada, allowing them to receive the public recognition they so richly deserve.


Nevada Business Journal is donating the proceeds of these events to fund scholarships for educators in the healthcare field. Proceeds from the Southern Nevada event will be divided between Touro University and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The Northern Nevada event benefits the University of Nevada School of Medicine.

We salute the 2006 Healthcare Heroes and extend to them our heartiest congratulations.

Sincerely,

Connie Brennan

Connie Brennan,
Publisher/CEO

A photograph of two women with short hair, wearing matching black dresses with colorful polka dots, standing on a modern glass and metal escalator. They are looking at each other and talking. The woman on the left is holding a white shopping bag. The background shows a multi-level shopping mall with other escalators and storefronts.

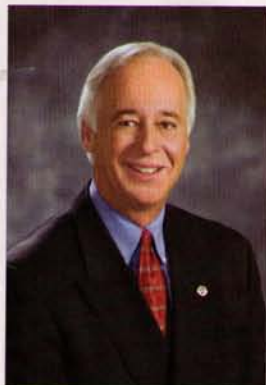
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Healthcare Heroes Judges *Southern Nevada*



Bob Cooper

*Southern Nevada
Medical Industry Coalition*



Doug Geinzer

Recruiting Nevada



Dr. Weldon Havins

*Clark County
Medical Society*



Charles Perry

*Nevada Health Care
Association*

Bob Cooper

Bob Cooper joined the City of Henderson in 1999 as the Economic Development Manager. He is responsible for the city's economic development strategy, including local business retention and expansion programs, business attraction, strategic business alliances and business ombudsman activities. He achieved designation as a Certified Economic Developer (CED) from the American Economic Development Council in 1982 and has more than 30 years experience in economic development. Cooper has published numerous articles on the subject and serves on several boards and councils, including the Henderson Development Association, Henderson Chamber Foundation Board and the Henderson Chamber of Commerce. He was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of the Southern Nevada Medical Industry Coalition, dedicated to improving healthcare systems in Southern Nevada by supporting healthcare education and aiding in recruitment of medical professionals, among other goals.

Doug Geinzer

Since 1993, Las Vegas-based Recruiting Nevada has been delivering recruiting solutions for Nevada employers and working on the frontline to strengthen Nevada's economy. Leading the efforts is Doug Geinzer,

founder of Recruiting Nevada. His employment Web sites attract professionals to Nevada in the areas of healthcare, education, accounting, engineering, government and other industries. Some of Geinzer's first Web sites were aimed at Nevada's weakest points of employment: nursing and teaching. After finding success with those Web sites and others, Recruiting Nevada has since launched 10 recruitment Web sites that post job opportunities throughout Nevada. Geinzer's company was attributed with helping to increase Nevada's nurse-to-patient ratio over the last four years from 520 to 547 per every 100,000 – a substantial increase, as Nevada has opened more hospitals and hospital expansions than any other state.

Weldon (Don) Havins,

M.D., J.D., L.L.M. (Health Law), F.C.L.M.

Don Havins is a graduate of the Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest University. He earned a Master's degree in Executive Management from the Claremont Graduate University. He attended law school at the University of San Diego, where he later earned a Master of Laws degree in Health Law. He is professor and Director of Medical Jurisprudence and Ethics at the Touro University College of Osteopathic Medicine and Clinical Professor of Surgery at the University of Nevada School of Medicine. He is a

member of the Nevada Bar. He is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology and the American Board of Legal Medicine. Havins has authored numerous publications in medical journals and law reviews. He currently practices ophthalmology and serves as executive director and legal counsel of the Clark County Medical Society.

Charles Perry

Charles Perry has been the executive director of the Nevada Health Care Association (NHCA) since August 2000. He has been closely affiliated with the long-term care industry in Nevada since 1975, when he came to Las Vegas as a founding partner of Quality Care Inc. to oversee operations at the Vegas Valley Convalescent Hospital. In 1982, Perry was elected to the Nevada Legislature and served as an Assemblyman in the regular session in 1983 and the 1984 special session. In 1983, Perry and his associates built the Henderson Convalescent Hospital. In 1991, he opened a major addition to the Henderson Convalescent Hospital. He served several terms as NHCA president before assuming his position as executive director. A licensed nursing home administrator since 1971, Perry began his career in nursing home administration in 1967 in Grenada, Mississippi.

Healthcare Heroes Judges Northern Nevada

Nancy Bridges, Nevada Hospital Association (no photo available)
Robin Keith, Nevada Rural Hospital Partners (no photo available)



Dr. John McDonald
University of Nevada
School of Medicine



Jim Miller
Washoe Medical Center



Larry O'Brien
Saint Mary's



Brandt Wright
Northern Nevada
Medical Center

Nancy Bridges, RN, CCM

Nancy Bridges currently serves as nurse executive for the Nevada Hospital Association. She is a relatively new transplant to the state of Nevada, moving back to the mainland last year after spending five years in Hawaii. Employed with the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, Nancy worked as the director of performance measurement and analysis and clinical methods analysis for Hawaii's 12 safety-net hospital facilities on six islands. Prior to Hawaii, Nancy was a fundraising and grant-writing professional, a diabetic research analyst for the University of Texas, deputy executive director of medical operations for TriWest Health Care Alliance in Phoenix (CHAMPUS), and director of utilization and quality management for various other health plans. Her nursing career spans 29 years with clinical and administrative experience in intensive care, oncology and long-term care.

Robin Keith

Robin Keith, president of Nevada Rural Hospital Partners, graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno with a bachelor's degree in nursing. Starting as a critical care nurse, she developed an appreciation for the fundamental mission of hospitals - providing high quality care to patients. Commitment to the

role of hospitals led Keith into graduate work in business administration and public administration, and a change from the clinical setting to hospital administration. As vice president of the Nevada Hospital Association, she built upon her interest in public policy and advocacy and was drawn into the special issue of maintaining the viability of rural hospitals. Working with rural hospital administrators, the Nevada Office of Rural Health, and a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Keith left the NHA to create the Nevada Rural Hospital Project in 1987.

Dr. John McDonald

John A. McDonald, M.D. Ph.D., has served as vice president for health sciences and dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Nevada since 2004. Previously, he served as chief of medicine at the Salt Lake City Veterans Affairs medical center from 2001 to 2004 and guided the formation of a clinical and basic science research institute at Mayo Clinic Scottsdale from 1991 to 2001. From 1979 to 1991, McDonald served at Washington University School of Medicine-Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, where he built and directed an internationally recognized program in pulmonary and critical care medicine. McDonald has published more than 100 peer-reviewed papers and several books, and has

lectured extensively in the U.S. and abroad. He received training in internal medicine at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and in pulmonary disease at the National Institutes of Health.

Jim Miller

Jim Miller is president & CEO of Washoe Health System, Northern Nevada's largest healthcare organization and the region's largest non-gaming private employer. With more than 28 years of healthcare experience, Miller oversees the strategic direction and ongoing operations of all Washoe Health System services, including Washoe Medical Center, Washoe Medical Center South Meadows, Washoe Medical Center Rehab Hospital, Washoe Med Skilled Nursing, Washoe Med Family and Urgent Care Centers and Hometown Health. A native of Henderson, he graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. In 1983, Miller joined Washoe Health System as controller and has held his current position since January 2000. Miller served as the 2005 chair of the Nevada Hospital Association Board of Directors and is a board member of High Sierra Industries and the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.

Larry O'Brien

Larry O'Brien joined Saint Mary's in January 2005 as president and CEO. His extensive background in healthcare leadership positions include chief executive of the managed care companies of the Bronson Healthcare Group in Kalamazoo, Mich.; executive vice president for the regional healthcare delivery system of Memorial Health in Savannah, Georgia; and most recently, as chief executive officer of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children and Kapi'olani Medical Center at Pali Momi in Honolulu, Hawaii. Prior to working in healthcare, he was involved in executive management positions in major brands within the food and consumer products industries. O'Brien received a Masters Degree in Administration from Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, Mich. and a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration from Upper Iowa University in Fayette, Iowa.

Brandt Wright

Brandt C. Wright has served as CEO of Northern Nevada Medical Center since August, 2005. He moved to the position from Auburn Regional Medical Center in Auburn, Wash., where he was chief operating officer. Auburn and Northern Nevada Medical Center both are owned and operated by Universal Health Services. Wright spent more than nine years in various leadership roles with the Baptist Memorial Health Care System of Memphis, Tenn. His last position was as CEO of Baptist Memorial Hospital in Collierville, Tenn. Wright began his career in healthcare as a financial counselor at Children's Medical Center of Dallas. A Texas native, Wright received a bachelor's degree in finance and information systems from Baylor University and a master's degree in health administration from Washington University in St. Louis.



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Healthcare Hero

Administrator, Southern Nevada

Dr. Don Kwalick

Southern Nevada Health District

Although Dr. Don Kwalick was surprised to be named as one of Southern Nevada's Healthcare Heroes, those who speak to him can hear the passion for his life's work in his voice and through his words.

Even while being interviewed for his "Heroes in Healthcare" award, Kwalick was still on the job — he couldn't help but stray from answering questions about himself to interjecting a few health questions of his own.

And if his demeanor isn't convincing enough, Kwalick has a résumé full of awards from professional and community organizations, is the author of numerous scientific publications and has been an active member of many professional and civic organizations. He is currently the president-elect of the Clark County Medical Society. He has spent nearly 40 years working in public health, clinical and academic medicine, healthcare administration and medical management. Kwalick is board certified by the American Board of Preventive Medicine and the American Board of Medical Management.

Kwalick became interested in public healthcare as a preventive medicine officer in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. His experiences, combined with his interest in biological sciences, led Kwalick to specialize in preventive medicine.

"It has been very rewarding," he said. "My specialty is preventive medicine/public health and, therefore, my patient is the community-at-large. The rewards to me in this specialty have been to see the impact our initiatives have had on the health of visitors and residents in Southern Nevada."

Prior to assuming his present position, Kwalick served as Nevada's State Health Officer from 1990 to 1997. Medically licensed in Nevada, California, Florida and New Jersey, Kwalick's career has taken him across the country. However, he said he is most proud of the work he has done in Clark County — one of the United States' fastest growing communities.

The Southern Nevada Health District is one of the largest local public health organizations in the United States, serving more than 1.7 million residents, around 70 percent of Nevada's total population. The district is also responsible for safeguarding the health of more than 37 million visitors to Las Vegas each year.

Since joining Clark County as chief health officer in 1998, Kwalick has seen his budget increase from \$25 million to \$65 million and the district has nearly doubled his staff to 550. Additionally, under his leadership, Kwalick has instituted public health advances such as community-wide water fluoridation,

the development of school-based health centers, decreased instances of tuberculosis and hepatitis A, an increased number of smoke-free restaurants and higher percentages of children who are immunized, among many others. In recent years, the role of public health has expanded to include oversight and participation in areas such as bioterrorism, and disaster and emergency preparedness.

But although Kwalick has overcome some major hurdles, he said he is still working to raise the health status of the community, which is a high priority for him. "Public health programs have a proven record of success and are part of a long-term strategy to put the 'health' back in healthcare and thereby decrease the need to concentrate resources on 'sick' care," he said.

He has also been involved in Health Access, a non-profit organization working to provide primary care sources and establish school-based health centers throughout the country. He works with UNLV's School of Public Health and has goals to continue strengthening the school by creating a new building to replace the existing 40-year-old structure.

When asked how others could become heroes in healthcare, Kwalick suggested working on the simple things: "Be responsible, think outside the box, listen, communicate well and have a sense of humor."



Healthcare Hero

Administrator, Northern Nevada

Charlie Myers

Banner Churchill Community Hospital

For Charlie Myers, chief executive officer of non-profit Banner Churchill Community Hospital in Fallon, the Healthcare Hero award is really a reflection of the work of his entire staff.

"I am not comfortable with personal accolades," Myers said, adding that Banner's successes and the past and present awards he has won are not solely his own. "It's not me who is winning those awards. I just happen to be the head (of the hospital)."

He added that if someone is in the healthcare profession for personal satisfaction, he or she is in the wrong industry. "You are only successful in healthcare if others around you are successful as well," he said. "It's not about me. It is about the systems that are put in place."

An employee of Banner Health – Banner Churchill Community Hospital's umbrella company – for more than 20 years, working in a rural community is Myers' passion. In rural healthcare, Myers said, the well-being of the hospital is integral to the well-being of the rest of the community. He said he prefers rural communities – where he has worked in three rural hospitals in his career – because they reflect the values he and his wife share and wanted to

pass on to their children. Myers moved to Nevada with his wife, Mary, and three daughters to work for Banner Churchill Community Hospital in 2000.

Another reason Myers likes working in a rural community hospital is because it is managed – all the way up to the board of directors – with guidance from people in the community, which creates a strong bond between the public, the hospital and Banner Health.

When recruiting new staff members, Myers strives to support the ideals Banner emphasizes: Medical Excellence, Best People and Best Care. "We value people above all, treating those we serve and each other with compassion, dignity and respect," he said. Myers works to attract and retain quality healthcare employees who love what they do, adding that he is challenged to create a healthcare system that provides an engaging work environment – an environment where people can do their best every day.

"We spend an awful lot of time at work," he said. "I think it would be tough to be in a job you don't like." Because Banner's staff members enjoy their work, Myers said, that commitment to quality care is reflected in patient satisfaction.

Myers is past chairman of Nevada Rural Hospital Partners (NRHP), which

gives hospitals the opportunity to access technology and grant funding they might not otherwise be able to access. Eventually, its members hope to switch over to keeping electronic medical records.

Myers also actively works to support nursing education. As CEO of Banner, Myers pledged \$400,000 of the hospital's money over a five-year span to be utilized by Western Nevada Community College in support of a registered nursing (RN) program. The pledge will pay for the RN instructor's salary and will support the program so that it will be up-and-running on its own at the end of five years.

"We want the program to continue to thrive in Fallon," he said. "We believe in educating our own and growing our own. That's how we keep small hospitals afloat – by growing our own staff." The program has already hosted students from Lovelock, Yerington, Fallon and Hawthorne since its inception two years ago.

In the future, Myers hopes to continue to recruit specialists and possibly add another 10 beds as the hospital grows. With a staff of about 400, Banner presently serves a population of more than 45,000, offering in- and out-patient medical services and specialty clinics.

WAKE UP WITH

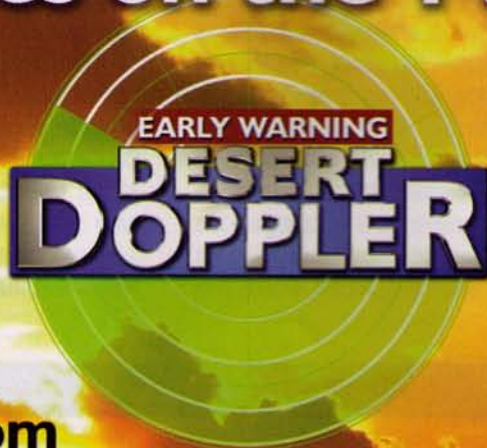


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Healthcare Hero

Care Provider, Southern Nevada

Dr. Tyree Carr
Nevada Institute of Ophthalmology

As a young boy dreaming of one day becoming a baseball or basketball player, Dr. Tyree Carr never would have imagined he would spend the majority of his life providing eye care services to the poor around the world.

Carr grew fascinated with medicine as a teenager, when he attended regular doctor's visits with a nephew who later died from leukemia. Seeing his nephew – just a child at the time of his death – battle health issues sparked Carr's interest in helping others, though it wasn't until later that he discovered how he would do so.

In college, upon realizing his talents in math and science, Carr decided to enter the medical field as an ophthalmologist. Now, more than 30 years later, he uses his career to help others both in and out of the office.

"With a little luck, hard work and blessings, here I am," Carr said. "I'm a Christian. I have God-given talents, and I was never meant to sit on them. My talents are to share with humankind, and that's what I intend to do."

In addition to his 30-year career as an ophthalmologist, Carr has been involved in mission work for more than 20 years, thanks to his friend, Dr. Ed Copf, who first got Carr interested in going on mission

trips. In the beginning, Carr acted as a state consultant to the Bureau Services to the Blind Program and regularly traveled from California to Mexico, providing his services to the poor.

Through a Seventh-Day Adventist Church in California, Carr has attended mission trips to American and Western Samoa for the last 10 years. There, he and friend Victor Williams, among many others, provide medical and surgical eye care to indigent Samoans with the help of diagnostic, antibiotic and surgical supply donations. "If we didn't go and provide services, they wouldn't receive services," Carr said of the desperate need for all kinds of healthcare in Samoa.

Carr and his fellow missionaries also collect unneeded eyeglasses in the U.S. to bring to the various places they volunteer.

Through donations, Carr and his group have collected hundreds of pairs of glasses. They label each pair with its prescription, catalog it and eventually distribute it to a needy person.

Additionally, Carr has recently begun volunteering his time and energy in Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. And although he has accomplished so much already, Dr. Carr said he does not want to stop there. He wants to continue to provide eye care through mission trips to Africa and Asia in the future, and upon retiring, he said he hopes to work part time, spending about five months every year doing mission work abroad. With what free time he has left, Carr plans to write about his experiences.

He encourages others interested in becoming a hero in healthcare, or any other line of work, to start out looking for a small way to make a difference. "That's how it starts," he said. "You have to start out small, and it grows." He said other healthcare workers need to realize they are blessed and fortunate and could start out simply volunteering a few hours of their time every month to a free clinic.

"It's fulfilling," he said. "The more I give, the more I receive."

*"The more I give,
the more I receive."*



Healthcare Hero

Care Provider, Northern Nevada

Dr. Paul Katz

Washoe Institute for Neurosciences

Dr. Paul Katz is committed to ensuring that people in the smallest rural communities receive excellent care when they experience a stroke or other neurological emergency.

As the medical director of the Washoe Comprehensive Stroke Center, his service area includes 27 rural hospitals from Northern California, to Tonopah, Ely and Elko, and many communities in between. "It's a huge area, one of the largest rural networks in the country," said Katz. "And, when I came to Nevada five years ago, I didn't know anything about rural healthcare delivery." Katz was formerly chief of neurology and director of the stroke center at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York.

When he began visiting rural hospitals, Katz learned first-hand the challenges faced by people with limited access to advanced medical care. "I found that one third of stroke admissions to our center in Reno come from rural areas," he said. "A stroke can happen anywhere, and sometimes there's no way you can get to Reno in time to administer intravenous TPA, a clot-busting drug that needs to be delivered within three hours of the stroke."

Katz's solution was to establish protocols for the rural hospitals in his service

area. "It's imperative that there be one standard of care," he noted. "If someone with stroke symptoms comes into one of the rural hospitals, that hospital contacts our stroke team. If the patient needs TPA, he or she can get it immediately, and can be flown later to Reno for further care."

Katz is working on refining the Stroke Center's telemedicine system to make it even safer. This system allows doctors in Reno to look into the emergency room at a distant hospital via computer and see for themselves what's happening there. "We're trying out a new system that can be operated from our clinic in Reno without requiring a computer expert at the other end of the connection," said Katz. "As you can imagine, there might not be a qualified person available in the middle of the night in a rural area. We're hoping to get funding for it, because the rural hospitals don't have much money to upgrade equipment."

Keeping physicians and other care providers up to date on technological and medical advances presents a challenge, said Katz, so in addition to visiting the hospitals on a regular basis, the Stroke Center staff holds an educational event each year for rural physicians and admin-

istrators. "We have a well-oiled system that was recognized by the National Institutes of Health as the rural model for stroke care," he noted.

Katz explained that the Stroke Institute is a multidisciplinary effort between neurology, neurosurgery, neuroradiology and rehabilitation. The way the system is set up now, patients may have to make several trips to Reno to see all the doctors involved in their treatment plan. He said his ultimate goal is to have the Stroke Institute become a major referral center for Northern Nevada, Montana, Idaho and southeastern Oregon. "I want to set up a system like the Mayo Clinic or the Cleveland Clinic, where people can be referred to us," he said. "We would bring patients to Reno and get all their evaluations done in one visit."

In addition to his administrative duties, Katz has a full-time clinical practice, treating patients with complicated neurological issues. "I've always been interested in what I call the Noble Triad of teaching, patient care and research," he said. "There are very few chances these days to do all three, but I often get that opportunity. The community has been extremely supportive of our efforts."



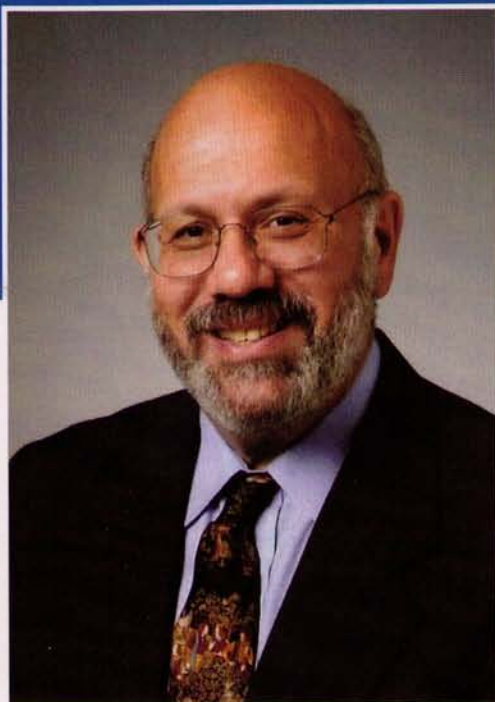
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Healthcare Hero

Educator, Southern Nevada

Dr. Mitchell Forman

Touro University – Nevada

Dr. Mitchell Forman is the man credited with establishing Nevada's second – and Southern Nevada's first – medical school, Touro University-Nevada. "I think I was at the right place at the right time to provide a service that was very needed in this community," he said. "I happened to be lucky enough to be the founding dean of this institution."

In order for Forman to accept what he considered a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," he and his wife left their home in Fort Worth, Tex. and moved to one of the fastest-growing cities in the country.

In two short years, Forman has seen Touro grow from a small graduating class of 78 D.O students to a current class of 135. Touro now offers a doctorate in osteopathic medicine; master's degrees in nursing, school administration, special education, occupational therapy and physician assistant studies; a bachelor's degree in nursing; and endorsements in teaching English as a second language, autism and literacy. However, for Forman, the innovation does not stop there. "We're 2 years old and still have a lot of growing to do," he said.

Forman worked closely with Dr. Mike Harter, formerly of the University of Nevada School of Medicine, to develop Touro. He

likened himself and Harter to pioneers because, with the help of Forman's faculty, they created something that didn't exist. He considers himself lucky to have found a staff of extraordinarily talented people. "This is not the Mitch Forman show," he said. "This is a collaboration."

Forman hopes to continue to foster Touro's Orthodox Jewish origins, especially since Southern Nevada houses one of the fastest-growing Jewish communities. Although Touro has students of all religions and backgrounds, it acknowledges its Orthodox Jewish roots by keeping a Kosher campus and closing on Jewish holidays.

"It creates an environment where Orthodox Jewish students can be part of an education system and still practice religion," he said, adding that success requires a balance between religion, study and work. However, Touro not only accepts diversity, but also embraces it, he added.

And although Forman has his hands full acting as dean of Touro, he has new goals – such as keeping doctors and nurses in Nevada – to achieve. "There is no question that Nevada is in a crisis," he said. "The need for healthcare is a big problem."

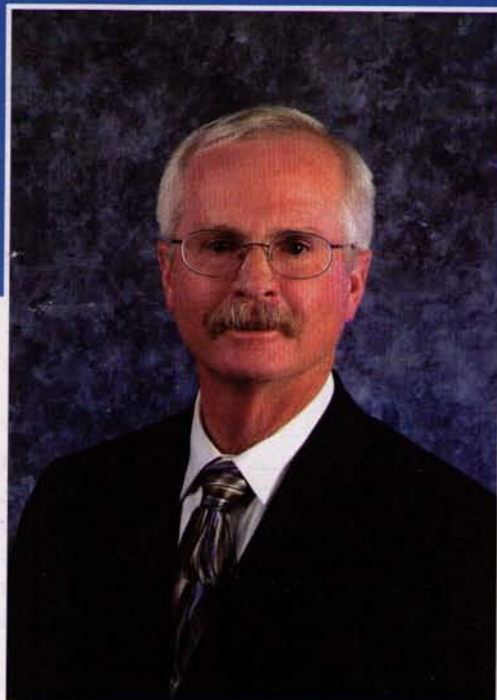
Forman hopes to assist in solving the crisis by continuing to expand the pro-

grams Touro offers and by matching Touro students and graduates with physicians and nurses in the community for work and internships. "If students have to go out-of-state for residency, they'll be lost," he said, adding that research shows medical graduates tend to practice within 50 miles from where they trained.

He also intends to establish programs with K-12 schools to show students of all ages that a medical career is an attainable goal. He frequently connects with high schools and colleges to try to recruit their very best for a medical career.

Additionally, he works to recruit and partner with local doctors to teach part-time at the university, so Touro students have the chance to learn from medical professionals with experience in the field.

When Forman first arrived in Nevada, he had to give up his practice because of a lack of time. As one of only 23 rheumatologists in Nevada, he has returned to seeing patients again, which he said adds a new perspective to his life because he can give back to the community and do what he has been trained to do. He hopes to serve as a role model for his students by continuing his practice and also teaching classes at Touro.



Healthcare Hero

Educator, Northern Nevada

Dr. Dan Spogen

University of Nevada School of Medicine

An advocate for family medicine, Dr. Dan Spogen spent most of his career practicing privately in Sparks and volunteer teaching at the University of Nevada's School of Medicine in Reno.

In his private practice, Spogen found that modern medicine concentrates on diagnosis and treatment, while often ignoring the emotional side of patient care. Spogen set out to practice more compassionately, making time to listen to patients, answer their questions and deal with emotional issues. "We need to practice mental and emotional healthcare with patients, as well as medical healthcare," he stated.

Fighting hard to redefine the nature of medical family practice, Spogen teaches his students to spend the majority of their time, not diagnosing the patient's ailment, but rather responding to any questions the patient might have about his or her diagnosis. "By just taking a couple of minutes, I can ease their fears and their questions are answered," Spogen said.

Spogen said his philosophy comes from a personal experience he had as a senior in medical school. He was on track to become an orthopedic surgeon when his grandmother became very ill. Naturally,

she approached her grandson in the medical field to answer some important questions for her.

"I didn't have the foggiest idea how to answer her questions. I realized then that I needed a sense of the bigger picture to be a better physician. I needed to care for people and not the diseases," Spogen recalled.

This realization caused him to begin volunteer teaching at the University of Nevada as soon as he finished his residency. But as time went on, Spogen was more and more interested in full-time teaching. In 2000, he joined the commission for the American Academy of Family Physicians, and in 2004 he became the chair of the commission. He helped design the curriculum for the medical residents, while also setting up fellowships within the medical field.

"Being involved on that national level was a big push for me to get out of private practice and teach full-time," Spogen said. A year ago, the University of Nevada officially hired Spogen as a full-time instructor. "By teaching full-time, I can see how the programs I design actually interact with the students," he said. "When you volunteer teach, you don't get to see how the

students and programs evolve over time, and I experience that more now."

As a teacher, Spogen takes on student apprentices and acts as a preceptor for all the medical residents. He also teaches a course on clinical problem-solving and lectures on several different topics relating to family medical practice. He acts as an advisor for the Student Outreach Clinic in Reno, the Family Medicine Group and a variety of sports medicine groups for disadvantaged athletes. Wherever he goes, Spogen has a student apprentice at his side.

"What I look for in students is how they interact with people, not how much book learning they have. Teaching is a very enriching career for me, especially when I see that light bulb go on in a student's head as he or she goes from basic knowledge to fully understanding the task at hand," he said.

Teaching medical students is Spogen's way of working to ensure that the future of family medical practice takes on a more empathetic focus. "When you visit your family doctor, it should be like going home," he said. "That is the attitude I try to practice myself and pass on to my students."

Healthcare Hero

Community Partners, Northern Nevada

Annette and Harvey Whittemore

Institute for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome



Dr. Annette and Harvey Whittemore have worked diligently to establish the Institute for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) in Reno, while simultaneously caring for their daughter Andrea, who has suffered from the disease for the past 17 years.

Andrea's diagnosis and consequent challenges inspired Annette and Harvey to start researching the disease. "We ran into problems with Andrea's school and her work — no one understood her unique situation, her need for a flexible schedule and her limitations," said Annette.

Soon after the diagnosis, Annette left her career as a special education teacher and Harvey slowed his law practice and development projects to jointly commit to the care of their daughter. "If it was this difficult for our family — who thankfully have enough resources to access the best doctors and care — we wondered what would it be like for families who do not?" said Annette, who was struggling to find relief for her daughter.

Together, the Whittemores discussed the lack of doctors and need for more research as they personally experienced the gaps in information about CFS and the lack of treatment options. Annette revealed, "We were hoping someone would establish an institute for patient care and research. Then we thought, 'Why not us?'"

Two years ago, Harvey and Annette began their crusade. First, Annette co-founded the Human Herpes Virus 6 (HHV-6) Foundation. HHV-6 is an immune-suppressive virus that can cause the symptoms of CFS in some patients, including Andrea. The foundation acts as the keystone for the Institute for CFS.

In the past two years, the HHV-6 Foundation has supported six scientific research projects. For example, it started a repository for blood and tissue so scientists from all over the world have free access for research on CFS and HHV-6. It also supported scientists in developing more sensitive, accessible and accurate blood tests.

These research projects helped the Whittemores discover that treating CFS patients with antiviral medicines proved more powerful in the relief process than previously thought. "We discovered patients, including our own daughter, have profound improvement with an antiviral program," Harvey noted. Because of her treatment, Andrea Whittemore can now live alone and work part time, but she still has her ups and downs, according to her parents.

In only two years, their initiatives have grown exponentially, advancing awareness of the disease and producing important advances in research. However, to proceed to the next step, Annette and Harvey decided they needed to establish a

clinic to house research facilities and act as a sanctuary for CFS patients. In the next 24 to 30 months, the Whittemores plan on opening the institute in conjunction with the University of Nevada.

In the meantime, they are working on the infrastructure, spending funds on research, planning an education outreach program and recruiting international specialists. They are already contracting with doctors from Florida, Washington and Belgium. Annette, along with HHV-6 Foundation co-founder Kristen Loomis and scientific director, Dharam Ablashi, organized an international conference in Spain and Annette has attended one in Japan.

Parents of five children and grandparents of three, Annette and Harvey Whittemore are no strangers to parental commitment and passion for their children's welfare. "When you have a very ill child, you can't help but support that child's cause on a grand level," explained Annette. "We feel that part of being a responsible parent is creating an environment that will help your child as well as your neighbor's child."

While the Whittemores are pleased that their daughter and other CFS patients are making progress, they realize that much more needs to be done. "We wake up every day and take another step," said Harvey. "We find another need and try to overcome each challenge."



Healthcare Hero

Humanitarian, Southern Nevada

Dr. Christine Petersen

Sierra Health Services, Inc.

Although Dr. Christine Petersen has led a successful career as chief medical officer at Sierra Health for the last nine years, she believes that being a doctor goes beyond the job description. For many years, she has been an active volunteer in the Las Vegas community.

"As a healthcare professional, you have an obligation to be involved," she said. "We need to strengthen our community" and people of any profession need to "support the community with whatever skills [they] have."

One of Petersen's top priorities is fighting the overuse of antibiotics through the committee she chairs, Nevadans for Antibiotic Awareness, since an increasing number of bacteria have become resistant to the antibiotics used to treat illnesses. As a result of the organization's work, which includes public and provider education, people have already begun to save money, and outpatient antibiotic prescriptions have been significantly reduced. "People appreciate getting the information," she said. Materials, which emphasize preventive measures as simple as hand washing, are written in English and Spanish and designed pro bono by Virgen Advertising.

Other problems Petersen is working to address are instances of lead poisoning

and Community-Associated Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (CAMRSA) – bacteria that causes skin infections, which Petersen said is common in athletic groups and in jails.

Aside from her work in the community, Petersen has extended her mission work to Africa – one of the projects she is most excited about. She got her first taste of Africa 15 years ago when she traveled there for vacation with her family – and couldn't get the country, or the people, out of her head. "I love the people," she said, adding that the country has "such poverty and medical need."

The chance arose last year for Petersen to go back to Africa with some colleagues from Sierra Health, and she jumped at the opportunity. With plans to assess the area's clinics and build a much-needed, non-government nursing school, the group set off on an African safari. "Tanzania has a shortage of 26,000 nurses. The key is to make nursing education accessible," she said. The burden of disease in Africa is huge, with many communities suffering from AIDS, malaria, maternal fetal death and even worms, she said.

After deciding, with Tanzanian partners, to run the nursing school out of St. John's University in Dodoma, Tanzania,

the group began to work with American universities – including Touro University – to receive the donations, such as electronic courses, supplies and aid, needed to run the nursing school in Africa.

And with the dean for the school already chosen, the nursing school is well on its way to reality. In rural areas, Petersen said, the people have no money to travel to school. Therefore, plans to offer basic courses electronically are underway, as an increasing number of towns are receiving wireless Internet access. After they have completed the basic courses, nursing students will have the opportunity to study in the field in clinical rotations. "It's very exciting," she said. Petersen will spend one month this summer in Mwanza, Tanzania, performing clinical work. "It's a way to give back," she said.

Petersen hopes to continue to promote communication and teamwork throughout the medical industry. "Unless we collaborate in the medical field and in our community, we're not going to be as strong," she said. To meet this goal, Petersen said the Southern Nevada Medical Industry Coalition, of which she is a part, gets new groups involved as soon as they come to town so they are more likely to work together instead of compete. Communication is key, she said.

Washoe Med Serves Northern Nevada Through Institute for Neurosciences

Washoe Med's Institute for Neurosciences, the only institute of its kind in Northern Nevada, serves the Northern Nevada community through nationally renowned specialists who combine their expertise and experience with advanced technology. Patients with neurological disorders, including strokes and aneurysms, brain or spinal cord injuries, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's disease, movement disorders, head and neck tumors, and cerebrovascular disease can receive state-of-the-art treatment without being referred outside the community.

As part of the Institute, The Comprehensive Stroke Center features highly skilled interventional neuroradiologists who use biplane angiography to see enhanced, three-dimensional views of the stroke site in the brain. With the assistance of this technology, they can stop a stroke in its tracks by removing a clot, delivering a clot-busting drug or sealing off an aneurysm. These minimally invasive treat-

ment approaches to vascular disorders once required surgery. In addition, Washoe Med was recognized as Nevada's first and is now Northern Nevada's only, Certified Primary Stroke Center by the largest healthcare standards setting and accrediting body in recognition of quality care for stroke patients.

Expert neurosurgeons work together towards the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders or injuries that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. "As recognized leaders in their field, our physicians pioneer the latest advancements in neurosurgery to provide patients with the highest quality of technologically advanced, compassionate care," said Jim Miller, president and CEO of Washoe Med.

The latest education, treatment and research for diagnosing and treating epilepsy are also available through the Epilepsy Center from the area's only dedicated pediatric and adult epileptologist. Registered technologists

at the area's only accredited EEG laboratory monitor irregularities in the brain's electrical activity that may produce seizures, and then plan treatment based on the results.

Washoe Med's Institute for Neurosciences offers the latest treatment options for multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy. Advanced diagnostic tools, such as Evoked Potential Testing, are used to diagnose, measure disease progress and provide patients the latest treatment options. Specialized physicians and staff work with patients and their families to help them more effectively deal with the disease and live more productive lives.

Experts from multiple disciplines provide treatment, which may include physical, occupational, respiratory and/or speech therapy. Some patients may require physical medicine and rehabilitation from disabling injuries or illnesses. Washoe Med offers inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services from a team of nurses, physicians and therapists.

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Healthcare Hero

Humanitarian, Northern Nevada

Gerald Ackerman

*Center for Education and Health Services Outreach
University of Nevada School of Medicine*

Gerald Ackerman acts as the assistant director of Nevada Office of Rural Health and co-deputy of the Area Health Education Center program, both affiliated with the University of Nevada School of Medicine. However, his passion for rural health care started in his hometown.

Growing up in rural Idaho in a town without a doctor, Ackerman personally experienced the need for access to medical practice in rural areas, and he has spent his career building bridges between academic medical centers and rural communities throughout Nevada.

While he could have moved to a city to raise his family and start his career in healthcare, he stayed true to his roots by moving his family to Elko in 1989. "Elko is my home. I love Northeastern Nevada because there are wonderful opportunities and great people. That's what keeps me here," Ackerman said. "I could have moved 10 times searching for 10 different jobs, but I stayed and raised my seven children with my wife Camille because I love the area and I appreciate working for the university system."

With his work as the co-deputy director of the Area Health Education Center program, Ackerman bridges the gap between academic medical centers and rural communities by establishing a training program for health professionals in rural areas. By re-

cruiting local high school students into academic medical programs, Ackerman believes the program provides an incentive for those students to return to their rural communities once they start practicing medicine. "We are an urban state, but 80 percent of our land mass is frontier," he pointed out. "There are a lot of 'can-do' people in Nevada, and they need to know about the opportunities that are available."

In addition to recruiting within rural communities, Ackerman also travels statewide to bring urban Nevada students to the rural communities. Traveling within the state as well as to Washington D.C. and other large cities, Ackerman never stops researching how to make his program more dynamic. "Rural healthcare is always a challenge. You are always recruiting," he said.

By creating and maintaining connections between the University of Nevada School of Medicine and the rural Nevada areas, Ackerman makes it easier for new doctors to relocate to rural areas, because they have developed personal connections with the community. Through Ackerman's program, medical students work with patients in rural communities, promoting further development of rural family medical practices. These medical students spend a total of 16 weeks in rural communities

during their third year of medical school. Rural clinics are then able to take these medical students as residents.

Ackerman's organization serves as a link, facilitating connections between the School of Medicine and his own community. By bringing in larger health programs, resources and expertise, Ackerman's program helps rural communities solve healthcare problems. "The agenda of the programs are strongly run by what the community issues are in healthcare," he said. "We roll up our sleeves and address what we can." Ackerman noted that the connections he establishes also help the state as a whole. "Rural communities can also give back and inspire more urban communities," he said.

As Assistant Director of State Rural Health, Ackerman not only helps develop networks between larger urban hospitals and smaller rural clinics, but also addresses challenges in access to adequate dental care. "Rural Nevada has horrific dental and oral access issues," he noted. Establishing partnerships between programs like Miles for Smiles and rural clinics helps improve this critical situation.

Both Ackerman's positions combine his loves of rural community and medicine. "I am excited about working for an organization that enables growth for the rural communities of Northern Nevada," he said.

Kids to Seniors Korner Bringing Community Services to Front Doors

The goal of Saint Mary's Mission Outreach programming is to address critical, unmet needs for underserved children, their families and seniors. While a range of community services exist to aid these people, many are unaware of the services available or have barriers to accessing them. Thanks to the Kids to Seniors Korner program, for some Northern Nevadans, help is as easy as answering the front door.

Kids to Seniors Korner incorporates a wide range of services to those in need of care, through cooperative agreements between the Reno Police Department, Washoe County Sheriff's Office, Washoe County District Health Department, the Sparks Police Department, Saint Mary's, Senior Social Services and Washoe County Child/Adult Protective Services. Each of the seven agencies provides \$10,000 per year to support the program to serve the needs of the community's most vulnerable children and seniors.

"What's really great about this program, is the 'knock and talk' teams that knock on as many doors as possible," said Keri Pruitt, Mission Outreach program supervisor. "We offer free vaccinations, health screenings and education, as well as dental care through the Saint Mary's Mobile Dental Outreach, with referrals and follow-up visits for more serious situations."

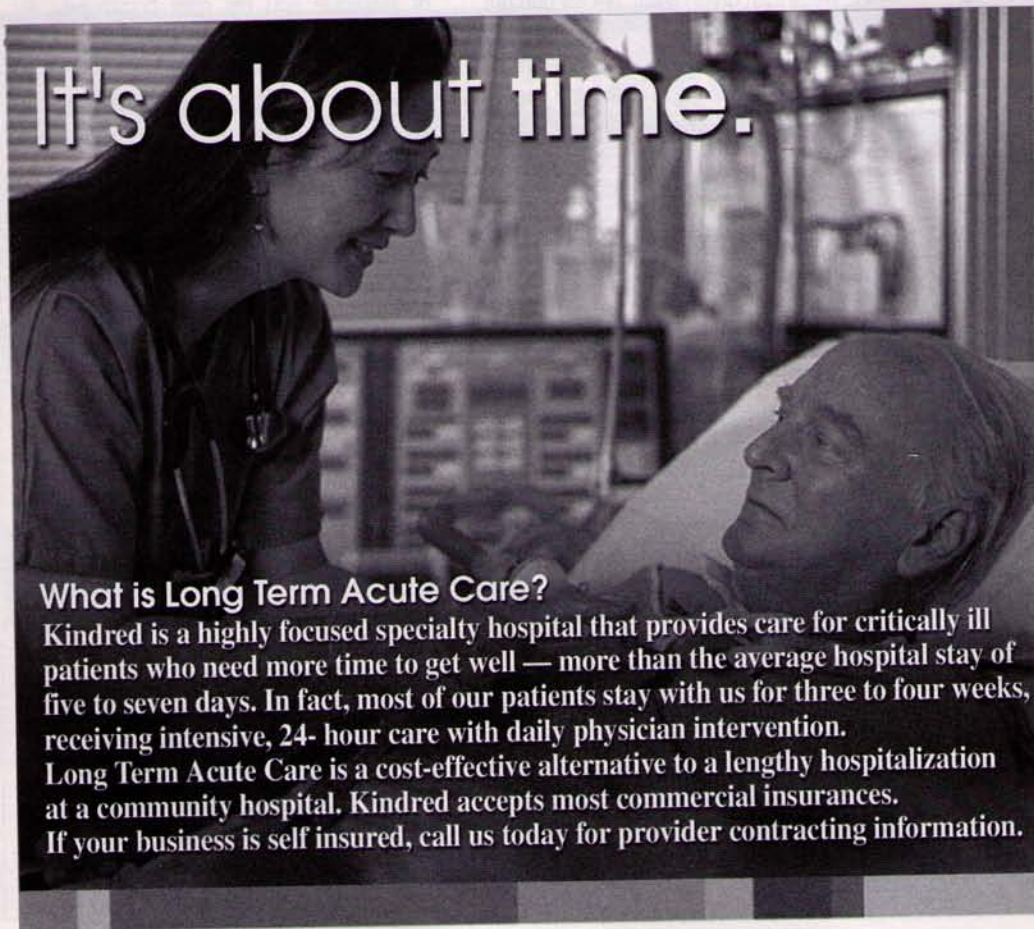
Utilizing a large mobile clinic, the partnership operates a two-tiered service delivery system which includes a multi-disciplinary team that follows a "Knock 'n Talk" philosophy — bringing a team of professionals into a targeted low-income neighborhood and areas highly populated with homeless families, such as shelters and motels.

The Kid's Korner Program was initiated as a small project by the Reno Police Department and the Washoe County District Health Department in 1996. A Reno police

officer and a public health nurse made weekly visits to motels to check on the welfare of children. As the program grew, Washoe County Sheriff's Office, Sparks Police Department, Washoe County District Health Department, Washoe County Social Services and Saint Mary's aligned to create a partnership to meet the critical needs identified by the project.

Because seniors are also vulnerable, the Senior's Korner Program was developed to identify and assist at-risk seniors. The two programs merged in 2003 to better meet the needs of Washoe County's most vulnerable.

More than 9,950 children, families and seniors were served in Washoe County neighborhoods in 2005 and in just 10 years, the program has assisted more than 37,000 children and families and over 7,000 seniors, helping them stabilize and improve what are often very difficult situations.



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Healthcare Hero

Entrepreneur, Southern Nevada

Roger Faselt
Quality Medical Imaging

Roger Faselt is the first person to admit that a medical imaging professional makes an unlikely hero. However, as Faselt's story shows, heroes come in all lines of work in the medical field.

"It's not a glamorous business or a high-esteem business," said Faselt, who founded Quality Medical Imaging (QMI) in 2001 to serve home-bound patients needing ultrasound tests, radiography and other diagnostic services. "However, we're filling an important role in the community by providing services to people who might not be able to make it in to the bigger facilities."

When first informed that he had been named a "Healthcare Hero" for his success as an entrepreneur, Faselt was quick to pass the credit. "The heroes in our company are the technicians who are out in the trenches, in people's homes," Faselt said. "Sometimes they are the only people these patients see for days. They face very delicate situations, and have to do their job with empathy and compassion."

Faselt knows that very well. Despite the impressive growth of his company, Faselt still serves as a technician in the field when he is needed. "Anyone who has ever run a small business understands the sacrifices you need to make," said Faselt, who led the ultrasound department of Sunrise Hospital prior to opening Quality Medical Imaging.

"You do what you have to do, to take care of your clients and – more importantly – the patients. At the same time, it's important to stay connected to the reason we opened our doors in the first place – to serve those who are in need."

Faselt wanted to do more than just open a licensed and certified portable medical imaging company. He wanted to create a company that was on the cutting edge when it came to state-of-the-art technology and services and taking them directly into people's homes, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities.

QMI made its mark by becoming the first local, mobile company to offer bedside pick-line services. But that was just the start, according to Faselt. In the past year, Faselt and his wife, Deanna, have invested more than \$1 million to enable QMI to convert completely to digital technology. While such an investment can be a strain for any entrepreneur – especially one just five years into doing business – Faselt says the investment will greatly benefit his patients.

"Completing a quality exam can significantly impact a person's health," he said. "If the technician doing a test or X-ray doesn't do a good job, or the equipment is not what it should be, it doesn't matter how good the interpreting physician is. We

are here to serve the patients, and we do whatever it takes to get it right. In our company, the health of the patients is our bottom line."

Faselt is ARRT and ARDMS certified in radiology, sonography, vascular sonography, abdominal obstetrics and neurosonology. He also serves as a guest lecturer for a variety of health classes and played an integral part of Community College of Southern Nevada's efforts to develop a sonography program, which was implemented into the college's curriculum five years ago.

He said playing an active role in protecting a healthy business environment in Nevada is becoming increasingly important to him as a small business owner in an industry dominated by big companies. Faselt is active in the Southern Nevada Medical Industry Coalition, as well as working with federal, state and local elected officials.

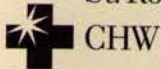
"I am not taking this honor lightly," Faselt said. "I believe being honored as an entrepreneur is a lot like being told, 'You have done well so far, but we expect bigger things from you in the future.' If I can be half the hero many of these other people being honored have been in their careers, then I will have done something right when it's all said and done."

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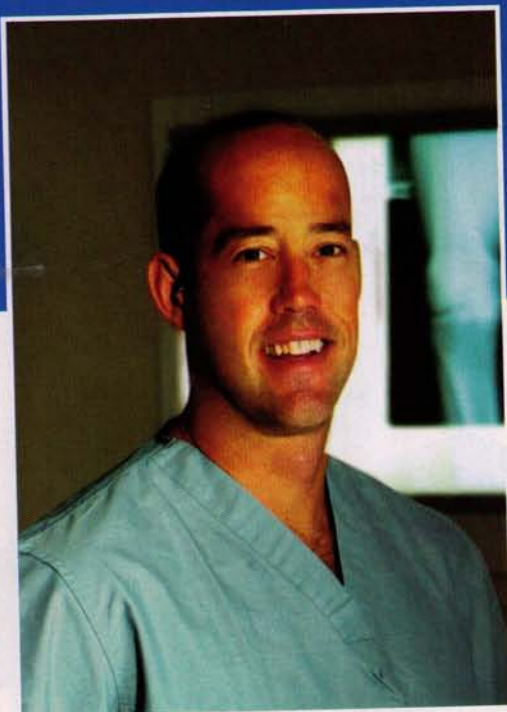
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Healthcare Hero

Innovator, Southern Nevada

Dr. Michael Crovetti

The Bone and Joint Institute of Southern Nevada

Dr. Michael Crovetti, only six years into his medical practice, has already accomplished more than most people achieve during an entire career.

Although Crovetti has enjoyed a successful profession as an orthopedic surgeon, he is also known for putting Henderson on the map by establishing Medical Education & Research Institute of Nevada (MERIN) – a premier medical research and education facility.

“MERIN was actually a bit of a dream,” he said. Crovetti saw the need to establish Nevada as a leader in the medical field and turned his dream into reality. After a miserable experience lecturing out-of-state, Crovetti was inspired to create MERIN, which began as a small drawing sketched on notebook paper on the flight home. The nonprofit institute was established in 2004.

Only two years later, the facility hosts thousands of surgeons from across the United States and around the world to test new surgical instruments and learn innovative procedures through practicing on cadavers. Crovetti said much of the public still does not accept the use of cadavers in medical research. In order to continue to grow the program and acceptance of the center, Crovetti said he has to change the way people think – which is the hard part.

“[MERIN] helps everyone,” he said. The research done there helps doctors to provide better, safer and most up-to-date healthcare services, which in turn benefits patients.

Regardless of the hurdles Crovetti and his team have to overcome, MERIN has already gained international recognition. Crovetti said he even encountered a doctor in Birmingham, England, who had heard good things about the center.

In the past, Crovetti said, when he introduced himself at a medical lecture and said he was from Las Vegas, he would hear a chuckle in the audience. “Those days are over,” he said. “Patients don’t need to leave to get good healthcare.” Crovetti said Southern Nevada is now getting the recognition it deserves. Patients who had planned to go to UCLA for surgery have instead decided to stay in-state for the operation.

He hopes to continue to raise healthcare awareness. To spread healthcare knowledge, Crovetti also operates a company that produces easy-to-understand, educational CDs he gives to his patients.

He said the rewards he reaps from his career are great. One of his prouder moments came when his son was asked to name a famous person for a school project, and named his father because he saves lives. He said when he comes home from work, his daughter will often ask, “Daddy,

how many people did you fix today?”

“It is just a feel-good job,” he said. “Although not every operation is easy, the medical profession is the greatest profession there is. If you enter it for the money, you’re making a mistake.”

A football player in college, Crovetti became interested in the medical profession when he broke his ankle during a game, inspiring him to learn about sports medicine. From there, Crovetti’s new passion led him to meet his first mentor, Dr. Doug Tase at Albright College in Reading, Penn.

After Crovetti witnessed his first surgery – a hip replacement – he was hooked. “From there on, I was inspired,” he said. He feels a sense of accomplishment when he sees his patients throwing footballs again after an injury. An especially meaningful time came when Crovetti operated on his daughter’s coach because, in a way, he was helping his daughter.

In the future, Crovetti said he hopes to spend more time with young athletes in his Nevada Sports Academy, helping them prevent injuries and improve performance. He said athletes in Nevada do not get the recognition they deserve, and he is disappointed that many of Nevada’s best athletes leave the state – which prompted his new dream of creating an athletic program that brings athletes of all sports together in Southern Nevada to create pride in Nevada’s athletes.



Healthcare Hero

Innovator, Northern Nevada

Kathy Barlow

Saint Mary's Mission Outreach

Kathy Barlow has become an expert at developing and managing cooperative partnerships, and the citizens of Northern Nevada – especially its most vulnerable populations – have been the beneficiaries. For Barlow, that sometimes means working double duty.

The Kid's Korner Program began in 1996 as an effort by the Reno Police Department and the Washoe County District Health Department to check on the welfare of children in low-rent motels. As the program grew, other community groups joined its efforts to meet critical social and healthcare needs. The model worked so well that Senior's Korner was developed in 2000 to identify and assist at-risk seniors. In 2003, the two programs merged into The Kids to Seniors Korner.

Kathy Barlow has encouraged and facilitated cooperation between all the groups involved in The Kids to Seniors Korner. Today, its partners include the Reno and Sparks Police Departments, Washoe County Sheriff's Office, Washoe County District Health Dept., Washoe County Social Services, Washoe County Senior Services and Saint Mary's Mission Outreach. Each department has a representative on the advisory board. Agency supervisors and staff who comprise the outreach team identify at-risk neighborhoods in Reno, Sparks and Washoe County, and work together to bring much-needed

medical and social services to children, families and senior citizens.

For 8 years, Kathy Barlow has served as program director for Saint Mary's Mission Outreach, as well as being an influential board member for The Kids to Seniors Korner. Her ability to negotiate a positive attitude between the seven partners and establish connections with agencies within the community have made her a significant contributor to Kids to Seniors Korner and an important benefactor to the community.

The collaborative experience between Saint Mary's and The Kids to Seniors Korner inspires her to continue her work, said Barlow. "Saint Mary's has a profound commitment to people who would normally slip through the cracks," she said. "I am able to work with people who want to make a difference on a daily basis."

A team consisting of a nurse, social worker, police officer and sometimes other care providers conducts a "Knock and Talk" in each neighborhood. Saint Mary's takes a large, medical van called a "Take-Care-A-Van" to these sites and donates immunizations and checkups to these disadvantaged neighborhoods. The program also travels to senior communities and areas where homeless people gather.

Creating effective and efficient interaction between service providers has become more important than protecting turf or taking credit. As Barlow said, "We ask ourselves, 'What is the greatest need?' and we bring those services to the front doors of our most vulnerable residents."

Most inspiring was her trip to Kenya in 2001, where some board members of The Kids to Seniors Korner helped establish an orphanage "to reach out in a different way to children we felt were even less fortunate than the ones we served daily."

Barlow noted, "I have to say the success of The Kids to Seniors Korner is witness to the fact that private, public and corporate companies can work together. It speaks to the importance of synergism. We wouldn't have the program if all the partners didn't collaborate. The Kids to Seniors Korner is synergy in motion."

Refusing to take sole credit for the program's success, Barlow feels strongly that The Kids to Seniors Korner has succeeded because of each member's commitment to personal and community values. "I think several communities intersect in your life everyday," she stated. "There is a faith community, family community, etc. I don't see community as one thing, but as intersecting circles. I am just a piece of the puzzle. Recognition belongs to everyone, not just one person."

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than 32 million health, dental and disability claims annually.


"We have the flexibility to work with organizations to develop customized solutions," explained Jay Coldwell, product director of emerging markets for Fiserv Health. "At the same time, we have the size and financial stability of a large carrier. As a result, our clients are far more able to control healthcare costs, while plan members receive the best care possible, at the right time."

When it comes to health plan management, technology plays a big part in holding down costs, said Coldwell. Electronic claims handling, interactive telephone systems and Web-based applications allow Fiserv Health to give each member individual attention with automated functions. "This unique application of technology and personal focus is a key element in our client retention rate," Coldwell noted. "We are proud to maintain a client retention rate of more than 90 percent in our health plan management division."

As healthcare costs rise, employers are searching for ways to cut expenses without sacrificing the quality of employees' care. One solution is Fiserv Health's new consumer-driven healthcare offering, called the Fiserv Health Consumer Connection. The program features interactive tools that provide information about medical conditions, local physicians and hospitals and other health-related data. After collecting information about each member's unique health profile, the program suggests ways to improve quality of life and control chronic conditions such as diabetes, while reducing out-of-pocket expenses.

Financial incentives give plan members a personal stake in their health benefits. For example, contributions to health reimbursement accounts are made to encourage activities such as taking health assessments and to reward positive changes in behavior.

"We see consumer-driven plans as a long-term trend," said Coldwell. "Companies need to make employees more conscious of the actual costs of their healthcare. The out-of-pocket costs employees pay have not kept up with the increases in healthcare expenses. These plans are an important way for self-funded employers to manage costs."



Heroes like Charlie Myers help us
make a difference one patient at a time.

We salute Charlie Myers, CEO of Banner Churchill Community Hospital for being selected as a Health Care Heroes award finalist. His dedication to the needs of every one of our patients exemplifies the medical excellence each of our employees is committed to providing. Charlie, your colleagues throughout Banner Health join together to celebrate your achievement. It's a standard we strive for across the Banner Health system.



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Healthcare Hero

Non-profit, Southern Nevada

Heather Murren

Nevada Cancer Institute

"I don't think of myself as a hero," said Heather Murren. "Hopefully, I can earn the title." Modesty aside, Murren's vision, Nevada Cancer Institute (NVCi), will help thousands of cancer victims for years to come. She is co-founder, president and chief executive officer of Nevada Cancer Institute.

"Being a hero means you try to make a difference and that you work hard," Murren said. And work hard, she's done. With the help of other community leaders, Murren laid the plans for NVCi – a comprehensive cancer center – in 2000, and it was established in 2003 by the Legislature as Nevada's official cancer institute. At the time of its inception, few people were willing to invest their money into a vision alone, so groundbreaking for the institute began with \$50 million of borrowed money in the form of a bond.

Once donors could see that Murren's goal was tangible, funding for the institute began to flow in. Donations for NVCi have come a long way since the beginning. More than \$100 million has been raised, including \$70-plus million coming from private donations alone.

Although the institute has already seen much success since opening its 142,000-square-foot flagship research

and care facility last September, Murren said it still has far to go. Its long-term goal is to become a National Cancer Institute Designated Comprehensive Cancer Care Center.

Facilities awarded this designation not only must perform first-rate research and provide exceptional patient care, but must also demonstrate that research and clinical efforts stimulate new discoveries, and translate these discoveries into better care. Research in the area of cancer control and programs in community outreach and education are also essential to be awarded the coveted status.

"I feel like we're starting to make a difference already," Murren said. "But we've really just started. We're a long way from the finish line." It is estimated that cancer will afflict 11,000 residents of Nevada during 2006.

Part of NVCi's mission is to ensure that cancer patients and their families, regardless of their geographic location, have access to the latest in cancer prevention, education, detection and treatment options. It is creating a statewide network linked to physicians and hospitals, and reaching out into many regional, cultural, ethnic and religiously diverse constituencies in Nevada. NVCi

has already expanded from its Southern Nevada base to open facilities in Sparks, Fallon and Elko.

"Words can't really express how gratifying it is," Murren said. "Seeing people treated for cancer, helping people through their journey, and knowing that somewhere along the road we've made someone's life a little easier makes it all worth it."

Murren said the volunteers at Nevada Cancer Institute also deserve recognition as heroes. "They have plenty of other things they could do with their time, yet they volunteer to sit with and encourage patients."

For her work at Nevada Cancer Institute, Murren has been honored by Congress and the U.S. Senate. She has also received philanthropy awards, such as the Larry King Heart Award for 2004, the Jameson Philanthropic Award from the Nevada Community Foundation, and the Humanitas Award from the Nevada Episcopalian Club in 2005.

Prior to her full-time work at Nevada Cancer Institute, Murren worked as a senior executive at Merrill Lynch, where she was a highly ranked chartered financial analyst. She and her husband Jim have two children.

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Healthcare Hero

Non-Profit, Northern Nevada

Linda Smith

Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

When her children left home for college, Linda Smith found two programs to fill her empty nest. After concluding her career as a high school English teacher in Reno, she began volunteering for both the Northern Nevada Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and Family Promise of Reno/Sparks, a coalition for the homeless created through a partnership of several downtown churches.

Spending 40-plus hours a week combined between these two programs, while also continuing her volunteer work with other charities and programs, she juggles her time successfully, serving as president of the board for both programs.

Family Promise is a national program with over 100 chapters. Twenty-five congregations throughout Northern Nevada help homeless families by housing them in their church facilities, one week at a time. The family is transported to the day center, a house where the family is able to comfortably cook, complete paperwork, wash laundry and begin the process of finding employment. At any given time, 14 guests are cared for by Family Promise. They are assisted by volunteers from each of the congregations, who help tutor the children and eat or make dinner with the families.

Operating on a budget of only

\$150,000, Smith helps organize the program and the program's fundraisers. However, she said, "Personally, I do it for the children. When you see these innocent children, some of it's hard to see, but it is immensely rewarding in the end. We had two little three-year-old girls, whose parents did not know they were deaf. However, with surgery donated through our connections with health programs, in three or four months the girls' hearing was restored. Without our program they would not have been able to get the pro bono healthcare they received."

While she continues her work with Family Promise, Smith is eagerly planning the 8th annual Race for the Cure and other fund raising programs for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. "I have never had breast cancer, but a dear friend of mine was diagnosed twice with breast cancer, as well as other cancers affecting her stomach," said Smith. "She has survived, but I

started volunteering as a service to her and her cause. I feel passionate for this foundation because I respect the way the foundation works." Smith ensures that 25 percent of every dollar donated to the foundation goes towards national research, while 75 percent goes directly to the Northern Nevada's foundation.

Through her work with the foundation, she has helped raise \$874,000 for Northern Nevadan women afflicted with breast cancer. Some are under-insured, and many are not insured at all. Her experience with the foundation, especially the annual Race for the Cure, has affected her personal life as well. "It is really amazing. I have always been there at the start of the race so I can be a cheerleader for the participants. Survivors, supporters and those living with breast cancer participate in the march. It is so powerful, just watching the women walk holding their daughters' hands, one step at a time. That is what reminds me to keep volunteering – to empower and encourage women as they battle cancer."

After all her exhausting work planning, supporting and participating, Smith remains passionate and determined. "It is important for me to give back in any possible way," she said. "It is simply the right thing to do. The gift that we give is more rewarding than getting a gift back."

"The gift that we give is more rewarding than getting a gift back."

The Valley Health System Making a Difference in Southern Nevada

Valley Hospital, Summerlin Hospital, Spring Valley Hospital and Desert Springs Hospital, together known as The Valley Health System, are committed to the Southern Nevada community and to providing quality healthcare to every patient, every day. The Valley Health System, owned by Universal Health Services (UHS), is the largest provider of healthcare in Nevada.

The Valley Health System and UHS have taken a proactive role in addressing issues facing Nevada. Nevada is well below the national average of hospital beds per population. Over the past five years, UHS has invested more than \$200 million to build and upgrade facilities in Southern Nevada to give the community better access to healthcare.

The commitment doesn't stop there. UHS employs more than 4,000 people in

Southern Nevada, with an annualized labor cost of more than \$270 million. The total annual economic impact of UHS on the State of Nevada has been estimated at more than \$744 million, with a five-year projected impact of \$3.7 billion.

To help address the nursing shortage, The Valley Health System has invested more than \$1.8 million in its Adopt-A-Student program, which pays up to \$8,000 in tuition for nursing students at the four local nursing schools. More than 225 students have used the program, and The Valley Health System has employed 170 of them. This year, The Valley Health System will spend more than \$5.9 million for nursing orientation and employee education, with the majority of education costs for nursing.

The mental health crisis continues in Nevada as more psychiatric patients clog

up emergency rooms while awaiting transport to mental health facilities. The Valley Health System stepped up to the plate and contributed an estimated \$315,800 last year to help ensure that Westcare's mental health triage center continues to operate.

Nevada continues to have among the highest (if not the highest) percentage of population without health insurance in the Western U.S. The Valley Health System provided more than \$46 million in uncompensated care to the community last year.

The Valley Health System and UHS are committed to Nevada and to providing accessible, quality healthcare to Nevada's residents. A healthy community starts with healthy hospitals, and The Valley Health System is a solid corporate citizen dedicated to making a difference in Nevada.

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Healthcare Hero

Technology/Research, Southern Nevada

Dr. William Zamboni

Plastic Surgeon

Dr. William Zamboni is respected worldwide for his groundbreaking surgical research, which involves performing surgery in a chamber with 100 percent oxygen under higher-than-normal pressure. He discovered that surgery conducted under these circumstances enhances a patient's healing ability, and allows the surgeon to extend the time during which successful transplantation can occur after amputation.

In addition to his private surgical work, Zamboni is also a professor of surgery and the chairman of the University of Nevada School of Medicine's Division of Plastic Surgery – where he is one of the youngest chairmen in the country.

Zamboni pioneered Nevada's first Limb Replantation Program at the University Medical Center Level 1 Trauma Center. In May 1998, he performed the state's first full arm reattachment. He said performing surgeries gives him personal satisfaction, but he is also happy for the patient he was able to help. "I couldn't imagine doing anything else," Zamboni said. "Surgery is a very rewarding field."

Zamboni's students watch and assist as he performs a surgery at UMC, and the residents who work under Zamboni's supervision conduct surgeries under the close supervision of Zamboni or other faculty members.

Licensed in Illinois and Nevada, Zamboni said he entered the medical field to interact with and help people, which he has done through working with patients and teaching. And because he is also a graduate of the University of Nevada School of Medicine, Zamboni serves as the ideal role model for those who learn under him at the school.

Only 15 years into his practice, Zamboni has already trained 236 students, more than 50 residents and 12 fellows – of which he said he is most proud,

although juggling his time between work and teaching often results in six-and-a-half day work weeks. However, he said knowing that his teaching has potentially influenced his students' lives in medicine is very rewarding.

And although Zamboni has already taken Nevada's medical research to new levels, he does not plan to stop there. He hopes to expand the faculty of surgeons in the university's Department of Surgery and add surgical training programs that will produce excellent surgeons and surgical specialties to serve Nevada residents.

"We have already had success in starting new fellowships and surgical training programs," he said. "But to me, this is just a starting point in a foundation of what is to come."

As for encouragement for others wanting to become a Hero in Healthcare, Zamboni said, "As long as you follow your passion and put the patient first, all else will follow."

Zamboni has been a member of countless organizations, the recipient of many distinguished awards, has taught at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and was an adjunct faculty member at the Nevada Cancer Institute. Additionally, he has received more than \$500,000 worth of grants for his research.

"As long as you follow your passion and put the patient first, all else will follow."



Healthcare Hero

Technology/Research, Northern Nevada

Dr. John Packham

University of Nevada School of Medicine

Dr. John Packham works with numbers, and makes numbers work for people. Currently serving as the director of the Nevada FLEX Program – part of the University of Nevada School of Medicine's Office of Rural Health – Packham helps collect and organize data so it can be used by healthcare professionals to determine community needs and support funding requests.

Packham, who received his PhD in sociology from John Hopkins University, provides accurate statistical data in hopes of creating a better understanding of Nevada's workforce needs in the medical field. Statistics can be used not only by hospitals or other healthcare providers, but also by policymakers and legislators trying to prioritize programs to fill workforce needs.

He believes, "For too long there has been a gap between the reality of physician supply-and-demand requirements and the statistics surrounding those needs. We are a speedily growing state, and the demand for healthcare and healthcare workers is immediate."

Through his work, Packham bridges this gap by trying to develop an understanding of the need for healthcare workers in Nevada, especially documenting access to healthcare clinics, nurses and dentists.

"It is part of solving the puzzle of broad-

ening the access to care. We, as doctors and data collectors, have a responsibility to make sure we are using dollars wisely according to the ongoing set of issues," Packham said. "When you have precise numbers, you can set precise targets. The data shows the precise magnitude of supply and demand. For example, exactly how many nurses do we need? And how can we best help them in school?"

Packham's data collection and statistical processes are groundbreaking and provide accurate information that serves a vitally important cause. "Doctors and administrators know there is a shortage of healthcare professionals and a need for more access to resources, but we used to lack precise numbers. Hopefully, our office is providing that information now. My approach to data is to adhere to a standard in which the data is collected in a transparent manner, and the process behind the data is widely known and not secretive. Other researchers or doctors

can look at our data and know how it has been collected," Packham noted.

Collecting numbers is only part of the process; statistics must also have practical applications for policy-making. "For example, we just completed a survey of employees at a rural hospital I work with," said Packham. "The survey results won't end up printed in a journal somewhere. Instead, they will be given to the community so the local leaders can make necessary changes in their organizations."

In addition to his work with the Nevada FLEX Program and the Nevada Office of Rural Health, Packham volunteers as a council member for Nevada Council of Health Insight, the Access to Healthcare Network in Washoe County and the Washoe County Chronic Disease Coalition. He also works with the Nevada Institute for Nursing.

Behind the numbers and statistics is Packham's passion to make a difference. "I have been trained as an academic sociologist, but what is nice about my position is that I get to interact with people. I get to see the numbers in action," he said. Still, the most important aspect to Packham is seeing his data aid the growing Nevada community. "My job is fulfilling, because it helps the community I live in," he said. "We all want to live in a better community than the one we inherited."

*"When you have
precise numbers,
you can set
precise targets."*



Healthcare Hero

Lifetime Achievement, Southern Nevada

Dr. Marietta Nelson

Ophthalmologist

Described by some as perhaps the most respected physician volunteer in Nevada, Dr. Marietta Nelson, who has been in Las Vegas for nearly 20 years, has made a name for herself in the community. However, at 52 years old, she did not consider herself old enough for the Lifetime Achievement award.

A member, and former president, of the Nevada State Medical Association who has had to choose award winners before, Nelson knows all too well how hard it is to choose just one person from a pool of qualified candidates. Many doctors in Nevada are worthy of being named Heroes in Healthcare, she said.

"Most are already heroes," she said. "As ophthalmologists, we aren't in the emergency room. Seeing others slaving away in those conditions, day after day, week after week, is inspiring."

Humility aside, Nelson has won awards for her work before, and she was even named Physician of the Year in 2000 by her peers in the Nevada State Medical Association. Additionally, she is board certified in pediatrics and ophthalmology.

Nelson said one of her favorite aspects of her profession is working with people.

"I like eccentricities," she laughed, adding that the unpredictability of her work keeps things new and interesting. No matter how many people have the same problem, somehow it's a little different with each person, she said.

With specialization becoming increasingly prevalent – there are six sub-specializations just within the eye alone – Nelson focuses on the entire eye so she can see the whole person behind it.

She said she considers surgery beautiful and probably sees it differ-

ently than a man does. She likened it to embroidery work – one of her favorite hobbies – because it's very intricate and delicate.

Previously a pediatrics resident, Nelson was hooked on ophthalmology after she witnessed a corneal transplant on a young patient. That led her to devote three years to a residency in ophthalmology. However, to fulfill her love of working with young people, almost half of her patients are children, and some are even as young as newborns.

And although Nelson's full-time job is enough to keep anyone's hands full, she still finds time for volunteer work. She regularly lectures at the School of Medicine and the College of Osteopathic Medicine and hosts medical students and residents for ophthalmology rotations in her office. When needed, she also volunteers her time to see children in need at no charge.

In the not-so-distant past, Nelson also made regular trips to Mexico along with a group of other local, dedicated ophthalmologists, as part of medical missions. She has also served as president of the Las Vegas Ophthalmological Society, Nevada Ophthalmological Society and the Clark County Medical Society.

*To fulfill her love
of working with
young people, almost
half of her patients
are children.*



Healthcare Hero

Lifetime Achievement, Northern Nevada

Dr. Noah Smernoff

Dr. Noah Smernoff practiced medicine for 77 years and didn't retire until he was 100 years old. He was still making house calls at 98 and would still maintain that personal focus with his patients today if his health permitted.

Focused on equal opportunity healthcare in both rural and urban communities in Nevada, he did everything from removing splinters to delivering babies, from removing appendixes to treating tuberculosis.

Smernoff began his career in 1929 as a resident at the Salt Lake County Hospital in Utah, which served many destitute patients in the midst of the Great Depression. While taking a summer off during his residency in Salt Lake City, he worked as a doctor in the mines for Kennecott Industrial Medicine. In that dangerous environment, the miners often threatened Smernoff with guns. But he saw through their desperation, and treated them with the same care he would his wealthier patients. From this experience, Smernoff established his motto: "Poor people get just as sick as rich people."

From then on, his mission became creating personal relationships with his patients. Promoting equal care became the hallmark of his career. "When he saw the

way some doctors treated poorer families, he put that mission into his practice," said Dr. Jay Chamberlain, a lifelong student of Smernoff who speaks both fondly and respectfully of his mentor. "He lives for his patients. He's my hero."

After his residency, Smernoff moved to McGill, Nevada where he took a position as a Kennecott company doctor. One of his favorite stories took place while he was practicing in McGill. He was delivering a woman who was unknowingly carrying twins. He delivered the first baby, and then excitedly cried to the brand new mother, "There's another one in here!"

Those twins are just two of the 6,000 babies he delivered during his career, many of them on kitchen tables at patients' homes in McGill. Chamberlain recalls a poignant moment in Smernoff's career. "As he was delivering a baby one night, he realized he had delivered the mother years before, and her mother before her. Three generations of Smernoff's patients were all in one room with him that night."

He worked in McGill until 1953, when he helped open the Ralston Medical Clinic in Reno, a small family clinic composed of five or six doctors. Chamberlain said, "He'd go to work at six in the morning, come home for

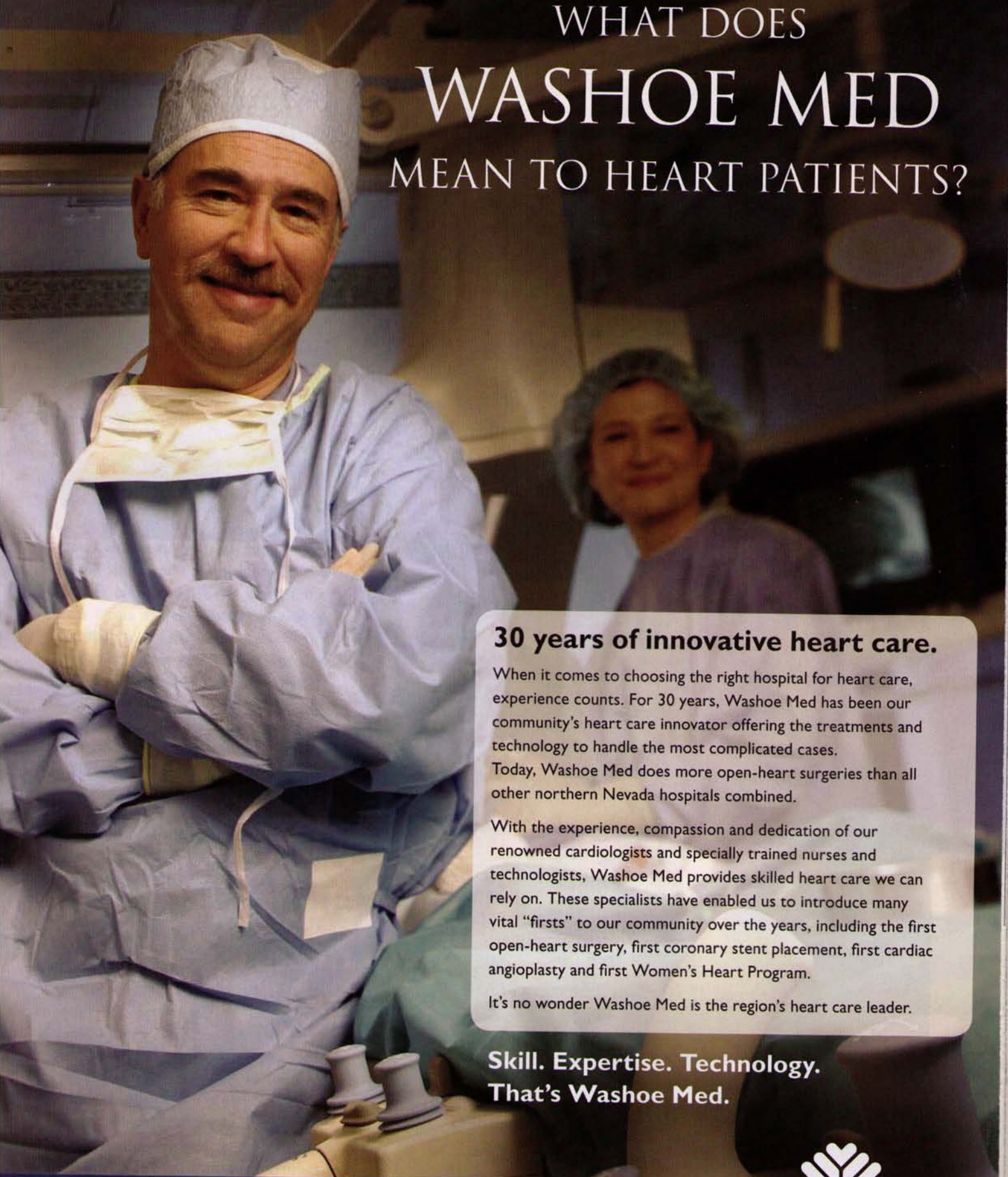
dinner at six o'clock, then leave again on house calls until nine."

Although the doctor had such a busy schedule, Chamberlain noted, "His family never considered him absent from their lives. He always had a special knack for letting people know that he loved them, even though he may not always be there."

Chamberlain added, "He takes care of people in a more traditional way than many modern doctors. He looks for people who are disadvantaged, and not only treats their affliction, but continues building a relationship with them outside of the hospital." Specifically, Smernoff spent valuable time with his drug- and alcohol-abusing patients, continuing to act as their sponsor as they went through rehabilitation.

While his work is now a few years behind him, Smernoff continues inquiring about his patients. "His mind is still as sharp as it was during his practice. I still feel like he is my mentor," Chamberlain concluded.

Although the technology of medicine has greatly changed since the 1920s, the human factor remains unchanged. Dr. Noah Smernoff's career holds many lessons for today's medical professionals, especially his determination to respect and care for all patients as individuals.



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