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HEALTH SYSTEM

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Summer 2015



**Dr. Kaviani Finds Parallels
Between Surgery & Giving**

**TORRANCE MEMORIAL
CELEBRATES 90 YEARS**

**New Hope for Once
Inoperable Heart Patients**



Exceptional Health Care, Then and Now.

90
YEARS

TORRANCE MEMORIAL Celebrates 90 Years

Those integral to its history reflect on the past, present and future.

WRITTEN BY DIANE E. BARBER | PHOTOGRAPHED BY LAUREN PRESSEY

The tone of the original hospital, built in Spanish-style architecture, suggested a costly mansion in good taste rather than an institution for the care of the sick.



Ninety years ago the Torrance family's vision was realized when the doors opened to the 32-bed Jared Sydney Torrance Memorial Hospital. This was due to the foresight of Torrance founder Jared Sydney Torrance. In his effort to make Torrance a completely modern city, before his death he made a will leaving \$100,000 to the Torrance Hospital Association (created in 1920).

However, after his passing, the bequest in the will was declared invalid because of a technicality in the laws of the state. His wife, Helena Childs Torrance, and his family honored his bequest by purchasing land on Engracia Avenue in Old Torrance, constructing the building and deeding it to the Torrance Hospital Association.

The hospital admitted its first patients on May 17, 1925. Mrs. Torrance went on to serve as a major benefactor and was largely responsible for sustaining the hospital through its first decade. Like her husband, she also

remembered the hospital in her will with a generous bequest.

The independent, nonprofit hospital survived the Great Depression and other hardships throughout the years to become nationally recognized as a leading multi-faceted health care system. Its evolution included a move across town, two name changes and the building of a state-of-the-art medical campus outfitted with the latest technology. The ultra-modern Lundquist Tower is a far cry from the quaint, Spanish-style architecture of the original hospital on Engracia Avenue.

Torrance Memorial's success is historically credited to forward-thinking leadership, a passionate and highly educated staff, and a steadfast commitment to providing medical care excellence for the South Bay community. In celebration of the hospital's journey, esteemed members of its team share glimpses of modern-day history through the lenses of their careers that have spanned decades. >>



GEORGE GRAHAM
FORMER CEO

Righting the ship and charting a 30-year course of success

George Graham joined what was then known as Torrance Memorial Hospital as a financial consultant in 1974. During that time it was suffering tremendous economic hardship. Impressed with his management style, within just a short time the chairman of the board asked him to take over management of the hospital for “a couple of years.”

He earnestly accepted the challenge in 1975. Thirty years later when he retired as president and chief executive officer, he left behind a legacy that has distinctly set the medical center apart from other hospitals and ensured its continued success.

“I saw a future for the hospital when most people had written it off,” Graham says. “Indicators that predict a hospital’s doom are having poor (economic) demographics, being land-bound and unable to expand, residing in decaying communities where people are moving away, and employing an aging medical staff that keeps the young lions out. We had none of that.”

To the contrary, the hospital had a growing, youthful medical staff, was surrounded by vacant property and the population was growing. Graham went to work to right the ship, instructing his team to “bite the bullet” (a favorite expression from George’s U.S. Navy days). Profits were reinvested back into the organization.

With George at the helm, the hospital was selected as one of the top 100 hospitals in the United States and continued to earn recognition as a technically advanced medical center. He attributes this success to the medical talent.

“It didn’t take much to get the hospital into a growth pattern,” Graham says. “There was so much going for it. There was no reason that it could not be successful. We were bringing in quality doctors, and we had an incredibly trained medical staff. Dick Hoffman (Richard B. Hoffman, MD, radiologist, in whose memory the Lundquist Tower is dedicated) in particular, greatly influenced my decisions regarding technology. We would not have the hospital we have today without his good judgment and commitment.”

In addition to Graham’s ability to attract an exceptional staff, build an excellent medical campus and stay on the cutting edge of technological advancement, he also created and implemented organizational procedures that fostered collaboration between the administration and the medical staff. The competition for resources and an “us vs. them” culture commonly seen at other hospitals gave way to a collaborative team spirit that is still at the core of Torrance Memorial’s culture today.

Where does Graham see the hospital going in the future? “We have all of the credentials necessary to continue to grow and thrive. We have leading technology, a highly qualified medical staff, a wonderful facility and we offer exceptional care. There is no end in sight in Torrance Memorial Medical Center’s future,” he says.



CRAIG LEACH
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Staying the course of growth and independence

Craig Leach began working for Torrance Memorial 31 years ago. He became George Graham’s successor on January 1, 2005.

As a lifelong resident of the South Bay, it resonates with Leach to stay true to Mr. & Mrs. Torrance’s founding vision for an independent hospital that serves this community. Today the Torrance Memorial Medical Center service area includes approximately 900,000 people who live in a geographic area that extends beyond Torrance, the Beach Cities and the Palos Verdes Peninsula to include San Pedro, El Segundo, Carson and Hawthorne.

“It is unique for Torrance Memorial to still be an independent hospital system in the state of California, of which we are very proud,” Leach says. “With about 150 hospitals in Los Angeles and Orange County combined, only about a half-dozen remain independent. We feel that a local board making decisions for the community we serve continues to be the best approach.”

The staff’s commitment and passion for the community has been generously returned in kind over the years. When planning for the Lundquist Tower began in 2007, the fundraising target was \$50 million to \$75 million. Upon opening the Lundquist Tower in 2014, that goal was far exceeded with a total of \$130 million in cash and pledges—a testament to the magnitude of the local philanthropic support, which has become a substantial component of the medical center’s income for future long-term growth and development.

With their sights set on the future, Leach and his dynamic team recently envisioned and established the Torrance Memorial Health System to better facilitate and improve the health of South Bay residents. Part of that vision included the purchase of THIPA (a local independent practice association) and the creation of Torrance Memorial Integrated Physicians (an accountable care organization), with close to 400 physicians participating in each organization. The focus of both organizations is to better coordinate patient care.

It also established the Torrance Memorial Physician Network, a multi-specialty practice that provides comprehensive care in primary, pediatric and medical specialty care, including endocrinology, rheumatology, OB/GYN, cardiology and oncology. The network is equipped with a state-of-the-art electronic medical record system and a patient portal, which provides patients direct and confidential access to all of their medical information. Staying a step ahead of its historical campus growth, Leach was also instrumental in facilitating the purchase of 16 acres of land across Lomita Boulevard, which will be incredibly valuable in the future.

For the third straight year, Torrance Memorial was ranked as one of the best hospitals for 2014–2015 in California and the Los Angeles metro area by *U.S. News & World Report*. As one of the largest health care facilities in Los Angeles (based upon the number of admissions and patient days), Torrance Memorial Medical Center is an industry frontrunner that continues to attract top physicians through technological capabilities for on-campus advanced medical procedures, including high-end, complex cardio, neurological and orthopedic surgeries.

“From a value standpoint, we deliver high quality at an appropriate cost level. We add to that a culture of service with a high level of passion and compassion for how we do what we do. This is a great hospital,” he says.



Mimi Brody, Kate Crane, Craig Leach, George Graham, Bill Collier, Norman Panitch, MD, and Peggy Berwald, RN, have each played a unique and critical role in making Torrance Memorial what it is today.



KATE CRANE
FORMER BOARD OF
TRUSTEES CHAIR

*Carrying out the
founder's vision*

When Kate Crane, an estate planning attorney and hospital donor, joined the Torrance Memorial board of trustees in the late 1980s, glass ceilings for women in business were commonplace. However, that was not the case at Torrance Memorial.

Co-founder Helena Childs Torrance placed such great importance on the role of women to the future of the medical center that in 1925 she had it written in the bylaws that the board would always be comprised of 50% women. After four years of service on the board, Crane was invited to succeed the late Jeanne Beecher as the hospital's second female chair.

"There were not very many women physicians at the time, so it was very inspiring that Jeanne had become the chairwoman after beginning as a volunteer," Crane says. "Jeanne had done a great job and was well respected by the board and the greater hospital community, so when I became the chairwoman, no challenges arose because I was a woman. The attitude concerning the composition of the medical center's governing board was totally unbiased, which said so much about the organization's culture. Women were fully respected in all positions then, just as they are today."

With no prior hospital experience and the health care industry in a state of non-stop transition, Crane had a "wonderful learning experience" during her service. "There were always new health care and hospital administration issues to deal with," she says. "There were constant developments in technology and innovations in the approach to care. Torrance Memorial was often the first hospital in the area to invest in new equipment—each purchase was carefully considered as to how it would contribute to the level of care in the community." (Kate specifically remembers the board being briefed on the acquisition of a lithotripter, which was then an amazing new device used in the non-invasive treatment of kidney stones.)

She remembers Torrance Memorial investing very early on in handheld devices that would streamline medical record maintenance. "It was an exciting time. I also learned the different ways that physicians and their practices were involved with the hospital and observed how those relationships evolved positively over many years of association," she said. While on the board she felt privileged in getting to know a wonderful network of physicians and health care professionals in the community.

Another component that made a big impression on Crane was the corps of volunteers. "Volunteers work in all areas of the hospital. Many of the people I knew in the late 1980s and '90s are still there today. It was always evident that the volunteers contributed so much to the hospital community. I truly think the hospital could not function without the remarkable volunteers."

Additional key milestones under Crane's service include the dedication of Torrance Memorial's Breast Diagnostic Center to the late South Bay auto dealer Vasek Polak and his late wife, Anna Maria, in 1994, and the emergency department expansion and reopening. "The Breast Diagnostic Center dedication was wonderful and momentous because it created a very positive space for women in the community. The staff there continues to be very dedicated to continually improving the services it provides." >>



1. Jared Sidney Torrance made a will leaving \$100,000 to the Torrance Hospital Association. 2. On July 9, 1968, community members gathered to break ground for the new \$8 million Torrance Memorial Hospital located on Lomita Boulevard. 3. George W. Graham successfully turns the medical center into a profitable organization through humor and impressing upon his staff the importance of “biting the bullet” when cutting nonessential expenses. 4. The new hospital as it looked when it opened in April 1971.



BILL COLLIER
CURRENT BOARD
OF TRUSTEES CHAIR

The future will be defined by “safety and quality”

Bill Collier stepped up from his board position to fill Kate Daniels’ seat in 2001. Like Crane, Collier is also an attorney and spent a considerable amount of time in his early years with Torrance Memorial Medical Center learning the basics about the health care business.

“George Graham and I met in parenting classes with our wives and became great friends when he was CEO of the hospital,” Collier said. “A few years later he asked me if I would be interested in serving on the board. I told him there couldn’t be anyone more ignorant about health care than me. But George didn’t care about that. He wanted people from the community who cared about the hospital.”

According to Collier, when he joined the board of trustees the delivery of care in the health care environment was very complicated. Managed care had become the “watch word” with a focus on quality, cost and efficiency. “It is a complex system that has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. But in the hands of our extraordinary staff, we have always been very competitive and a step ahead of everyone else in the managed care environment in Southern California.”

In addition to policy and procedure changes throughout the years, there have been major hospital campus changes and improvements. Collier’s proudest accomplishment during his tenure thus far is his involvement with the decisions made by the board to build the Lundquist Tower.

“It is one of the most attractive, user-friendly and state-of-the-art hospitals in the state of California and in the country,” he says. The operating rooms look like they are right out of a *Star Wars* movie, and the bright and airy atmosphere is so much more welcoming than other hospitals in general. We joke that it is just like checking into a Four Seasons Hotel.”

What lies ahead for the hospital in the eyes of Bill Collier? “One of the biggest things we anticipate going forward is that major hospitals will make further great strides in the safety and quality of the care they deliver. We are well positioned to do that, and everyone (patients, medical staff, payors, regulators and the hospital itself) will be the beneficiaries. As board members, we will continue to rely on the medical staff to inform us of promising new technologies, and we will continue to invest in them so this hospital system will provide its community with care that is on the cutting edge of health care.”



NORMAN PANITCH, MD
FORMER CHIEF
OF STAFF

Keeping an eye on the forefront of innovation

Norman Panitch, MD, was one of very few gastroenterologists in the area when he joined the Torrance Memorial Hospital (the name changed to Torrance Memorial Medical Center in 1979) staff in 1975. Along with him came a host of other board-certified specialists from Harbor-UCLA Medical Center (where he was formerly the chief medical resident). He became chief of staff in the 1980s and retired from practice in 2013. Currently he chairs the Physician’s Council and is a lecturer.

“When I started, the hospital was doing poorly financially. But it was the only hospital in the area that could do sophisticated lab testing, and it was full of young bright doctors like Dr. Richard Hoffman and Dr. Stephen Lemkin, who provided tremendous stability,” says Panitch. “At the time I took over as chief of staff, we were not accepting any more doctors because the building was too crowded.”

With a passion for education, Dr. Panitch grew concerned about the lack of educational opportunities for post-graduates. He was soon appointed chairman of medical education and arranged monthly lectures at the medical center, often led by his friends from USC and Harbor General/UCLA.

“I felt Torrance Memorial was a rising star at that time, as did many other young physicians coming into the community,” he says.

In the early 1980s when doctors were still leery of health maintenance organization (HMO) medicine, Torrance Memorial management was concerned that if the hospital did not compete, it would lose market share. Dr. Panitch and a group of other doctors formed the nonprofit Torrance Hospital Independent Practice Association (THIPA) in 1985, which doctors ran independently until 2012.

“THIPA turned around the perception of HMOs. Now we measure doctors not by quantity or by claims, but by access, patient satisfaction and quality scores. The old concept that HMOs were inferior to preferred provider organization (PPOs) has been blurred.”

Dr. Panitch looks to the future of Torrance Memorial Medical Center with great enthusiasm and optimism about the advancements in technology that are leading the way for the coordination of care. “The future of medicine is transparent, encrypted information portals with patient access,” he says. “Torrance Memorial has always been on the forefront of innovation, and that will continue with this and other technologies.”



PEGGY BERWALD, RN
 CHIEF NURSING
 OFFICER, SENIOR
 VICE PRESIDENT OF
 PATIENT SERVICES

*Witnessing the
 evolution of nursing*

Peggy Berwald, RN, has spent 37 years of her 42-year nursing career at Torrance Memorial. She began as a staff nurse. In 2003, she was appointed chief nursing officer and senior vice president of patient services. During her tenure, Berwald has watched the hospital evolve from a small community hospital to a large, regional medical center and health care system.

“I was very fortunate when I started as a staff nurse in our adult intensive care unit (ICU) in 1978. There was a team approach and a lot of opportunities to try different positions, as there still are today. I was asked to take on various projects and responsibilities until my current position, which was an honor to accept because of the credibility, integrity and stability of the executive leadership team.”

A turning point in Berwald’s career was losing both of her parents in ICUs and making the difficult decision to have them taken off life support. The silver lining in her loss was the ability to relate to patients and their families on a much deeper level.

“I have always been one to advocate working with families to make the right decisions for the patient. But you never expect to find yourself where the patients’ families are. We are touching people’s lives in the most vulnerable and intimate way, which is a privilege and a calling.”

With more than 3 million members, nursing is the largest segment of the nation’s health care workforce and has been voted as the most trusted position in the Gallup polls since 2002. Berwald sees a bright future for nurses and believes that now is one of the most pivotal times in the history of the profession.

“Nurses are playing an integral role in a shift from a treatment to a prevention and wellness health care model. Our role is to make people feel safe and cared for and to look with empathy beyond just clinical care to the connection of the mind, body and the spirit. That is what makes the greatest difference in caregiving.”

Under Berwald’s leadership, Torrance Memorial received the prestigious Magnet designation in 2012, which is the highest recognition for nursing excellence in the United States and abroad. Out of 5,000 hospitals nationwide, only 400 hospitals have achieved this honor. “When I became the chief nursing officer in 2003, the Magnet designation process became my blueprint and strategic plan to be able to attract and retain a quality nursing workforce to achieve the highest patient outcomes.”

Working on the front lines of patient care, Berwald and her dedicated staff continue to strive for excellence. Since the research-based Versant New Graduate RN Residency program was implemented nearly 10 years ago, the hospital’s retention rate of nurses has increased for those who have completed the program.

“Our young and diverse nurses are competent, compassionate, confident and well-prepared to become future nursing leaders at Torrance Memorial,” she says. “The caliber, quality and education level of these nurses positions us very well to meet the changing and growing health care needs of our community.”



MIMI BRODY
 AUXILIARY MEMBER

*25,200 hours
 (and counting)
 of volunteering
 perspective*

Mimi Brody began volunteering at Torrance Memorial Hospital in 1970 at the original location on Engracia Avenue. Forty-five years later, her spirited enthusiasm is as strong now as it was then, as she continues to serve her beloved community.

“There were only 40 or 50 volunteers when I started, and we all knew each other. Now there are about 950 of us. Back then volunteering was not as structured as it is now because the hospital was very small. It was so small that we held our meetings in private homes. We discharged patients, served meals and did anything we could to help.”

When the hospital moved to its current location in 1971, the bed count dramatically increased from 96 to 247, and additional volunteers were recruited for more diverse responsibilities.

“We were able to do a lot of new things,” Brody says. “And instead of pushing carts from room to room with magazines and other sundries, we had an actual gift shop, which is where I love to spend most of my time now.” The Auxiliary’s commitment to the success of the shop, along with outside fundraising, has provided significant financial support for the medical center.

“At the end of each year, the gift shop profits go back to the hospital,” she says. “Four years ago we pledged \$1 million toward the naming of the Lundquist Tower Healing Garden. It is a place where people can go and sit with trees, flowers and a fountain to gather their thoughts. We have one year to go and are close to reaching our goal.”

As for the future of volunteerism at Torrance Memorial Medical Center, according to Brody, regardless of new technology, changes in health care or the size of a hospital, patients and families benefit greatly from interacting with volunteers. “Most people are upset and are facing a lot of unknowns. They appreciate a friendly smiling face and a personal touch. For me to be able to give that to them is very satisfying.” •



Helena Childs Torrance was largely responsible for seeing Jared Sidney Torrance’s vision through and also for sustaining the hospital during its first decade of financial stress.