The Myers’ Retirement & Mammoth Hospital’s 40th Anniversary

By Talene Shabanian
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2018 marks an important year in Mammoth Hospital’s history as we celebrate our 40th anniversary and bid farewell to CEO Gary Myers and his wife, Karilyn, long-time Orthopedics/General Surgery/Rehabilitation Manager. The Myers’ retirement marks the end of an era, one in which the Hospital grew from a small rural outpost to a full spectrum health care provider. (And yet, in all that time, we failed to come up with a more succinct title for Karilyn’s position.) Jokes aside, this year presents an opportunity to reflect on how far both the Hospital and the Town have come. Talking with the Myers about their life in the Eastern Sierra, their story offers a first person perspective of that trajectory.

For a hospital to open in the United States, it has to make business sense, not people sense. That is why Mammoth Hospital’s story is unique. It didn’t make a dime of business sense to open a hospital in Mammoth forty years ago. With less than 3,500 residents, a hospital couldn’t sustain demand to keep qualified doctors and nurses employed, much less recruit them in the first place or finance construction.

Fortunately for all of us who live in or visit the area today, a tenacious group of proactive citizens recognized the need for accessible health care regardless of the bottom line and took it upon themselves to do something about it. From 1968 to 1978, the Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary, as they came to be known, strived to raise funds and campaigned for a bond to fund

Some of our talented Medical Imaging staff; Denise Morrow, Jana Trckova-Ramos, and Christy Driehaus, all looking forward to working with new 3D Tomosynthesis mammography technology, coming soon to Mammoth Hospital. Read more about this new advancement and what it means for patients inside this issue.

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Orthopedics: Innovative and Ever-Changing

The orthopedic team at Mammoth Hospital is continually striving to stay fresh on current research, innovative techniques, and best practice in orthopedic care. Towards this end, the Mammoth Orthopedic Institute, in partnership with Mammoth Hospital, is once again hosting the Mammoth Sports Course for the third year in a row. The conference allows the entire sports medicine team at Mammoth Hospital, including surgeons, physician assistants, nurses, athletic trainers, physical therapists, and orthopedic technologists, to partake in candid discussion and collaborate with sports medicine teams from around the country.

This year’s Mammoth Sports Course will feature a joint preservation cadaver lab, lectures on the patellofemoral joint and shoulder instability by world renowned surgeons and Mammoth Hospital physical therapists as well as multi-disciplinary case study presentations by surgeons from around the country, including Mammoth Hospital’s own orthopedic group. Dr. Brian Gilmer, one of Mammoth Hospital’s orthopedic surgeons, summed the course up well when he said “the spirit of this course [isn’t] just to rehash the same PowerPoint presentations given by experts at various meetings, but to critically evaluate the indications, techniques, successes, and failures involved in the treatment of complex problems in which no clear evidence-based guidelines exist.”

Mammoth Orthopedic Journal Club

Medicine is an innovative, ever-changing, and fast moving field. Constant vigilance is required in order to stay up to date and ensure one’s practices do not become outdated. If there is new research out there relating to orthopedic care, you can rest easy knowing that the orthopedic team at Mammoth Hospital has read it. Once a month the team hosts an orthopedic journal club where the entire care team gets together to review and discuss scholarly articles from the top orthopedic journals in the world. This allows the team to constantly review the research and apply it to their practice at Mammoth Hospital. The collegial atmosphere allows the team to collaborate, ask questions, and fosters a culture in which all members of the team are willing to reevaluate their practices in order to ensure they are providing the best possible care for their patients.

Dr. Timothy Crall leads a discussion on advanced techniques in shoulder arthroscopy during the Sports Course last Summer.

“...was invaluable for understanding the big picture, building a better team, and caring for our patients.”

- Course Participant

Healthcare District Board Openings

With the election of Southern Mono Healthcare District Board Chairwoman Lynda Salcido to Mammoth’s Town Council, three vacancies on the SMHD Board of Directors will be open for our November 6, 2018 general election. Directors sit on the SMHD Board for a term of four years. Board members’ terms will begin on December 20, 2018.

Serving on the SMHD Board of Directors offers community members a chance to become an integral part of the operations of Mammoth Hospital, a vital resource for residents of the Eastern Sierra.

Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month from 8 a.m. until approximately noon. Any person who is a registered voter within the hospital district, and is not disqualified by any California law, is eligible to be a candidate for a hospital board office.

The filing period for a declaration of candidacy begins on July 16 and ends on August 10 of this year. That form can be picked up and filed with the Elections Department between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding holidays), at the Mono County Registrar’s office at 74 N. School Street, Annex I, in Bridgeport.

For more information, visit www.monocounty.ca.gov/elections/page/election-information and download the Candidates’ Guide or call (760) 932-5537.
As our community develops and we envision the future, it's easy to gloss over healthcare and assume there is some social or governmental mechanism that will secure services as the town grows. The reality of course, is far from that. Having a hospital nearby is not a guarantee, much less a full spectrum healthcare provider. Which is why the Mammoth Hospital Foundation exists—to enable Mammoth Hospital to develop at a pace that ensures everyone living and visiting Mammoth has quality, accessible healthcare. In 2018 and 2019 the Mammoth Hospital Foundation is raising funds for three major projects:

**3D Tomosynthesis Mammography**

Dr. Yuri Parisky, longtime Mammoth Hospital Radiologist and resident community firebrand, championed the cause of bringing Tomosynthesis to Mammoth. Tomosynthesis transforms a traditional mammogram from 2D to 3D by using a series of layered images. The result is a higher clarity mammogram that increases chances of early detection 20 to 65% and while reducing the likelihood of a false positive.

Thanks to the outstanding generosity the Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary, Mammoth Resorts, Rusty Gregory, and the Friends of Mammoth Hospital, who collectively donated over $250,000 Tomosynthesis is coming to Mammoth this fall!

**Dental Clinic Expansion**

As the only provider of Medi-Cal dental services in town, the wait for a dental appointment in Mammoth is frequently six months or more. In the next two years, Mammoth Hospital will be doubling the size of the Family Dental Clinic from three exam rooms to six. The Dental Clinic Expansion will result in greater availability of appointments for residents and guests when facing a dental emergency, but will also enable more patients to be seen for regular checkups.

Thanks to the Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary and a group of generous private donors, the Dental Clinic Expansion has already met $145,000 of the $190,000 goal! The Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary are the Hospital’s biggest donors, donating $100,000 to the Dental Clinic project and another $100,000 to the Tomosynthesis project.

The Auxiliary are a group of volunteers who run The Cast Off on a 100% volunteer basis. These dedicated volunteers are tolling away behind the register on a beautiful summer’s day so that we can have second-hand toys and top-of-the-line healthcare! Every year the Auxiliary makes major donations that enable Mammoth Hospital to make advancements in care we otherwise could not afford.

**Specialty Clinic Expansion**

All visiting specialists currently rotate through exam space adjacent to the Dental and Orthopedic Clinics. The space constraints limit the amount of time on a monthly basis Mammoth Hospital can offer critical specialty care lines. The new expanded Specialty Clinic will relocate into the building that once housed The Cast Off, on the southwest corner of the Hospital campus and will include six exam rooms and two procedure rooms. This expansion will enable increased availability of currently offered specialties like urology, dermatology, otolaryngology (ENT), and cardiology and pave the way for the Hospital to recruit other specialists, reducing the need for residents to drive hours to receive specialty care in Reno or Los Angeles.

While 5% may not seem like significant progress this actually represents a very meaningful gift of $20,000 from a generous local family. The Mammoth Hospital Foundation is raising the remaining $45,000 for the Dental Clinic and $360,000 for the Specialty Clinic Expansion through an Adopt a Room patron program.

The Mammoth Hospital Foundation is working to ensure that despite challenges across the industry, the best facilities, medical technology, physicians, and nurses are right here in Mammoth and that our community continues to be an exceptional place to live, work, and play. We are extraordinarily lucky to have benefactors in our community who recongize the need for quality healthcare and are willing to step up and support these projects that benefit us all!

If you're interested in learning more about these projects, the Adopt a Room program, or want to know how you can contribute, visit www.MammothHospital.com/giving-back/foundation.
Serving the Bishop Community with Board Certified Physical Therapy Services

The Mammoth Hospital Physical Therapy clinic in Bishop was established a few years ago in order to provide easier access to our Orthopedic and Physical Therapy services for our Bishop patients. The clinic has a solid group of talented providers who are able to offer a wide variety of clinical expertise. In Physical Therapy you can refer to yourself as a “specialist” if you complete some advance testing and pass a test with the American Board of Certification. You may not sit for these tests unless you have logged in enough hours and have some advance knowledge of the subject manner. We are pleased that in the Bishop clinic we have three specialties on staff. Chris Matteson and Blake Rossi are both Orthopedic Clinical Specialists and are also Certified Athletic Trainers. Jen McMahon recently became a Geriatric Clinical Specialist and Joanne Henze has two board certifications for specialty; one in Geriatrics and the other in Pediatrics. In California there are only 1,595 Orthopedic Clinical Specialists, 201 Geriatric Clinical Specialists and 172 Pediatric Clinical Specialists, so we are extremely proud of our staff for acquiring these specialties and being able to offer these specialized services to our Bishop patients.

Our Bishop clinic also hosts providers with 20+ years’ experience that bring with them special skillsets in treating patients. We have providers that have advanced knowledge and skills in women's health, pilates, orthopedic treatment of the spine, chronic pain, sports medicine, balance, wound care and orthotics. It is this experience that enhances the provider’s clinical reasoning and enables them to offer quality cost efficient care. Our team stays on top of the latest research and treatment techniques.

Many of our Bishop clinic staff members grew up in the Owens Valley and we take a particular pride in offering the best quality care to the residents of this town that we all love so much.

“Many of us grew up in the Owens Valley and truly love it here. We feel that with our experience and advanced skills we can allow our patients to stay home and receive high quality care right here in their own hometown.”

We’re social. Come visit. Stay up to date with all the goings on at Mammoth Hospital on our social media channels!
Chief Executive Officer Recruitment

Mammoth Hospital is in the process of recruiting a new Chief Executive Officer to lead the organization into the bright future that awaits our organization. As of the beginning of June, over 50 candidates have already expressed varying levels of interest in the position, according to Mark Andrew, a senior partner with Witt/Kieffer, the recruitment firm which is conducting our nationwide search for the right candidate.

This spring, Witt/Kieffer compiled a thorough profile of both our hospital and our area, which showcased what a unique opportunity awaits Mammoth Hospital’s new CEO. Witt/Kieffer recruiters are busy this month conducting personal interviews with candidates they believe show the most promise to be the right fit for our community and for the work we do here at Mammoth Hospital.

Attendees of the July 19 Southern Mono Healthcare District Board of Directors meeting can expect to be presented with a series of candidate profiles, which members of the Board will review. According to a proposed search timeline, the Mammoth Hospital Board, its Senior Managers, Physicians and other key stakeholders will identify their candidate of choice in the late summer, and develop a plan for his or her transition by mid-September. This will allow current CEO Gary Myers, who has served two stints as CEO as Mammoth Hospital, to retire alongside his wife, Karilyn (former Orthopedics/General Surgery/Rehabilitation Manager).

What is Interventional Radiology?

By Donald S. Harrell, MD

The field of Interventional Radiology has been in existence for a long time. You may have heard of angioplasty. It certainly has its roots intertwined with this procedure. However, today it is so much more and encompasses access to almost every organ system in the body.

Its basic premise is that doctors trained in Interventional Radiology can treat a multitude medical conditions that had previously required surgery. The procedures are performed through small holes in the skin, hence they are minimally invasive.

As imaging technology has advanced so has the breadth of interventional radiology procedures. The Interventional Radiologist utilizes fluoroscopy (real time x-ray), digital subtraction radiography, ultrasound and CAT scans to “see” inside your body. They are able to treat conditions with more precision, less invasively and reduced complications and hospital stays.

Today’s Interventional Radiologists are at the forefront of modern medicine and clinical advances in the use of image guided technologies. Their training consists of residency and fellowship leading to dual board certification in Radiology and Interventional Radiology.

Dr. Donald S. Harrell is an Associate Professor at USC School of Medicine in the Interventional Radiology Division of the Radiology Department. He has also been on the medical staff of Mammoth Hospital since 1986 splitting his time between Los Angeles and Mammoth. But now he is leaving USC to fully commit to caring for patients in Mammoth and the Eastern Sierras.
the construction of Mammoth Hospital. Today the Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary is still supporting Mammoth, operating The Cast Off on a 100% volunteer basis, donating all proceeds to the community and the Hospital.

By 1981 Mammoth Hospital had been open for three years. The 20,000 square foot hospital didn’t have a single computer or high-tech medical device. Starting a tiny hospital high in the mountains had been the realization of a daring dream. But now with doors open and the operation struggling, questions were surfacing—was it perhaps too daring? That year Gary and Karilyn were living in the Pacific Northwest, recently having graduated from Stanford University’s Master’s in Physical Therapy program, where they met. They were two years into their physical therapy careers that fall when they moved to Mammoth. While they quickly fell in love with the Eastern Sierra, their inquiries into physical therapy work hit a dead end as they were informed there wasn’t demand for services beyond the one physical therapist who operated entirely on an inpatient basis.

Consequently, Gary and Karilyn viewed their time here as a brief sabbatical and took odd jobs to make ends meet. Karilyn worked as a waitress at Shogun and as a sales attendant at Kittredge Sports, where her paychecks promptly went back into the till to outfit the two for their outdoor adventures. Gary rotated between a handful of jobs, working as a cook at Shogun, a checker at Safeway, and picking up construction jobs where he could. Believe it or not, had you been a patron at the Chart House in Mammoth in 1982 it would have been Gary behind the bar slinging drinks. I like to think that his experience wheedling unruly patrons helped him develop the skills later required to manage a pressing flock of employees and physicians.

Following a familiar pattern, Gary and Karilyn’s intended season in town extended into a year. They began to hear increasingly from locals soliciting advice for activity-related injuries. With no real sports medicine clinic in the area, there was little awareness that many common injuries were treatable with physical therapy. Gary and Karilyn began coordinating with Mammoth Hospital’s physical therapist to extend coverage. When they weren’t assisting with inpatient care, the pair began traveling to see patients throughout Mono, Inyo, and neighboring counties, from Bridgeport to Lone Pine, even as far as Tonopah. Gary had his pilot’s license and once a month flew Karilyn to Trona in Kern County, where she provided physical therapy to children with disabilities. A notable contribution by Karilyn, eclipsed by the realization that for many years we have failed to utilize a potentially effective physician recruitment technique—enticing physicians with a private flight and then pressuring them to sign contracts midair with Gary in the pilot’s seat.

Gary and Karilyn began to fly and drive less, their focus increasingly drawn to Mammoth where their practice was seeing steady growth. With two baby girls at home, Jacquelyn and Jennifer, this was a welcome development. Centinela Hospital had recently acquired Mammoth Hospital and recruited Gary to offer physical therapy services. Meanwhile, Karilyn worked for the schools, providing physical therapy to students all over Mono and Inyo Counties. Eventually the two opened a private practice, Myers & Associates, where they provided the first outpatient physical therapy services in Mammoth.

In 1992, Gary returned to Mammoth after spending a year traveling as a physical therapist with the US Ski Team and began what would become a pivotal post as a board member on the Southern Mono Healthcare District Board. Centinela, the Hospital’s parent company at the time, chose to return ownership to Southern Mono Healthcare District (SMHD), tasking the SMHD Board with leading the CEO recruitment process. After extending offers to several candidates who proved unwilling to relocate, the Board finally extended an offer that was accepted, only to have the candidate pull out last minute. Exasperated, the Board approached Gary to submit an application. While Gary thrived leading his private practice, he had not considered extending beyond that scope. He took some time to contemplate the proposal before resigning from the Board and submitting his successful application as CEO at the age of 42.

Over time, the demand for orthopedic services grew, and Mammoth Hospital decided to invest in developing an Orthopedic Center of Excellence. By 2004 it became apparent that with an increasingly busy orthopedic clinic, physical therapy services needed to move in-house. Mammoth Hospital determined it would purchase Myers & Associates, where nearly all physical therapy patients in town were seeking care; however Gary and Karilyn took no money for their successful physical therapy practice itself, selling only the equipment and obtaining an agreement from Mammoth Hospital that none of their faithful employees would be lost in the transition. Karilyn brought her talented staff along as she assumed management of the Physical Therapy department. Several of those employees are still working...
Over ten years of successful management later, I asked Karilyn for her parting thoughts. She reflected that she was enormously gratified to see the evolution in attitudes around physical therapy in the community, noting that much has changed since 1981, when comments such as “we don’t need physical therapists” and “I didn’t know physical therapists did that” were common. Today, physical therapy is a respected and widely valued medical specialty that plays a key role in recovery and prevention. Karilyn is excited to see the team model of care develop with physical therapy well-integrated. In one of her last staff meetings before she retired at the end of April, Karilyn encouraged her team to hold onto lifelong learning, emphasizing the value of professional growth, keeping current with the latest studies, and being involved with students, new recruits, interns, and fellows. Karilyn is a fervent believer that teaching others makes you a sharper, better, and more energized professional. “It takes extra time, extra energy, extra effort,” she says, “but even at little Mammoth Hospital, we can be at that level, helping to educate the next generation.” Last but not least, Karilyn encouraged her staff to stay involved in the community and to look for ways to spread their knowledge and be of service.

Gary’s tenure is still very much present tense; with several months to go before he leaves, he is now, as ever, a very hands-on leader involved in the thick of operations. Gary’s thoughts around his retirement are still crystallizing, though he did affirm that he is feeling good about several years of continued growth and success at the Hospital: “I’m very proud of the quality of services and medical staff we’ve built as well as the technical and administrative staff that support them.” When prompted to reflect on his tenure, he said humbly, “Where else would a guy like me have an opportunity like this. It’s been a gift and a privilege.”

The Hospital has engaged a recruiting firm, Witt/Kieffer, and is actively searching for CEO candidates to interview. The recruitment process will take approximately six months, if all goes as planned. Interested candidates will not be disclosed to the public until the final stages of the search process this fall to protect the privacy of those who may be interested in applying but are not certain they are ready to leave their current employer. I asked Gary what he thought the next CEO needed to be successful in this role. After listing the daunting qualifications needed for any hospital CEO, Gary noted, “The most important thing is the small town aspect, being part of the community, getting out and being visible, accessible, involved and integrated into the community.”

Both Gary and Karilyn are leaving some very big shoes to fill. When Centinela relinquished ownership of Mammoth Hospital in 1994 they abandoned plans to develop a sports medicine program due to the challenges of operating in a remote location. The Mammoth Orthopedic Institute is now an official medical provider for US Ski & Snowboard with some of the top orthopedic surgeons in the nation. Under Karilyn’s leadership, the Physical Therapy and Orthopedic clinics have been working hand in hand, a robust hub of activity and development, employing over 50 knowledgeable physical therapists, athletic trainers, physician assistants, and support staff. Moreover, physical therapy is integrated as part of the team care plan offered throughout Mammoth Hospital, helping to heal patients and getting them back outdoors.

When Gary assumed his position as CEO in 1994, Mammoth Hospital had only a 15% market share of inpatient hospital admissions in Mono County. Centinela had predicted Mammoth Hospital would go under in just a few years. Now, celebrating its 40th anniversary, Mammoth Hospital is financially sound, employs over 400 people, and is poised for growth in the next decade. The Hospital has transformed from a small rural outpost to a nearly 100,000 square-foot facility housing a board-certified team of physical therapists, comprehensive primary care providers in family medicine, pediatrics, women’s health and advanced care surgical specialists in general surgery, urology, and of course orthopedics. We have a state-of-the-art Medical Imaging Center, a full-service laboratory, and advanced information technology. Residents and guests live and play in Mammoth with the peace of mind knowing that the very best physicians, nurses, facilities, and medical technology are at their doorstep!

There is a widely shared feeling of gratitude for the many of us that have served under both Gary and Karilyn’s leadership and have benefited by studying their example. We will remember the Myers and their story as an example of the incredible journey this community hospital has taken and as inspiration for how much can be achieved through education, hard work, commitment, and not least of all, heart! Best of luck and deepest thanks to you both for your dedicated years of service! You have well-earned what we all hope will be golden years.