

THE HOUSTONS On Living and Giving



Jackie Lee and Jim Houston

Jackie Lee and Jim Houston met with Eisenhower Medical Center Foundation President Michael Landes to discuss life, healthy living and Eisenhower Medical Center.

MICHAEL: Jim and Jackie Lee, tell us why you are so involved in not for profits in the Coachella Valley.

JIM: We are coming up to our 50th year of marriage, and we have established very clearly what our responsibilities are to each other in our relationship — I work to make money... and Jackie Lee likes to give it away.

JACKIE LEE: There's really been no argument about it. When people ask me why we support so many different charities, I say, first of all, because I have a husband that allows me to... I say, "Gee, I really like this one, and it needs some help," and he trusts my judgment.

MICHAEL: You like giving to the community?

JACKIE LEE: Giving to the community came early in my life. I started working when I was eleven doing fashion work, and you were always involved in charity events for hospitals, the children's hospital and a variety of other charities. I have been helping charities ever since.

JIM: When we give to charities, we do it almost selfishly because we are having a good time in the process.

JACKIE LEE: And, we're able to do it.

JIM: Our ability to support charities comes from years of hard work. We both come from modest backgrounds.

MICHAEL: Why did you choose Eisenhower Medical Center as a focus of your time and money?

JIM: When you reach our age, you want to know that you are going to have available the best possible medical services and skills... and that is Eisenhower. There's no question about that. Eisenhower is now one of the top facilities in the country, and it has services, equipment and physicians available that are as good as any place in the world. It's in our best interest to support Eisenhower and help try to make it even better.

JACKIE LEE: Before we went to Mayo Clinic in Rochester in June to get a second opinion, I'd met one of the cardiologists at Eisenhower, and he said, "That was my alma mater for eight years. You couldn't get a better facility." Mayo was an interesting experience, but they can't match Eisenhower on a personal, caring level. MICHAEL: You've had to use Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center services. Tell us about it...

JACKIE LEE: I usually don't like to talk about my physical problems, but if I can help someone, who has the same problems I do, get to relief quicker, I will give you the details. I have peripheral neuropathy in my feet and in my legs. At first, as it progressed, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and was given the wrong medication.

We tried a lot of doctors on the west coast and a lot of clinics in Vancouver, Toronto... It took four to five years to really find out what I did have. We heard about two neurologists that were outstanding in their field — Dr. Nazareth and Dr. Nazemi. We found out they were both at Eisenhower! We were still living in Vancouver at that time.

[assets/news/story/CFHImages/200603/coverstory-2.jpg](#) My doctor is Dr. Nazareth. He saw me on a Sunday, which is just unheard of. After all those years at other places, Dr. Nazareth diagnosed me correctly (chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy — please see box for more information.) We would go back to Vancouver for our regular summertime, and come back to the Eisenhower Lucy Curci Center for infusions. I have been on infusion now of IVIG (intravenous immunoglobulin) for about three years.

Peripheral neuropathy is the "killing off of the nerves." In the three years that I have been with Dr. Nazareth, the progression of the disease has stopped...my legs are getting better. I am in the infusion center at the Lucy Curci Center two days every week, and the nurses couldn't be nicer. They thoroughly understand what's going on. They take everything on with a smile. I'm there 3 to 3 1/2 hours each time.... And I get a lot of thank you notes written and a lot of reading done.

MICHAEL: Do you feel the difference?

JACKIE LEE: I am regaining a certain amount of feeling down my legs. The gamma globulin creates a "buffer" around the nerve ends.

MICHAEL: Is it painful?

JACKIE LEE: Well, the pain can be monumental...it used to feel like I was walking on hot coals. Between the IVIG and the medications, mine is under control, but it took eighteen months to reduce the pain. The infusion is helping immensely; I can walk again. It's just that I can no longer wear high heels and "pretty shoes."

JIM: An outside medical consultant, who had toured the hospital and Lucy Curci, said that overall the Lucy Curci had the finest equipment anywhere in North America. Nobody asked him the question. He just volunteered that this is a really first class installation and equipment.

MICHAEL: We are thrilled we're helping. Let's move from health care to Hollywood. Let's talk about your local CBS television station.

JIM: Our first exposure to television was when Jackie Lee and I were courting at the University of Washington. She was the weather girl on KING TV, and I used to go and wait for her to finish her show.



The Houstons at the Palm Springs Film Festival being interviewed by CBS2 reporter Rachel Spooner.

Four years ago, we had the opportunity to get the commitment from CBS to build a new CBS Station in the Coachella Valley. At that time, CBS aired from Los Angeles, and

we thought it would be nice if the Valley had a locally owned station again. We feel that it has been successful helping the community and that it has improved local programming, which is why we did it in the first place.

MICHAEL: It's the finest station in terms of equipment, much like Eisenhower's Lucy Curci Cancer Center. It's the latest and the greatest. All digital...

JIM: But back to health... Eisenhower is part of our "healthy living." We have confidence in the fact that if something happens, more than likely there's going to be somebody who's a world-class physician to help us, and certainly the operation of the hospital is as good as it gets. You're just going to get the best treatment possible at Eisenhower Medical Center.

MICHAEL: Thank you both for all you do for making this a great valley to live in.

Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy

While immune-based neuropathies account for a small segment of all neuropathies, chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy (CIDP) affects the longest nerves in the body. Characterized by slow progression, the lower limbs, feet or hands are involved.

CIDP is an immune-based neuropathy in which the body produces antibodies that instead of attacking infections or viruses, attack your own tissues, in this case myelin, the insulation that surrounds nerves. Pain, weakness and muscle atrophy are the most common symptoms. Intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG), or gamma globulin, contains antibodies that help fight infections. IVIG bonds to the abnormal antibodies that are attacking the tissues and removes them.

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