David Romness, MD

AND THE ART OF MEDICINE

By: Deborah Liv Johnson

Dr. David Romness and his new surfboard.

You can't surf in Minnesota, but you can canoe and fish and take long walks in the October air at dawn, breathing in a musky blend of black earth, leaves and frost. Ironically, native Minnesotan David Romness,MD, the new Chair of Eisenhower Medical Center's Family Practice Department, received his first surfboard at the age of 50, after he and his family had moved to the desert. A gift from his sons in honor of their new lives in Southern California, Romness has taken his long board out and experienced some good, slamming waves at the beach, but he isn't ready to give up alpine skiing (one of his great loves) or his day job. He figures he can enjoy them all. "Eisenhower is very committed to providing state-of-the-art care and committed to giving people in the valley the best care possible."

Dr. Romness came to the valley with a commitment to practice good medicine. "My father was a physician in family practice, and my mother was a nurse. After doing a rotation in the ED [emergency department] as a medical student, I knew that was the path I wanted to take.Working in the emergency department gives me the ability to take care of people right away. And people here are so appreciative — especially the seniors. It's very satisfying to practice here."

Growing up in the land of ten thousand lakes, Romness spent as much time as possible outdoors — hunting, fishing and skiing. After his parents built a home in Vail, Colorado, they traveled there often to ski. As an undergraduate, Romness attended St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, which carries the distinction of harboring the world's preeminent college choir. Romness sang tenor in the prestigious choir before moving on to medical school at the University of Minnesota. After practicing emergency medicine at Hennepin County Medical Center, Romness took a position on staff at North Memorial Center in Robinsdale, Minnesota, until his move to the desert, two-and-a-half years ago. "It's important to let people know you care about them, and you'll listen to them, along with relieving their pain."

If you ask Dr. Romness why he moved to the desert in the first place, he will tell you that he, his wife Debby, and their 16-year-old son Cody, wanted to live closer to older sibling Tyler, who resides in Los Angeles. Basking in year-round sunshine doesn't hurt either…and Romness has taken up the desert's most popular pastime, golf. The fact that Romness truly enjoys his work at Eisenhower is a bonus.

"Eisenhower is very committed to providing state-of-the-art care and committed to giving people in the valley the best care possible. They have an administration that is willing to commit resources to various departments that need them, and they have a very strong fundraising program from valley residents. And, Eisenhower is the only nonprofit hospital in the valley."

Patient care is a priority for Romness. "I believe in practicing the art of medicine, in addition to practicing the science of medicine. That means taking care of the individual, offering reassurance, holding someone's hand, talking to the family. I like to ask them about their fears, in addition to finding out where their pain is. The emergency department isn't just about ordering tests and making a diagnosis. It's important to let people know you care about them, and you'll listen to them, along with relieving their pain."

Is there anything missing from Dr. Romness' life? "Someday, when I have the time to commit to it, I'd like to sing in a choir again."

We'll be listening.

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