Honoring Mike and Ann Lyon
It’s better to receive and to give

In moving from Minnesota to the Monterey Peninsula three years ago, Mike and Ann Lyon were told by real estate agents of the excellent healthcare available in their new community. It was good to know, but not something they needed to investigate or use. Yet.

About a year ago, Mike found himself in an emergency medical situation where he did need the finest healthcare available, and that brought him to Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula.

“Suddenly, I found I needed the special care provided by the staff and facilities at the hospital’s Tyler Heart Institute,” he says. “I had the opportunity to gain intimate knowledge with the folks in the cath lab and Intensive Care Unit, having surgery in October. I was very, very impressed with all the medical staff — doctors, specialists, nurses, supporting staff, and particularly the morale of the people involved, and their follow up.”

The real estate agents were right. Mike came out of his hospital experience with renewed good health and an appreciation for the Community Hospital healthcare system. He and Ann responded to the experience by pledging an extraordinary gift in support of the Tyler Heart Institute.

“Our contribution,” he says, “is our way of recognizing the citizens of this community and the Community Hospital board of trustees for having the foresight to make a facility such as the Tyler Heart Institute available, and to attract the high quality of physicians and staff required to make it happen. Ann and I felt if we’re going to be part of this community, there can’t be a better investment than contributing to the ongoing development and continued improvement of the heart center.”

Mike, who was in manufacturing, is enjoying semiretirement. The couple worked and raised their children in the Twin Cities area. When it was time to retire, a significant number of family members, including four children and 10 grandchildren, were living in Northern California. So they decided to uproot and transplant themselves to the West Coast.

“Determined to move to California, we started looking for areas that would serve our needs and interests and bring us closer to our family,” he says. “We found
Often write in these pages about the natural beauty of the Monterey Peninsula and how those of us who live and work here are inspired by our surroundings. The recent passing of Community Hospital’s first chief executive, Tom Tonkin, brought me back to the actual ground the hospital sits on — 22 acres of pine forest. Mr. Tonkin physically assisted in clearing the land to make way for the new hospital, figuratively planting the seed and nurturing it to what we now know as Community Hospital. Mr. Tonkin helped inspire some of the first acts of philanthropy — such as the donation of that pine forest — and we owe him, and our many donors, a debt of gratitude.

Recently the natural world and philanthropy came together again in an unexpected way. A man whose wife passed away wanted to express his gratitude to the hospital for the care she had received. He decided to purchase a piece of artwork, selected by Community Hospital’s art curator, depicting a forest scene similar to the one that his wife had viewed from her room in the Forest Pavilion. “My wife could not have imagined a more peaceful setting for a hospital,” he told me upon making the gift. “She would be pleased to know that every person who has occasion to reflect upon this painting will be reminded of the beauty just outside their window.”

Tom Tonkin would be pleased as well. This story and others like it uplift and inspire all of us. Thank you for all you do on behalf of Community Hospital and its patients.

Sincerely,

Albert J. Alvarez, Chief Development Officer Community Hospital Foundation

Getting Involved
A conversation with the chairperson of Community Hospital’s board

When Ian Arnof bought a retirement home in Carmel, he didn’t imagine himself sitting on the Community Hospital Foundation’s board of trustees, let alone becoming its chairperson. But he also didn’t imagine injuring his leg so severely that it would warrant a three-week stay in the hospital, didn’t imagine receiving such kind, careful, and conscientious care from a hospital that didn’t know him, and didn’t imagine that the first relationships he would develop in his new town would be among those who cared for him while he healed. But that’s exactly what happened. Arnof has been on the board five years and is serving as its chairperson this year.

The following is an excerpt from a conversation about his relationship with the hospital and the community it serves.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE PENINSULA?
A proponent of preventive healthcare, I started going to the Pritikin Longevity Center in Santa Monica in 1983. I liked California so much that in 1998 or ’99, I decided to buy a second home to see if I’d want to retire here. From San Diego to Napa Valley, I looked at houses, finally narrowing it down to two places I like: Santa Barbara and Carmel. I didn’t know anybody in either town, but I’d been to Carmel and Pebble Beach for meetings, and I found a house in Carmel I liked. A year later, we sold the bank I was running in New Orleans and I decided to make my second home my first home.

HOW DID YOU MAKE A CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITY HOSPITAL?
I came out here in August 2000 and, two months later, I fell in my yard and really hurt my leg. Complications required a three-week stint in the hospital. I didn’t know anyone there, and no one knew me. But they took really good care of me. By the time I left, I knew more people there than in Carmel.

I now have friends here from all over the country. Because they relocated, their main hospital is somewhere else. Yet after being here awhile, most find the need to use Community Hospital VIPs at their home hospitals, no one knows them when they walk in here. But they do when they leave. I get so many compliments about Community Hospital. No matter who you are, they give such personalized attention and quality healthcare service. My friends are used to first-class service at home from first-class hospitals, and they find the same treatment here.

While I was in the hospital, I asked if he could meet the CEO. Dr. Steve Packer came by, and I told him that if he ever needed any help, if he had a fundraiser, he could count on me. I was just so grateful.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR EXPERIENCE IN SERVING AS A VOLUNTEER?
I grew up in a small town. One of the things that teaches you is if individuals don’t get involved and volunteer, nothing gets done. I became accustomed to doing community work; I had done that...
all my life. As a newcomer, it’s an easy way to get to know people and to get involved, to invest in your new community. When I was invited to be on the board, I was looking for ways to become involved in the community. I am now in my fifth year on the board and will retire at end of 2009, but that won’t be the end of my involvement in the hospital.

WHAT DO YOU VALUE IN LIFE?
I guess I like being a unique individual, true to my own beliefs and values. I want to be accepted for who and what I am, not for anything I’m not. This community accepts a wide range of lifestyles and values diversity. I appreciate that there is no stereotypical way to get involved; you can be yourself and give to wherever you can make the best contribution. I value that in a community.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR OUTSIDE INTERESTS?
I’m the chairman of two boards. One is Community Hospital, the fourth hospital board I’ve served on. Also, I’ve always been active in public education reform. I currently am the chairperson of an organization called “New Schools for New Orleans,” which is trying to rebuild the public school system there. Thanks to Hurricane Katrina, we pretty much have a blank sheet of paper on which to design and build a new system. I am not a golfer and I am allergic to crab. So people say, “Why did you move to New Orleans if you can’t eat crab meat, and why did you move to the Peninsula if you can’t play golf?” I’ve heard if you’re going to be good at golf, you need to play four hours a day, three days a week. I live in the middle of the best golf place in the world, but I’ve never had time to play.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE ON THE BOARD, OR WHAT DO YOU HOPE AND ENVISION FOR THE HOSPITAL DURING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?
I think Steve Packer truly has a vision of building a high-quality healthcare system in Monterey County. He’s a very talented manager, very professional. Of all the hospitals I’ve worked with, he is far and away the finest CEO. I want to help him achieve that vision in any way I can.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHER PEOPLE WHO WISH TO GET INVOLVED IN THEIR COMMUNITY?
This is a really easy place to join and get involved and contribute. First of all, it’s a small town. Once you move here, go to two or three events you really like; maybe the symphony or a play, or a charity event, where you’re going to meet everyone in town who shares the same community interests. I found this in Davis Factor and David Benjamin, (former Community Hospital trustees), and others, who set good examples of giving to the community.

I chose Community Hospital because I like this kind of work, because I knew the hospital better than anything else in the community, and because I quickly had a reason to say thank you. There are a lot of people like me who had careers somewhere else and then moved here in their 50s or 60s or 70s and are looking for ways to contribute. Maybe they just need that invitation.
Tom Tonkin: A true visionary

The Community Hospital family — staff, physicians, longtime friends, donors, trustees, and auxiliary members — is mourning the loss of Thomas E. Tonkin, Community Hospital's first chief executive, who died July 30 at the age of 82.

Mr. Tonkin served the hospital for 47 years, 35 as its top administrator, five as president and CEO of Community Hospital Foundation, and seven as president and CEO of Community Hospital Endowments.

“Tom Tonkin was the true visionary for what Community Hospital has become,” said Jay Hudson, Mr. Tonkin’s successor as president and CEO from 1990 to 1998. “He created an environment that raised the spirits of all who entered the hospital’s doors.”

“Community Hospital is a living legacy of Tom Tonkin’s visionary leadership,” said Steven Packer, MD, president/CEO. “The beautiful building where we provide care, the service excellence of our employees and our culture of philanthropy are all a reflection of Tom’s values. He will be missed by everyone who had the privilege of working with him.”

Mr. Tonkin arrived in 1955 as administrator of Community Hospital’s predecessor, Peninsula Community Hospital in Carmel. Faced with its antiquated facilities in scattered buildings, Mr. Tonkin launched an ambitious fundraising campaign to build a new hospital. The effort won the support of Samuel F. B. Morse and his Del Monte Properties Company, which donated the 22 acres of pine forest on which the hospital stands today.

In six years, generous supporters contributed $1.75 million to build the new hospital. When it opened in 1962, the 100-bed, 210,000-square-foot facility was just what Mr. Tonkin had envisioned: A hospital that didn’t look like a hospital. While Community Hospital has grown over the years, the design elements championed by Mr. Tonkin are reflected throughout the expansion.

From the beginning, Mr. Tonkin recognized the importance of volunteers and advocated the creation of the dedicated group known as the Auxiliary. He worked closely with the organization over the years, and when he retired as CEO, the Auxiliary established a $100,000 endowment in his name to aid patients in financial need.

Marion Robotti, a past-president of the Auxiliary and a 40-year volunteer, said “Mr. Tonkin was a born administrator. He was a mediator, gracious to all, yet firm in stating that the hospital was here for all patients and their families.

“He was an inspiration to all of us. He felt the Auxiliary’s job was to make patients and their families feel comfortable and taken care of, which has remained throughout the years as a focus of our mission.”

Another past-president of the Auxiliary, Pat Zanetta, noted that Mr. Tonkin attended every Auxiliary board meeting. “He often stopped by the different areas where there were volunteers — at the gift shop, the front desk, the office, the Fountain Court — to see how things were going,” she said.

Monteey Peninsula Foundation offers generous support to Breast Care Center

Since it opened in 2002, the Breast Care Center of Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula has provided expert care in a warm, welcoming environment. A generous grant from the Monterey Peninsula Foundation will help ensure that commitment to the best care, with the best technology, continues.

The foundation, host of the annual AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am golf tournament, awarded the hospital $500,000 to help bring the next generation in technology to the Breast Care Center. The funds will be awarded over three years and must be matched by donations to the center.

The foundation has been a longtime supporter of the hospital and its initiatives.

“The Monterey Peninsula Foundation has supported Community Hospital over many years with grants totaling nearly $1.4 million,” says Ollie Nurt, president and chief executive officer of the Monterey Peninsula Foundation. “We are pleased to award this important grant to the Breast Care Center as this state-of-the-art facility serves as a key resource for the community. We are proud to partner with Community Hospital and other supporters in the further development of the Breast Care Center through this gift.”

The grant has become a cornerstone in the hospital’s campaign to raise $2.5 million by year’s end to bring digital mammography and other leading-edge technology to the Breast Care Center. The high-definition images produced through digital mammography enable more accurate breast cancer diagnoses than film mammography.

“We are very grateful for the Monterey Peninsula Foundation’s generous support of this important initiative,” says Steven Packer, MD, president and CEO of Community Hospital. “The Monterey Peninsula Foundation has made a lasting impact by addressing an impressive array of the community’s needs. We truly appreciate its assistance in supporting our efforts to further enhance the care provided to the patients we serve from throughout Monterey County.”

More than 17,000 women visit the Breast Care Center annually and about 200 new cancer cases are diagnosed each year by Dr. Susan Roux, the center’s medical director, and her colleague, Dr. Kristine Leatherberry. The move to digital mammography will ensure that area women continue to have local access to the very best resources in the fight against breast cancer.

Eight community women who have had breast cancer or been touched by the disease through a friend or family member’s diagnosis, have formed a committee to lead the fundraising campaign.

The committee members are: Laurie Benjamin, Dede Bent, Linda Cosmier, Betty Kasson, Suzanne Lehr, Marcia Modissete, Jane Panattoni, and Lucy Reno.

“When you’re empowered with the right doctors and the best equipment, you don’t have to be afraid anymore,” says Cosmier, whose sister is a breast cancer survivor. “That’s what we’re hoping to do through this effort.”

For more information on the fundraising initiative, please go to www.chomp.org or call Carol Hutton at Community Hospital Foundation, 625-4506.