

## A PASSION FOR PAM JONES AND DAVID HESS

Interview by Ray Newton

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** I'm delighted to be interviewing the husband and wife team of Pamela Jones and David Hess, both 17-year residents of Prescott. Pam, let's start with you. You're a native of...?

**PAMELA JONES:** I was born in California. My family moved when I was 3 months old. My dad worked with the Air Force. I lived in multiple states until my parents settled in Florida. I graduated high school there. I then began working in health-care in Florida and became CEO of a large private practice cardiovascular specialty group in Jacksonville.

I started as a receptionist for a cardiologist and earned my degrees while I was working fulltime. I started at the local community college, then transferred to Jacksonville University where I earned my BA in business. Later I went to Duke and got my MBA in healthcare management.

In 1992, I was still working at the cardiovascular clinic when a healthcare consultant urged me to continue my career by going into healthcare consulting. So, I started my own company, Tyger Healthcare Inc, where I am the president and CEO.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** David, tell me about your childhood and early years. You were born in...?

**DAVID HESS:** Atlanta. When I was 3, we moved to a little town called Carrollton, Georgia.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** You got a degree at the University of Florida. Why not Georgia?

**DAVID HESS:** I applied to the University of Georgia because everybody at my high school did. But my brother was in school at the University of Florida, so I also applied at Florida. I actually went down and visited him and liked the campus. Even so, I want-

**F**rom the day they arrived in Prescott in May 2002, Pam Jones and David Hess have been influential in the greater Prescott community. Coming here as they did—from successful careers in health care and cardiology—they set out to be involved in the community.

Almost immediately, they were contributing personally, culturally, socially, politically. It didn't hurt that Pam had 25 years of executive experience in finding innovative solutions for hospitals, health-care clinics and other medically related organizations. David was a nationally recognized physician, spearheading the development of outpatient cardiology procedures and cardiac imaging techniques.

Pam and David are forthright in saying their "passion" has always been to make a positive difference in whichever community they lived.

David is the son of a Holocaust survivor. His father Jacob escaped from Nazi Germany to the United States in 1937. Jacob became a U.S. Army veteran, having served in the Pacific. He and the Hess family settled in Atlanta, where David was born. They later moved to rural Georgia, where David grew up before going on to become a successful physician and medical administrator. He is praised by those who know him as "... a thoughtful, analytical man, who chooses his words carefully."

Pam is a native Californian. Because her father was in the military, she grew up in several states—Texas, Oklahoma, Florida among them—before beginning a career in health care. The always smiling Pam is certain those frequent moves to new communities gave her valuable experiences in making new friends and adjusting to changing educational, social and cultural environments.

For the past two decades, Pam and David have dedicated their time and resources to philanthropy, especially in support of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. In 2003, they established the Jack and Anita Hess Faculty Seminar at the museum in honor of David's parents. The purpose: to provide a weeklong specialized educational experience for university professors about varying aspects of the Holocaust. More than 350 faculty members from 310 universities have attended in the past 15 years. Those professors have instructed more than 80,000 students.

ed to go to the University of Georgia. But, first I was accepted by Florida.

So I called the University of Georgia and I said, "I'm waiting to see if I'm accepted." And they said "Well, we'd love to have you but, we're not taking any out-of-state students this year." I said I'd never left the state of Georgia. I was born and raised here. They could not get that straightened out. We even

called our local legislator, and he called to say "The Hess family lives in Georgia."

So, as it happened, I went to the University of Florida by default.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** What was your baccalaureate degree?

**DAVID HESS:** Chemistry.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** And you did that in three years?

tion and returned to the prison hospital the same day, which eliminated quite a bit of guard time, thereby saving money for the prison system.

**DAVID HESS:** The patients came to us in an ambulance. We did the procedure, they went back. It's safe and it's now routine. Angioplasties, stents, etc. are all outpatient procedures now.

**PAMELA JONES:** You were one of the first electrophysiologists in Florida.

**DAVID HESS:** Yes. The University of California had one of the first EP programs in the country and I was one of the first physicians trained in EP. Our group performed the first ablation procedure for an arrhythmia on a human. I was in charge of that procedure. It was me, Mel Scheinman, my mentor, Fred Morady, who went to University of Michigan to teach and has had an illustrious career, and Rolando Gonzalez, a Dr. from Chile who was in training. We did the very first one, April 6th, 1981 and I will never forget that day.

You've heard of a PET (positron emission tomography) scanner? We had the first outpatient PET scanner in America at our clinic in Florida. We were using it for cardiac work. We liked the technology because it saved costs and the technology eliminated unnecessary procedures.

**PAMELA JONES:** At that time, Medicare wouldn't pay for outpatient PET scans at all.

**DAVID HESS:** We would do PET procedures for free in Medicare patients until Medicare did start paying.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** Changing directions. You both have been acknowledged as influential and positive political leaders in the greater community. For instance, Pam, you chaired the Republican Women of Prescott organization, which now is considered the largest of its kind in the nation. How long were you president?

**PAMELA JONES:** Two years. I think it was 2012-13.

**DAVID HESS:** (Smiling) I like to brag that Pam is the one that got 'em in that growth spurt.

**PAMELA JONES:** The organization hardly had any money at that time.

**DAVID HESS:** But, by the end of her second year, they had \$40,000. Pam won't toot her own horn, but I think she was the one to get them to think bigger.

**PAMELA JONES:** Sometimes I think it's a lit-



tle too big now, but it's a good group.

**DAVID HESS:** She loves politics. She breathes politics.

**PAMELA JONES:** I have a love-hate relationship with politics, depending on what's going on. I really am a political junkie. I love working local politics.

**DAVID HESS:** One of the things we like to do is recruit younger people to get into politics.

**PAMELA JONES:** Like Judd Simmons, now the County Assessor, and Greg Mengarelli, the current City of Prescott mayor.

**DAVID HESS:** It's time for that generation to be the leaders. We really like to do that. That's the kind of behind the scenes strategy that I enjoy.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** Pam, you were on the George W. Bush inauguration committee. How did that happen?

**PAMELA JONES:** Well, it's kind of funny. They were looking for volunteers, and we then were living in the D.C. area. A friend and I volunteered. We worked in the mailroom. That might sound boring, but it was exciting because every piece of mail or package or anything had to come through the mailroom to be examined to be sure it was safe.

I also worked as a volunteer in the East Wing of the White House. I met President Bush the first day. He was very, very nice. His dogs would always come into the office where I worked. If there was a special event, they would always invite the volunteers.

But 9/11 happened. They didn't want

any volunteers back in the White House for safety reasons. So David and I started thinking of moving.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** You came here in 2002. You had been living in D.C. Why Prescott?

**PAMELA JONES:** We were married in Vegas in 1994 at the Graceland Wedding Chapel. An Elvis Impersonator gave me away. We were all in costume. David's a romantic, so he wanted to get married in Paris — in a little town and have some of our friends. But I said, "No, I don't want to do that. I want to get married in Vegas by an Elvis impersonator." He thought I was kidding, but I wasn't.

So we left D.C. and moved to Prescott after 9/11. We always liked to visit Las Vegas, but after 9/11, the Washington airport was closed for months. So, David got out a drafting compass and drew a circle with a 250-mile radius around Vegas to see where we could live and be able to drive to Las Vegas.

**DAVID HESS:** So, we figured with a 250-mile radius, we can drive to Vegas whenever we want. We didn't care if planes were flying or not.

**PAMELA JONES:** We knew we didn't want to live in California. But up popped Northern Arizona. We came out here in February because we figured that'd probably be the worst weather. We visited Flagstaff, Sedona — and Prescott. When we came here, David saw the little downtown. It reminded

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him of the little town where he grew up. He loved it right away, and, we actually bought a house on our first trip to Prescott.

**DAVID HESS:** We make decisions pretty quickly.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** Do you still go to Vegas?

**DAVID HESS:** We used to go three or four times a year. The last two or three years, we've been so busy with projects. I doubt we go once a year.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** What kind of entertainment do you like? Movies?

**DAVID HESS:** We really like the classics so say "North by Northwest," those kind of movies.

**PAMELA JONES:** I like a lot of the old mystery movies.

**DAVID HESS:** Yeah, Hitchcock movies, like, "Rear Window." If you really think about those movies, you'd be on the edge of your seat with no help from special effects.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** You told me you like rock 'n' roll and classic cars. What to you is a classic car?

**PAMELA JONES:** My cousin had a '55 or '57 Chevy. I loved it. I'm the car nut.

**DAVID HESS:** In Pam's exercise room downstairs we have the actual rear end of a '57 Chevy that's been made into a sofa.

**PAMELA JONES:** We only have a two-car garage — unfortunately.

**DAVID HESS:** (*grinning*) I did that on purpose. Looking at these houses with a six-car garage, I'm thinking, "No, Pam could fill that."

**PAMELA JONES:** I came real close one time to getting — I think it was — a '57 Corvette?

**DAVID HESS:** (*chuckling*) But she couldn't reach the pedals.

**PAMELA JONES:** Yeah. The guy said, "I'll put blocks on the pedals for you."

I said, "I had blocks on my tricycle. I don't want blocks on a classic car."

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** Since you moved to Prescott, you've been involved in philanthropic and charitable groups, particularly the Jewish Community Foundation (JCF).

**DAVID HESS:** A lot of people are responsible for the Foundation. The JCF was founded in 1998 by Harold Greenberg, Bob Morris, Rabbi Billy Berkowitz and local attorney Mark Goodman. It's primary purpose — to serve as a focal point for Jewish-planned giving and to promote continuity of the Jewish community through a broad spectrum of

## An Anti-Semitic Memory

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** Did you ever encounter anti-Semitism?

**PAMELA JONES:** When you were a little kid, the Ku Klux Klan burned a cross on your yard.

**DAVID HESS:** I was the only Jew in the school. We were kind of lower middle class or upper lower class. Kids pretty much accepted me. But it was the parents. One time, a friend of mine said, "Why don't you come with me to the Country Club for brunch on Sunday?" I say, "Oh, that'd be great." I got there, we sat down and then within five minutes, somebody mentioned something and I was escorted out.

**PAMELA JONES:** Tell them about the Ku Klux Klan and your dad's store.

**DAVID HESS:** I was about 7, maybe 10. My dad was in the dry goods business, which a lot of Jews owned in the South. If you would remember what those stores looked like in the '50s and '60s, they had these wooden counters. Underneath was where the extra stock was. But there was a drape on the back that would just cover up the extra stock. This was in Douglasville, Georgia, where my dad had a store. We had one in Carrollton, another in Douglasville. It was a Saturday and my brother and I were in the store. The Ku Klux Klan had a rally right through town. My dad saw them coming into the store. He hid my brother and me underneath one of the counters, hiding us. He said, "Whatever you do, don't come out. If I say run, run out the back."

So, the KKK came in and there's a bunch of them. All we can see is their feet. They've got torches and they're saying terrible things to my dad. "We're gonna burn you out, Jew," and all those kinds of things. My dad really doesn't say anything. They left and didn't do anything. We're little kids, and we crawled out and said, "Dad, why didn't you beat them up?"

My dad was a little guy. He said, "Well, there were a lot of them."

My brother asked, "Well, why didn't you call the sheriff?"

My dad said, "I couldn't."

My brother and I said, "Why not?"

He told us, "The sheriff was one of them."

We said, "They had on sheets. How could you tell?"

Dad said, "I sold most of those men their shoes."

So, he knew one of them was the sheriff. Isn't that something?

community initiatives and programs.

We're a 501(c)3 organization with a great 14-member board of trustees. You may find it interesting that non-Jews can and have served on the board.

We also have great partners in the community like the Margaret T. Morris Foundation, Harold James Family Trust, Prescott Radiologists, Yavapai Regional Medical Center and Yavapai College. The great thing about this community is that there are not a lot of egos walking around.

The Jewish Community Foundation has very few endowments. Most donors are giving money to do something important now. Frequently, when I talk with donors I say it's nice to leave an endowment, but foundations can get fat and happy, not have to work hard if the endowments become

too large. I encourage people if they're gonna leave something, leave it and spend it over the next 10 or 12 years.

This puts pressure on the foundation itself to continue to enhance philanthropy through the generations that come behind you. Money Pam and I will leave is going to be spent over a certain period of time, a "spend-down." I think one reason we've been able to accomplish a lot at JCF is that we've given us a \$100,000 endowment instead of giving us a \$100,000 endowment give us a \$100,000 and say something good now. Spend it."

I'm all for immediate "bang for the buck." People ask, "Why don't you give scholarships at Embry Riddle or some other university?" I respond, "For \$8,750, we can completely train a nurse for two years at Ya-

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College. But that same money can't even get you two courses at a big university."

That's what we try to do, the most amount of good with the monies that we get. Let me give you an example. I just ran the numbers. There's approximately a 90 percent student completion rate for our scholarship recipients in the nursing program at Yavapai College. Of the ones who finish, 90 percent to 92 percent stay in the community. That is amazing. All we ask is a moral commitment to stay in the community and the graduates stand by that.

**PAMELA JONES:** There's one student — his story is just unbelievable — he graduated as a radiology technologist. He's already paying it forward at the college. He's started his own scholarship to pay it forward. Isn't that wonderful?

**DAVID HESS:** For the nursing program, students have to meet all the prerequisite; a two-year associate degree. Then there's a two-year program to get their R.N. What we have found at Yavapai College is their nursing students have some of the highest scores on the state exams. We have yet to have a nurse fail that exam. It's a really great program. If you think of how little we have to invest to produce a professional, it's the best bargain in education. At this time, we have provided full scholarships for 123 nursing students and radiologic technology students.

**PAMELA JONES:** We — the JCF — do not select the recipients. That goes through the college. They select them based on need, not on merit.

**DAVID HESS:** With a lot of the money that comes in, donors will say, "I want you to do something really exciting with education." We just run with that. Our ability to have this money helps us do a lot of things. We can support three nurses for \$25,000.

**PAMELA JONES:** And create programs and look and see what's out there in the community. Where there's a need, let's go look at it and we ask, "Can we partner, can we create something?"

**DAVID HESS:** For example, in Arizona, it's required to test kids hearing. But vision tests are not required. The county's education agency is trying to get enough equipment to go ahead and test all of the kids for vision. We started talking to them. They

need equipment. We're going to help with providing those basic needs. If you think about it, kids that don't know they can't see the whiteboard don't know they have trouble learning because they can't see. With the right equipment, we can fix that.

**PAMELA JONES:** We've already identified potential donors for this project.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** You additionally have gone beyond just health care and education. You've contributed substantially to artistic and creative efforts within the community.

**DAVID HESS:** Yes, we're going to make a significant investment in the Mainstreet Theater that Clyde Neville is constructing next to the Findlay Toyota Center in Prescott Valley.

**PAMELA JONES:** The Mainstreet Theater is a little-known gem in our community. I called some friends and said, "We want to take you to dinner, and we're going to go see a special play." We went to eat, then we took them to see the kids in the "Wizard of Oz." Our friends loved it.

**DAVID HESS:** Another example is when we brought classical violinist Itzhak Perlman here. We had a donor who said, "If you can get Itzhak Perlman to come to Prescott, I will support you", — and we did just that! The year we brought Perlman to Prescott he only did four performances outside of New York City.

One of the things that we try to do with our projects is create that visibility that we can accomplish anything in this community if we set our minds to it. We try to have challenging projects that motivate people into thinking bigger.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** On a bigger scale, you have organized three trips to Israel — 2007, 2009 and 2014. Planning another trip?

**DAVID HESS:** Our leadership missions to Israel were prompted by our desire to have thought leaders in the Quad City area travel and experience Israel in person. Many of us feel the media improperly portrays Israel, so the JCF wanted local leadership to come to their own conclusions about Israel and its people.

We took the first trip to Israel in 2007. JCF sponsored the trip. When we came back from that trip, we had a follow-up and a hot chocolate and coffee thing. We were showing photos from the trip and asking what everybody thought about Israel. I remember Bill Fain from Prescott Valley standing up saying, "That was one of the best trips

I've ever taken, and I think you should do another one and I want to help pay for it."

He sat down. Then Mike Fann, a local contractor, got up and said the same thing. All of a sudden...

**PAMELA JONES:** (interrupting) Steve Rutherford, a local businessman, volunteered to pay. I mean, they wanted to pay it forward. They wanted to sponsor people for the next Israel trip.

**DAVID HESS:** The second trip was paid mostly by people who went on the first trip. And the third trip was paid for mostly by people from the second trip. You have, basically, a lot of non-Jews who are contributing to our Foundation so we can take another group of leaders to Israel.

**PAMELA JONES:** We've partnered with the American Israel Friendship League (AIFL). That's the first time in their entire history that a group of non-Jews, or a group of — well, anybody — has paid it forward. They were amazed.

**DAVID HESS:** To answer your question about another trip, I think we're going to try to target 2020. First, we have to raise the money, which I don't think will be an issue. Next, the American Israel Friendship League our partner in Israel, has to approve another trip. We were the first organization they let pick its own delegation. Now we've been three times, so we have a good, working relationship with AIFL and we are hopeful they will approve a fourth trip.

**PRESCOTT LIVING:** What has motivated you to be so dedicated, passionate and generous in supporting charitable groups and organizations?

**PAMELA JONES:** We love living in this community. It's the kind of community that embraces new arrivals and provides a setting that encourages people to get involved. That means charitable organizations, politics, volunteering, philanthropy; you name it. You can be involved.

**DAVID HESS:** We both grew up in families where both parents had to work. We wouldn't say we were poor, but certainly our parents had to watch their finances carefully. But they instilled in us the importance of education and hard work. They emphasized that when we became successful, we should try to make a difference. It's simply natural for us to fulfill that mission to make a difference. ●