

\$50,000 Gift Keeps Mother Remembered

By Lindsay Woolman, Featured in *South Coast Treasures*, 2008

Laguna Niguel residents Janet and Karen Hooper are two sisters who are grateful to South Coast Medical Center. Their late mother, Genevieve Hooper, spent her last days at the Laguna Beach-based hospital and was treated with the most attentive and loving treatment.

In addition to the care their mother received, Janet and Karen were also impressed with the emotional support the hospital staff showed to the entire extended family. The SCMC employees were incredibly solicitous and caring—from the emergency room technicians to the kindness from doctors and nurses. The love, support, and compassion the sisters received still serves as a comfort to this day. In order to thank SCMC for its graciousness, the Hooper sisters donated \$50,000 in honor of their mother. The donation will help furnish a new patient room with an ocean view. A plaque that reads “Genevieve Hooper” will hang outside the door.

Genevieve, or Gene as she was known, was a sweet, caring lady and a genuine people person who lived to be 88 years old. She married Howard Edward Hooper during the depression and during those early years they struggled to stay afloat. The Hoopers, each of whom was raised in Ohio, moved to Pasadena in 1944 before settling in Laguna Niguel in 1973. The couple worked hard to build a successful life for their family. Janet and Karen, both of them retired high school teachers, credit their parents for providing them with college educations.

Gene Hooper worked as an executive secretary for a jewelry company until she retired at the age of 79. She also worked part-time in a doctor’s office where she especially enjoyed getting to know the patients. She was loved by many and was a wonderful friend and a great mother. Gene also had a passion for gardening and she and Howard enjoyed spending time in their landscaped yard overlooking Laguna Niguel. Their daughter, Janet, now lives in their beloved home.

After Howard passed away in April 2001, Gene started to go downhill. In February 2002, she was admitted to SCMC and after a series of tests she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Two days later, Genevieve Hooper passed away peacefully in the presence of her loving family.

During her last days at the hospital, the staff's kindness helped offset the devastating loss. Says Karen, "They gave us a private room so that we could just be there with her. It was wonderful." Janet credits the nursing staff for encouraging their faith. "The nurses were not just taking care of the patient, but also the family," she said. The support and compassion were especially helpful to the sisters who lost both parents within ten months of each other.

"It was very easy to make the donation because we wanted our mother to be remembered," Karen said. Neither sister is married nor has children, so this was a way for their mother's memory to live on forever.

Six years after their mother's passing, the sisters continue to be grateful to the hospital. The experience has stayed with them as a reminder that the kindness and compassion of a few people can make a huge difference. In the spirit of both their parents, the sisters have found that giving back to the hospital and supporting the community are part of the healing process. "We miss our mother terribly," adds Karen, "but we're so grateful to the hospital. The staff was wonderful and we can't thank them enough."

South Coast Medical Center would not be the same without the generosity of families like the Hoopers. If you are interested in giving or want to share your story, please contact the Foundation Office.