



Nancy and Duane Baumann believe Mayo Clinic is more than just a health care provider after generations of patient-centered care.

On Common Ground

Shrill screams caused Berneice Baumann to stop what she was doing and rush into the kitchen. She found her 1-year-old son, Duane, sitting on the floor in tears. He'd pulled an electric coffeepot on top of himself, and the boiling liquid scalded him from the neck down.

A local doctor did his best to treat Duane in 1941, but despite his best efforts, raised scar tissue, known as keloids, began forming. Berneice knew that eventually the scar tissue would restrict Duane from turning his neck. At a follow-up appointment, the doctor recommended cutting the keloids off as a last resort. Berneice wanted a second opinion.

Seeing 'Ghosts'

At the suggestion of her sister, Berneice packed up the family car and drove all night from their Illinois farm to reach Rochester, Minnesota. Upon arriving, she reached for Duane and entered Saint Marys Hospital, now known as Mayo Clinic Hospital — Rochester, Saint Marys Campus, where nuns greeted her and took young Duane down the hall to be evaluated by the doctors.

"At that time, doctors had bands with lights on their heads, white jackets, and they entered the room as a group. As a young boy, I thought they were ghosts floating into the room," Duane says.

The doctors calmed Duane and immediately began working to stunt the keloids' growth and shrink the newly developed tissue.

A week later, her son treated, Berneice approached the front desk to settle her bill. She cautiously made eye contact with the staff member and requested a payment plan. Money was scarce.

Seconds slogged by before the staff member returned, bill in hand. Glancing down at the paper, Berneice was filled with relief. "They told her she owed \$10," Duane says.

“Mayo Clinic’s research in regenerative medicine is going to change the face of medicine.” — Duane Baumann

Just a Checkup

In 1967, Duane earned his Ph.D. from Clark University and became a professor at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. Years later, he married his wife, Nancy, and started a water resource consulting firm. They had three daughters — Bridget, Rebecca and Brittany. Throughout the years Duane remained adamant everyone in his family have their medical needs treated at Mayo Clinic.

“My family would spend vacations in the Phoenix area to enjoy the warmer winter climate, play tennis and participate in other outdoor activities,” Rebecca says. “We would also have our checkups at Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale. It was an annual family outing for us.”

In 2004, the Baumanns visited Arizona during spring break. Since they were in the area, Nancy carved out time to stop by Mayo Clinic for her annual physical. Typically she would go in one day and receive a follow-up call the next to confirm everything looked normal.

This time was different.

A Swift Response

Nancy received a call requesting she come back to the clinic for a second mammogram.

“I thought nothing of it,” she says.

The Baumanns had planned to travel back to Illinois that Saturday, but when Nancy went in for her follow-up results, predetermined plans became irrelevant.

“The doctor told me the tests revealed I had breast cancer,” Nancy says. “I asked them if I should just come back during the summer for treatment, but they told me it needed to be treated — now.”

The following week, surgical oncologist Barbara A. Pockaj, M.D., Michael M. Eisenberg Professor, conducted Nancy’s lumpectomy, and post-surgery tests determined Nancy was cancer-free.

“Every step of the way, from diagnosis through treatment, I was shown compassion for my situation and respect with all my questions,” Nancy says. “That gave me strength and courage to move through it.”



The Baumanns support regenerative medicine at Mayo Clinic for its vast potential to improve people's lives.

Family and Future

These days, Duane and Nancy find themselves enjoying short treks through the Sonoran desert that surrounds their Arizona home. Duane, true to his farming background, savors spending time in his backyard admiring and caring for the unique cactuses and plant life.

With a Mayo Clinic campus close to their home, they take time to stop by to hear about what is new in the world of medicine.

Duane recently attended a Department of Development event where Wyatt W. Decker, M.D., vice president, Mayo Clinic, and CEO of Mayo Clinic in Arizona, was speaking about regenerative medicine. Having recently experienced heart valve problems that required surgery — the same surgery Duane's mother had undergone years earlier — the presentation on heart valve regeneration piqued Duane's interest.

Mayo Clinic's investment in its research and patients inspired the Baumanns to give to the

Center for Regenerative Medicine. In honor of their generosity, Mayo Clinic recognizes the Baumann family as Major Benefactors.

"Mayo Clinic's research in regenerative medicine is going to change the face of medicine," says Duane, who credits Bruce K. Kimbel Jr., M.D., Patrick A. DeValeria, M.D., and Aleksandar Sekulic, M.D., Ph.D., for providing excellent care for his family.

Having grown up going to Mayo Clinic, the Baumanns' daughters view the clinic as more than a place of health care.

"Mayo Clinic is unique in that doctors try to get to know their patients and engage in conversation," Brittany says.

With more than 60 years of interaction, the Baumann family is tied to Mayo Clinic in a special way.

"Mayo Clinic is a legacy passed down from generation to generation," says Bridget. "Mayo Clinic is part of our family." ■