

VIM & vigor

FALL 2015



Making a Change

83 tips that prove change is easier than you think

PLUS Before motivating others to get healthy, **Jillian Michaels** helped herself

HOW TO CHOOSE
AN ACTIVE ADULT
COMMUNITY

**Advances
in joint
replacement**

MEET THIS
WARM-HEARTED,
PINGPONG-PLAYING
OAKS RESIDENT

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A healthier diet comes from mindful choices, not sacrifice.

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Correction: The "Freak Out or Chill Out?" article in the Summer 2015 issue misstated that poison ivy and poison oak are the same plant. They are similar but different plants.

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TIME FOR A CHANGE?

Whether you're considering a new residence or a new joint, you have quality options nearby



The focus of this quarterly issue of *Vim & Vigor* is change. It seems appropriate as we approach a new season.

When I was a youngster, the start of school was always after Labor Day. At least then those of us who lived in the South began to think of the promise of cooler temperatures to come. Today, we seem to rush things, pushing the start of the fall semester at school into early August. One thing people don't seem to rush is the decision to move out of a house, where so much space is available and relatively little of it is used with any frequency.

Most residents at The Oaks tell us that they didn't realize how little space they needed for their personal living until they moved to their new home in The Oaks, with so many beautiful living areas at their disposal. If you are contemplating making a move, Terrie Roberts offers a how-to story to help you evaluate your options. Look for that on page 52. She also profiles a happy, independent Oaks resident, Dona Anders, on page 56.

As people age, even healthy ones often find themselves needing joint replacement. Fifty years ago it would have been hard to imagine some of the technology used for joint replacement today. Our regional editor, Marilyn Joiner, shares two examples of joint replacement technology available from the many outstanding orthopedic surgeons at Willis-Knighton. Look for that story on page 49.

I was honored when I learned that a story was planned for my milestone anniversary with Willis-Knighton. I'm not a fan of the media spotlight and rarely give interviews. This health system is not all about me, and I prefer to share the focus with the many deserving people who have made us successful. I must say, however, that over the past few months I have been grateful for the kind acknowledgments of my 50 years at Willis-Knighton, both from health system and community sources. I am humbled by the comments in the story by Darrell Rebouche on page 54.

Finally, if you're like me and enjoy a bargain, look for the inserted card that offers a free month's rent for *Vim & Vigor* readers who sign a lease for Tower at The Oaks or Garden Apartments at The Oaks by Nov. 15. Cool weather is coming, and fall is a great time to make a change.

James K. Elrod
President and CEO



VIM & VIGOR

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WHERE DO YOU WORK OUT?

Eight benefits of exercising at a fitness center



Joyce Florance,
fitness
coordinator

Although the cost of most home exercise equipment is cheaper in the long run than a yearly gym membership, the prevalence of cast-off equipment at garage sales is evidence that home exercise programs may not be the answer. Sure, exercising at home is convenient—it requires no travel and there is no need to dress out or pack a workout bag. In the end, however, your decision between working out at home or off-site depends on your commitment to doing it consistently.

There are several advantages to joining a wellness center:

1. FEWER DISTRACTIONS. At a wellness center there are no cats, dogs,

children or household chores. You can focus on your workout.

2. VARIETY. If you purchase your own equipment, you will likely buy one or two pieces and a few dumbbells or elastic bands. A full-service wellness center offers you a wide array of cardiovascular and weight equipment. The variety will ease boredom and foster commitment.

3. GROUP EXERCISE CLASSES. In addition to the encouragement you will receive from others, the socialization can be fun.

4. “ME” TIME. Going off-site to exercise affords you time to spend alone or with others, which can help to relieve stress.

5. ENCOURAGEMENT. You are surrounded by staff and fellow members who share your goals and values. Having

a workout buddy can help you adhere better to your exercise plan.

6. INVESTMENT. For a lot of people, the monthly fee is motivation. They don’t want to pay for something and not use it.

7. EXTRAS. Wellness centers have perks like large pools, saunas and whirlpools, shower facilities, towels and toiletries.

8. EXPERT ADVICE. Most wellness centers have personal trainers or fitness staff to motivate you and offer tips for getting the most from your workout.

Whether you work out at home or go to a gym, what is most important is that you exercise regularly. Find a solution that best meets your lifestyle and that you are most likely to commit to. And remember, always get your physician’s approval on a new fitness regimen if you are 65 or older, have never exercised or have health problems. ■

CALL



Looking for a Place to Exercise?

Stop by a WK Fitness & Wellness Center today and talk to the friendly and encouraging staff about the many benefits of membership. Or call **318-212-4475**.

BY THE NUMBERS



WILLIS-KNIGHTON
AT A GLANCE:
FISCAL YEAR 2014

53,537
ADMISSIONS



3,429
DELIVERIES



237,717
ER AND URGENT
CARE VISITS



28,072
SURGERIES



510,113
HOSPITAL
OUTPATIENT
VISITS



SPECIAL EVENT:

**WEIGHT
NO LONGER!**



Many of us know how it feels when pants seem snug or when there's an unflattering picture of us taken from the side or the rear, revealing more than we wanted to. It's easy to resolve to lose weight and also easy to find excuses to put it off. Besides not looking your best, you know that there are health consequences to carrying extra weight, and that should worry you more than a bad picture.

If you're ready to take control of your weight and your health, "weight" no longer! Whether you have pounds to lose or wish to maintain a healthy weight, you'll want to attend WK WOW's Weight No Longer

health fair. Gain the tools you need to make the changes you want, for your appearance and for your health.

The event is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 3, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the WK Pierremont Health Center Auditorium. This women's wellness event is free for WK WOW! members and \$5 for nonmembers. Register online at wkhs.com (look under "Classes & Events") or call **318-212-8225**.

If you're not a WK WOW! member, join at the WOW! website, wkwow.healthcare.



A NEW INVESTMENT IN PATIENT CARE

As a not-for-profit organization, Willis-Knighton reinvests its earnings in better healthcare and a better community. One example of this is the new open-bore Siemens MRI at WK Pierremont Health Center, complementing the diagnostic imaging capabilities already available at WK Bossier.

The architecture of the unit is simple and efficient. The system is fully equipped for neurology, orthopedic, breast and full-body MRI scans.

The breast MRI at WK Pierremont enhances the health system's advanced breast care program, which introduced 3-D digital breast tomosynthesis last year. A dedicated clinical breast care radiologist has been added who actively consults with patients at high risk for cancer. The goal is to decrease the time from a patient's screening exam to the time of a surgery referral. Patients have reported a higher level of satisfaction because they are given the result of their diagnostic exams before they leave the hospital.



The Siemens Magnetom Aera at WK Pierremont has open space for greater patient comfort during MRI scans.



SAFER SLEEP FOR BABIES

Mothers, grandmothers and even great-grandmothers may have substantially different ideas about baby care and child rearing. Over the years, research has changed how mothers are advised to care for their infants, so if you're helping to care for a baby, don't be tempted to overrule the new mother, especially when it comes to sleep.

For years babies were placed to sleep on their stomachs. Cribs featured soft blankets, dainty pillows and snuggly plush toys. But that's no longer considered safe. Nationally, a "safe sleep" campaign is helping to change ideas about how babies should sleep in an effort to stem sudden infant death syndrome. Willis-Knighton is promoting the initiative throughout the health system.

Here are things that are not safe for sleeping babies:

- **ADULT BEDS.** Mattresses are too soft, and adult bedding can suffocate babies.
- **COUCHES.** Babies can become stuck in the cushions and suffocate.
- **BUMPER PADS, BLANKETS, WEDGES AND POSITIONERS.** These items are not needed and can block a baby's airway.
- **SLEEPING WITH OTHERS.** Babies can be smothered when sleeping with adults or other children.

DON'T BE TEMPTED TO RISK A PRECIOUS BABY'S LIFE. Practice safe sleep when caring for infants!



MarketPlace offers residents at The Oaks of Louisiana convenient shopping for milk, baked goods, accessories and gifts.

ONE-STOP SHOPPING

MarketPlace is a boutique and convenience store all in one

► If residents at The Oaks of Louisiana run out of milk, need to satisfy a sweet tooth between meals or pick up a birthday gift for a friend or a grandchild, they don't have to go far.

The MarketPlace, in Clubhouse at The Oaks, is a phone call or a short walk away.

MarketPlace is a gem of a store—a charming little boutique that specializes in friendly service along with unique gifts, convenience items and women's accessories. It is in the middle of campus, ideal for residents whether they live in the Tower, Garden Apartments, Savannah or Health Center at Live Oak.

Ashley Sabins is manager and lead buyer for MarketPlace. An energetic dynamo with a smile to greet everyone who walks through the doors, Sabins has seen MarketPlace grow not only in inventory but also in the consciousness of residents, family members and the outside community.

"We want the MarketPlace to be the go-to place for residents when they have a need, and more and more it is," Sabins says. "We want residents to be able to get anything."

To that end, Sabins and Rhonda Maclaasac, executive manager of MarketPlace, travel to the Dallas Market Center twice a year. They peruse the offerings of hundreds of vendors, searching for unique items, always with residents in mind.

"As a buyer, it is so overwhelming at market because there are so many things to look at and take in," Sabins says. "You wonder, am I going to see everything? Sometimes we make decisions on the spot. Other times we take information and decide later."

MarketPlace offers milk and other staples such as paper towels and facial tissue, but Sabins prides herself on the success that accessories and gift items have brought to the store. "We've expanded our line for men," she says.

"We have gifts for children. We have religious gifts. We also carry gourmet food items from Wind & Willow and Janis & Melanie."

There are bath and body products, seasonal and holiday items, and stationery and cards.

Ladies' purses, scarves and jewelry, however, are the boutique's biggest draw, with shelves and displays arranged in such a way that shoppers might think they were in a high-end department store.

Few department stores if any, though, specialize in personalized gift baskets that can be delivered, a free concierge service for items purchased at MarketPlace.

And with Sabins, it's no doubt a delivery service with a smile. ■

GO TO...



Come See What We Have in Store

MarketPlace at The Oaks is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information, call **318-212-2455** or visit **oaksofla.com**.

THE GOOD STUFF

Two delicious recipes from Willis-Knighton and The Oaks of Louisiana

Hard-Cider Hens



INGREDIENTS

- 4 Cornish game hens
- 12 ounces hard cider
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 cup salt
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ gallon water
- ½ gallon ice
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 2 pears, peeled and cored and cut into ½-inch dice
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons butter

INSTRUCTIONS

In a pot, heat water enough to dissolve salt and sugar. When dissolved, add ice and pour in a container large enough to hold game hens and liquid. Submerge hens in the liquid and marinate 4 to 24 hours in the refrigerator.

When ready to cook, preheat oven to 200 degrees. Place game hens in a roasting pan and cook uncovered 2 hours. In a heavy, shallow-walled skillet, reduce cider by half its original volume (6 ounces). Add chicken stock and maple syrup. Increase oven temperature to 425 degrees.

Brush game hens with sauce from skillet. Continue to cook sauce to reduce it further. When game hens reach internal temperature of 165 degrees and are browned, remove and allow to rest. When sauce is reduced to about a half-cup, add butter, lemon zest and thyme and spoon over game hens.

These pair well with roasted Brussels sprouts, mashed parsnips and more hard cider.

Yield: 4–6 servings.

Recipe from Alan Dion, Billy Wiethaupt III and Cameron Wallace from The Oaks of Louisiana.

Stuffed Mushrooms

INGREDIENTS

- 4 portobello mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil (divided)
- 1 cup packed baby spinach
- 2 cloves garlic
- ¼ cup pecans or walnuts
- 5 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 ripe avocado
- Sea salt and black pepper to taste
- Pinch of cayenne pepper or chipotle powder or paprika (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Wipe mushrooms with a damp paper towel and remove stems. Brush the top of the mushrooms with 1 tablespoon of the coconut oil and place cap side down on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with some sea salt. Bake 8 minutes.

Remove mushrooms from oven and pour the liquid out of the caps. Return mushrooms to baking sheet. Prepare filling by placing remaining ingredients except the avocado in a food processor. Blend until smooth.

Peel and pit the avocado and mash it up with a fork, leaving some chunks. Stir together the filling and the chunky avocado. Taste filling and add sea salt, black pepper and cayenne pepper if desired. Spoon the filling into the mushrooms and warm in the oven 5 minutes.

Recipe provided by Julie Hartley, RD, Willis-Knighton Diabetes & Nutrition Center.



MANAGEMENT PROFILE

People Person



Debbie McCall

Debbie McCall loves daily challenges. As human resources manager at Willis-Knighton Health System, she sees them as opportunities. With more than 6,500 co-workers to consider, McCall celebrates what she calls “one of our biggest challenges: keeping up employees’ skill levels by providing training and opportunities to grow.” She says, “We look for candidates who are curious and passionate about whatever they do.”

She certainly fits her own criteria. McCall’s tenure at Willis-Knighton began in 1983, and she says that while she has pursued many interests, nothing fascinates her more than people in the workplace. “I’m very passionate about helping people and making a difference in their lives,” she says. “I get a lot of joy from seeing that I’ve helped someone get to the next step.”

Willis-Knighton emphasizes a family feel among its employees, and McCall takes that to heart. She also advocates keeping standards high. “We’re constantly thinking about the needs of the business and how to get individuals ready to meet those needs.” That, she says, enables Willis-Knighton to always deliver excellence in healthcare to our community. “We continue to focus on things that only people can do: imagine, create, build teams, lead and envision the big picture.”

WK Employees Active in the Community

“All I did was what I thought I was supposed to do.” That sums up the outlook that led to **Currie Godfrey** earning a prestigious award from the Louisiana National Guard. Godfrey, an exercise specialist at WK Fitness & Wellness Centers, was awarded the Louisiana Distinguished Civilian Service Medal during a ceremony earlier this year at Shreveport’s Municipal Auditorium.

For 17 months, Godfrey formally mentored a young man in the Youth Challenge Program at Camp Minden. The Louisiana National Guard describes the Youth Challenge as “an alternative educational program which offers adolescents an opportunity to change their future.” Godfrey established a relationship with his student during a five-month residential phase of the Youth Challenge and stayed with it for a year after that. He helped his student make positive life choices.

“There are a lot of troubled teens out there,” Godfrey says. His student was 15 years old when they met, a product of foster care. “His mom has six kids by six different men. He’s the oldest.” By the time the mentorship technically came to a close, the student had turned 17. Not surprisingly, the two have kept in touch. Godfrey feels rewarded. “It has helped me more than it has helped him.”



Currie Godfrey with his Youth Challenge Program protégé

Lori Wheeler tells her surgeon, Cambize Shahrदार, MD, that her fast recovery from hip replacement has allowed her to resume her normal life, both at work and at home.



‘Hip’ Surgeries

for Hips and Knees

New approaches to joint replacement feature a custom fit and quick recovery

BY **MARILYN JOINER**

When Cambize Shahrदार, MD, arrived at Willis-Knighton more than a decade ago, he was a hip guy with hip ideas. He had completed two orthopedic surgery fellowships in California. One of those really hip ideas was a procedure, anterior hip replacement, that was available at only a few places in the nation, and he was sure it would take off in Shreveport. It did.

During extensive training, Dr. Shahrदार had performed both traditional and anterior hip surgery, and he believed anterior was far superior for patients. With his office at The Orthopedic Clinic in the WK Pierremont area, he was well positioned to reach active baby boomers, empty

nesters and retirees—just the kind of people who would be open to this new surgery. “I have performed more than 1,500 anterior hip replacements,” he says. “It has made a big impact on the patients.”

One major advantage of anterior surgery is quicker recovery. People who are busy and active are anxious to return to the business of life. Given that benefit, it’s not surprising that Dr. Shahrदार today attracts people not only from the area near his clinic but also from throughout the region.

In addition to faster recovery time, the anterior procedure differs from traditional hip replacement in other ways. “We use a specialized table that allows the patient to lie flat instead of on the side,” Dr. Shahrदार explains. He points

out that precision placement of the new joint is critical and that this technique uses intraoperative fluoroscopy (X-ray) to help him position the implant.

Ideal for Active People

Lori Wheeler, age 38, took advantage of this specialized joint replacement technique. “My recovery was a piece of cake,” she says. Her surgery occurred on a Thursday, and she was back at her desk job for a half-day the following Tuesday. Of course, her age and physical condition helped her bounce back quickly, too.

Unlike many of Dr. Shahrदार’s patients, Wheeler was not only young, but she was also active and enjoyed sports, especially kickboxing. “That all came to a halt pretty quickly when I began to have soreness in my hip,” she says. “I was a procrastinator and thought it would take care of itself.”

Her pain didn’t diminish. In fact, it became worse. While visiting her sister in Michigan, her sister became so

concerned that she took Wheeler to a doctor, who ordered an MRI. The verdict: a torn labrum (the cartilage seal around the hip joint). She learned she would either have to deal with the pain or have surgery. Back home, her local doctors concurred and referred her to Dr. Shahrदार.

Wheeler is sure she found the right doctor. Since her surgery in November, she has had a working hip that's pain-free and what she calls "a shockingly small incision." Now, instead of having to rest after shopping and other activities, she is going strong. She has given up kickboxing and is careful with certain motions, like sitting cross-legged.

Right Surgeon, Right Surgery

Janis Honeycutt, a licensed practical nurse, put off knee surgery for a year. But one day in 2014, a trip to the emergency room brought it all into focus. "My knee was popping and I was in pain. And then when it swelled up, I went to the emergency room," she says. "I had a cyst behind my knee, and that's when I knew it was time."

The emergency physician at WK Bossier Health Center recommended John Mays, MD, and after careful research, Honeycutt decided Dr. Mays was the right one to do her surgery. "My daughter is in the medical field, too," she says. "We looked him up on the Internet, and she went with me to the appointment. We had a list of questions, and he answered everything right."



Janis Honeycutt can walk pain-free thanks to her high-tech knee surgery with John Mays, MD, at WK Bossier Health Center.

Today, she couldn't be more pleased with the result, and that's not a surprise to Dr. Mays, because her joint surgery was performed with the ConforMIS knee implant, which is customized for each individual. "The majority of knee

replacements today are good, but they are designed for the imaginary average person," the surgeon says. "The knees come in several sizes, but they are all the same basic geometry. However, with humans, no knee is the same." A customized implant leads to a better fit.

EXPERIENCE: THE DIFFERENCE

Cambize Shahrदार, MD, and his team at WK Pierremont Health Center have more than 10 years of experience with anterior hip replacement. Yet, despite the demonstrated results of the anterior approach, the surgeon says that traditional hip replacement surgery continues to dominate the market. Why? "It's difficult for a surgeon to learn the procedure," he explains. "It has a steep learning curve because it takes a long time to learn and do efficiently without complications."

Engineered to Perfection

Though today Dr. Mays is a busy orthopedic specialist with Bossier Orthopedics, he started his education with an undergraduate degree in biomedical engineering. Thus, while on the lookout for a better solution for knee replacement, he discovered the ConforMIS knee implant. It was exactly what he had been seeking, because it



John Mays, MD, shows a custom knee joint that is created using a 3-D printer and packaged with many supporting tools to offer excellent results for patients.

appealed to both his biomedical engineering and his surgical interests.

What makes ConforMIS so special? When Dr. Mays identifies a patient who is suitable for the implant, he orders a CT scan of the ankle, knee and hip, which he sends to the implant manufacturer in Boston. There, the experts generate a 3-D model of the patient's entire leg so that they know exactly where the knee is in relation to the ankle and hip. Using a 3-D printer, the company creates an implant that replicates the patient's knee anatomy, designed to fit specifically for him or her. With the knee replacement, they ship custom tools and cutting guides, all based on the patient's unique anatomy.

Customization is the key to having a knee that works as it should. "That allows me to perfectly fix the alignment, because during regular knee replacement you can't tell where the hip and ankle are in relation to knee," Dr. Mays says.

All this tailoring results in satisfied patients. According to Dr. Mays, studies

show that about a third of women are not happy with their knee replacement and would not do it again. Because many people are electing to have knee surgery while they are still active, they want a new joint that will allow them to maintain their lifestyle. The ConforMIS knee gives a better chance for that.

While the ConforMIS knee is not suitable for individuals with severe deformity, it is ideal for most people. Dr. Mays likens it to custom shoes made by a shoemaker who measures your foot and creates a shoe that fits perfectly. You would likely pay big money for that kind of customization, but not with the ConforMIS knee. "It doesn't cost the patient an extra dime," Dr. Mays says.

Knees and hips that work like they should. Superior technology. Experienced surgeons. It's no wonder that people get great care at Willis-Knighton hospitals, where these doctors and their colleagues performed 373 hip replacements and 596 knee replacements last year alone. ■

JOINT CAMP: GET YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What should you expect when you have joint replacement surgery? Chris Mangin, director of Willis-Knighton's Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Institute, has been asked that question before. Thus, he and his team developed a program called Joint Camp to help answer it.

The classes are held every two weeks, one at WK Bossier Health Center and one at WK Pierremont Health Center. They have been well received by participants, some scheduled for surgery and some not.

"Several people come every month for informational purposes, because they might be having joint replacement surgery or because their family member is scheduled for one," Mangin says. Typically, the patient will attend alone or with a family member, who is called a coach.

Mangin highly recommends the class and encourages physicians to mention it to their patients because getting information firsthand can be comforting.

WEBSITE



Learn More About Joint Replacement

Registration for Willis-Knighton's joint replacement information classes, Joint Camp, is available at wkhs.com (look under "Classes & Events"). Those who can't make a class can watch a video for the basics at wkhs.com/vigor/joint-replacement.

Activities with friends are such fun! These residents display whimsical hats and glasses for a carnival in the Alta and John Franks Community Centre.



HOW TO CHOOSE AN **ACTIVE** ADULT COMMUNITY

BY **TERRIE M. ROBERTS**

Six days into their new lives as residents of Tower at The Oaks, Mary Nell and Pete Anders already loved their home and were eager to experience life to the fullest at The Oaks of Louisiana.

The couple moved to the active adult community from their home in Spring Lake. Married for nine years—both had lost longtime spouses—they realized at age 85 that they needed to relocate.

“You really need to do something like this when you have a little control instead of when your kids or some other person does it for you,” Mary Nell

Anders says. “It was the right decision.”

Donna Angle, lifestyle consultant at The Oaks, agrees. “Most people need to make housing adjustments as they grow older,” she says. “It always is better, though, to make the decision while it is still yours to make.”

She acknowledges, however, it can be overwhelming and frightening.

“Choosing a community involves more than choosing a floor plan,” Angle says. “You’re choosing a lifestyle. There are steps to take to ensure that you and your new home are a perfect fit.”

Think About Your **WANTS AND NEEDS**

First, prospective residents should gather as much information about a community as they can.

They should prioritize their wants and needs. How do they picture their lifestyle? What features do they desire in their home and in the community amenities?

“Consider features in the surrounding area as well,” Angle says. “Is there easy

access to cultural attractions, shopping, restaurants and medical facilities?”

Angle says prospective residents should make a checklist that includes questions about the monthly cost of an apartment; deposits or entry fees; the process for leaving before the signed agreement or lease ends; services included in the monthly rental fee; how many meals are provided; parking; and fees for services not included in the monthly rental fee.

Next, schedule a tour.

Have a **LOOK AROUND**

“There is no substitute for a personal visit,” Angle says. “It enables you to get an idea of the range of amenities and activities. You also need to consider your social, cultural, educational and recreational requirements.”

During tours, Angle suggests prospects record their first impressions. Be observant. Are the grounds well maintained? Does the residence feel fresh and clean? Is the staff accessible and attentive?

Angle says it also is a good idea for prospective residents to schedule a tour in conjunction with an event. “You’ll see if activities and events are well attended,” she says. “Look at the monthly calendars of events to see if they match your interests and if events vary in size and type.”

Prospective residents should also talk to people who already live in the community to get honest opinions and feedback. “Do they look like they love where they live and would be welcoming to a new neighbor?” Angle says. “Is there positive energy in the air?”

See What There Is **TO DO**

Ask about the range of amenities. Many active adult communities have similar offerings, so Angle says it is important for prospective residents to list the things they can’t live without, such as transportation or 24/7 gated security.

Angle says active adults today increasingly are looking for indoor swimming pools, personal trainers, walking trails,



Above: Mary Nell and Pete Anders toured The Oaks of Louisiana and talked to friends who were residents before deciding to move.

Right: There’s always something interesting on tap for Oaks residents Jane Porter (left) and Ellen Morrow.



fitness classes and outdoor recreation like croquet—all things that make life healthier and happier, and all available at The Oaks.

“They also want engaging activities and social opportunities,” she says. “Because they have freed themselves from daily concerns of meal planning, home repairs and maintenance, they have time for new friends and living as actively and independently as they can.

“Activities at a community are a tipoff to the age of its residents, so look for a place that matches your interests,” Angle adds. “We offer bingo and bean bag baseball for those who love those activities, but the scope of what we offer is much broader—croquet, putting, dancing, special-interest clubs, travel, book reviews, lectures on world religions, cultural events.”

Consider the **FUTURE**

Mary Nell and Pete Anders found everything they wanted and needed at The Oaks of Louisiana. “We had visited and were very impressed,” Mary Nell Anders says. “We had heard all about the wonderful food and good service, and it has proved so. We just thought it had everything.”

It does and more.

Unlike many similar communities, The Oaks offers a continuum of care to meet a resident’s needs if and when those needs change. Savannah at The Oaks is an assisted living option; Health Center at Live Oak offers skilled care as well as short-term rehabilitation.

“At The Oaks, we promote active, healthy, independent living, but we recognize circumstances change,” Angle says. “Residents have full access and priority to our different living choices as they need. It is important to plan for future health needs when choosing a community.

“Willis-Knighton Health System’s mission is to continuously improve the health and well-being of the people they serve,” she continues. “Willis-Knighton, which owns The Oaks, is equally committed to improving the quality of life for residents here, at any stage of life.

“To be able to stay within The Oaks of Louisiana if needs change is an advantage that sets The Oaks apart from many other senior adult communities,” Angle says.

Mary Nell and Pete Anders count that among the community’s top amenities. ■

JIM ELROD IN ONE WORD

Friends, colleagues and employees describe the man who has led Willis-Knighton Health System for 50 years

BY **DARRELL REBOUCHE**



Visionary. Dynamic. Charismatic. Brilliant. Relentless. Magnanimous. Driven. During 50 years as president and CEO of Willis-Knighton Health System, James K. Elrod has inspired those who know him best to speak in superlatives about him and his life's work: the awe-inspiring growth of Willis-Knighton under his leadership. All of those words and many more were used when friends, confidants and longtime employees were asked to describe him in one word. Some found the request impossible. "In one word?" Daniel J. Moller Jr., MD, Willis-Knighton's medical director, asked incredulously.



“He’s too big for that.”

“He’s a force to be reckoned with,” declares Caddo Parish Sheriff Steve Prator. “We all know that.”

“Jim Elrod has been Willis-Knighton. Without him, it would not be what it is today and probably would have failed many years ago,” says Frank Hughes, MD, chairman of the health system’s board of trustees.

RISING to the Challenge

In 1965, Willis-Knighton’s visionary trustees chose to employ an administrator with a master’s degree and residency in hospital administration, plus military service with the U.S. Air Force. In addition to these credentials, Elrod brought with him a fierce determination to move the hospital forward. “He was accepting a job that was a tremendous challenge at that time,” recalls Richard Sale, a longtime friend and Baylor University classmate. “At the time, Willis-Knighton was not at the forefront of the healthcare industry in Shreveport, and Jim saw that as a challenge to go in and make things happen.”

The challenge has been met. Fifty years into his tenure, Elrod shows no signs of slowing down, when someone else might be tempted to rest on his laurels. From a small hospital on the corner of Greenwood Road and Hearne Avenue teetering on the brink of insolvency, Willis-Knighton is now operated as one hospital with multiple locations, making it the largest hospital in Louisiana, with 1,192 beds and more than 6,500 employees. The achievement is remarkable.

“During the 50 years he has been in Shreveport, Mr. Elrod has done more for the community and more for the improvement of healthcare than anyone else who has come around,” says Sonny Moss, vice president and administrator of WK Pierremont Health Center.

“Mr. Elrod’s desire for excellence in the delivery of healthcare has benefited our community in more ways than I could list.”
— Sonny Moss

“Mr. Elrod’s desire for excellence in the delivery of healthcare has benefited our community in more ways than I could list.”

COMMITMENT to Community

Among the words used to describe Elrod is “magnanimous,” and those who have worked alongside him for decades may consider that an understatement. His commitment to community service is unmatched. Since 1979, Willis-Knighton has tithed (given 10 percent) from its financial bottom line to provide free healthcare and other needed services to the less fortunate in the community. In doing so, WK became the largest philanthropic engine for the region. Dr. Hughes says this is Elrod’s greatest accomplishment. “What better thing could there be?” he asks. Elrod infuses this philosophy of philanthropy throughout the health system. Among the many pledges each Willis-Knighton employee makes when joining the ranks is “never miss an opportunity to serve.”

“Tithing the bottom line has affected so many lives that most of us are unaware of,” says Debbie Olds, chief nursing officer at Willis-Knighton Medical Center. Moss echoes that sentiment. “People don’t realize what it takes to accomplish

what Mr. Elrod and Willis-Knighton have accomplished over his 50 years,” he says. “Sometimes, when you do a really good job, you almost make it look easy and people take it for granted.”

“People don’t recognize and know about all the things he’s done in our community,” says Joyce Hooper, Willis-Knighton’s director of radiology. Her colleague, Mike Chandler, director of respiratory therapy, agrees. “Willis-Knighton has done so much good for so many people,” Chandler adds. “Just look around and see all the good that’s come from what he’s done.” Former staffer Dianne Coffman is still amazed by what her former boss has accomplished, not just for the health system but also for the community. She nods her head in amazement as she recalls some of them, summing it up: “Only once we get to heaven will we know how much Mr. Elrod has done.”

IMMEASURABLE Influence

“Amazing” is another word used to describe the man, the CEO, the philanthropist. His tenure alone is astonishing to many in the healthcare industry. A recent research project prepared for the American College of Healthcare Executives reveals the average tenure of a CEO in his or her current position is a little more than five and a half years. Elrod has been on the job for almost 10 times that long. The same report indicates only 3.4 percent of CEOs are in their position for more than 20 years.

Elrod has dedicated his life to Willis-Knighton and Shreveport-Bossier, and the community is better because of it. Dr. Hughes puts it this way: “Jim Elrod’s legacy will be the gift of Willis-Knighton to the community.”

At 50 years and counting, that legacy is still growing. ■



Tower at The Oaks resident Dona Anders is known for her kind spirit and generous heart, but she's made a name for herself, too, in the Tower's pingpong competitions.

RALLY ROUND

Big-hearted Dona Anders enjoys the friendly competition of pingpong



Dona Anders may be small in stature, but she has a huge heart.

"She is super caring, and one of the things people don't realize about her—because she is a strong personality—is she will go out of her way to do kind things for anyone," says her son Todd Anders, of Dallas.

Residents and staff at Tower at The Oaks can attest to that. They have been beneficiaries of Dona Anders's kindness and benevolence time and again.

"She has a heart of gold and would do anything for anybody. She puts others

before herself," says Cathy Blankenship, Tower concierge.

"She makes it a point to show staff appreciation for a job well done and remembers others on special days like their birthdays," says Katie Cohen, Spa & Wellness Center supervisor.

Dona Anders moved to Tower at The Oaks, one of two independent living options at The Oaks of Louisiana active adult community, three years ago. Previously she lived in a comfortable home on Captain Shreve Drive that she shared with her husband, Richard, before his death nearly 18 years ago.

Todd Anders says he and brother Rick are thrilled their mother moved to The Oaks. "There are a lot of communities like The Oaks in a lot of different markets. The Oaks ranks as one of the best. You guys have figured out something more people could stand to figure out," he says.

"It has been a great decision," Rick Anders continues. "Our mother could not be as independent as she is if she were not living at The Oaks."

Although health issues have recently curbed Dona Anders's activity—she once enjoyed water aerobics three days a week and workouts on machines specially designed for senior adults—she nevertheless exercises as she can.

She also was among the first to sign up when the Spa & Wellness Center offered pingpong classes and held its first double-elimination pingpong tournament, complete with brackets.

"She is a skilled player and has a mean serve," Cohen says. "Her quick reflexes create a challenge for any opponent. She loves to be challenged and always pushes herself to achieve her highest possible level of excellence."

And in typical Dona Anders style, "she always encourages and shares a kind word with fellow pingpong players," Cohen says.

Well played, Mrs. Anders. ■

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