

Summit Pacific Celebrates Donor Appreciation and Honors Legacy of Grays Harbor Artist Elton Bennett

Summit Pacific Medical Foundation



(ELMA, WA) – On August 30, 2023, the Summit Pacific Medical Foundation gathered key supporters for a donor appreciation reception, a memorable occasion recognizing both generosity and a remarkable artistic legacy. The event, held at Summit Pacific Medical Center, celebrated donors whose contributions have played a pivotal role in supporting Summit Pacific’s mission.

Brad Thomas, Foundation Executive Director, expressed his gratitude to the sponsors, supporters, and donors over the last year for their generosity to the Foundation. Thomas also thanked and gave recognition to the Summit Pacific employees and leadership that donated to the Employee Giving Campaign-Changing Lives, announcing that the initial fundraising goal of \$75,000 had been surpassed, showcasing the impressive commitment to the Foundation.

The highlight of the evening was a ceremony dedicated to the memory of Elton Bennett, a beloved Grays Harbor artist born in 1910, renowned for his unique ability to capture the beauty and vitality of the Grays Harbor region. The Foundation paid special tribute to Elton Bennett’s daughter, Barbara Bennett Parsons, for her extraordinary donation of ten original paintings personally chosen by Parsons to be displayed at Summit Pacific’s Wellness Center. Parsons emphasized that her father’s art symbolizes the vision of a healthy Grays Harbor community, aligning perfectly with the vision and values of Summit Pacific.

In a touching statement, Parsons conveyed her connection to the community and her own journey of wellness, emphasizing the role of creativity in the healing process. “One of the components of healing is creativity,” Parsons remarked. “I hope that having this art available in the Wellness Center creates hope, peace and a connection to this area that helps patients heal.”

Elton Bennett’s artistic journey began with various trades, including fishing, mill work, and dredging, as he worked tirelessly to support his family. His early sketches depicted everyday life in and around Grays Harbor,



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and while he struggled to establish his career, his art found its way onto labels for products such as cans of clam chowder, menus for Sourdough Lils, motel brochures, and paper placemats. Over time, he gained recognition for his outstanding talent, leaving behind an inspiring legacy of 5,041 works of art at the time of his tragic passing in a commercial plane crash in Pago Pago, American Samoa, in 1974.

Andrew Hooper, Board Commissioner, expressed his gratitude for the contribution, stating, "Elton Bennett's art, through the generosity of Barbara Bennett Parsons, will accelerate Summit Pacific's pursuit of improving wellness and health in our community."

Hooper emphasized that, "Our vision, 'Through Summit Care, we will build the healthiest community in the Nation,' is a tough goal, but I love to share it because we are going to do it!" He underscored the importance of partnerships with local individuals and community organizations to achieve this bold vision.

The Summit Pacific Medical Foundation extends its profound appreciation to all its donors and supporters, including Barbara Bennett Parsons, for their enduring dedication to enhancing health in Grays Harbor.

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Summit Pacific is a vibrant and expanding nonprofit public hospital district serving east Grays Harbor County, Washington. Founded in 1982, Summit Pacific now operates three locations comprised of a critical access hospital, primary care clinics, an urgent care clinic and a range of ancillary and specialty services. Summit Pacific's vision is "Through Summit Care, we will build the healthiest community in the Nation." To learn more about Summit Pacific, visit www.summitpacificmedicalcenter.org.