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## UCLA Medicine Magazine

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## UCLA Medicine Magazine

### Fall 2008: A New Future Begins!

#### The Givers

*Each gave for their own reason, but without the generosity of caring philanthropists Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center might never have been constructed.*  
By Roberta G. Wax

Just as it takes a village to raise a child, so, too, it takes a community of devoted and generous individuals to elevate the hopes for better-quality healthcare. It was in such a spirit that donors small and large contributed to the successful completion of Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

"This couldn't have been done without the generosity of the donors," says Dr. Gerald S. Levey, vice chancellor of UCLA medical sciences and dean of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. "They bought into this vision. Without [them], this project wouldn't have happened."

All told, private giving raised nearly \$300 million for the hospital, a staggering amount for a single project. To recognize the contributions of benefactors, their names are etched in glass on a donor wall in the main lobby that is inscribed with a quote from architect I.M. Pei: "What is the true impact of space, light and nature on wellness? I believe the design of Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center will affect the people who work, visit and receive care here. The principal objective is to create an environment of healing."

UCLA is grateful to all who gave to the hospital project, but it is impossible to recognize each individually on these pages. To celebrate the breadth of the giving – and of the givers – we highlight a handful of donors whose generosity is emblematic of everyone who contributed to make Pei's vision of "an environment of healing" a reality.

#### Stewart and Lynda Resnick

**It is easier** sometimes to make money than it is to give it away. Stewart and Lynda Resnick do both very well. But the husband-wife philanthropists - founders of Roll International, a private holding company that includes such well-known brands as Teleflora, FIJI Water and POM Wonderful – acknowledge "It's hard to be comfortable giving money away, not knowing if it's going to a good place or not."

That wasn't the case, however, when they decided to make a gift to name the Stewart and Lynda Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA. Giving, Lynda Resnick says, "is like investing in a business - you want good leadership. We feel confident [giving to UCLA] because we know the leadership is good." For them, making money and giving money go hand-in-hand. "If you are fortunate to make enough money, you want to do something for the rest of the world," explains Stewart Resnick, standing with his wife on the fourth-floor terrace of the hospital that bears their name, the city of Los Angeles spread out below them. Government can't be expected to do it all, adds Lynda Resnick, so "the private sector has to help, and we are trying to do our part ... to make a difference."

They are long-time supporters of UCLA, having previously established several endowed chairs. Years ago, when they owned The Franklin Mint, their company designed a trophy in the shape of a chair that still is given to newly named chair holders in the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. And they are vigorous advocates. "They spread the word about us in such a positive way," says Dr. David T. Feinberg, CEO of UCLA Hospital System. "When they speak on our behalf, it is very valuable because it has credibility coming from them."

**The support of the Resnicks** for the Neuro-psychiatric Hospital was particularly important. "There is still a stigma attached to mental-health issues," Stewart Resnick says, and private support for mental health lags behind that for other areas of medicine.

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While the Resnicks were initially reluctant to have their name on the hospital, they decided it would be beneficial because it signals a deeper level of support. "This is an under-funded and under-appreciated area [of medical care] that doesn't get the support it needs," Stewart Resnick says. Making their gift so visible "sets a good example."

Their commitment to philanthropy extends to their own businesses, and the Resnicks encourage a charitable ethic among their employees. For example, the Roll Giving Program offers employees \$1,000 a year to give to an eligible charity of their choice; while the checks come from Roll, the name of the giving employee is included on the check, along with a letter indicating the donation is given on behalf of that particular Roll employee. "We want to encourage giving but don't want employees to feel it is a burden," Stewart Resnick says. Roll Giving offers an additional matching-gift benefit to employees, which ranges from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

"We are building a philanthropic mentality within the organization," Lynda Resnick notes. Giving employees a say in where the company makes charitable contributions makes sense because they recognize where the needs are in their own communities. "They know if the school yard needs a fence or if the local hospital needs help to serve their needs," she says.

**Beyond their philanthropy**, the Resnicks have close ties to UCLA. Stewart Resnick earned his B.S. degree in business administration at UCLA, and his J.D. from the UCLA School of Law. He is a member of UCLA's Executive Board for the Medical Sciences and is on the advisory board of the Anderson School of Management. On Lynda Resnick's side, her mother, grandmother and son all have received medical treatment at UCLA. Her son has multiple handicaps, and UCLA, she says, "saved his life."

In addition, they are committed Angelenos. "We love Los Angeles," Lynda Resnick says. "It is great to do something that is good for the city." Add to that "a passion for life," says Jane Nathanson, a fellow philanthropist and long-time friend, and there's a powerful drive to make an impact. "They have a lot of interests and a tremendous social consciousness," she says. "They feel that they have been fortunate, and they want to give back."

Their own personal experiences have made them knowledgeable about various aspects of the medical and mental-health fields, Nathanson says, and that has guided some of their philanthropy. "They're really terrific philanthropists. If there is a need somewhere in the community, and you go to Stewart and Lynda, and they see that it is important, they will give," she says. "Los Angeles is lucky to have them."

### Howard Ruby

As Howard Ruby shows a visitor his photographs displayed on the sixth floor of Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, he pauses to watch a man who is looking at one of his stunning Arctic landscapes. Beaming, Ruby comments that seeing others enjoying his work "is what it's all about."

Many patients, families and staff are enjoying Ruby's work. The renowned nature and wildlife photographer donated about 200 of his photographs – many of them direct from an exhibition at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. – that now hang on the walls of public corridors and in meeting rooms throughout the new hospital.

The images of shimmering blue glaciers and jagged icy crevices in the Arctic, African bush and exotic wildlife – amazing close-ups of puffins, penguins and polar bears – contribute to the new hospital's environment of community and healing, says Dr. David T. Feinberg, CEO of UCLA Hospital System. They "elicit a sense of nurturing and beauty and real life," he says, adding that beautiful surroundings contribute to patient wellness and encourage patients, as well as the hospital staff, to focus more fully on the work of healing. There is a deep sense of serenity to many of the pictures: a dark bison shrouded in white in a Yosemite snowstorm; rows of bold red poppies in Washington; flowers that seem to glow with their own internal light.

As a neighbor of UCLA, Ruby watched the progress of the new hospital while it was being constructed and felt he wanted to make a contribution. "I watched this hospital being built. I'm a member of the community. I've been a patient at UCLA. This is not a typical hospital, it's a beautiful building," he says. A lengthy tour of the hospital with Dr. Feinberg, followed by a tour of his studio that he gave the hospital CEO, solidified the relationship, which both men say is ongoing. "The hospital was such a surprise," Ruby says of his first visit. "It didn't feel like a hospital. They're looking for wellness here." If his pictures help to accomplish that, then Ruby says he is gratified and happy.

Besides donating the specially framed photographs, Ruby moved quickly to install all the large-scale pieces in time for the hospital's opening in June. He worked with Debby Doolittle, the art curator for the medical center, to match photos to specific areas of the hospital. For example, polar bears, puffins, penguins and two 7-foot-tall photographs of a giraffe and polar bear are placed in the public areas of Mattel Children's Hospital UCLA. For Stewart and Lynda Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA, there are soothing landscapes, snowscapes and seascapes. Some photos are mounted high on the walls of the interventional surgery floor to give patients – and staff – tranquil images to look at.

**In addition to being a photographer**, Ruby is a successful businessman. He is the founder, chairman and CEO of the Oakwood Worldwide temporary-furnished-apartment chain. But it is photo-graphy that is his passion, going back to when he was in junior high school taking snapshots with a Brownie camera. That passion has earned him numerous accolades, including being named the 2007 Conservation Photographer of the Year by the National Wildlife Federation and Nature's Best Photography Magazine for using his photographs to help create awareness about climate change.

There is a thrill for him that goes beyond the public showing of his work. "It's wonderful to be in *Nature's Best Photography Magazine*, to be in the Smithsonian," he says. "But when you know there is a broader purpose, it adds another dimension." Ruby's biggest fan remains his wife of more than 20 years, actress Yvette Mimieux Ruby. It was she who convinced him to show his work publicly. "He was a little shy," she says. For Ruby's birthday three years ago, she gave him his first show – a two-day event at the Bill Lowe Gallery in Santa Monica showcasing about 70 of his photographs.

His wife is still awed by Ruby's work. There were tears in her eyes when she saw his Arctic sunset hanging in the Elizabeth and Jim Wiatt Executive Board Room of the medical center. "It's stunning," she

says of the 20-foot-long by 5-foot-high panorama – 22 separate shots that are stitched together in the computer – which captures melting sea ice beneath a spectacular orange-and-gold sky just 400 miles from the North Pole. “It gives me chills.”

Dr. Feinberg says that the powerful image fits so well within the elegant space that it looks like it was created expressly for the board room. One of Ruby’s favorite photos is of a polar bear cub cuddling up to its mother. The mother bear’s head is inclined toward her cub, but her eyes are narrowed as she looks in the direction of the camera, as if to warn, “Keep away.” “Look how she’s protecting the cub,” Ruby says, pointing at the picture. “And how the cub looks up at mom with such love and feeling of being protected.” What better metaphor is there for the caring that goes on within the walls of the new hospital where Ruby’s pictures now hang.

## Dr. Fred Hagigi and the Estate of Hooshmand Missaghieh

**For generations**, the roots of the Hagigi and Missaghieh families have been intertwined in the soil of Iran. Family members on both sides worked in healthcare, including a physician to the royal family, and in the 1950s they together founded one of the first modern hospitals in their country, Missaghieh Hospital in Tehran.

“It was among the best in the country,” says Dr. Fred Hagigi, a UCLA professor of public health, whose father had been chief of the hospital. Its physicians were trained in Europe and the United States, and it was the first in Iran to include a nursing school. “We loved the hospital in Iran,” says Dr. Hagigi’s wife, Latifeh, a UCLA lecturer in Iranian studies and a member of the Missaghieh family. “It was modern. It was open to all. It was a great step forward.”

But as the political climate in Iran shifted, leading up to the Islamic Revolution in 1979, many members of both families fled Iran. “They had to leave everything,” says Latifeh, who, with her husband, came to study in the United States several years before the revolution. “It was especially difficult to leave Missaghieh Hospital.” Among those who came to the United States was Latifeh’s uncle, Hooshmand Missaghieh, a mechanical engineer. He and Dr. Hagigi had been close since Dr. Hagigi was a child – “Fred was like a son to him,” says Latifeh – and Dr. Hagigi imagined that he would one day take over Uncle Hooshmand’s company in Tehran.

Instead, he became his uncle’s financial adviser in the United States, and when Missaghieh became ill, assumed responsibility for overseeing his medical care. When the older man began having cardiac problems, Dr. Hagigi brought him to UCLA for treatment. “When it came time to plan my uncle’s will, we discussed places where he could donate money,” says Dr. Hagigi. With the family’s deep history of supporting healthcare, “it wasn’t difficult to decide on the type of institute to which to donate. It was just a question of which one.”

**The new** Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center reminds Dr. Hagigi of the hospital in Tehran that his family helped to establish. “It resembles the ideal of what our families built in Iran,” he says. “Even though we are far from our homeland, we can bring our dreams here.” So when Hooshmand Missaghieh died several years ago, Dr. Hagigi decided it would be appropriate to make a donation from his uncle’s estate to the place that had given him such good care in his final years. That donation established the Missaghieh Family Cardiac Interventional Suite.

“I tried to be objective about where we would choose to give, but in the end your heart has to be there. UCLA is our home,” Dr. Hagigi says. “We work here. Our son rode his bicycle all over the campus when he was a child, just as I played as a child on the grounds of Missaghieh Hospital, and he earned his B.S. in business economics and his M.P.H. in healthcare management here. We have a personal feeling of intimacy with this place. There is a sense of family here.”

The gift to establish the Missaghieh Family Cardiac Interventional Suite is essential to helping UCLA maintain – and advance its standing as a leading cardiac-care center, says Johanna Bruner, director of Cardiology Services. The state-of-the-art invasive and non-invasive cardiac labs ensure that UCLA provides “the highest standard of care in a safe, comfortable and caring environment,” she says. “We are grateful to everyone who supports our mission to deliver the finest cardiac care in the world.”

Dr. Hagigi also recognized that the largest Iranian population outside of Iran lives in Southern California. That community, with UCLA in its geographical heart, links to the heritage of the Missaghieh and Hagigi families and the hospital they left behind. Having the family name perpetuated at UCLA “is another way to compensate for that loss,” Dr. Hagigi says. “And we also hope that this will encourage other Iranians to donate, to feel that connection.”

**A legacy** of giving is ingrained not only in Dr. Hagigi’s family, but also in their Baha’i faith. “We have been very blessed to be born into families that are financially capable. We have to make sure that others benefit,” he says. “Health and education are the most-fundamental basic rights of any human being. This is the foundation of our giving and the foundation of our faith.”

Dr. Hagigi has also personally established a fellowship at UCLA, and he hopes that his family’s example will inspire other members of the UCLA community to give something back to the university. As a teacher, he says, he tries to “plant a seed about giving and sharing. It’s important to cultivate a sense of community among faculty and students.” And the Hagigis want the family’s legacy to continue. “In the history of medicine in Iran, people still talk about Missaghieh Hospital,” says Latifeh. “I wish my uncle had lived long enough to see this new UCLA hospital. He would have been proud.”

## Jonathan Mitchell and the Mitchell Family Foundation

**When Jonathan Mitchell’s** great-grandparents emigrated from a small village in Europe to New York’s teeming Lower East Side, they were so poor that the children wrapped rags around their feet in winter because they didn’t have shoes. At the age of 4, his grandfather, Edward, roamed the streets selling collar buttons, shoelaces and old newspapers – anything to help the family survive.

“He might come home at night with a few pennies,” says Mitchell. “He’d turn them over to his mother, who would put some of them into a small box. At the end of the week, she’d take my grandfather by the hand and give what was in the box to dispossessed people on the street who had nowhere else to sleep.

"They could barely eat themselves, yet they gave to others." His great-grandmother, Mitchell says, "taught our family the meaning, the importance of charity."

As an adult, Mitchell's grandfather founded Beneficial Standard Life Insurance Co., and, together with his wife, Anna, established his family foundation. Edward contributed greatly to the fledgling State of Israel, and his son, Mitchell's father, Joseph, supported many Jewish organizations, chaired the Los Angeles Music Center Unified Fund Campaign and was chairman of the board of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. As a board member of Hillcrest Country Club in Los Angeles, he initiated the requirement for members to give at least 10 percent of their income to charity.

**These are lessons** that Mitchell learned well. On behalf of the Mitchell Family Foundation, he has given to numerous educational and healthcare institutions. Now, in honor of his grandparents, a gift to UCLA has underwritten the Edward D. & Anna Mitchell Dining Commons in Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, as well as two information booths, also named in memory of his forebears. "Within Jonathan and his family is a culture of giving, a responsibility to take the assets they have and use them to help others," says Larry Weinberg, who knew both Mitchell's grandfather and father, and who watched Jonathan "grow to become a leader on his own."

Weinberg, also a philanthropist and co-founder and former owner of the Portland Trail Blazers basketball team, says Mitchell "sees the big picture and takes the long-term view. He sees and understands not just what needs to be done at this instance, but what will make a difference today and particularly tomorrow."

Mitchell himself became involved in charitable work "as soon as I could afford to." He runs his family's investment portfolio and serves as president of the family foundation. "It is important to me that my grandparents' names are connected to good things," Mitchell says. "I want my children to see that, to see them as role models. I want my grandparents to be remembered for their wonderful accomplishments in improving our world."

Indeed, now Mitchell's four children are learning that lesson. His oldest son, Jason, sits on the foundation board. "My father has taken over my grandfather's work," says Jason. "We have a long history of philanthropy. He feels passionate about these causes ... and talks a great deal about helping others, about changing people's lives through education and healthcare."

**Giving to Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center** "was an easy call," Mitchell says. His parents met as students at UCLA - his mother, Beverly, who is also on the foundation board, graduated with a degree in physical education (and received a UCLA Alumni Award for Community Service in 1974), and his father was in the Class of '42 until he left to serve in World War II.

Years later, Joseph would be treated at UCLA. "I was truly impressed with the care he received," Mitchell says. "They stabilized him and got him on the right medication and treatment plan. That made a big difference to our family. They enabled him to function well enough to come home and live comfortably for a good number of years before his passing in 2004." Other members of Mitchell's family also received medical treatment at UCLA, he adds. When deciding where to turn his philanthropic attention, Mitchell says he looks for organizations that are responsible and not wasteful. "I understand that there are administrative and fundraising costs in any charitable endeavor, but I want to help an organization where the money will do the most good," he says.

He also wants to feel a connection to a group, and he likes charities that help people help themselves: "I like giving money to help gifted students, to educate people who exhibit a desire to learn and apply their learning." Why is giving important? "We're always trying to better ourselves, to better society," he says. "It's up to those of us who are able to set an example. Others will surely follow, and we'll all live happier lives as a result."

## Wing K Chung

**This is a story** about a man who loves and misses his wife. It is about a woman who loved to tend her flowers. It is about two people who loved to help others.

That desire to help has materialized as gifts to numerous institutions, including UCLA. But for Wing K. Chung, his most personal, perhaps his most cherished, is the gift he made to create a garden at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center in memory of his late wife. Teak benches, chairs and tables dot the brick-lined garden outside of the area where families will wait while their loved ones are in surgery. A lavender Chinese wisteria creeps up the wall and will eventually cover the overhead beams to create a shady bower.

It's a peaceful spot - a "sanctuary to soothe the anxiety of patients and their families ... and help people find comfort," he says - and an appropriate tribute to his wife, Alice Lee-Tsing, who was affectionately known to friends and relatives as Lee-Tsing and was herself a patient at UCLA Medical Center.

**Theirs seems an** unlikely partnership. At first glance, they appear to be such opposites. She was independent, outgoing, boisterous - a real "hoot," says Vivian King, a close friend who grew up with the couple and still calls them Aunt and Uncle. "She was always laughing." Wing, on the other hand, is conservative and quiet.

Lee-Tsing was born in Shanghai, one of 12 children, and came to the United States as a student. Wing grew up in China during World War II. It was a hard life, he says, and as the oldest son among six siblings, he was responsible for his family. "I always felt that if only someone would help, life would be better," he says. He vowed to give back to the community when he could. Lee-Tsing, a medical technologist, was living in California when a mutual friend arranged for her to meet Wing, a civil and structural engineer, who was living in Boston. She flew across the country to meet him.

"I knew right away she was right for me," says Wing. "She was not an ordinary woman. She always had a plan. She would fight for what she believed in. She was not afraid of anything." They married the next year.

**The devoted couple** "brought out the best in each other," says a friend, Mary Anne Anthony, who worked with Lee-Tsing at the UCLA Medical Center blood bank. And they shared a long history of

philanthropy, whether it was taking in someone who needed a place to stay, helping friends and relatives find jobs or donating money to promote health and education.

"Lee-Tsing believed in the power of education and its ability to improve one's quality of life," says Wing. "She was always helping people." Her caring was evident even when she was dying. Wing recalls that when his wife was in the hospital, about 10 days before she died, she met a woman who aspired to be a nurse. Lee-Tsing immediately called over a nurse to ask how this woman could apply to nursing school.

It is Lee-Tsing's selfless, enduring spirit that inspired Wing to establish the Wing and Alice Lee-Tsing Chung Garden. "A garden is the best tribute to Lee-Tsing," says Anthony. "She loved the beauty of flowers and the peace of a garden." Besides paying homage to his beloved wife, Wing hopes his donation will inspire others, especially Chinese Americans, to give. "I'm just a little guy who has limited resources. But if I can inspire others to do something, we can accomplish great things," he says. "It doesn't matter how much money you have, you can still do something."

If everyone contributes a little, Wing says, the world, like the garden named in Lee-Tsing's memory, will be a more beautiful place for all.

## **Jim and Elizabeth Wiatt**

**Jim and Elizabeth Wiatt's** long association with UCLA healthcare began with close encounters of the personal kind.

At a social gathering, they met the noted UCLA psychiatrist, researcher and civil-rights activist Dr. Louis Jolyon West, "a dynamic and brilliant thinker" who "impressed us with his work" to deprogram prisoners of war and cult members, says Jim Wiatt. They also came to know another esteemed UCLA physician and researcher, Dr. Gary Gitnick, chief of the Division of Digestive Diseases and founder of the Fulfillment Fund, a non-profit he established in 1977 to help disadvantaged students graduate from high school and go on to complete their college education. Dr. Gitnick, Jim Wiatt says, "inspired us with his vision and dedication."

And there has been a long association with Dr. Gerald S. Levey, vice chancellor of UCLA medical sciences and dean of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. "I was drawn to both his innovative approach to management and his endless enthusiasm and dedication," Jim Wiatt says. "UCLA is lucky to have him." That, says Jim Wiatt, "is the way you get drawn in, by the people you know. You meet amazing people at UCLA."

That connection has led to strong ties with UCLA, both philanthropic and personal, and the Wiatts' donation to Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center named the Elizabeth and Jim Wiatt Executive Board Room. But their contributions go "beyond monetary gifts," says Dr. David T. Feinberg, CEO of UCLA Hospital System.

"It is also the gift of time and energy. They offer wise counsel and great ideas. They bring their heart and soul. They're like our ambassadors in the community," Dr. Feinberg says.

**Jim and Elizabeth Wiatt** are a quintessential Los Angeles power couple - informed, influential and involved. He is the chairman and CEO of the talent-powerhouse William Morris Agency. She is an entrepreneur; in June, she and a close friend opened a clothing store for 'tweens in Beverly Hills called Fashionology LA. Both sit on a variety of boards. Jim Wiatt is chairman of UCLA's Executive Board for the Medical Sciences and the Los Angeles Police Foundation, and is a member of the board of the Los Angeles Music Center, among other creative institutions. Elizabeth Wiatt has served on the boards of the Fulfillment Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council, and is on the board of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's Million Tree Initiative. Last year, she was named to the *Los Angeles Times Magazine* list of "People of Influence."

"Jim and Elizabeth represent the best of what our city has to offer," says Mayor Villaraigosa, who first met the couple in 1998 when he was Speaker of the State Assembly. "They are the kind of people who raise their hands whenever there's a good cause and a need for someone to step forward." Community, Elizabeth Wiatt says, is a "core value" for the couple and their family, which includes daughters Isabel, 10, and Caroline, 8, and getting involved is part of their nature. "We believe strongly that it is important to have a safe, healthy community," Jim Wiatt says. "It's important to do something for the community we live in."

As exemplars of humanitarian commitment, they look to friends and fellow philanthropists like Robert Day, the founder and chairman of the investment-management firm TCW Group Inc. and president and CEO of the W.M. Keck Foundation, one of the largest philanthropic organizations in the nation, and his wife, Kelly, who is a co-chair of UCLA's annual Millennium Ball, and to entrepreneurs Stewart and Lynda Resnick, whose gift to Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center named the Stewart and Lynda Resnick Neuro-psychiatric Hospital at UCLA.

"We are constantly inspired by both the Days' and the Resnicks' philanthropic giving and commitment to our community," says Jim Wiatt, who also is co-chair of the Millennium Ball. "They are role models to us, having touched so many different people at UCLA, and beyond, through their dedication and generosity." The Wiatts' enthusiasm for community engagement "is very real and comes from their hearts," says Walt Disney Co. CEO Robert Iger, who has known the couple for nearly two decades. "They don't do these things for show. They do them because they truly care about numerous issues and how they impact their community."

Such commitment has been passed on to their daughters. The girls are "ferocious" about protecting the environment, Elizabeth Wiatt says. At school, they formed the "Teenie Greenie Team," and at home they're kid-sized conservation enforcers. "If I don't bring my own shopping bag to the supermarket, they're on me," Elizabeth Wiatt says, with a laugh. "They watch to make sure we turn off the water when we brush our teeth." Jim Wiatt smiles as he listens to his wife describe their children's activism. "The thing about activism is, you have to show by example," he says.

Elizabeth Wiatt credits her husband for her sense of social awareness. "Jim inspired me through his passion and commitment," she says. She recalls when they were first dating and she read something in

the newspaper that riled her. "Someone should do something about this," she said to him, to which he responded, "What about you?" "I realized at that moment that that 'someone' would be me," she says.

Jim Wiatt's own social awakening came from his parents, who "always gave more than they could afford," he says. They were active in the civil-rights movement, and he recalls as a child sitting on the stairs in his parents' home and listening to Martin Luther King Jr. speak during a party they hosted for the civil-rights leader. Later, Jim Wiatt was a volunteer for Robert F. Kennedy, and he was at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on the night in 1968 that Kennedy was killed. A week after Kennedy's death, he and other young volunteers formed the Kennedy Action Core to lobby for gun control.

Those lessons learned as a youth continue to this day. "Jim is very conscious that life has been good to him. He's worked very hard to get where he is, and he consciously believes in giving back," says Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton. "The Wiatts are real people. It's that simple. There's a lot of depth to them, and that's what people respond to."

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