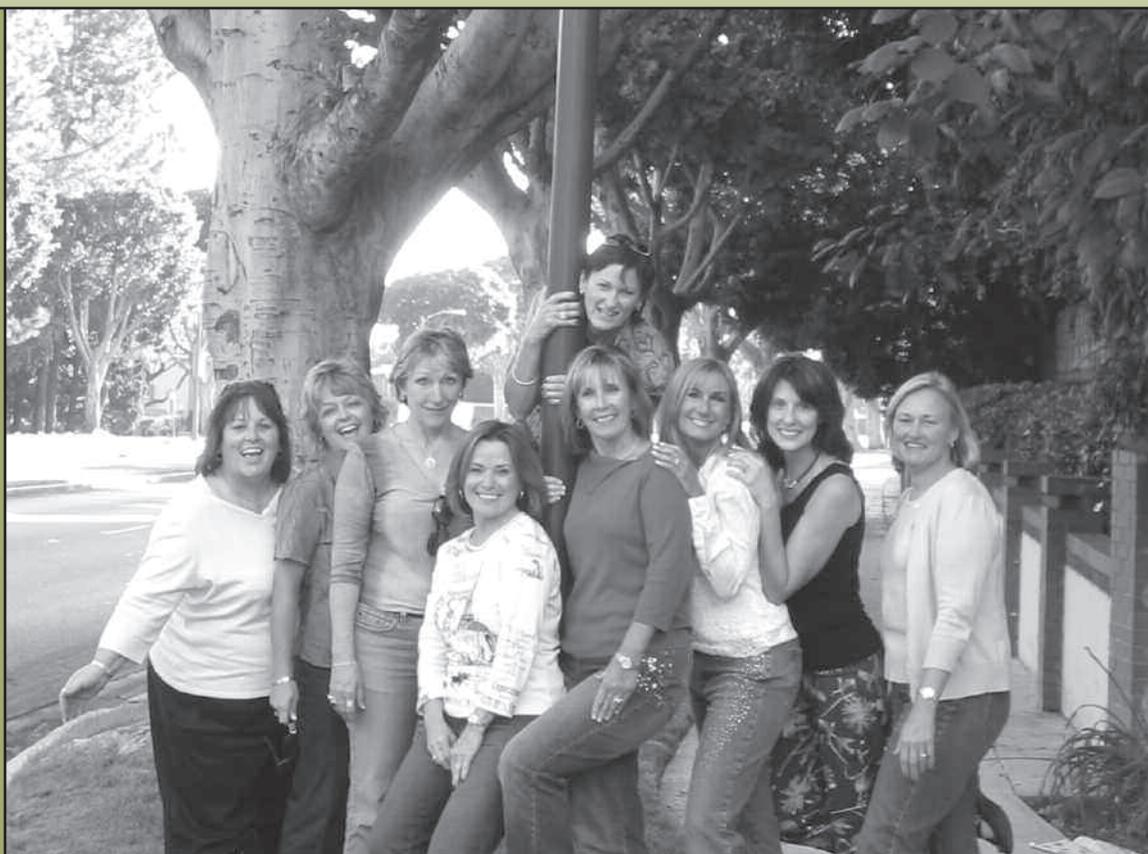


# Friends celebrate the return of “the old Denise” with a donation to The Campbell Foundation

*“You don't realize how precious mobility is until you no longer have it.”*

— DENISE BLASSINGAME



**After a crushing automobile accident, Denise Blassingame, (pictured far left, with her friends in Beverly Hills), felt pain with every step she took. Hip replacement surgery improved her life dramatically.**

**G**ifts to The Campbell Foundation come in all sizes, from donors of all ages, motivated by a variety of reasons.

One gift last year came from a lively group of women from DeSoto County, Mississippi, who travel together. Their donation honors the birthday of Denise Blassingame, a member of the group who credits the doctors of Campbell Clinic with helping her resume a full, active life after a traumatic automobile accident.

At this time ten years ago, Denise was confined to a hospital bed in her home. Her broken leg, ankle and pelvis were mending, but her shattered left hip was so damaged that doctors were not certain she would walk again.

She survived the accident, Denise tells friends, because God took care of her. She walks again, Denise believes, with the help of God and Campbell Clinic.

## HE'S GOING TO HIT US!

The big blue garbage truck plowed into Denise's sedan as she was driving her daughter Monica to school one morning in late August 1997. "The last thing I remember," Denise said, "was telling Monica, 'He's going to hit us!' Then I guess I blacked out for a minute because suddenly there was glass everywhere and the dashboard was in my lap."

Monica's injuries were minor. But an ambulance crew had to use "jaws of life" tools to remove Denise from the wreckage. She was transported to the Regional Medical Center at Memphis (The Med), where Campbell Clinic surgeon Dr. George Wood was on call. Denise learned from Dr. Wood that in addition to numerous cuts and bruises, she had a compound fracture of her left leg, a broken ankle, her pelvis was broken in two places, and her left hip was crushed. Her injuries would require months of hospitalization.

"When I thought back to the accident and saw how the dashboard was broken, the motor was pushed in, and the front of the car was crumpled like an accordion, I realized that God made a little pocket for Monica and me," Denise said. "I didn't even consider what was ahead of me. I knew God brought us through the accident and knew that everything would be okay, no matter what."

## A DOCTOR WHO LISTENED AND EXPLAINED

After a week in The Med, Denise was moved to a hospital in DeSoto County to be closer to home. Dr. John Crockarell, whose specialty is total joint replacement, became her doctor. She was in traction and confined to a trapeze bed, where she remained for over two months. Denise celebrated her birthday in the hospital with family, friends and the hospital staff she had come to know well.

"I was very comfortable with Dr. Crockarell," she said. "He always had time to listen, and he explained things in a way that I could understand."

Denise added, "Dr. Crockarell's quiet and encouraging manner has been very reassuring over the years. We've talked about the mission trips he has been on, and how he's spent his time helping others. He takes time to answer all my questions about the new techniques being perfected. I realize what a blessing it is to have one of the exceptional doctors of Campbell Clinic taking care of me."

After returning home, Denise progressed from being bed-ridden to using a wheelchair, then a walker, then a cane. Even with a cane, she could not stand for long. The loss of cartilage in her crushed hip made every step painful.

Five years after the accident, Denise underwent hip replacement surgery. "Dr. Crockarell advised me to wait

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Dr. John Crockarell

as long as I could, since hip replacements only last about 20 years and I was still in my 40s," she said. "But after five years, I was starting to favor my right side, and the pain was unbearable."

## BLESSED, AND THINKING OF OTHERS

After the surgery, Denise felt instant relief. Six months later, she was walking without a cane. Today, when she travels with her girlfriends, she can go sightseeing, tour museums, even manage her own luggage. "My friends say, 'The old Denise is back!' and that means I'm able to go and do like I could when I was younger, before the accident," she said.

Although Denise admits she is slower today and rests more frequently between walks, she insists that she is blessed to walk, especially without a cane. "You don't realize how precious mobility is until you no longer have it," she said.

Several years ago, Denise and her girlfriends decided that rather than give gifts to honor each other's birthdays, they would make a group donation to the charity of the birthday girl's choice. "We are all so blessed," Denise said. "Rather than giving more to someone who already has plenty, we give to a charity that does something for others in a meaningful way."

Denise chose The Campbell Foundation as her charity because of the Foundation's work in physician education and orthopaedic research.

"People don't realize what a dramatic difference advances in orthopaedic research can make in an individual's life," she said. "I know that years of research went into developing the hip replacement products and techniques that helped me. I want others to benefit from the kind of research that put me back on my feet again."