

Huong Duong, MD

Internal Medicine

Please share your personal history.

I grew up in Vietnam in a military family, the oldest of nine children. My father was a colonel in the South Vietnamese army and we moved from base to base. I was 18 when, six days before the fall of Vietnam and with three hours' notice, we were told to pack a small bag and left for the "Tent City" refugee camp set up at Camp Pendleton. My father was to follow us, but before he could leave, the airport was bombed and in the chaos that followed he was caught and sent to a "re-education" (concentration) camp for five years. It was 14 years before we were reunited with him.

Dr. William Collins lived in San Clemente, and his wife, Josephine, volunteered with the Red Cross. The Collins' agreed to sponsor two families, which happened to be my family and my cousins' family - 17 of us in all. We stayed with the Collins' in their home, and there were bodies sleeping everywhere. After they moved we rented the house from them. My mother was a seamstress in a



typical sweat shop, and my siblings and I worked at McDonalds to support ourselves.

Although I wanted to be a doctor I didn't think I could go to college. I talked to Dr. Collins, and he took me to Saddleback

College and enrolled me. I later transferred to UCI, and Dr. Collins arranged for me to do research with **Dr. Alan Gazzaniga**, (a former SJO Chief of Staff who is now retired). When I graduated from medical school at UC San Francisco the Collins' were there, and today Mrs. Collins is my 17-year-old daughter's godmother. All of my siblings graduated from college; one is an anesthesiologist, another is a rehabilitation medicine physician, one a dentist and one an optometrist.

I met my husband, (Vice Chief of Staff) **Dr. Paul Beck**, at UCSF during our first clinical rotation. I saw how he treated patients and admired and respected him for his compassion. We were married during our second year of residency and will be celebrating 25 years this year.

In 1987, the day after I finished my residency, I joined this practice in Tustin, which was founded 43 years ago. There are currently four of us - **Drs. Mario Ficarola, Susan Ban, Thomas Hwang** and myself. Despite the changes in healthcare over the years my focus remains the same, providing the best care for my patients.

Tell us about being a kidney donor.

My sister (the rehab med physician) was diagnosed with systemic lupus in high school. By 2003 she needed to either have a kidney transplant or go on dialysis, and I was the only match in our family. The transplant was done at Stanford. It's been seven years and she's doing great. Her specialty is brain injury and she works 12 hours a day, five days a week.

I'm in awe of unrelated donors who give the gift of life. It was the best thing I could have done for my sister.

What are your personal interests?

I spend a lot of time with family. Dr. Beck and I love to travel when we can. I went back to Vietnam with him 20 years after I left there, and have also enjoyed visiting national parks, Italy and Spain.



A PUBLICATION FROM THE ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL MEDICAL STAFF OFFICE

St. Joseph Hospital 
ST. JOSEPH
HEALTH SYSTEM

1100 W. Stewart Dr.
Orange, CA 92868

SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT:

Please send your news items to:
via fax to (714) 744-8670
or call (714) 744-8559.

www.sjo.org