

Barbara Hankey-Rogers

Turning Life's Blessings Into a Legacy of Giving

After losing my only child at an early age, I knew I needed to find a way to turn an unimaginable tragedy into something meaningful. I have always felt incredibly blessed to have had a wonderful life, and I came to realize that giving back could help me move forward while, hopefully, making a difference in the lives of others.

Of all the causes close to my heart, animals have become one of my greatest passions. Animals are among the most vulnerable members of our community. They have no voice and depend entirely upon us to protect them, care for them and give them the love and dignity they deserve. In return, they give us unconditional love, companionship and comfort, and can be wonderfully therapeutic.

I have been honored to serve on the board of Loving All Animals for approximately 20 years and, prior to that, was involved with Animal Samaritans. Advocating for animals and helping create better lives for them has brought tremendous meaning and joy to my life.

The arts are another important part of my life. As a longtime theatergoer, I have always loved the McCallum Theatre and believe that music, theater and the performing arts bring joy, inspiration and connection to our community. I was incredibly fortunate to be invited to serve on the McCallum Theatre board, an opportunity I treasure.

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I am equally honored to serve on the board of the Joslyn Center. What the organization provides for older adults is remarkable. After losing a spouse or experiencing other life changes, many people can suddenly find themselves without the social connections they once enjoyed. The Joslyn Center provides a welcoming community where people can remain active, engaged and connected.

With activities ranging from pickleball and fitness to cards, arts and crafts, the Center offers countless opportunities to make friends and enjoy life. Most importantly, it provides companionship, belonging and a renewed sense of purpose.

My professional journey began at USC, where I majored in business. After college, I obtained my real estate license before joining my family's automobile business. I worked in many areas of the



company—from Rent-A-Car and leasing to the office and even selling cars on the line. Those experiences taught me a tremendous amount about business, people and the importance of building lasting relationships.

I also wrote a cookbook, a natural extension of my belief that good health is one of the foundations of a fulfilling life. When we nourish our bodies properly and make thoughtful choices about the foods we eat, we give ourselves a better opportunity to enjoy healthy and happy lives.

Today, I am fortunate to share my life with my soulmate and other half of 30 years, Gary Geske. Gary has supported me in every facet of my life and has always encouraged me to follow my passions and give back. I am incredibly grateful to have him by my side.

Looking back, I realize my life has been shaped by both profound loss and extraordinary blessings. Giving back has become one of the ways I honor the life I have been given.

Whether it is helping an animal that has no voice, supporting the arts that enrich our community, or helping create a place where people can find friendship, companionship and purpose, I feel most fulfilled when I know I am making a difference in someone else's life.

