

AMERICA’S HEALTHIEST HOMETOWN

A weekly report on The Villages’ efforts to become “America’s Healthiest Hometown” compiled by Daily Sun Ombudsman **Larry D. Croom**
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Did you know?

Caroline Mathis, an advanced registered nurse practitioner in women’s health at the USF Health Specialty Care Center, is a big fan of author David Baldacci.

Fixing health care: All about ARNP Ginger Clive

Primary care doctors, specialists and other medical providers have been recruited as part of an initiative to revamp health care right here in Florida’s Friendliest Hometown. The Villages Health is partnering with USF Health to bring in family doctors, care providers and specialists who will work as a team, all in the best interests of serving patients. This weekly feature will introduce these innovative medical providers who have joined this effort.

Why did you become a nurse practitioner?

Because I believed I could help. I could get closer to the bedside – back to the bedside. It was less administrative and that I could, in fact, help the patients. My background is mostly in geriatrics, especially the frail elderly, and I felt, especially where I was from up in New York, there was not enough access.

What is your favorite thing about being a nurse practitioner?

Interacting. I am fascinated by people. I like what people think, how they think, their life experiences. It’s all interesting and fascinating to me.

What will it feel like if you are on the ground floor of a health care initiative that is picked up and used by other communities?

It’s going to be very cool. I’ve already been in contact with some local docs up my way, saying, “If you’re in any position to look into this, this is really something. It will let you do medical care the way you would want to do it.” That’s the key thing. And it will be really great for those of us who started here. It’s really exciting because this is how it’s supposed to be. You are supposed to be able to spend time with the patient.



Care Center: Colony
Age: 57
Undergraduate: State University of New York at Plattsburgh
Master’s degree: State University of New York Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome
Certified: ARNP-C

Do you think this initiative can change health care across America?

I’d like to think so. I would hope that it would, because I think our system is so horribly disjointed. There’s frequently too many hands in the work. You have to have a driver. You have to have a coordinator, somebody who knows where all the tentacles are so they can take care of the patients so mistakes don’t happen.

Next week Find out all about Dr. Paul Daluga, a primary care physician who practices at the Mulberry Grove Care Center.

Creating America’s Healthiest Hometown How do you see your role as a family doctor?

“As a primary care physician, it is my responsibility to listen to my patients and educate them about the importance of prevention and guide them in the management of their already established chronic illnesses. In doing so, I feel I am fulfilling my role as their medical adviser and caregiver.”



Dr. Mariel Gonzalez Mendoza,
Pinellas Care Center

Care Centers in The Villages

Primary care

- The Villages Health Colony Care Center**
280 Farner Place, 352-674-1710
- The Villages Health Santa Barbara Care Center**
1575 Santa Barbara Blvd., 352-674-1740
- The Villages Health Pinellas Care Center**
2485 Pinellas Place, 352-674-1720
- The Villages Health Mulberry Grove Care Center**
8877 S.E. 165th Mulberry Lane, 352-674-1750
- The Villages Health Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center**
1050 Old Camp Road, Building 100, 352-674-1760

Specialty care

USF Health Specialty Care Center
1400 N. U.S. Highway 27/441, Building 810
352-674-8731



George Horsford / Daily Sun

USF Health specialists, from left, Dr. David Ethier, Dr. Reed Panos, Dr. Roger Sherman and Dr. Kathleen Steepy say the years they spent practicing medicine in the military taught them skills they still use today.

A NEED TO SERVE

USF Health specialists credit military with helping to shape their lives

By **LARRY D. CROOM** / DAILY SUN OMBUDSMAN

There is a special bond – a connection with deep roots in patriotism and the need to serve one’s country. They served a combined 61 years of military service, and during that time in uniform they provided a wide variety of medical treatments for soldiers and airmen who also felt the call to serve.

For Dr. David Ethier, Dr. Kathleen Steepy, Dr. Reed Panos and Dr. Roger Sherman – all of whom practice at the USF Health Specialty Care Center – the military afforded them the opportunity to pursue their careers in medicine and learn a variety of different skills they still rely on today.

For Ethier, who retired from the Air Force as a lieutenant colonel, it was an experience in life lessons that was second to none.

“I think that every young man and woman should serve in the military,” said the orthopedic surgeon, who served 24 years, 14 of those on active duty. “Even just a minimum of two years would be so important to this country, because what you learn in the military are values that are not easily taught in the schools.”

Steepy, who comes from a long line of military service – her father, uncle, husband, father-in-law, brother and sister also served – said she learned a great deal about character and values during her 11 years in the Air Force.

“They taught me to really appreciate the young men and women who serve our country,” said the longtime local OB/GYN. “It’s important that everyone thank them for the service they give this country.”

Coming May 25
USF Health doctors share special medical school bond.

Coming June 1
Two USF Health specialists recall airborne adventures.

Steepy, who attained the rank of major, said that deep appreciation really hit home while she was completing her residency training at Wright-Patterson Medical Center in Ohio and was part of a team that provided care for injured veterans returning from the Gulf War.

“They really do sacrifice their lives,” she said. “They deserve a lot of credit. And they keep going. They have such spirit and patriotism. It’s really a family when you’re in the military.”

Ethier said the Air Force experience helped prepare him for civilian life as an orthopedic surgeon and he has appreciated the opportunity to provide treatment for many veterans over the years.

“It was very rewarding, taking care of individuals like that,” he said. “And that’s really carried on into my private



Submitted photo

Dr. Reed Panos, right, poses with President George W. Bush in this photo that the 43rd president signed for the retired Air Force colonel.

practice as well, that sense of accomplishment from being able to help people improve their mobility.”

Sherman, who serves as the medical director at the specialty care center, spent two years in the Air Force as a flight surgeon at Duluth Air Force Base in Minnesota in the mid-1960s.

He said part of his job was to determine who was fit to fly and who wasn’t – a task that was compounded by pilots who were returning from service in Vietnam and often were suffering from a variety of issues.

“It was very intense and we saw the whole gamut,” the former captain said. “But our job was to get them back flying, as soon as possible. But sometimes, for one reason or another, they couldn’t fly, so that was it.”

Like Steepy, Panos said he never will forget treating injured soldiers, especially those who were involved in the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu, which is better known by

the movie title depicting the bloody confrontation, “Black Hawk Down.”

“Many of them had extremity injuries,” said the plastic surgeon, who was in residency training at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, at the time. “But they were all nice and healthy and had good muscles. We reconstructed those and every single one of those guys walked home.”

Panos, who spent four years in the Army and another 20 in the Air Force and retired as a colonel, said it was one of the most rewarding experiences of his military career.

“That’s the reason I stayed in the military for 24 years,” he said. “We didn’t get paid as much as most other guys that do my profession, but what a job. We worked with some of the most professional providers, from the physical therapists to the people that make prostheses to the operator – everything is just incredible.”

USF Health military doctors

Dr. David Ethier

Branch: Air Force
Years served: 24
Rank: Lieutenant colonel
Age: 57
Specialty: Orthopedic surgery

Dr. Reed Panos

Branches: Army; Air Force
Years served: 24
Ranks: Captain; colonel
Age: 59
Specialty: Plastic surgery

Dr. Roger Sherman

Branch: Air Force
Years served: 2
Rank: Captain
Age: 75
Position: Medical director

Dr. Kathleen Steepy

Branch: Air Force
Years served: 11
Rank: Major
Age: 50
Specialty: Obstetrics and gynecology