

Meet Dr. Mark Wagner

The light is dim. Monitors and keyboards line the table. “Mammograms are read on this screen. CT scans on this screen. These two monitors are on outside pacs- where I read images from Castle, Los Banos, and Urgent Care. My group (Merced Radiology) handles all the hospital radiology and we read for a couple of outside clinics,” he explained. This small room is where the reading begins. The story in pictures unfolds.



Dr. Mark Wagner’s first introduction to Merced came with family visits. “I had a lot of fun here as a kid with my cousin’s family,” he remembered. But it was a job offer from a fellow physical therapist, a college buddy, that drew him back. “A friend from college in LA had started a physical therapy practice here and invited me to join him. So in 1978, my wife, Karen and I moved up here from southern California. I became a partner in my friend’s physical therapy practice,” he related. Three years later, he sought a new challenge. Radiology intrigued him. Friendship with the head radiologist at Bloss Hospital in Atwater hooked him. Eight years later, with medical school and residency completed, he passed up a fellowship at a large hospital in Michigan, choosing instead to return to Merced to begin his radiology career. He never looked back.

Dr. Wagner’s service spans nearly three decades. The County Hospital (MCMC), Mercy (on the Creek) or the old outpatient center (MSDC) on Loughborough, “I’ve been wherever the hospital wanted me!” he laughed. More than once Dr. Wagner served as Chief of Staff, for MCMC, Mercy (on the Creek), and MSDC. He held positions on numerous hospital committees. He continues to sit on the Medical Executive Committee, a committee made up of all the department chairs. Currently, Dr. Wagner serves as Radiology Department Chair, a position he’s held for almost twenty years.

Dr. Wagner was active in and gave generously to the Capital Campaigns for the building of the hospital facility and the 3D mammography equipment. He, along with his technologists researched and determined the best 3D mammography equipment to purchase. “I submitted the 3D mammography request to the Foundation Board. I was glad we could take that to the community!” he stated. The community support was overwhelming.

Since August 2016, all mammograms at Mercy Medical Center have been done with 3D mammography. The multiple images create a three dimensional picture of the breast. This improves breast cancer detection in dense breast tissue, allowing doctors to see beyond the areas of

density. Both dense breast tissue and cancer appear white on a standard mammogram image which may make cancer more difficult to detect in dense breasts. The 3D images can be analyzed as a whole or examined in small fractions for greater detail.

Women in Merced no longer have to travel out of town for 3D mammography screening. In addition, Mercy Medical Center offers Saturday appointments and test results are sent to the doctor within 24 hours of your appointment.

Community matters to Dr. Wagner. As a physician, the Mercy Medical Center Foundation remains an important link in his community involvement. Gathering with the medical community matters. Gathering with other doctors, community leaders and people in other professions to celebrate work accomplished in the community brings him a sense of satisfaction.

“I grew up gathering with the medical community. My uncles, my dad, were all physicians. When I first arrived in Merced, we had a robust medical community and enjoyed functions with wives, husbands and kids. It was so much fun, getting together several times a year! We all need to know one another, and know who people are and what’s available in our community,” he acknowledged.

Dr. Wagner’s heart for community, passion for his profession, gifts of time and service in leadership, and generous financial support for both the Capital Campaign, and 3D Mammography keep Mercy Medical Center moving forward to deliver compassionate, excellent, high-quality health care service.