



Patricia Wilson

*WHEN DAMP AIR from the Pacific drifts into Rogue Valley to meet the colder temperatures that cascade down from British Columbia, it's not uncommon to see a blanket of clouds and fog covering that part of southwestern Oregon.*

Look out a window of your plane as it swings into a circular approach to the Rogue Valley airport on such a day, and you won't be able to see the town of Grant's Pass beneath the clouds.

Although it's hidden, Grant's Pass is still there, waiting for the day when a warm sun dissipates the clouds and fog.

#### KEEPING A PLACE IN MIND

Grant's Pass can also be found beneath the clouds that come and go in Patricia Wilson's mind. Sometimes she can remember her hometown, and sometimes she can't, but Grant's Pass is always there.

Patricia is now a resident at Brookdale Highlands Ranch on the outskirts of Denver. That senior living community has recently expanded its campus to offer a new level of service called "Crossings" to their Alzheimer's and Dementia Care programs. Crossings is ideal for residents like Patricia, who don't require a great deal of physical assistance but can benefit from activities designed to maintain cognitive abilities and slow the progression of dementia.

At times, it seemed Patricia's recollection of her adult life in Grant's Pass was lost forever, but a recent trip down memory lane revealed it's still there beneath the fog.

#### AT THE CENTER OF GRANT'S PASS

If life in Grant's Pass was the script of a stage play, Patricia Wilson would find herself cast in the female lead role.

In 1957, her husband Jim provided a valuable service to that community by creating a radio station. Starting from scratch, he built a building, bought the studio equipment and transmission tower, obtained an FCC license and hired staff. KAJO AM began broadcasting music and local news to listeners in Grant's Pass, Medford, Cave Junction and surrounding areas. They played a music mix of Big Band classics, featuring artists such as Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman, as well as current hits of that day from performers like the Rat Pack's Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr, and Dean Martin.

In many ways, Patricia was the force behind Jim Wilson, equipping and enabling him to run the station. In addition to answering the phones there, she

managed their home and helped raise their three children. Patricia also volunteered for their school, church and the philanthropic organization P.E.O. International (which fosters the advancement of women through scholarships and mentoring). In all these roles, Patricia represented KAJO to the community with even greater visibility than her husband. Grant's Pass was a place where everyone knew her name.

#### THE CHILDREN BECOME CAREGIVERS

Patricia's son Carl took over the family broadcasting business and added FM station KLDL to their portfolio.

Patricia's daughter Sarah took on the role of looking after her mother's needs. As those needs became greater, Patricia had to leave Grant's Pass to move to an Independent Living retirement community near her daughter, and eventually, moved in with Sarah and her family in their Denver home.



# REMEMBERING

# GRANT'S PASS





**PATRICIA SENDING WELL-WISHES TO FRIENDS IN HER HOMETOWN — FROM HER FAMILY’S KAJO RADIO STUDIO IN GRANT’S PASS.**

Sarah noticed her mother’s occasional forgetfulness and her struggles to think of a name but attributed these lapses to the natural aging process. But they worsened and became signs of something Sarah “*didn’t want to see,*” she recalled. One night, Sarah woke to sounds coming from down the hall and looked to find her mother wandering about the house. Patricia asked her daughter, “*Where are we?*”

As Patricia’s symptoms progressed, Sarah discovered that her mother was losing pieces of her history, including her adult life in Grant’s Pass. After Sarah researched the symptoms of dementia online, a doctor’s visit confirmed that diagnosis. But he also gave her a ray of hope when he recommended Brookdale’s Clare Bridge program.

**A SPA FOR THE MIND**

Sarah wanted her mother to have “as normal a life as possible. I don’t want her in anything like a nursing home.” Sarah was impressed by the design of Brookdale Highlands Ranch, with a layout much like a standard apartment community, each furnished and decorated “just like home,” she said.

But the most attractive feature of the community was Brookdale’s Clare Bridge programming. Since Patricia has moved in, Sarah can testify that residents “are not left to languish. Every day is filled with activities.” Easy tasks give participants daily moments of confidence-building success.

**CREATING ART HELPS MAINTAIN NEURAL PATHWAYS IN THE BRAIN. FIELD TRIPS STIMULATE THE SENSES. CHAIR EXERCISES BUILD STRENGTH AND CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH, WHICH IMPROVES COGNITIVE FUNCTION.**

As a result, Patricia now enjoys a much greater quality of life. Sarah reports, “She is quite happy.”

**YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN**



When the Crossings campus expansion was completed, Brookdale rewarded the Highlands Ranch community by offering a special wish granted for one of their residents. During the last five years, Brookdale has partnered with the *Wish of a Lifetime* organization to fulfill the lifelong dreams of more than 600 seniors.

Carmen Scott, the Resident Programs Manager at Brookdale Highlands Ranch, asked herself, (Who among our residents would be sufficiently functional and lucid to really enjoy a special venture?) She thought of Patricia and remembered an occasion when they talked about how her husband started a radio station in Oregon. That gave Carmen an idea.

A few weeks later, Patricia and Sarah were invited to Carmen’s office to see a special message. There, via videoconference, *Wish of a Lifetime* CEO Jeremy Bloom awarded them with a homecoming trip to Grant’s Pass to see family, visit the radio station and speak to her friends in her old hometown on the air.

**THE FOG CLEARS**

Patricia and Sarah saw familiar landmarks on the drive from the airport into Grant’s Pass – the views of Rogue River along the highway, the grocery stores, schools, churches, Tom Pearce Park, and finally, the KAJO studios. Her daughter could see the fog that hid Patricia’s memories clearing away. “Everything came flooding back,” Sarah said.

There was a family reunion in the lobby of the radio station’s new building where Patricia’s sons, Carl and Matt, were there with her grandchildren waiting to greet her. A photo of her husband displayed prominently on the wall caught Patricia’s eye.

“I remember when we took that picture. I just loved your dad so much. He was so wonderful with the people around him,” she said.

After tears, laughter and catching up with the latest news in the lives of her family, Patricia was led to a broadcasting studio.





**WHEN PATRICIA CLOSES HER EYES, IT COMES TO HER - THAT'S BENNY GOODMAN, PLAYING "LET THAT BE A LESSON TO YOU."**

She sat in the on-air guest's chair, while at the DJ desk, Carl announced his mother's return to Grant's Pass to the KAJO listeners in the community who remembered her fondly.

He interviewed his mother, asking about the early days of building a new station from scratch. Carl asked her to describe Grant's Pass of the '50s and '60s and what it was like to see her hometown again.

Immersed in the place where most of her adult life took place, Patricia's awakened mind was clear. She reminisced about those first few years at the station and expressed her gratitude for the community support their enterprise received in those days from listeners and advertisers. "I just love being back here. It's so nice to be with family and friends again," she said.

After Patricia's interview, they stepped out of the new facility to walk over to the old original radio station building, now used for storage. She noticed the familiar rosebushes in front, still alive and blooming 50 years later. Patricia asked to pick a rose to take with her and said, "I remember when I planted these."

Later during lunch at a downtown restaurant, several of Patricia's friends dropped by to visit. At first, it seemed

Patricia didn't know who they were, but as the conversation went on, she began calling each one by name with no need to be prompted with reminders.

**SCENES FROM HER LIFE**

Out of sight, out of mind. For Patricia Wilson and many like her, that cliché is literal. Since returning to her home at Brookdale Highlands Ranch in Denver, the fog periodically returns to her mind and hides her memories, but it eventually dissipates to reveal that her past still lives inside. Sometimes, all she needs is a cue.

There will be mornings in which Patricia wakes with no apparent trace of Grant's Pass in her mind. After breakfast, she might walk past the living room where she may hear a familiar tune. She wonders, "Where have I heard it before?"

It's a Big Band song playing in the background of an old movie "Hollywood Hotel" that her friends are watching on TBS.



She takes a seat in one of the armchairs, not to watch, but to listen.

When Patricia closes her eyes, it comes to her. That's Benny Goodman, playing "Let That Be a Lesson to You."

That kind of Big Band music on radio station KAJO was the soundtrack of Patricia's life. The fog dissipates and her mind's eye displays scenes from Grant's Pass. She sees an image of her husband Jim at the studio with a full head of thick wavy brown hair, then another image with thick wavy gray hair. She remembers young Carl playing with the turntable at the broadcast desk. She recalls a scene in which she

was driving 12-year-old Sarah along Redwood Highway, back when it only had two lanes. Then, an image of 5-year-old Matt, dressed for Easter Sunday comes to mind. Patricia will enjoy reliving these moments from her old hometown until the fog returns.

Whenever Grant's Pass disappears from Patricia's view once again, it is not gone forever, but only hidden. The day will come when an old photo, a scent, a familiar voice or the notes of Benny Goodman's clarinet will part the clouds that cover Grant's Pass, bringing Patricia's cherished memories back out into the sunlight.

**ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: FACTS & FIGURES\***



In 2014, 15.7 million caregivers provided an estimated 17.9 billion hours of unpaid care valued at more than \$217 billion.



Approximately 32 percent of seniors using adult day services have Alzheimer's.



Alzheimer's disease is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States.



Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia accounting for 60% to 80% of cases.



In 2015, Alzheimer's and dementia cost the nation \$226 billion. These costs could rise as high as \$1.1 trillion by 2050.



\$5.5 MILLION dollars have been raised by Brookdale since 2008 to benefit the Alzheimer's Association (\$1.5 MILLION YTD 2015)



In 2015, nearly half a million Americans age 65 and older will develop Alzheimer's.



More than 550 Brookdale communities provide Alzheimer's and Dementia Care.



More than 60 percent of Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers are women, and 34% of whom are age of 65 or older.



More than 12,000 Brookdale residents receive our Alzheimer's and Dementia Care services.

A good, healthy diet with unprocessed foods and exercise has been shown to reduce the symptoms of Alzheimer's.

\*Alzheimer's Association, 2015 Alzheimers Disease Facts and Figures