



# Power of the Human Spirit

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If you would like a personal copy, or copies for your healthcare office,  
contact Clint Snell at (318) 424-4167 or toll-free at 1-800-219-5273.

# A Message from Our President

## **SNELL'S WAS FOUNDED IN MEMPHIS IN 1911.**

In the 1940s, Jim Snell opened up the first independently owned Snell facility in Shreveport, and we have been privileged to serve patients in the Ark-La-Tex area for generations since. And like the company itself, we have treated many of our patients over a lifetime. This longitudinal experience, combined with staying up to date on new techniques and technologies, gives us unique insight into the needs of amputees and bracing patients alike.

When I decided to commission *Power of the Human Spirit*, my first thought was that it would be primarily directed to new amputees and others who, either through trauma or disease process had earned the label of “disabled.” But, as the project evolved, I realized that we have a much broader audience in addition to new patients who come into our clinic for prosthetic or orthotic treatment. While this publication was most assuredly created for Snell's patients, it is also designed to benefit physicians, therapists of all types, families, case managers and even legislators.

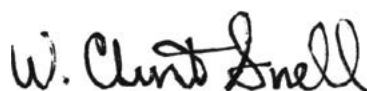
One of the perceptions we are striving to communicate through the stories and images in this book is that for those who are new to needing a prosthesis or a complicated orthosis, there are others who have gone before you and those who will come after you. You do not have to be sidelined by the situation.

For physicians, case managers and therapists, our goal is

to provide you with another tool to help in communicating with and reassuring your patients about the potential outcomes of an amputation or disease process requiring braces. We understand that there are times when words are simply not enough to set a person's mind at rest after a trauma.

For our legislators, it is my sincere hope that we can shine a light on the value of contributions individuals with disabilities make to our world, every day. So when you work to represent your constituents, these people's hopes and dreams will be just as top of mind as are the hopes and dreams of the able-bodied.

I sincerely hope you'll find this book to be uplifting and educational. If you would like to contact me or my staff, please see the information below.



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**Joe Vance Smith**  
**Beans, Bullets**  
**and Band-Aids**

## Barter System

During the Great Depression, Snell's accepted produce and other farm goods as payment when patients couldn't afford to pay.

**FIRST SERGEANT JOE VANCE SMITH SPENT 28 YEARS** serving his country in the U.S. Army and U.S. Army Reserves before he “hung up his boots” in 2004. He joined up in 1969 and got out in 1972, after doing a year's tour in Vietnam. In 1980, he joined the Reserves and was called back to active duty four times: in 1991 during Desert Storm, in 1995 during the Joint Endeavor Bosnia Conflict and in the Iraqi War in 2002. During all of this combat experience, Joe never saw the inside of a Med-Evac helicopter.

“I spent 36 years working for the Federal Government,” he said. His career covered multiple jobs, in addition to his tours of duty. “As a 1SG I was in charge of making sure that everyone in my company was taken care of, what we call Beans, Bullets and Band-Aids. My responsibilities were to ensure that all the administrative areas were covered before sending reservists and National Guard soldiers off to Iraq and then receiving them back in when they returned. Essentially making sure that they were properly trained on their equipment, that they went through the medical process, etc.” He also worked as the postmaster in Cookeville, Texas for 10 years, before his retirement in 2010.

He settled in to enjoy his retirement, farming. “I have 25 acres, and run cows, turkey and chickens. I also cut hay for hay production and am getting ready to get some baby goats for the grandkids,” he smiled. Joe and wife Connie have nine grandchildren, ranging in age from 2 to 15 years old. With regards to their children, they are the true “yours, mine and ours” couple. Between the two of them, they have four adult children, ranging in age from 29-36, and a 17-year-old that is their child together. According to Joe, wife Connie “doesn't know what she is going to do once our 17-year-old leaves home, after 31 years of raising kids!”

Strong family ties, an iron will and a positive attitude are what got him through in the dark days following the tractor accident that took his lower left leg in 2013. “It was an entirely preventable accident, I hate to say. I was digging post holes with the auger on the tractor, which is supposed to have a kill switch. The kill switch wasn't working. Of course, I should have turned off the PTO, but decided to just jump down and knock off some dirt and jump back on. But, while I was down there, a bolt wrapped my pant leg around the shaft, tearing my foot off at the ankle.

The only thing that saved me is that I called my father-in-law who lives on our property and he came down and immediately called 911. I told him to tell them to send a Med-Evac, not to bother with waiting for an evaluation by a regular ambulance team. I knew it was bad.”

And that was how a soldier who had been posted to multiple tours of combat duty unscathed saw the inside of a Med-Evac helicopter close up and personal.

Joe continues: “I asked my father-in-law if it looked pretty bad and he said all he could see was bone, and what did I want him to do. I told him to cut me off of here. That didn't work out so well, since all he had on him was a little pocket knife.”

Joe never lost consciousness during the ordeal. In fact, once the first responders arrived, 1SG Joe, who had evaluated the situation and the solution, helped to direct them as to what to do to get him freed up from the shaft and on his way. He never lost his sense of humor, even after it taking an hour and a half to free him.

“Once they got me off the tractor and onto the gurney, we had to cross the field, which was littered with pot holes. I told the guys: hey, I think you missed bumping me over a couple of those pot

holes.” The EMT responded: “Do you want us to go back over the ones we missed?”

Once they got him to the helicopter, the EMTs proceeded to get out a body bag. Joe, still awake and aware told them there was no need for the body bag, he wasn't ready for that. “I think they really had the bag in order to keep from getting blood everywhere, but making quips and cutting up with those guys helped me to keep my spirits up.”

Wife Connie was at work in Longview that day, so when asked where they wanted him transported to, he asked to be taken to the hospital in Longview: “I called her at work and told her that I had messed up pretty bad and gave the phone to the EMT. They let her know where they were taking me and she was there when I arrived at the hospital.”

Joe's ordeal was just beginning. He was in the hospital for 21 days, underwent three surgeries and then spent six months in a wheelchair and rehab before starting down the path to get a prosthesis: “I knew where I was before the accident and knew where I wanted to be after I got back on my feet. That's what kept me going. I wasn't going to let this slow me down. I wasn't ready to leave my family, who surrounded me with love and support throughout the process.”

Once Joe was healed enough to consider a prosthesis, the VA presented him with a list of potential prosthetics clinics. He had already done quite a bit of research and determined that he had two “non-negotiables” on his list, a Rush Foot and a vacuum-sealed socket. “Clyde from Snell's was there at the VA that day and I asked him if they could provide me with those two items and he said they could. He walked me through the procedure and I decided on Snell's,” he recalled. That was the beginning of a long and mutually respectful relationship between the two men.

“I could call Clyde right now and ask if I could come in and he would say come on. I don't have to have an appointment. He's built me 4-5 legs now and does a great job.”

In 2016, Clyde invited Joe to speak at the company's annual team building and educational meeting, Snell's Stars. He had noted Joe's positive attitude and perseverance and wanted him to share his success story with the employees.

Asked about his experience with Snell's, Joe said: “I could give you a sales pitch for Snell's! I would recommend them to anyone for their prosthetic needs. You can't beat the personal touch they give patients. Thanks in a big part to Snell's and Clyde, I am going to live a long and productive life.”

Today, Joe is still farming and not surprisingly, he does more than he really should. He pushes himself hard every day, and some days suffers the consequences with soreness and tingles in his residual limb. “I told my daddy that retirement is fine as long as you don't let yourself sit around and just get old. That will kill you.”

That being the criteria, we can happily expect Joe to be around for a very long time.



**Jacob Hein**

**Rough Start Turns  
Into a Blessing**

# Polio Epidemic

In 1951 and 1952 at the height of the polio epidemic, Snell's staffers worked around the clock to meet the tremendous demand for braces.

**STEPHANIE THOMPSON FIRST MET JACOB WHEN** she was assigned to his case through her job as a home health nurse. She instantly fell head over heels for the sweet little boy that was having a very difficult time. There was such a connection she told his family that even after he grew older and she wasn't his nurse anymore, she would still stay in touch with him.

As it turned out, less than six months later, he would become her son.

"Jacob was staying with his aunt and uncle when I first started working with him. Then his mother asked for him back, so I started to treat him at her home. One day, his mother asked me if I could take Jacob. Since I often took him to doctors' appointments and the like, I asked her where did she want me to take him," she chuckled.

The answer? She wanted Stephanie to adopt Jacob. Jacob was eight months old at the time and couldn't sit up by himself or crawl. He was on a feeding tube, breathing machine and apnea device. He was suffering from failure to thrive and from a neurological disorder called CMT, which is a genetic condition that causes smaller, weaker muscles in the feet and legs. CMT is related to muscular dystrophy type conditions.

Stephanie was not deterred by his health issues, but as a single mother of five, felt like it was a family decision: "I prayed about it and talked to the kids very openly about the responsibility this would place on the entire family, and my kids were all for the adoption." So, she and his social worker waded through the paperwork and she brought Jacob home to his new family.

His new brothers and sisters doted on Jacob and after the first couple of weeks, he responded to the outpouring of love. He quickly learned that it was okay to cry and that when he did, he would get the attention he needed. "The kids treated him like a real life baby doll!" said Stephanie.

While Jacob and the family were finding the adjustment smooth sailing, they were hit by utterly devastating news two months after the adoption. Oldest brother Daniel was diagnosed with a brain tumor. "I had to take Daniel to St. Jude in Memphis multiple times for treatment, so had to make arrangements to make sure Jacob was well taken care of while I was away. One of the most astounding questions I got was 'what are you going to do about Jacob now?'. I was polite about it, but thinking inside that he's a little boy, not a puppy that I can return or take to the pound," she said.

But the positives of having Jacob as her son well outweigh any other considerations. Within weeks after the adoption, Jacob was improving dramatically. He began to take bottles and was relieved of the feeding tube. He started breathing on his own, and sitting up by himself. Today, he walks, eats regular food and is an active 4-year old. Jacob is getting ready to start preschool, as well. "He'll be going to a special preschool where he can get physical therapy

for his legs. Apparently, the muscles are shortening up faster than we thought, even though we do his exercises with

him every day. His braces help quite a bit, though," stated his mom. While Jacob has some developmental delays, his mom, brothers and sisters read to him regularly, help him practice identifying shapes and learning his numbers. Says Stephanie: "He will take a book into Daniel's room before bed every night and sit in his little chair and "read" to him."

Snell's fits Jacob with ankle knee orthotics and Stephanie couldn't be more pleased with his care there. "They're awesome! He sees Clyde every time so Clyde knows exactly what is going on with Jacob. He's not working from someone else's notes and trying to catch up. Everyone there is kind and courteous. Jacob was a little standoffish at first, but now he comes in like he owns the place," she laughed.





**Stephanie Johnson**  
**Unbreakable**  
**Bond**



# Residency Program

We have been a certified residency program site for the National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (NCOPE) since 1996.

**STEPHANIE JOHNSON SPENT MOST OF HER LIFE** and career in service to others. The mother of two retired from the Marines in 1996 with the rank of Sergeant 2nd FSSG, where she worked in the administrative and legal area. She had plans to continue to work in the legal field after she left the Marines, but life had a different plan for her. Instead, she came home to take care of her sick mother.

“I needed to be close to my mom, so I took a job driving a school bus. I loved it! People may not realize how teachers, bus drivers and others who work with school children have the chance to inspire kids. It’s much more than a 9-5 job,” she said.

She would see the benefits of the care she lavished on the kids in an unexpected way in 2010. That was when she discovered that the lump on her foot that she initially noticed in 1990 while still in the Marines had come up again. “It first came up while I was still in uniform, and I had it checked out and it didn’t seem like much. But when it came back and I went to the doctor, it turned out that it was much more serious.” She was sent to Little Rock for a consult and son DJ went with her. That is when she discovered that she had a rare form of cancer called synovial sarcoma. “I was expecting to have the lump removed and that it would be no big deal. I was devastated to learn that not only was it cancer, but that the doctor told me that I would have to have my foot amputated. Thank the Lord I had DJ with me. He held my hand and was my rock,” she recalled.

“My mom has always been my best friend,” DJ said. “I saw how discouraged she was when she got the news, and I wanted to break down myself. But, I had to stay strong for her. She’s always been the strong one for everyone else and doesn’t take as good care of herself as she should, so I knew I was going to need to step in.”

There were no specialists in the area that were familiar with the type of cancer Stephanie had, so the surgery had to be performed in Little Rock. DJ was by her side for the entire ordeal. “I stayed in the hospital in Arkansas for two days after the surgery, and then told my doctor I wanted to go home. He was surprised and asked me if I was sure that was what I wanted. I told him I could sit at home and be in pain just as easy as I could sit there in pain. I wanted to be close to my family, so I left the hospital and went back to Louisiana.” It was a very difficult time for everyone. And while daughter Nellisha and husband Darrell were there for her, son DJ took the brunt of the situation. He had to drop out of college that semester in order to be with his mom 24/7.

He was also the one that took her to her appointments with Snell’s. “I was there at Snell’s with her the first time she walked on her prosthetic leg. It was just amazing to see her regain her mobility and confidence. I was sure all along that she would be okay, but I don’t think she was until that day,” said DJ.

Stephanie noted: “You think you love someone, and then you see what they have done for you when the time comes to make a sacrifice. The kinds of sacrifices my husband and my children made for me when I was going through all of this showed me how enduring their

love for me really was.”

And the outpouring of love didn’t end there. Remember those school children that Stephanie

drove every day? The families of the children got together and constructed a new accessible porch and bathroom at her house. “I was just overwhelmed with gratefulness,” she said. “I still see some of my “kids” when I am out in the community, and they tell me they want me to come back,” she laughed.

Stephanie started her journey to get a prosthesis with Snell’s and has been with them ever since. “They’re family to me now. When I first came in I was so down and not sure how the process was going to work. They took me back in the back and showed me how they make the legs and went out of their way to make me comfortable. If I had to use one word to describe the people at Snell’s it would be ‘genuine’,” she went on to say. “Karla, Mary, Mark and Derick have gotten to be friends to me. When my mother in law passed, I called and talked to Mary and Karla and they were such a comfort to me.”

DJ went on to complete his college education at University of Louisiana at Monroe, earning a degree in criminal justice. “When he graduated in 2013, he looked and looked for a job. He became a substitute teacher for a while, but that wasn’t what he really wanted. I suggested that he talk to Mr. Snell and see if they had any openings. At first they didn’t, but then a spot came open and they interviewed DJ and he got the job. Karla said maybe the reason the others didn’t pan out was so he could come to work at Snell’s,” Stephanie remembered.

DJ shared how he feels about working at Snell’s: “It’s the best thing in the world. Knowing that I am doing a job that affects people in a positive way. Seeing how beneficial Snell’s was to my family it’s great to see others get that same sense of joy. This is an amazing company, who really cares about our patients. We want to see them succeed and we give it our all, every day.”

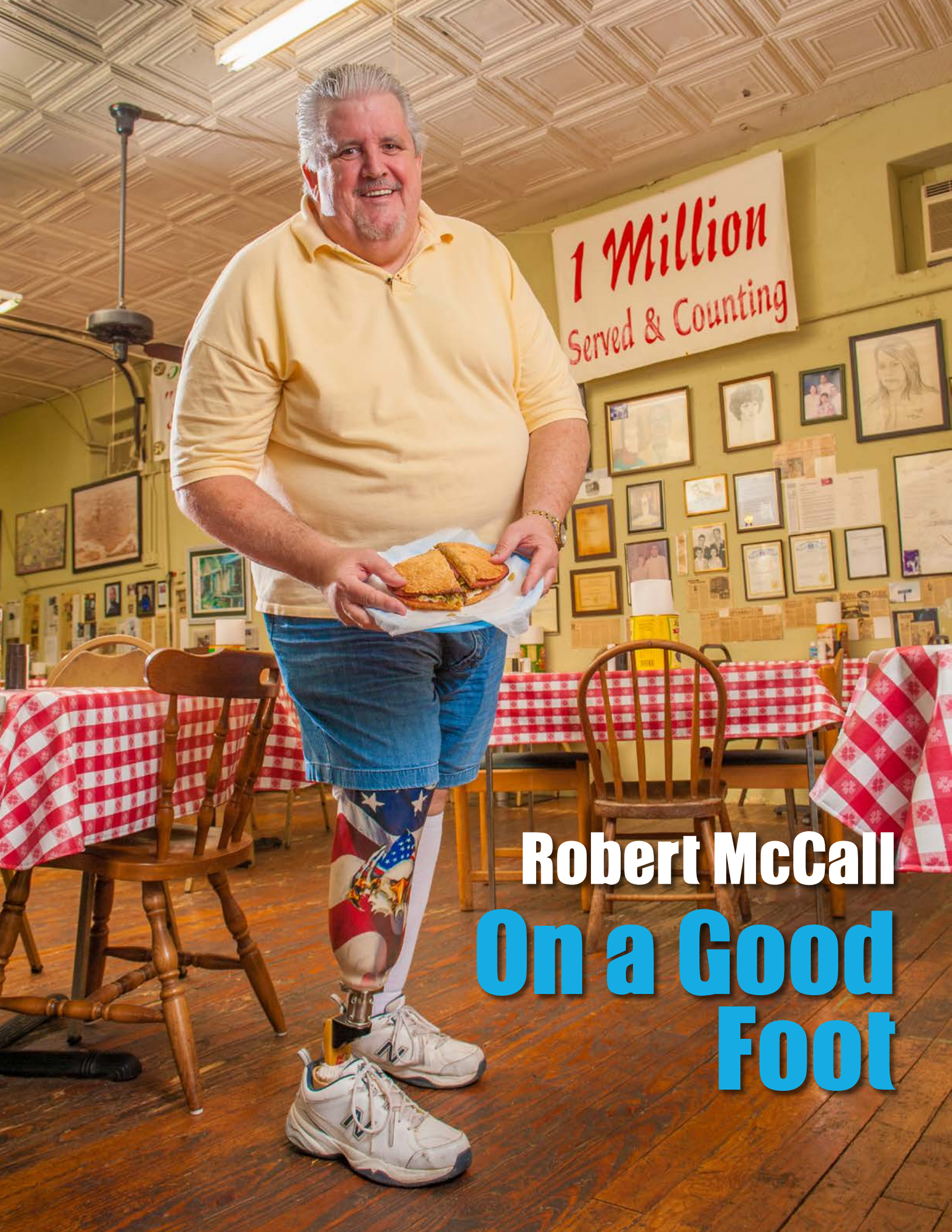
Clint Snell commented: “We are proud to have DJ on the staff. He shadowed prosthetists at first, then progressed with assisting them. DJ was so productive we hired him as a prosthetic technician where he has excelled. It is neat to see him working with his mom on her prosthesis. DJ brings a special empathy to the job that was instilled in him from his wonderful family.”

On a final note, Stephanie asked to share her favorite quotes, hoping that these messages might help someone:

“Make someone else’s day, everyday.”

“Smile, because someone needs it.”

“Encourage yourself daily!”



1 Million  
Served & Counting

**Robert McCall**  
**On a Good**  
**Foot**

## Team Approach

We are part of your health care team. We work closely with you, your physician, therapist, case manager, family and others to ensure you are receiving the best, personalized care.

**HOW ABOUT A FAMOUS FERTITTA'S "MUFFY"** with a side of patriotism? Robert McCall, husband of Agatha Fertitta McCall is proud to show off his American Flag/Eagle prosthesis while on duty at the Shreveport landmark restaurant. "I don't own the place, I just work for Agatha," he laughs.

Robert grew up in Minden where his father worked for Exxon in the field for 20 years and subsequently owned a service station in Minden with his dad for 25 years. When his father decided to get out of the station business Robert moved to Dallas, in 1989.

After returning to Shreveport in 1992, some mutual friends introduced Robert to Agatha on December 19th, 1993 and by February 19th, 1994 they were married. Says Robert about the whirlwind romance: "I knew what I wanted and I went for it!"

It was no laughing matter, though, when Robert injured his ankle in 2012. "I thought it was just a sprain, and I was just mule-headed and didn't go see about it. Turns out it was a fracture and delaying treatment ended up destroying my ankle," he said. He worked with his physician to try and save his foot, but the medications and trauma ended up with him being hospitalized with kidney failure. At that point: "My doctor said that either I was going to have to have it amputated, or it was going to kill me." On August 22, 2012, he underwent the amputation of his right foot.

He initially went to a different clinic, but in 2015 started having issues with that prosthesis due to shrinkage of his residual limb. Being enrolled in a state program that helps disabled people keep working, he was able to go to Snell's for his current leg. Knowing Clint Snell and others from their eating at the restaurant made him feel very comfortable in changing prosthetists.

"I wanted to do some kind of artwork on my new leg and Russell showed me several ideas. I saw the flag and eagle design and knew that was the one. I have a 31 year-old-son who is in the National Guard, and my father also served. Everybody that sees my leg wants to know where I got it. I tell them Snell's."

Today, Agatha and Robert enjoy a busy life at the restaurant and as grandparents to their twin grandsons—babysitting for them on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to help out their parents. "The twins, born on July 14, 2015 are identical, and now you can barely tell them apart. That wasn't the case when they were born. They were 10 weeks early and Alex, the oldest one by one minute, weighed 3 pounds 1 ounce. His brother, Hale only weighed 1 pound 13 ounces. Alex spent eight weeks in the Neo-natal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), but Hale was there for 18 weeks, and had to remain on oxygen for 10 more months. It was difficult, but now Alex is a sturdy 25 pounds and Hale is almost caught up at 23 pounds," he recalls.

One of Robert's favorite anecdotes is how Agatha discovered she was going to be a grandmother. "We were in St. Louis, where her son, Patrick, was being ordained as a minister and Agatha

asked Nina, her daughter and my step-daughter, if she would like an "adult beverage." Everyone that was in the know, immediately hollered out 'not in her condition!'"

Robert has two daughters, Christina who has two children and is pursuing a nursing degree, and Candace, who also has two children and works for a large retailer. He has a son, Brandon, who continues to serve in the Army National Guard.

Nina, the twins' mother is an OB-GYN in Shreveport, and Patrick is now pastor at University Lutheran Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

His views on Snell's? "They did me good. I really appreciate them. Anyone needing this type of service, I would send them there, and I have heard the same thing from others. They are just a good group of people, they will sit down with you and listen and get you what you need."

Thankfully, Robert has his health back, and as he puts it: "Two good legs to stand on." He advises anyone that has what they may consider just a sprain to go have it checked out and avoid the pain suffering that he underwent.



Photo Credit: Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau



**Michelle Smith Arnold**  
**Something**  
**Wonderful**

July 14, 2012

# Continuity of Care

The practitioner that consults with you at Snell's will be the same person that oversees the creation of your device. We fabricate your prosthesis or orthosis in our own in-house lab.

**“I HAD SPENT 26 YEARS WAITING FOR SOMETHING** wonderful to happen,” Michelle Smith confided, in December 2010. Michelle, who was born with cerebral palsy, has been seriously mobility challenged all her life. “I didn’t have the life of a 26 year old, due to the CP and the limitations that brings on—for example, I couldn’t even step down a curb or get in and out of a car without help.”

Something wonderful did happen for Michelle. “My friend Nikki was watching Good Morning America in September, 2009 and saw a story about this amazing new type of orthotic device that is based on electrical stimulation of the nerve endings. When she called me to make sure I had seen the story, my first thought was that I could probably benefit from this type of braces, but that it would likely be too far to travel to get them.”

The story was about the latest development in orthotics, an advanced system designed to use mild functional electrical stimulation to lift the foot to help an individual walk more safely and easily, including up and down stairs, uneven surfaces—even curbs. The ones she was fitted with are the Bioness NESS L 300\*. The NESS L 300 eliminates the need for rigid braces, in most cases, and in some cases use of the NESS L300 has resulted in a permanent improvement in condition for patients, allowing them to walk without a device at all.

“The results were astounding. I got my Bioness orthotics on September 9, 2009 and saw an improvement within 18 minutes of trying them out. That is when my whole life began to change!” she exclaimed.

## **“How Do You Run, Mom?”**

Michelle, with her newfound mobility asked her mother that question one day several months ago. “For the first time in my life I can step backwards, sideways, go where I want to go without having to hold onto anyone—that alone was a miracle—and now I am learning to skip, hop, run, too!” As it turns out, her best teacher for all those fun things is her 3-year-old niece, Amber. “She and I are learning together.”

Recently, Michelle, daughter of Thomas Smith, pastor of Campiti United Pentecostal Church in Campiti, was delivering gumbo to a parishioner, as part of a fund-raiser the church was conducting to help offset the cost of her new orthotics, and surprised both herself and her sister by walking down the porch steps by herself, which didn’t have hand rails, without even thinking about it—until her sis pointed it out to her.

Asked about her experiences with Snell’s Orthotics and Prosthetics, she reported: “In all truth, the folks at Snell’s are like family to me. I call and talk to them regularly. They have been so good to me and have gone out of their way to help me.”

## **Drastic Changes**

“Sometimes I just want to cry tears of joy at the drastic changes. I had quit driving years ago, but continued to renew my license, now I am working on driving again, as well as searching for a job in my field of accounting. Now that I am able to do things on my

own, my social life has also changed. I can go and do with my friends without having to worry about planning each step ahead of time, or r e f u s i n g invitations to

places that are unfamiliar. The whole world has opened up to me, and I feel like the Bioness’ are a miraculous answer to my prayers. My parents are able to go to their hunting camp without having to worry about who is going to watch over me while they are gone, which I am so thankful for. This technology not only gave me a whole new life, it also gave my parents their lives back,” she continued.

“And, lately, I have been seeing improvement even without my braces on, which makes me think that I might fall into the category of people who regain nerve function from wearing them!”

Michelle’s family, in addition to dad, Thomas and niece, Amber, includes her twin sister, Danielle, a younger sister, Kirby and her mother, Rosemary.

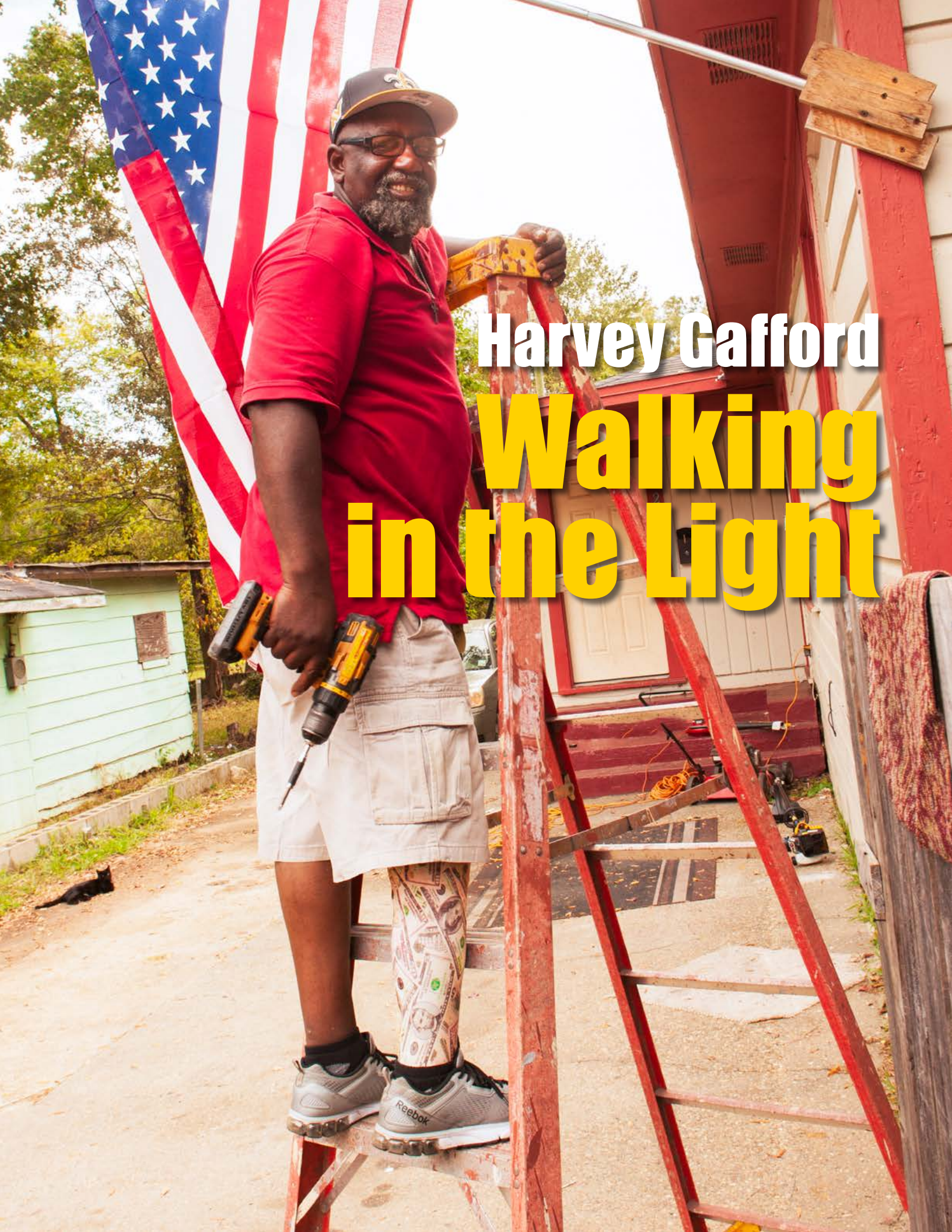
According to Clint Snell, CPO and president of Snell’s Orthotics and Prosthetics: “It was very dramatic seeing the changes that Michelle made over time. Even the day we first put the Bioness on her she was able to managed curbs and uneven ground. She was so excited and enthusiastic! Since then she has continued to make a great deal of additional progress in activities of daily living. It does seem like the Bioness has enhanced Michelle’s life and allows her to do more: getting out and about and meeting new people and friends. It is so gratifying to see changes like this in a patient’s life.”

## **Wedding Bells**

Wonderful things continue happening for Michelle. Through mutual church friends, Michelle met Cass Arnold at a group outing on October 1, 2010. After dating for a year and 2 months they were engaged to be married on January 5, 2012, Cass, himself a twin, and Michelle were married on July 14, 2012. “We were going to get married in my dad’s church, since originally the ceremony was going to be small. But, my mom changed my mind about a small wedding, so we ‘went big’. For that reason, we were married in our former church in order to have room for the crowd,” Michelle said.

Reflecting back on a more serious note, Michelle shared: “People don’t really realize the effects that a disabling health problem can have on your mental state. Prior to getting the Bioness braces, I couldn’t really do much on my own. That is a depressing place to be, no matter how hard you try to stay upbeat. Gaining mobility has changed so much in my life—it has freed me to reach my full potential, and in turn, given me more opportunity to help others.”

*NOTE: This article was originally written in 2010 and updated in 2012.*



Harvey Gafford  
**Walking  
in the Light**

## Training and Education

Snell's certified practitioners undergo rigorous study and on the job training. Currently, a masters degree is required, as well as a 12 month residency program for each discipline. Regular continuing education is also a requirement.

### HARVEY GAFFORD GREW UP ON THE RECEIVING

end of a whole lot of love. Not surprising since he was the 14th out of thirteen sisters and five brothers. They grew up on a farm not far from Shreveport. "I miss that sometimes. We have all grown up and gone our own ways, and five of my siblings have passed," he mused.

Today, his mission is to minister to others both in daily life and as a Deacon in his church: "I am just trying to walk with God. If the pictures ya'll took of me help anyone who is going through something similar, that's what I'm all about," he said.

It wasn't always like that for Harvey. As he says, one mistake at age 18 "cost my family and me nearly everything." He is referring to having been shot in the groin with a 12-gauge shotgun. "I still get déjà vu about that night sometimes. It was September 13, 1972," he recounted.

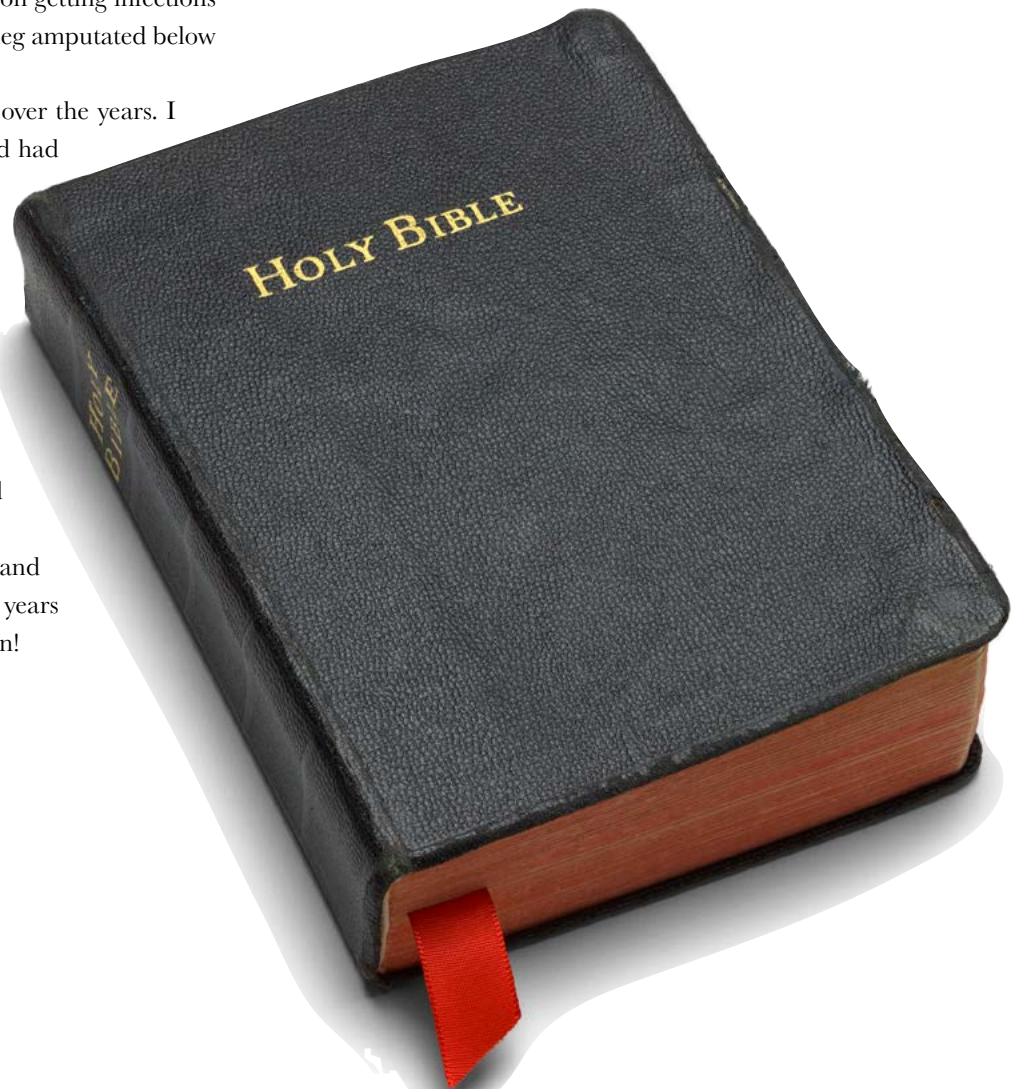
The gunshot initially left him with drop foot and partial paralysis in his right leg. However, in his work as a hospital janitor, over the years he had more and more issues with his leg.

"I couldn't feel my foot very well and, of course I was on my feet all the time at work. It started out with getting an infection in my toes and I lost half my foot. Then, I kept on getting infections after that, to the point that I had to have my leg amputated below the knee," he said.

About Snell's: "They have kept me going over the years. I was going to another clinic before Snell's and had nothing but trouble with the legs they made me. One time I was riding the bus and the strap broke on my leg. I had to sit there on the bus and tie it back on so I could get home.

Not long after that, one afternoon I was at a gas station and saw a young man with a prosthesis. We got talking and he told me he worked for Snell's and to come by. That's how I got started going to Snell's and have been happy ever since."

Coming full circle on big families, Harvey and wife Sandra who have been together for 40 years have five adult children and ten grandchildren!





**Connie Jenkins**

**Let It Fly!**



## Mobility Saves

**Our results suggest that patients who received lower extremity orthoses had significantly fewer acute care hospitalization . . . these patients had better outcomes, in that they experienced fewer emergency room admissions.<sup>1</sup>**

**CONNIE JENKINS CAN DO THE “GIRLY GIRL”** thing all day long, but she can also turn on a dime and spend days at a time out in the woods, only coming back to civilization to get some laundry done, go to the grocery store and sleep a couple of nights in a “real” bed. An accomplished bow hunter, she is also a huge fan of the beach, where she spends as much time as she can when she visits her daughter and son-in-law who live in the Galveston area.

Connie, born in 1960, is married to Robert, a Vietnam Veteran who couldn't be prouder of his unstoppable wife: “I have some health issues as a result of the war, and she actually is the one that takes care of me!” he declared.

As a result of her battle with fibro-sarcoma, Connie's leg was amputated above the knee in 2000. “Fibro-sarcoma is a very rare form of cancer. Because of that, the doctors here had to consult with other physicians out of state to figure out how to treat me,” she said.

Her sense of humor never left her, even after the loss of her leg. One of her first legs featured socket art with a shark “biting off her leg”, complete with huge teeth and blood.

Getting back to the girly aspect. Connie works with local artist Rod Sims, owner of Simsonite Creations in Shreveport, to create both her socket art and t-shirts to match her interests. Look care-

fully at the photo and you will see a glimpse of her personal style, including the pedicure on her prosthetic foot.

**A b o u t** Snell's, Connie says: “They're amazing. I've been with them

about 14 years and anything and everything I want, they work with me to get it. Russell is my prosthetist, and without him I wouldn't be where I am today—that's the honest truth. The other thing I love about Snell's is that they really get how important my art is to me. I'm picky about it and they spend the time it takes to satisfy me.”

Connie and Robert have three surviving adult children, she lost a son at age 23. They are blessed with nine grandchildren, most of whom live in the Shreveport area.





**Sawyer Brimer**

**The Cuteness Just  
Won't Quit!**

## Generations of Experience

Co-owner Christopher Snell, BOCOP, represents the fourth generation of the Snell family to lead the practice.

**SAWYER BRIMER, WHO WAS BORN** on November 23, 2015, was what every exhausted new parent dreams of: an infant that is a great sleeper! Beginning at around nine weeks, Sawyer slept as many as ten hours a night. Mom Lauren and dad Sam were delighted to not join the ranks of parents who were sleep-walking during the day due to being up most of the night with their new baby.

But, at around two months of age, they noticed that the back of Sawyer's head on the left side seemed abnormally flat. They took him to the pediatrician who reassured them that in all likelihood the problem would resolve itself once he started to sit up. That it was caused by him favoring that side when laying in his crib. As instructed, they continued to monitor the situation, but at four months, it was only getting worse. So, they got a referral to maxillofacial specialists, Dr. Ghali and Dr. Woerner, who had Snell's scan.

On their return visit, the new scan showed that his head was growing in width, but that the flat side in the back was not improving. At that point, the specialists referred the Brimer's to Snell's for a cranial helmet. The family, residents of Haughton, left for Shreveport that same day. "When we got to Snell's they scanned him right away, and within two weeks they had his helmet ready," Lauren says.

She noted that the first couple of weeks adjusting to the helmet were a bit rough for Sawyer when he was napping or sleeping, but after that, it was smooth sailing. In fact, when they took it off for the hour a day he would go without it, he would start looking

for it. "Bless his heart, if he bumped his head when he wasn't wearing the helmet, he would just get this confused look on his face, like why did that hurt my head?" she laughed ruefully.

Lauren and Sam were rigorous about maintaining the schedule of Sawyer wearing the device 23 hours a day, and are delighted that his treatment was successfully concluded and the helmet was removed on November 8, 2016. "His head looks amazing," Lauren smiled. "You would never be able to tell he had been in a helmet."

Asked about the family's experience at Snell's, Lauren was enthusiastic: "They were very easy to work with. You can tell they love what they do. Everyone was so sweet and genuine. When Sawyer would get anxious during scanning they would sing or talk to him to help him relax. He had appointments every two months, and his treatment went very easily every time."

Lauren is a first grade teacher at T. L. Rodes Elementary in Haughton and husband Sam is a forester for the Caddo Levee Board in charge of all timber. The couple has been married since 2010 and are expecting Sawyer's new little brother in early 2017. As for Sawyer, he is starting to walk and get into everything, just like any kid his age.



**Bobby Sims**

**Ride Fast,  
Jump Big**



## Going to Bat for You

Snell owners Clint and Christopher Snell are active in keeping the needs of our patients in front of local, state and national legislators. Clint Snell was awarded the Legislative Award by the American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association (AOPA) in 2011.

**FROM THE FIRST TIME HE LAID EYES** on a motorcycle as a little kid, Bobby Sims knew that he wanted to ride, and ride fast. He begged his parents for a bike and they gave in and bought him a mini-bike for trail riding when he was 13. “But, that wasn’t it for me. I always wanted more speed and to be able to do jumps,” Bobby said. At age 15, his grandmother accommodated him with a Honda CR 250.

Soon after, Bobby could be found out at the motocross track as often as possible. It was there that he met Wade Free, who was sponsoring another young man who needed a teammate. Wade spotted Bobby’s talent and offered to sponsor him, as well. His sponsorship paid for travel expenses, fees, motorcycles, everything surrounding competing. After racing for real the first time at age 17, Bobby was even more hooked on the sport. He continued to compete up until 2011 when he learned that he had a daughter on the way, and determined that it was time to sell his motorcycle and get a “real” job.

But, motorcycles were in his blood: he wasn’t without a bike for long. He continued enjoying riding with his buddies as a hobby. It was on this last motorcycle, where as fate would have it, he crashed. “I was trying to throw a big “whip” and that’s what bit and I ended up injuring my leg,” he explained. He was in Texas at the time and was transported to a major hospital in the area.

His experience in Texas left much to be desired. There was conflict between surgeons regarding the best route to take between attempting to spare the limb and amputation, with the orthopedist firmly coming down on the side of amputation. As Bobby puts it: “I was laying there with my leg rotting off and finally demanded that they amputate. Even afterwards, my experience didn’t improve and my parents and I decided that it would be best for me to come back to University Health Shreveport, where I finally got the care that I needed in order to recover.”

As Bobby reports, one positive result of his accident is that it brought him and his parents closer together. “I couldn’t really do anything for myself, and my parents were there for me to help and support me. My mom was by my side every day.”

Since a young age, Bobby had skills working on cycles—everything from re-building engines to customization. He used his expertise on his own and his buddies’ bikes. Today he is more focused on working on his prized Camaros and is looking

forward to racing again—this time on four wheels.

When asked about Snell’s, Bobby’s response was heartfelt: “When my orthopedist asked me where I would

like to go for my prosthetic care, I said Snell’s. At the time, I didn’t realize that some of my racing buddies had been going there for custom braces. But, something just drew me to them. Snell’s has been really good. I’ve been treated like family. Russell and Mary are the best! Well, everyone there is great, really.”

Bobby wears an Ottobock Genium X3 knee now, but that wasn’t always the case. After going through several types of knees that couldn’t take the “punishment” of his active lifestyle, it was determined that this high tech knee was his best option. That began the intense process of getting his insurance to approve and pay for it. The insurance company had deemed that the Genium X3 was “experimental” and would not authorize it for medical necessity. “They pulled together at Snell’s, and kept on hammering at the insurance company until they approved it.”

While he is delighted to have his knee, which allows him to walk up stairs, sprint and do other activities, he is disappointed that the technology is not readily available to other active amputees without a fight.

“One of the best things about having this knee is that I can keep up with my little girl. I got her a 4-wheeler and put a governor on it so it can’t go too fast and with the Genium, I can jog behind her and keep her safe when she rides. Without this knee, I couldn’t do that.”

**Chuck Patterson**

**Around Here, We Call  
Him a Superhero**



**AT THE AGE OF 79, CHUCK PATTERSON WENT** through an absolutely harrowing event, and lived to tell about it. He was out fishing in his boat and hit a sandbar. Chuck was thrown out of and under the boat. “The boat came up over me and broke two vertebrae and also mangled my left foot. I passed out and when I came to, thought I was in about 12 feet of water. I thought I was for sure going to drown. Turns out I was in shallow water, so I tried to stand up, but kept falling to my left. That’s when I realized that my foot was seriously injured,” Chuck recounted. “I saw that the boat was up on the sandbar, and started crawling, praying that I wouldn’t run into deep water.”

Chuck managed to get back into the boat. Luckily, his cell phone had stayed in the boat when he went over. Just as fortunate, he had a signal, not always the case when out on the water. He immediately made two phone calls: the first to his wife Mary Ann and the second to 911. “I didn’t want Mary Ann to get a call that would scare her half to death, so I called her and said not to worry, an ambulance is on the way, but looks like I cut my foot off,” he recalled. Once medical help was on the way, Chuck used his belt to make a tourniquet, so that he would not bleed to death from the severe foot injury. “It took them about 45 minutes to get to me,” he said.

Later he heard that several people had run up on the same sandbar, but they were going slower so were not thrown from their boats. “I would caution people to be very careful out on lakes and rivers. The moving water can change the landscape underneath from one day to the next. I had fished there many times before and it wasn’t there. That day, it was.”

With respect to his treatment at Snell’s: “I love those people. It takes a little while to go through the process to get a prosthesis, so I got to know them all pretty well—they became like family to me. Especially Mary, we like them all, but we love her. The folks at Snell’s are so honest and forthright, you can’t help but like them.”

Chuck, an Air Force veteran who served during the Korean War, and his wife Mary Ann have been married since 1952 and are still going strong. They have three adult sons, all of whom live nearby. They are also blessed with six grandkids and

two great grandchildren, who live in Washington state, where his granddaughter’s husband is currently stationed.

Today, at age 83, he still fishes every week—from a boat. You can find him out on Cross Lake most Thursdays and Friday mornings when the weather is good.

## Range of Services

Snell’s provides full service prosthetic and orthotic care. From basic to micro-processor technology, we will evaluate and consult with you and provide the most appropriate design for your medical condition and lifestyle.



A man dressed as Santa Claus is sitting on a wooden chair. He has a long white beard, wears glasses, and a red Santa hat with a white pom-pom. He is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt, a red sash, and a red Santa suit. He is also wearing a grey knee brace on his right knee. He is wearing black boots with white fur trim. To his right is a Christmas tree decorated with lights and ornaments. The background is a dark wooden wall.

**James Marshall  
In Support  
of Santa**



## Certification and Facility Accreditation

Snell's Orthotics-Prosthetics is accredited by the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics, as required by the State of Louisiana.

**JAMES MARSHALL KNOWS HOW TO MAKE** kids smile. The retired special education teacher for Caddo Parish spent his career working with at-risk kids at Hamilton Terrace and Rutherford House Residential Treatment Center. He now stays busy creating fascinating glass skull art, playing Santa as a photographer's model around the Shreveport area and bringing Christmas cheer to nursing homes in San Antonio, TX.

"I really love going to the nursing homes as Santa when I visit my daughter every year in Texas. My wife, who dresses in full regalia as Mrs. Claus, comes along and it just brings us so much joy. We take our three Chihuahuas, Maggie, Missy and Mickey, on the trip with us, also, which they love." James said.

Snell's fits James with an Össur Medial Unloader knee brace, shoe inserts and build ups to help treat his arthritis. "I had been to three other practitioners before I found Snell's and Snell's by far exceeds any of them in terms of quality and service: they are superb. I have a one inch difference in leg length on my right side and Rebekkah over there takes great care in how she customizes my shoes so that you can't even tell there is a difference. And, my shoes don't fall apart in a few months like they did when I went to other clinics. I have shoes now that Rebekkah did for me that are still in great condition years later. I also like the fact that I don't have to wait for more than a few minutes when I go for my appointments and that they get me in and out as quickly as possible. Something you don't see very much anymore," James noted.

James is a Vietnam Veteran who served in the 101st Airborne Division in 1968-1969. He has been married to Melinda for 35 years and has two adult children and five grandchildren. He credits family with being the reason he is still around after serious complications from hip replacement surgery in 2014: "I just wasn't ready to leave them yet."







# SNELL'S

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