



Offering HOPE & HELP

Bill and Julie Lavidge serve as resource to community, Banner Alzheimer's Institute

⋮ Caring for a parent with Alzheimer's disease is a daunting task and one that will
⋮ befall many more people as the population ages. Having lived through it, with
⋮ the support of Banner Alzheimer's Institute, Bill and Julie Lavidge now do what
⋮ they can to help others in the same boat.

When Bill or Julie Lavidge's phone rings, the call is often from someone desperate for help. The caller has heard that the Lavidges might be able to offer a lifeline—a way to cope with the challenges of having a parent with Alzheimer's disease.

Bill's mother died from Alzheimer's nine years ago, at age 84. So the Lavidges have been in the caller's shoes. Now, they are the "go-to" resource for friends, and friends of friends, who don't know where to turn.

"It is daunting when you finally accept that your parent has some sort of cognitive decline," says Julie Lavidge. "We are in the age group when it is very relevant. We just dealt with it earlier than a lot of our friends. Now, we love being a resource to others in the community."

Bill Lavidge's mother began having memory problems in her late 70s. She also started becoming easily agitated and not herself.

"You know, in hindsight, we probably saw symptoms before we knew what they were," relates Bill. "Her memory was obviously failing, but we wrote that off to age."

As Margaret Lavidge's symptoms worsened, her family sought out support services. They wanted to keep her in her home as long as possible.

"We did not understand how to care for somebody with cognitive disabilities," recalls Julie Lavidge. "I went everywhere looking for resources, but there wasn't much available."

'This is going to be okay'

Eventually, a friend introduced the Lavidges to Pierre Tariot, MD, who had just moved to Arizona from New York to help establish

Banner Alzheimer's Institute. Margaret Lavidge became the institute's first patient.

"I remember meeting Pierre and feeling like, 'This is going to be okay,' says Julie Lavidge. "He was our rock and our guardian angel."

As it happened, one of the missions set for Banner Alzheimer's Institute was to establish a new standard of care for Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers.

This new care model was based on providing ongoing hope and help for patients and their families throughout the disease's progression.

The institute's clinic space was not yet open when the Lavidges met Dr. Tariot, so he made home visits. He focused on ways to improve Margaret Lavidge's safety, dignity and quality of life.

"As we were going through it, Pierre and other BAI folks would teach us what needed to be done," recalls Julie Lavidge. "They even came in and taught us how to help her shower, after she started refusing to take showers."

"He held our emotional hands," adds Bill Lavidge. "He is such a kind, caring and gentle person. And he really knows his stuff."

Gratitude, belief and self-interest

The Lavidges were so grateful for the support shown by Dr. Tariot and other Banner Alzheimer's Institute staff that they became two of Banner's most ardent advocates and friends. Julie Lavidge joined the board of Banner Alzheimer's

Foundation, which raises philanthropic support for the institute.

The couple teamed up to serve as vice chairs of the foundation's fundraising campaign, which has nearly reached its goal of raising \$40 million for Banner Alzheimer's Institute. The Lavidges also make personal charitable gifts to Banner annually.

In addition, Julie Lavidge is co-founder of a group called WISP (Women Inspiring Scientific Progress), which raises support for Banner Alzheimer's Institute as well. The group's membership has grown from 30 to nearly 50 members this year, and they will distribute \$100,000 to the institute in 2015.

"Part of the reason for our involvement is to show our thanks," says Bill Lavidge, who runs one of the top-ranked advertising agencies in Arizona. "Another is because we really believe in what Banner is doing and think they are going to change the world as it relates to treating Alzheimer's disease."

"We also have some self-interest," he adds, "because my three sisters and I may be predisposed to the disease." ■

Banner Alzheimer's Institute is committed to ending Alzheimer's without losing another generation and to providing an unparalleled model of care for families.



Learn more about BAI and WISP at banneralz.org

ALZHEIMER'S CAMPAIGN AIMS TO FUND BREAKTHROUGH

As vice chairs of the Banner Alzheimer's Institute Breakthrough Campaign, Bill and Julie Lavidge have helped raise almost \$40 million to accelerate the efforts needed to stop Alzheimer's disease. Launched in 2012, the campaign is now less than \$700,000 from its goal.

Campaign funds have been directed to patient care to make a difference for families now as well as research to end Alzheimer's as quickly as possible.

Both of those enterprises are costly. Caring for patients with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia can cost up to three times that of a patient without memory issues. Much of that care is not reimbursable by insurance.

"Banner Alzheimer's Institute is not a moneymaker for Banner," points out Bill Lavidge. "It is a community service, not just for this community but for the country. That is another reason for our involvement and why philanthropy is so vital."

"You have a nonprofit organization saying, 'we want to be a leader in Alzheimer's disease care and research,' even though it generates little financial support for the organization. We are truly impressed by that display of leadership."