

# LOS GATOS

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An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Los Gatos  
The Heart of Los Gatos

# *Living*



**Perspectives from the Becks,**  
*Inspired by Service*



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Photo by Hyunah Jang





## Perspectives from the Becks, *Inspired by Service*

By Ellen Manzo, Photos by Hyunah Jang

**KIM O'KEEFE BECK** is a mother, wife, Stanford Ph.D., biologist, and philanthropist. Ms. Beck is passionate about family, protecting wildlife and endangered species, enabling students to realize their unique potential, and contributing to a better world. She also has a love for natural, wild places and has an organic green thumb.

Ms. Beck has always been motivated by her interests. She excelled in competitive gymnastics until the age of 14, earned a B.A. from the University of California Santa Barbara, an M.A. in biology from San Francisco State University, and a Ph.D. in ecology and evolution from Stanford University where she was awarded the highly coveted EPA Star Graduate Fellowship.

The devoted inquisitive biologist conducted field research and analyzed the genetic diversity of birds in Cameroon, West Africa. In Yellowstone National Park, her research examined how climate influences the genetic diversity and population biology of small

mammals. Today, Ms. Beck serves on the Defenders of Wildlife board and is a trustee of the Hillbrook School. She is thoughtful, introverted by her admission, motivated, and strives to balance her many interests and responsibilities. She is a remarkable woman, inspired and driven by the impact one individual can have on the world.

**DOUGLAS BECK** is a father and husband who holds dual professions. In his day job, he is a Vice President at Apple, Inc., where he reports directly to CEO Tim Cook and is responsible for several of the company's businesses worldwide. He is also a Navy Reserve Captain with love for both service and the sea. He has served America for 23 years while simultaneously maintaining a civilian career. Today, he commands the Joint Reserve Detachment for the Joint Intelligence Operations Center of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii, the unified command responsible for all services in the Pacific theater. He previously founded and led the



joint reserve component of the Defense Innovation Unit, based here in Silicon Valley. He is also a veteran of three deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, for which he earned a Bronze Star, the Combat Action Ribbon, and the Presidential Unit Citation.

Mr. Beck was commissioned as an Ensign, older than most for his rank at age 26. By that point, he had already racked up several notable accomplishments. Mr. Beck graduated summa cum laude with an undergraduate degree at Yale. His academic excellence, energy to pursue achievement, moral character that seeks to lead others, and devotion to the service of others, qualified him for selection as one of the 32 Americans fortunate to earn a Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford, where he earned an M. Phil in International Relations. He was already two-plus years into a promising position in global strategy at McKinsey & Co. when he took the oath with the Navy. He later became one of the youngest Partners in McKinsey history, living and working in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Jakarta, as well as here in the Bay Area. Following Mr. Beck's employment at McKinsey & Co., he held the position of Chief Strategy Officer at Charles Schwab.

## FAMILY PHILOSOPHIES:

*"When you get the choice to sit it out or dance, dance."*

- Lee Ann Womack

*"Never give up."*

Today, Mr. Beck has a fast-tracked civilian career, serves as a nonpartisan civilian advisor to both Defense Department leadership and the Secretary of State, and still serves our country in uniform. At Apple, he strives to ensure all in the world have equal access to technology and is dedicated to a personal objective to flatten the digital divide in education and healthcare. He is athletic, intellectual, nostalgic, and sentimental. Mr. Beck is motivated and feels privileged to be surrounded by individuals of diverse origins and backgrounds dedicated to a single mission and purpose both at Apple and in the Navy Reserves. His family and teams of "amazing people trying to do something bigger than themselves" spark his inspiration. He intently believes that each of us needs to figure out what we can do to impact those things that matter.

The two are inspired by giving back, by service, and making the world a better place. In that regard, they're a perfect match.

## THE INTERVIEW...

Kim and Doug sat comfortably in their Saratoga kitchen gathered around the terminal for a Zoom profile interview. For most Monday through Friday employees, Saturday means a day off to recover after a long week of work. For Doug, this was another busy day supporting our country with the Navy Reserve following a demanding workweek. It was a day of conducting the orchestra at the home front for Kim, chauffeuring children to activities, and gearing up for the week ahead. I had previously been to the Beck family home on multiple occasions, a treasure trove of memories of the family's years of living in Japan, Doug's service in Iraq and Afghanistan, Kim's research in Yellowstone National Park, and family days at Half Moon Bay. The household artifacts reflect the tight-knit family. And in the Beck clan, no one is left behind, not even the four-legged friends.

*Early years:* Kim was born in Indiana and raised in Tucson, Arizona, and Eugene, Oregon. Doug, son of a physician serving at the time with the United States Army, was born on an Army base in Germany. At the age of two, Doug's family returned to the U.S. and settled in the Bay Area. They each had packed high school and college years with academics, sports, and extracurricular interests.

*Doug meets Kim:* Discussing years of the couple's relationship and family life was like peering into a window of joyful reminiscence. Doug, known for his sentimentalism, relayed details of their meeting at a summer wedding. "I was sitting in Piedmont Community Church. I got there early. In walked this woman with the sun behind her hair, and I said, "OMG, it's like..., it's an angel." A couple of hours later, Mr. Suave and Debonair managed to win Kim's attention. By the time the music ended, he had her contact information. From that point on, it was "Game on."

Kim planned to depart San Francisco State University three weeks after the chance meeting to return to Oregon. Doug

volunteered free labor and joined Kim for the trip to Oregon. "The drive together up to Oregon in the U-Haul, listening to favorite tunes from an old CD player that I plugged into the cigarette lighter, is one of my absolute favorite memories of all time," disclosed Doug.

*Courtship was short, engagement was long, and the twenty-something years were high gear.* The couple shared favorite family stories. I learned about the 1940s themed Maltese Falcon costumes that secured 1st place at a corporate Halloween costume party and about Valentine's Day in Mendocino. I listened to the adventures of buying the first home in Half Moon Bay's countryside. And not surprising for this high-energy couple, there was the story of the postponed honeymoon due to enormous career obligations on their time, later to be rewarded with two favorite vacations.

The two claim they passed like ships in the night during the early years of the relationship, engagement, and marriage due to Doug's responsibilities as a consultant and Kim's research obligations. Kim recalled, "Doug had a three-year opportunity in Shanghai, China. We married a month after his return, and two weeks later, I left for a six-month field research season in Yellowstone." Fortunately, each was able to take time off to visit the other. Kim visited China, and Doug was able to see Kim at Yellowstone, where he had the chance to do something he always wanted to do – live a wildlife biologist's dream as Kim's research assistant.

*And we spoke about their marriage.* According to Kim, "It seems like early marriage for us was a blur of working, and then we had twins." The couple became parents to twins, Sophia and Thomas, who today are 15 years of age and high school freshmen. Without much time to settle into the demands of a bustling family with one-year-old twins, Doug was off to Iraq, the first of three deployments as part of a joint special operations task force.

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After Doug's return from the Middle East, Doug took on a new international assignment with Apple with responsibilities for Northeast Asia. The Becks relocated and lived in Tokyo for five years, a place Doug had first gained a love for as a high school exchange student and through summers spent in Japan during college and graduate school. Their children gleaned a taste for international cultures, savored Japanese food that still ranks high with them today, and learned the lifelong lessons of being a minority in an international environment.

Upon repatriation back to the States six years ago, the Becks chose to make Saratoga their home. In Tokyo, they lived within walking distance to Doug's work, which gave them more time together as a family. They decided to live in Saratoga, given its proximity to Apple headquarters, excellent schools, tree-lined streets and charm, and town identity. Daughter Sophie attends Archbishop Mitty High School. She is an avid horseback rider and is working to qualify for her second Dressage U.S. National competition. Her love for animals extends beyond her horse. She finds personal reward in devoting time to saving one foster kitten at a time at home. Son Thomas, an enthusiastic tennis player, attends Bellarmine College Preparatory and looks back on his weeklong visit with their Japanese host family in Japan as one of his favorite memories. He looks forward to participating in Bellarmine Immersion trips that allow student opportunities to work with and learn from those who are less fortunate. The apples don't fall far from the tree.

## THOUGHTS ON RECENT EVENTS

### **The California Fires and Wildlife Resiliency**

Kim's scientific and philanthropic background stems from a Ph.D. in ecology and evolution from Stanford University. Defenders of Wildlife, the board on which she serves, aims to protect native animals and plants in their natural communities. In California, the non-profit works closely with wildland management stakeholders to establish policies to promote forest health, encourage renewable energy plant placement that protects endangered species, and preserves California's biodiversity for the long-term sustainability of both people and wildlife.

"The wildfires are especially significant for California, given that it is home to more endemic species than any other state," explained Kim. "We may not know the full toll of the fires on wildlife for years. On a positive note, if habitats with thriving ecosystems and healthy populations are within proximity, wildlife can readily repopulate burned areas. This highlights why it's critically important in California to offer protected areas where animals can survive and flourish that are connected to one another, allowing wildlife to move between them. Fires will continue, but with protections and planning, it is truly phenomenal how resilient wildlife is if given a chance."


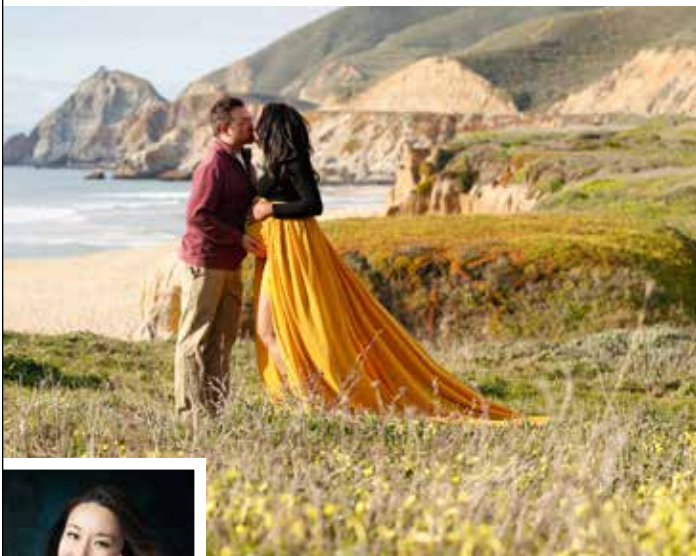

### **The Pandemic's Impact on Technology –**

Doug's responsibilities at Apple include healthcare, education, and the public sector, all of which have been at the vortex of inconceivable activity throughout this pandemic.

"The role that technology can play in helping to drive real benefit to society and in health, education, and public services has been accelerated by what's happened as a result of the pandemic." Examples include leveraging technology to help with distance learning, home telehealth, communications with loved ones in quarantine and hospitals, collaboration and communication for workers and their constituents across the full range of public agencies, as well as exposure notification and other public health imperatives.

Doug views some of these evolutionary changes to be enduring and that their benefits will last long after the pandemic finally recedes. Changes in how technology is used to drive real learning will last long after kids can finally return to their classrooms. Changes in the ways we interact with our doctors and the way our care teams use technology to work with each other will too. And so will many of the new ways those in government at all levels have found to work with one another – and to deliver services to the public. Doug believes this will all help improve service delivery, as well as bringing teams around the world closer together while simultaneously reducing the need for travel. And hopefully, the byproduct of all this will result in more time for families to spend together.

These enhancements, however, also contribute to a growing challenge for society that has been made even more apparent during the pandemic – what many call "the digital divide." As Doug says, "If we aren't careful, as technology becomes more and more a critical part of these core public services, those who are lucky enough to have access to the best technology will have huge advantages over those who don't. And too, many of those who don't will continue to be members of our most vulnerable communities. And that's not fair. We need to make technology

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as broadly available as possible, especially in areas like education and in healthcare, to flatten the digital divide and ensure that ALL people are able to benefit from the incredible innovations that technology can help provide."

**Building Shields from Turmoil in the Next Generation -**

As the parent of two high school students and as a trustee on the Hillbrook School board, Kim views that "Schools face the dilemma of trying to prepare students for a future that we can't even imagine right now. Hillbrook's vision to 'Inspire students to achieve their dreams and reach beyond themselves to make a difference in the world.' results in teachers challenging students with 'What matters to you and what are you doing about it?' I love that question," exclaimed Kim. "I love it because there are so many issues that the world presently faces, and our children aren't isolated from the turmoil. It is very empowering to any child to know that he or she can make a difference about something that matters." The Hillbrook Trustee believes that the ideal way to engage children is to let them learn that they have the power to make an impact. And Kim is testimony to that fact. Growing up, Kim worried about the natural world, and today she's a wildlife researcher turned advocate.

**On Inclusion, Personal Resilience and Times of Uncertainty -**

COVID-19, an economic downturn, the California fires and the confrontations facing first responders whose job is to maintain peace and security in America's communities, have created feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. This pandemic is a constant reminder that everyone has to be concerned for the community at large. The double sword is that business closures and layoffs force individuals to become concerned about *me*, driving that *we're on our own* mentality. The latest events in America have presented the most demanding personal resilience tests ever experienced in this century.

"The year I was trying to finish my Ph.D. with one-year-old twins, while Doug was in the Middle East, was when I had to dig down the deepest," said Kim thoughtfully. "The lesson I learned from that is that one can't separate personal resilience from community resilience. Our family's well-being was inextricably

linked with that of the people that we relied upon and with whom we had a connection."

"When we start weighing the trade-offs between what is best for us individually and what is needed for us collectively, we are asking the wrong questions and on the wrong time scales. It usually means we are only thinking short-term," explained Kim. "I think of healthy communities in the same way I understand what is required for healthy ecosystems. Interconnectedness underlies all biological relationships – from the ability of an ecosystem to deliver clean air, water and food – to the ability of a community to sustain a cooperative and stable enterprise. Diversity is essential to both. By empowering everyone in our community, we capture the collective knowledge and engagement that is necessary to create a more sustainable and positive future for us all."

"What Kim just said is what this country has been all about from the very beginning, even with all the ways we have struggled with it since then." Doug exemplified his point with the American motto *E Pluribus Unum*, which appears on America's currency and means *Out of many, one*. "The last six months have been a stark reminder of how much work there is left to do to deliver on that vision, and just how important it is that we do it. "

Doug views the military as the most integrated place where he has worked. "Every service member has taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, which bonds us by that common purpose in defense of our nation. Having a common purpose helps eliminate the noise about where people are from, the religion they practice, and the color of their skin. I think that is something our whole society can learn something from."

Doug's military responsibilities have included experiences throughout the Asia Pacific region, Japan, Korea, the corresponding seas, at the US Pacific Command headquarters in Pearl Harbor, in the Middle East and North Africa. His military assignments put him at the forefront of great power competition with China, as well as of joint inter-agency counterterrorism as part of U.S. Navy SEAL teams on the other side of the world.

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"I've had the privilege to serve with amazing Americans from every possible ethnic, geographic, socioeconomic, religious, personality, and gender background - and a huge range of technical specialties, skills, and interests. The military brings all those people together in support of a common mission, in support of a common purpose. When we get that right, it truly is the best of America. It has been such an incredible privilege to be part of that, and I continue to learn from it every day."

"It's also true that the closer one is to that sense of purpose, the mission, the better it is. I've never seen anything more innovative than a joint inter-agency special operations task force downrange in combat. The innovation and collaboration in harnessing diversity, speed of clarity and action, and integrity of thought that I've seen there is the best I've ever seen anywhere, in anything. And at the same time, the Pentagon can be just like any other huge bureaucracy - only bigger. The more one can tap into that sense of purpose and focus that comes from being close to something so critical that the noise of division and self-interest has to fade away, the better it is. My experience of that incredible innovation down range is not unique. I'm sure that firefighters, health care workers, and others experience versions of it all the time. All Americans should be striving to bottle the best of that and incorporate it into our lives. I try to do that, to maintain that perspective, wherever I find myself."

#### **Veterans Day on the Horizon -**

With Veterans Day around the corner, Doug Beck has two messages for our community: "Point One: Our Veterans represent all of us and the best of us. The principles and skills that they have learned through their experience in uniform are assets that we need to leverage. If you don't have Veterans on your team, you need to hire some. Veterans understand teamwork, collaboration, hard work, values, leadership, and resilience, and those are all things we need on every team. Point Two: Many Veterans need help getting all of those skills and attributes in place in a context other than the defense of our country. They will get there, but sometimes someone needs to take a bet on them." Doug hesitated, and then solemnly shared, "And others need help of a different kind. I just participated yesterday in another memorial service for a Veteran who chose to take his own life. Many Veterans I know have lost a friend in combat. But pretty much ALL the Veterans I know have lost someone they knew through suicide. And that's not just young Veterans or old Veterans; it includes everyone in between." And then Doug emphasized with emotion in his voice, "And that's on all of us. It's on all of us to care for people. To make it easier for our Veterans to know how to care for themselves. Especially right now, with so many people in isolation."

#### **Appreciation for Community-**

The Becks lost a family member to COVID-19. In that regard, the pandemic hit home for them as it has for so many others. As they celebrate Thanksgiving, they do so with gratitude for their health, family, home, and the ability to live in a place that feels safe and secure, something they genuinely wish for all people. With a choked-up voice, Kim asserted, "There has been so much going on this year! It almost feels painful to have the privileges we do." Absent that ubiquity across all, the Becks are thankful to reside in a country that offers them the opportunity to help others along the way, so that perhaps those they assist on their journey may be able to share similar expressions of gratitude on future Thanksgiving holidays to come.

**To learn about local initiatives that deliver honor and support to Veterans in our community, visit the Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation at [www.honorAvet.org](http://www.honorAvet.org).**

## **Campbell Veterans Memorial Foundation Recognizes Jim Free**

*By Dan Furtado, Photo by Hyunah Jang*



Jim is a Vietnam Veteran, serving in the U.S. Navy as a technician on guided surface to air missile defense systems aboard the USS Goldsborough, DDG-20, then a new class of guided missile destroyers.

Jim is the past President of the Campbell Kiwanis Club and was selected Kiwanian of the Year in 1999. In 2003 he was selected as the Campbell Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year. In June 2013, the State of California Assemblyman Paul Fong, selected Jim as the Veteran of the Year for Assembly District 28.

Jim was asked to lead an effort to build a new Veterans Memorial in downtown Campbell. A committee was formed and was later incorporated as the Campbell Veterans Memorial Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation. He served as the President and C.E.O. of that corporation until 2015 and is now the Chairman Emeritus of the board.

The Campbell Chamber of Commerce held their annual Citizen of the Year recognition event this past June. Several Campbell service organizations and volunteer groups associated with the City also recognize a person who has made significant contributions to the local community. Jim was selected as Veteran of the Year for both his military service and contributions to both the Campbell Veterans Memorial Foundation and the Veterans Memorial and Support Foundation, serving Saratoga, Los Gatos, and Monte Sereno.

**For more information, please visit [www.campbellveteransmemorial.org](http://www.campbellveteransmemorial.org) and [www.honoravet.org](http://www.honoravet.org)**