



## *Jo Ann Hardy*

### OSTEOARTHRITIS

Jo Ann Hardy has always been a woman on the move. She has spent many years keeping active, both professionally and personally. Her professional experiences in the travel business require her to escort tour groups and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. In her free time, Jo Ann has always volunteered her time to the community, quite often spending long amounts of time on her feet.

Jo Ann actually has a condition that she shares with over 40 million Americans – Osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis leads to pain, deformity, and loss of joint motion as protective cartilage within the joints is damaged and leaves the bone exposed. It is also the most common form of arthritis, disproportionately affecting women. Moreover, it is a leading cause of disability worldwide.

Osteoarthritis necessitates lifestyle changes as it progresses. Jo Ann found that she became less able to tolerate mobility challenges. Climbing stairs and getting around became difficult, and as Jo Ann describes, “It became increasingly difficult to even get up out of a chair.”

Fortunately, Jo Ann’s mobility issues and pain were able to take a back seat after she had bilateral total knee replacement surgery in May of 2003 at Scott & White Hospital in Temple, TX. The surgery was followed by 30 days of outpatient therapy at Columbia/St. David's Hospital in Austin. Jo Ann says she’s had an “incredible improvement.” She has even been able to increase her many activities without pain.

Jo Ann has been able to reclaim her busy life. She hopes that “as our population ages, advances in research in orthopaedics would enable patients to be more active and productive citizens and contain health care costs.”

By the year 2010, one third of the American population will be aged 50 or older. Knowing that Osteoarthritis affects nearly half of the elderly, and one quarter of the population between the ages of 45 and 64, more research is clearly needed. Future Osteoarthritis research is needed to study the interaction of materials and wear; examine the genetic, biological, and mechanical factors influencing the progression of arthritis; and to examine the bioengineering approaches to tissue regeneration with an emphasis on cartilage repair.