

Gloria Engel, MD

The Long and Winding Road



Despite her arduous journey to her chosen profession, Dr. Engel says she never truly wanted to be anything else but an internal medicine doctor. The first inkling Dr. Gloria Engel can recall of wanting to become a doctor was watching the Emmy® award-winning television show *Medic* when she was just a child growing up in the San Fernando Valley. "I liked the subject matter and that people kept getting helped," reflects Dr. Engel. "It was an amazing show."

Her road to becoming a doctor in real life would be somewhat of a winding one, however, as she encountered a number of detours and hurdles along the way.

Young and determined to change the world, Dr. Engel started college majoring in pre-med. Soon after, she became involved in Robert Kennedy's political campaign. "I just happened to be in the ballroom at his victory party when he was assassinated," shares Dr. Engel. "After I recovered from the shock of that, I decided that rather than save the world through medicine, I was going to save the world through politics."

Dr. Engel changed her major to public affairs and began attending The George Washington University. However, after two years in Washington, DC, she became very cynical about politics and had grown homesick for California. She returned to California, landed a job at California Institute of Technology (Caltech) as a lab manager and went to school to finish her pre-med requirements. At 26 she applied to medical school...she was turned down repeatedly. "I was told I was too old and female by at least six or seven schools," says Dr. Engel.

Frustrated, Dr. Engel worked at Caltech for five years before landing a new job with Beckman Instruments, Inc. "I worked as a regional technical specialist," explains Dr. Engel. "I repaired research equipment and was the first woman to ever be hired there to do service work in the field." Dr. Engel stayed at Beckman for 10 years before becoming sick and was hospitalized. "That time gave me the chance to reflect back on my life and what I had accomplished," recalls Dr. Engel. "What I realized was I still wanted to be a doctor."

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Dr. Engel recovered and began studying for the medical college admission test. She reapplied to medical school and was accepted at 37 years of age. She attended Loma Linda University, completed her residency there in 1994 and also completed a fellowship in congestive heart failure and caring for adult heart transplant patients.

After her fellowship, Dr. Engel served as a physician at two different large medical groups until joining the Heart Institute of the Desert. In 2004, Dr. Engel started her own practice. "I am impressed by the staff and physicians at Eisenhower and its vision for the future of health care in the Coachella Valley," shares Dr. Engel.

Despite her arduous journey to her chosen profession, Dr. Engel says she never truly wanted to be anything else but an internal medicine doctor. "I've always wanted to relate to people one-on-one," explains Dr. Engel. "I like seeing someone through an illness and getting them well. I also enjoy offering preventive options to patients, guiding them through the aging process and helping them stay as healthy as possible."

Dr. Engel lives in Yucaipa with her long-time partner of 30 years, Tony whom she met while working at Caltech. They enjoy attending his motorcycle racing events every month, being outside and tending to their large backyard. They also love their four-legged family, which includes three cats and one much loved dog, Mimi.