



Left: Monroe read a get-well card from Joe DiMaggio in 1952 while recovering from an appendectomy at the former Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Hollywood. Below: Spielberg (left) stood beside the late eminent geneticist David Rimoin on June 21, 1990, as the three-story Pediatric Research Center was named in the director's honor.



THE SECRETS OF HOLLYWOOD'S HOSPITAL

Whose heart had to be resuscitated nine times (by Garry Marshall's wife!), who ordered in from Chasen's (yes, it was Liz Taylor), and does a celebrity baby ward really exist? How Cedars-Sinai, the medical world's most glam facility, ended up with both boldface patients and patrons

BY Gary BAUM ILLUSTRATION BY Remie Geoffroi

From birthing room to deathbed, no institution in L.A. can claim anywhere near as emotionally central or uniquely sweeping a hold on the entertainment industry as the internationally renowned Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Whether it's Patrick Swayze fighting pancreatic cancer, Frank Sinatra dying of a heart attack, Madonna undergoing hernia surgery, Jessica Simpson having a baby — or untold behind-the-scenes business players privately tending to the health of themselves and their loved ones — Hollywood's hospital is almost inevitably involved. Sure, there are other medical meccas favored by those in the industry (UCLA's med school, after all, is named after David Geffen, and Saint John's in Santa Monica is popular for its maternity ward), but Cedars, as it's known, boasts by far the most hallowed history for not only treatment but also Hollywood giving. Celebrating its 110th anniversary this year, the hospital has been built and steered in significant ways by the industry and certainly wouldn't be considered a world-class facility, recognized today both for its top-notch care and research strides in everything from stem cells to strokes, without its help.

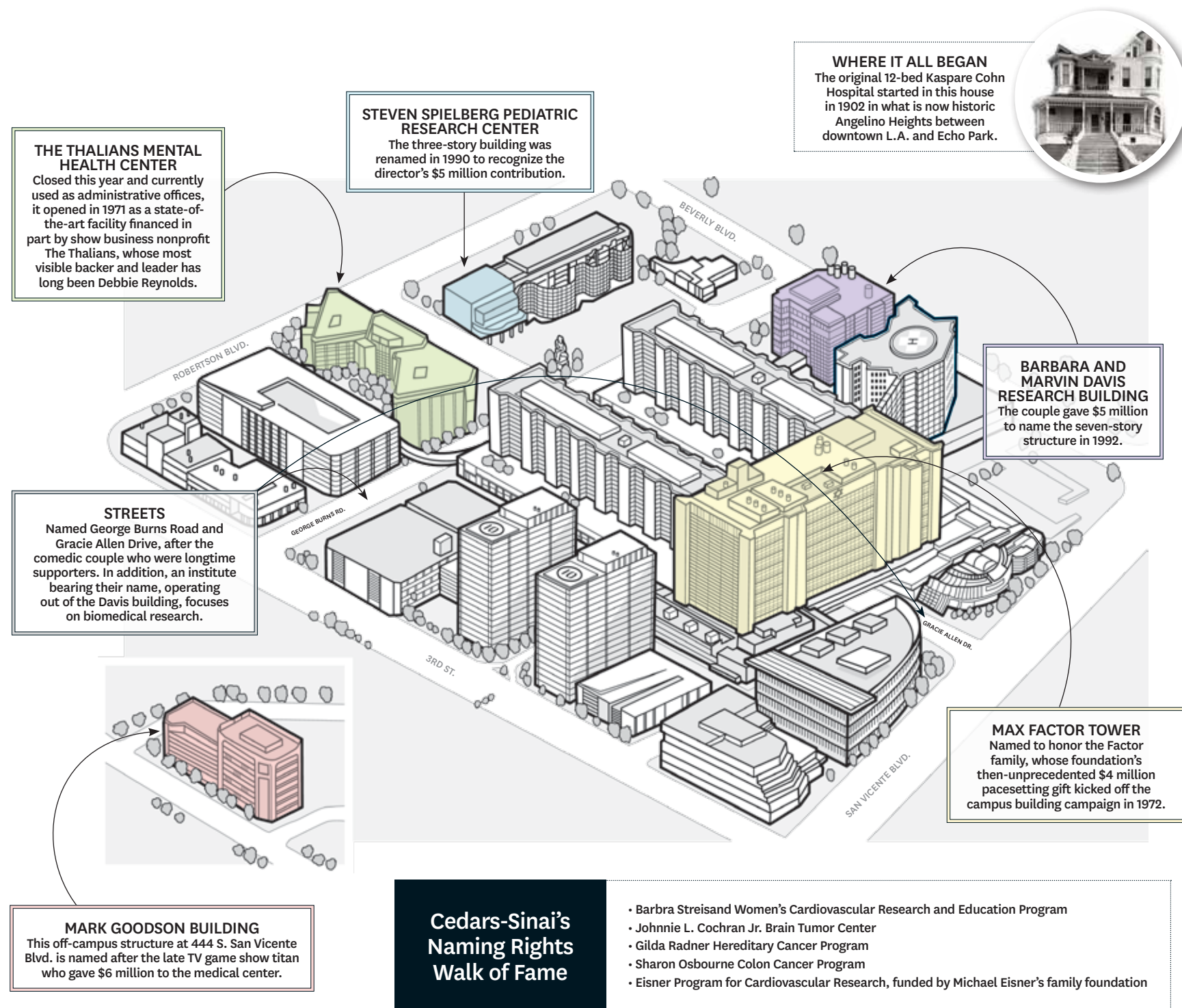
"It's a big part of the good times and the bad," says Gersh partner Leslie Siebert, who's active

with Cedars' Women's Guild and was born at the hospital, as were her kids. Adds Jeffrey Katzenberg, a Cedars board member since 1998, who says he has never lived more than a mile from the campus during his time in town: "I know the facility very well as a user. Every medical emergency has been there, those breaks and those sprains. My in-laws passed away there; my children were born there. It's defined my life in an essential way, as it has for so many people in our industry."

The massive 24-acre complex delivers 7,000 babies a year, performed nearly 100 heart transplants during the past 12 months, is the only private hospital in the county with a Level 1 trauma center and is a nexus for thousands of uninsured Angelenos who receive many millions of dollars in services each year at little or no cost. So it's hard to imagine it was founded as a 12-bed facility in a Victorian house near downtown in 1902. Then called Kaspere Cohn Hospital, it was run by the Hebrew Benevolent Society. Later renamed Cedars of Lebanon, an Old Testament reference to the timber used for Solomon's Temple, it expanded into a grand Art Deco building on Fountain Avenue in Hollywood and tapped the wallets of film moguls Jack Warner and Joseph Schenck, as well as Will Rogers. (In 1976, that



Left: Noel Bairey Merz, the director-cardiologist who oversees the Cedars-Sinai Women's Heart Center, with Bill Clinton and Barbra Streisand at a fund-raiser at Streisand's Malibu house June 14.



property would be purchased by the Church of Scientology for its West Coast headquarters and painted bright blue.) After World War II, Al Jolson deeded his two-acre estate on Mulholland Drive to assist in a \$1 million drive toward construction of a maternity and pediatrics pavilion to handle the post-war baby boom.

Meanwhile, another Jewish hospital, the Mount Sinai Home for the Incurables — which soon decided to go by the only slightly less depressing Home for the Chronic Invalids — opened in 1926 in Yiddish-speaking, working-class East L.A. In 1928 Louis B. Mayer held a big Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel fund-raiser to help underwrite hospital-stays coverage at \$2 a day. Everyone from Norma Shearer and Joan Crawford to Barbara Stanwyck and George Raft attended and even performed at its gala events, often at the urging of the Jewish studio heads who were their bosses.

Cedars' Fountain Avenue facility, located near the Paramount lot, couldn't help but become an industry magnet. Marilyn Monroe had her appendix removed there in 1952. (She taped a note to her abdomen under her gown, imploring the doctor to cut as little as possible: "I know it seems vain ... please do whatever you can to prevent large scars.") One time, when Elizabeth Taylor was staying on the fifth floor, Richard Burton had Chasen's send over dinner — and, to boot, ordered in a pair of the restaurant's tuxedoed violinists to play. One of the hospital's most frequent patients was Peter Sellers. "Lovely guy; his heart stopped all the time,"



Jack Nicholson (center) spoke with his doctor Robert Klapper, chief of orthopedics at Cedars, courtside at Staples Center during a Lakers game in 2011. A little while back, Nicholson suggested to Alexander Payne, his director on *About Schmidt*, that Payne might look into being treated by Klapper for an ailment. "Hollywood is a small village," says Klapper. "When they find someone they like, they recommend you."

says Barbara Marshall, director Garry Marshall’s wife, who was an ICU nurse in the early 1960s, before the use of electric defibrillation paddles. “We used to jump up on the bed and pound him on the chest. I think I did it nine times.”

After Cedars merged with Mount Sinai in 1961, in part so the Jewish hospitals would no longer need to compete on the fund-raising front, it began drawing financial support from Jules C. Stein and Lew and Edie Wasserman, as well as TV- and radio-spot fund-raising assistance from Charlton Heston and Jack Lemmon. By this time, Mount Sinai had migrated to the increasingly Jewish Westside to a location at the still far-from-chic intersection of Beverly Boulevard and San Vicente Boulevard, a neighborhood then defined by its unsightly oil derricks, barbecue joints and pony rides. (Chanel wouldn’t hang its shingle a stethoscope’s toss away on Robertson Boulevard for nearly half a century.) When the two facilities formally became one on the site in 1976, the new centerpiece tower was named after Hollywood makeup kingpin Max Factor, whose family foundation provided pivotal philanthropic support with a then-unprecedented \$4 million gift in 1972, while the Debbie Reynolds-backed Thalias Mental Health Center (closed earlier this year) anchored another portion of the property.

In time, Steven Spielberg, TV game show producer Mark Goodson (*Family Feud*, *The Price Is Right*) and former 20th Century Fox owner Marvin Davis would have buildings named after them to acknowledge multimillion-dollar gifts, while programs in hereditary and colon cancer and brain tumors would be titled for, respectively, Gilda Radner, Sharon Osbourne and attorney Johnnie L. Cochran Jr. In addition, the two public streets that intersect the campus were named George Burns Road and



High-profile Cedars-Sinai mothers and their babies, from left: Jessica Alba with daughter Haven; Milla Jovovich with daughter Ever; Natalie Portman with son Aleph.

The Maternity Ward to the Stars

“CELEBRITY BABIES” AND “CEDARS” HAVE become synonymous. Kourtney Kardashian, Jessica Simpson, Victoria Beckham, Kate Hudson, Penelope Cruz and Pink have all delivered there in the past couple of years. A skim of the births in any given issue of *THR*’s “Hitched, Hatched, Hired” column reveals that far more industry progeny are born at the hospital’s maternity ward than its only real, if still distant, rival: Saint John’s Health Center in Santa Monica, where Suri Cruise came into the world. Although there’s no designated celebrity wing and no obvious extra security, stars with sizable entourages prefer the three-bedroom, two-bath units at Cedars, particularly those with doors marked

3127 and 3129. They feature hardwood floors and round-the-clock doulas and cost \$3,784 a day. But it’s key to remember that those sweet suites can’t be guaranteed. “If people go into labor right before you do, you’re shit out of luck,” according to one talent publicist. Whenever a boldface name is expected to arrive (they usually park where the doctors do and come in via a back entrance), Cedars is thick with celebrity-weekly reporters on back-to-back shifts to be the first to break the birth scoop. They tend to use the hospital’s Starbucks as base camp. Notes one tabloid vet: “We’ll spot members of a star’s entourage grabbing a latte. That’s often the giveaway.” — G.B.

“My in-laws passed away there; my children were born there. It’s defined my life in an essential way.”

Jeffrey Katzenberg, on Cedars-Sinai



The former Cedars of Lebanon facility in Hollywood, now the West Coast headquarters of the Church of Scientology.

“Cedars-Sinai years”; he and late partner Howard Austen moved back from Italy as they became increasingly frail. Mel Brooks, Alan Ladd Jr., Jay Kanter and Paul Mazursky would famously convene on Fridays at a corner table at the since-departed Orso adjacent to the campus. “These guys liked it so they could visit their doctors afterward,” Mazursky told *THR* last year. “The sound of the ambulances was something we got used to.”

These days, Cedars — whose campus is adorned with a 4,000-piece donated art collection that includes works by Picasso, Warhol and Hockney — vacuums Hollywood dollars from every direction. There’s the Sports Spectacular gala each May, which has raised \$21 million for the Genetics Institute by getting Fox Sports, CBS, AEG, ESPN and others to shell out at the Century Plaza for a night honoring a David Beckham or a Kobe Bryant. In the fall, the roving Pink Party, run by super-connected Pacific Palisades boutique owner Elyse Walker in support of the women’s cancer program, can pull in more than \$1 million in an evening from the fashion-oriented film and TV crowd (Jennifer Garner, Kim Raver, El’s Ashlan Gorse) as well as sponsors like CAA and the Sumner Redstone Foundation.

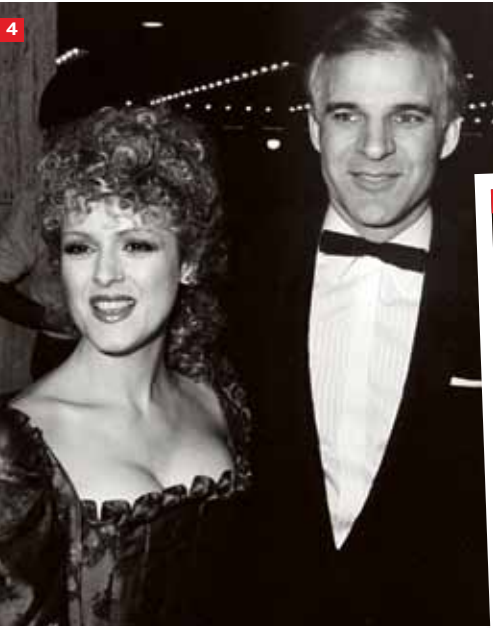
Still, the apex of giving remains the hospital’s Women’s Guild, which turns 55 this year. Founded by a high-powered clique, including Rosalind Russell, Fran Stark and Nancy Sinatra, the guild now counts Anne Douglas, Morgan Fairchild, Wendy Goldberg and Marcia Ziffren (ex-wife of entertainment lawyer Kenneth Ziffren) among its leaders. The group, which began with the modest intent of raising money for newborns’ layettes, has ramped up its goals to funding laser technologies, research chairs and, currently, a \$20 million Lung Institute. The guild has paid for it all by heavily leaning on their husbands’ pocketbooks and studio-head power, relentlessly working their social circles and throwing what was for decades the industry’s undisputed top annual charitable event (*see sidebar*).

Today, the hospital’s Hollywood connections are an embarrassment of riches. Who’s that doing the voiceover on the in-house video for the new Advanced Health Sciences Pavilion? Oh, just Sidney Poitier. And who is Eskedar Gobeze, a member of the patient relations department, which, when situations allow, can work the insider magic of getting people upgraded to the much-preferred eighth-floor deluxe suites? Why, Gobeze is Berry Gordy’s lady friend, of course. (Observes Anne Douglas: “In patient relations, they say you can’t go [to the eighth floor] if you’re still attached to a machine. You have to be able to breathe on your own!”) And the shaved-headed dude yukking it up with Jack Nicholson courtside at a Lakers game? That’s his doctor, the head of orthopedic surgery, Robert Klapper — who, natch, used to consult on *E.R.*

The enduring fealty the industry has for the hospital made for a perilous moment several years ago for one longtime supporter. Barbara Davis, Marvin’s widow, was in a serious car accident just after leaving an opera opening in downtown L.A. Despite suffering a banged head, punctured ribs and what turned out to be a blood clot in her lung, she waved off efforts to bring her to the most proximate medical center. Rather, she chose to endure a bumpy cross-town commute: “I said, ‘Bring me to Cedars!’ Because when you go to Cedars, you’re at home.” **THR**

Gracie Allen Drive, after the comedic couple who were longtime supporters. The A-list giving continues apace: On June 14, Barbra Streisand held an intimate fund-raiser at her Malibu house in honor of Bill Clinton, with guests including Haim Saban and Ron Meyer and tickets at up to \$100,000 a couple. Streisand is working to raise \$20 million (she contributed \$5 million) for a women’s cardiovascular program at the hospital.

Tales of industry affinity for Cedars — which accounts for no less than 5 percent of nightly room bookings at both the Four Seasons and SLS hotels a few blocks away for pre- and post-stay patients, family visitors and friends — have become legendary. Gore Vidal is again living in L.A. specifically for what he has called his



1 Candy and Aaron Spelling at the Women’s Guild premiere of *Scrooged* in 1988. **2** From left: Warren Beatty, Natalie Wood and Harriet Deutsch at the premiere of *West Side Story* in 1961. **3** From left: Ted Mayers, Jane Wyman and Joan Crawford at the *Lord Jim* benefit in 1965. **4** Bernadette Peters and Steve Martin at the premiere of *Pennies From Heaven* in 1981. **5** Sherry Lansing (left) and Patty Davis at the premiere of *The Jazz Singer* in 1980. **6** Goldie Hawn with daughter Kate and son Oliver at the premiere of *Overboard* in 1987.



“I would say, ‘I need \$10,000.’ He’d say, ‘You got it!’ ”

Anne Douglas, Joanna Carson, Wendy Goldberg and other members of the hospital’s Women’s Guild remember putting the screws to Hollywood for Cedars for their star-studded film premiere benefits

FROM 1958 TO 1995, THE WELL-CONNECTED Women’s Guild of Cedars-Sinai held a black-tie, klieg-lighted film fund-raiser annually at such venues as the Egyptian, Grauman’s and the Cinerama Dome, followed by a dinner-and-dancing party. Nicknamed “the fur premiere” because it typically took place in December, it was for decades the unrivaled charitable event on Hollywood’s social calendar, pulling in major moolah with the debuts of everything from *Funny Girl* to *Lawrence of Arabia*. Here, members of the guild, which continues to raise millions for Cedars, tell *THR* all: **SHELLEY COOPER**, veteran film publicist (*Three Kings*, *Striptease*): “It was always the end-all and be-all of star-studded events.”

BEVERLY FIRESTEIN, member of the Max Factor family: “These women in the guild, they were movers and shakers in the community. One of

them, Fran Stark, her husband, Ray, she said to him, ‘How about a movie?’ And it grew. In those days, the studios paid for everything: the food, the place. It was always very glamorous.”

JOANNA CARSON, ex-wife of Johnny Carson: “Whoever your contacts were, you brought them to the game.”

ANNE DOUGLAS, wife of Kirk Douglas: “We all had our customers. I had Lew Wasserman. I would say, ‘I need \$10,000.’ He’d say, ‘You got it!’ ”

ROSALIND RUSSELL (in a 1969 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*): “Five of us gangsters went after the top picture of the year [1969’s *Hello, Dolly!*]. Then 20th Century Fox said, ‘We’ll be needing 100 tickets for stars, celebs, producers.’ ‘Fine — that will be \$10,000, please.’ While they fainted, we snapped our purses shut with one click and got up. Oh, you should have seen them.

It was the biggest holdup of the century.”

WENDY GOLDBERG, wife of producer Leonard Goldberg: “That was their kickoff, instead of a junket.”

DOUGLAS “In the beginning, we were rather powerful. Later on, we had to give the studios and the press a certain amount of tickets, which diminished our income.”

FIRESTEIN “Times changed with the way things operated. The studios cut their budgets. It was such a struggle to get a top movie. *Nick of Time* [1995] was not exactly the same as *Fiddler on the Roof* or *Funny Girl*, so we decided to move on.”

GOLDBERG “These days, the biggest films, like *The Avengers*, have already been in many countries before the U.S. The way they market a movie is so different. So now we keep it fresh. Last year, we did an event with Cirque du Soleil.” — G.B.