

From Heartbreaking to Heart Racing Again.

STORY BY DOUG OAKES. PHOTO BY JOANN HOLGUIN.

Your heart races the moment you hear its bugle, and a huge elk steps out in front of you. The thrill overwhelms your senses and your reactions become automatic, intuitive even. It happens to the experienced hunter and the novice alike – the thrill of encountering nature at its primal level is instinctive and ingrained. JoAnn Holguin knows firsthand what it feels like to experience the thrill of hunting big game. And what it feels like to lose the ability to enjoy the things she loves to do.



Holguin poses with her first Bull Elk.

Holguin, Executive Assistant to the CEO at Gila Regional Medical Center, has always loved outdoor activities like hunting, fishing, and sharing her passion for life with her grandkids. But severe knee pain was cutting into her active lifestyle and enjoying time with her family. When the pain became unbearable, Holguin sought treatment from Dr. Brian Robinson, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon at Southwest Bone and Joint Institute in Silver City, New Mexico.

“The pain was constant for years, restricting my normal daily activities,” Holguin said. “It was heartbreaking; I couldn’t participate in outdoor activities and stayed back because I was always worrying about falling and injuring myself more due to the intensity of the pain and loss of mobility.”

After an intensive examination and therapy, Robinson quickly identified the problem – primary osteoarthritis of both knees, usually the result of progressive loss of articular cartilage. Osteoarthritis typically occurs in elderly patients, but since Holguin was in her early 50’s it was clear that the disease was related to playing sports in her youth, and now it was advancing rapidly.

“After non-surgical treatment options failed, the treatment plan was clear; I recommended a total knee replacement,” Dr. Robinson said.

Robinson performed a type of total knee replacement surgery called PSI (Patient Specific Instrumentation). PSI utilizes CT images of the affected joints to provide

more accurate pre-operative planning and delivers more reliable outcomes for patients suffering from degenerative knee osteoarthritis.

The surgery went smoothly, and relief was almost immediate. “The procedure was successful, and JoAnn is now pain-free and back to work,” Robinson noted.

“I feel amazing, this was truly life changing for not only myself, but my family. I went from having constant pain for years to doing the things I love. Now, I can go hunting and walk the mountains pain free,” Holguin said. “I harvested my first Bull Elk (with my

husband’s help). I feel great and can live life pain free.”

Holguin’s recovery from surgery was also much faster than anticipated. “I had zero complications post-op and recovery was great. I had minimal pain related to both surgeries and Dr. Robinson was there every step of the way, and very compassionate,” said Holguin. “I was back to work in 5 weeks and thanks to Dr. Robinson I can enjoy my life pain free. It was the best decision I ever made.”

“Dr. Robinson is the best,” Holguin said. “I was blessed to have him as my orthopedic surgeon.”