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63-year-old gives birth

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A 63-year-old woman gave birth to a healthy girl after in vitro fertilization that produced what University of Southern California doctors said Wednesday was the world's oldest successful pregnancy.

The baby was delivered late last year by Caesarean section and weighed 6 pounds, 4 ounces. The mother's identity was withheld by doctors.

When the Southern California woman first approached the USC Program for Assisted Reproduction, she represented herself as being 50 years old instead of 60, said Dr. Richard Paulson, the program director.

"Had the individual disclosed her actual age ... she would not have qualified for treatment at USC, since the program uses an arbitrary upper age limit of 55 for women seeking fertility therapy," a statement from the USC reproductive center said.

It took three years for the woman to become pregnant. Doctors learned of the woman's advanced age at the

end of her first trimester, said Paulson, chief of fertility division at the USC School of Medicine.

All women over the age of 45 who wish to undergo donation must pass a series of rigorous physical tests to ensure they are fit enough to withstand the stress of pregnancy.

"It turned out that she sailed right through the tests," Paulson said in a telephone interview.

The woman has been married to her husband for 16 years, and the couple has no other children.

"It is remarkable that a 63-year-old can successfully conceive and adapt to the rigors of pregnancy safely well to deliver a healthy baby at term," Paulson said. He said the successful birth raises the threshold of beliefs about conception.

"It may be said that women have not one, but two biological clocks — the clock for the eggs and the clock for the uterus — that seem to run out much earlier than the one for the uterus," Paulson said.

DAUGHTERS

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Following the session, they will take a tour of the department. Employees will field questions about the work involved, the conditions in the workplace, the rules that must be followed and other

areas of interest.

Tom Putnam, computing services director, is taking his daughter to work with him.

"I am hoping that she will get a chance to see women in many different occupations," Putnam said. "She should find out what work is like and the many different expectations people have at

work. This should help her understand why her continued education is valuable."

"A lot of the girls in the area that we are targeting are being taught to learn stereotypes that discourage them from participating in technical fields," he said. "Hopefully, our program will break some of those stereotypes for them."

SKYDIVING

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Saitis said misconceptions about skydiving can deter some potential skydivers from trying out the sport. He said some complain they do not have the money to invest in skydiving. The first jump can range from \$145 to \$240, depending on the type of jump. Subsequent jumps cost about \$35 to \$125.

Although people often view skydiving as expensive and dangerous, Saitis said this is not necessarily true.

"People think we have to be crazy to do something like this, but look how many people have died building Bonfire," Saitis said. "I know a lot of people who will go out and spend \$50 a weekend drinking. I know it sounds like a lot of money, but you really get what you pay for."

Roderick said some people are amazed to hear of her love for skydiving. She said although skydiving is similar to many sports in that it can be risky, it involves less risk than many thoughtless daily activities.

"Skydiving is safer than driving a car, being in a boxing match or flying in an airplane," Roderick said. "Just like wearing your seat belt while driving, there are certain things you can do to make skydiving a safer environment."

Jonathan Warden, a senior agricultural develop-

ment major who has skydived 105 times, said skydiving provides a needed break from the stress of everyday life. Skydiving is a release as well as a spiritual act for him.

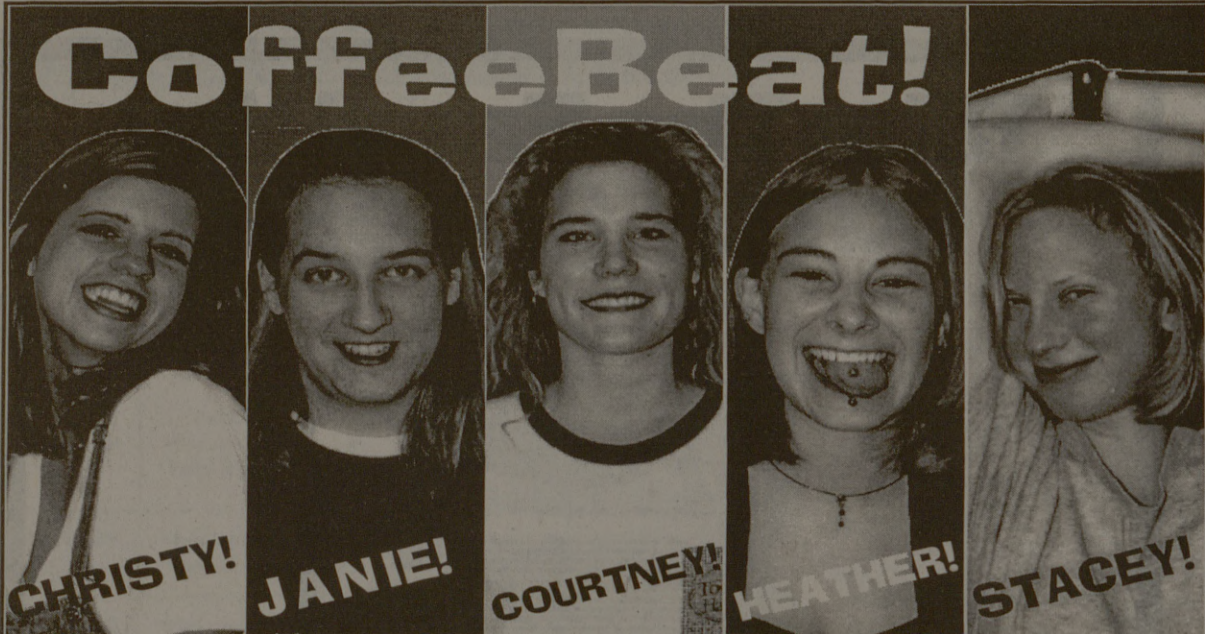
"As college students, we all carry that burden of school and work," Warden said. "When you're skydiving you don't think about your problems — you realize there are bigger and better things in life."

Saitis said some people say skydiving is similar to riding a roller coaster. He said the sensation one gets riding a roller coaster is not true because skydivers do not experience the wrenching feeling or a falling sensation. In reality, it's 30- to 45-seconds of free-falling in each jump, which is what like floating in a swimming pool — only you're floating in air.

Roderick said she encourages everyone to skydive at least once because nothing is comparable to the thrilling free-fall followed by the 3-minute ride.

"Scare your family and impress your friends," Roderick said. "Skydiving is the most peaceful thing you could ever imagine. It is quiet and you just see forever."

Saitis said the thrill of skydiving is best captured in a pointed observation by an anonymous skydiver: "It's like flying, then riding in a boat, then riding in a plane, then riding in a boat, then riding in a plane. If you want to experience the element of the vehicle."



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