



Donna Karan at Bethesda Hospital

PICTURE SHARON SMITH

Donna Karan falls for Bethesda

New York-based fashion designer **Donna Karan** didn't let a broken wrist stop her attending a high-profile charity event with her friend, WA-born photographer **Russell James**, at Bethesda Hospital on Tuesday evening. "I was in the **Kimberley** and I fell while we were heading back to **Broome**," Karan told *Access All Areas*. "We had just come from a very sacred site and I tripped on the way to the helicopter. I got brought here to Bethesda Hospital, thanks to Russell's connections, so they took care of me immediately."

Karan described her stay at Bethesda as "extraordinary". "Everyone could not have been nicer, taking care of me especially at the late hour I came in," she said. "They met me at the airport, because I didn't know what was wrong with my wrist."

It was the first visit to Perth for Karan, who said she decided to attend the event when James explained to her Bethesda's focus on urban zen and palliative care.

Karan's Urban Zen Foundation is an integrated health system taught by yoga teachers and committed to improving the healing and treatment experience for patients and families.

Karan, who was inspired to start the foundation when her husband **Stephen Weiss** died of cancer in 2001, said she was proud of her transition from fashion into the world of health care, education and culture.

"I am no longer dressing what people are wearing on the outside but what they wear on the inside," she said. "You can wear a pretty dress but if you don't feel good all the pretty clothes in the world won't answer the problem."

Perth's medical, arts and fashion fraternities turned out for the fundraiser, which was a showcase of photography and prints from James' **Nomad Two Worlds Collection**, a collaborative art project with indigenous artists, and was hosted by Bethesda board chairman **Neale Fong** and **Rhonda Wyllie**.

In what would be a world first, James said that he was investigating a Perth site to host the entire **Nomad Two Worlds Collection** which could also be a joint venture with Urban Zen.

During the event, Karan and Fong were all smiles as they auctioned off a limited edition cashmere and silk scarf for \$4000.

Wyllie gave an impassioned speech after the announcement of her \$100,000 donation to the refurbishment of the Palliative Care Unit.

She told *AAA* she had spent time with Karan on her boat earlier in the day where the pair had bonded over their experiences dealing with the death of a loved one, because her husband **Bill** died from cancer in 2006. ❦

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