

NEUROSURGERY CANCER TESTIMONIAL

“May 17th of 2010 I found myself at the Chesapeake General Hospital Emergency room with my wife (and best friend) Sally. The reason for our untimely visit to the ER was the fact that Sally was having difficulty in her speech and a general feeling of anxiety. After conducting a scan it was apparent that she had a golf ball size brain tumor! Following this disturbing news I was informed that we would be referred over to the Portsmouth Naval Hospital owing to the fact that I’m a retired United States Navy Chief Petty Officer and there was room at the Portsmouth facility. I was initially disturbed by this referral as I had the misconception that the Navy Hospital was a step down from civilian hospitals; however, events were obviously driving the bus.

As a side note – Portsmouth Naval hospital is where my three boys were born in 1974, 75, and 76. It was in the old hospital and quite honestly – rather Spartan. I hadn’t been to the “New and Improved” Portsmouth hospital but had been told by a very close friend – who has MS – that he was impressed by the hospital and especially the staff – subsequently - I would soon share his opinion in spades!

The morning of 5/20/2010 I was in the Neurosurgery office with the Clinical Nurse and the senior Staff Neurosurgeon and received some very disturbing news. After surgery - my dear wife of 40 years was diagnosed with stage 4 brain cancer with a 6week to 6 month terminal window as the cancer was advanced and very aggressive.

The sad news is that I lost my dear Sally in August of 2010; however, what I do remember with clarity is the care, compassion, emotional support, and demonstrated love for humanity that the Neurosurgery staff provided to – not only Sally – but to my entire family during this time of travail. Two poignant moments that I recall with warmth and fondness was the Neuroscience Clinical Nurse sitting quietly with my dear Sally consoling and comforting a woman gripped with uncertainty and fear. The nurse grasped Sally’s hand steadying a human soul caught in the midst of a violent and rapidly approaching storm. The second act of compassion was the Neurosurgeon grasping my hand in the hospital room where she candidly delivered the sad news to Sally and family with compassion followed by a short walk out into the hallway with tears welling up in her eyes as she extended her heart felt regret that more could not be done.

In summary – I’m honored to write this testimonial citing not only the professionalism and superior staff and available facilities that I found at the Portsmouth Naval hospital but more importantly the sincere and heartfelt compassion that was extended to Sally and my entire family. It assuredly did make a difference.

To all at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital Neuroscience division and beyond I wish to say well done and God bless you all for your demonstration of love and compassion. You are all a credit to your profession and appreciated and loved by our family!” -- Donald --