

For Whom The Bell Tolls

The Sound of Hope - Dedicated December 3, 2019

If you happen to pass the Mercy UC Davis Cancer Center and hear a new and beautiful chime in the air, that would be The Sound of Hope. If you follow that sound, mounted in the lobby on a bright orange plaque with words reading, *“One step at a time, one foot in front of the other. I’m gonna get through this, one way or another,”* you will see a brilliant silver bell, on it engraved The Sound of Hope.



What began as a dream for cancer survivor and Mercy nurse Dawn Butler and her husband Pat, now hangs as a true beacon of hope for patients and their families on their journey with cancer. Dawn, who received her treatment at the Mercy UC Davis Cancer Center, had heard of the idea of an end-of-treatment celebration bell that has been adopted in many cancer treatment centers across the nation. “When she finished her treatment here, our idea was that if she could ring that bell, then we were done with cancer. But there was no bell,” expressed Pat.

With the encouragement of some colleagues, Dawn and Pat reached out to the Mercy UC Davis Cancer Center Community Outreach Team and the Mercy Foundation with the generous offer to donate the funds needed to bring a bell to our very own cancer center. They expressed that they wanted the bell to be inclusive of all patients in the different stages of their treatment journey, not exclusive to only those who have finished treatment. Excited by the idea, the team got to work designing and coordinating Dawn and Pat’s vision into reality.

On December 3rd, at the Mercy Foundation’s Celebrate a Life event, The Sound of Hope bell was officially unveiled. During the ceremony Dawn shared this emotional message:

“My husband and I want to remind everyone going through treatment like I did here at Mercy Cancer Center, that we need to celebrate each and every hurdle we and our families overcome in our journey through cancer treatment. Sometimes the hurdles are small and personal, while others are momentous and take our breath away. But every victory deserves a celebration and we want to be able to provide a positive means to share our victories with the amazing cancer center staff and physicians, as well as fellow cancer survivors. Whenever you hear this bell ring, remember it is the sound of hope, reminding you (staff) of the important work that you do here. We want to share in each other’s victories, making it through just one step at a time. This should be a celebration of a life well-lived, which is why we are dedicating this bell to Pat’s father Norman Vierra, and my mother, Ruby McCanna.”

With friends and family at their side, Pat and Dawn gave the bell its first official ring, and the crowd erupted into applause. Pat and Dawn, who have been married since 2002, are certainly living life well-lived as Dawn described above with six children and fourteen grandchildren between the both of them. Also avid motorcyclists, they enjoy going on rides together, even traveling as far as Yellowstone on one occasion. With the recent purchase of a motor home, they look forward to making the most of their days off and eventual retirement.

The Mercy Foundation and Mercy UC Davis Cancer Center are so very grateful to this gift the Butlers have bestowed upon us. We look forward to celebrating all those little victories, one step and a time with those for whom The Sound of Hope tolls.



Above: Pat and Dawn Butler ring The Sound of Hope bell together for the first time during Mercy Foundation's Celebrate a Life reflection ceremony.