
Forever Grateful

By Deborah Durbin-Arceo, RN
Mercy Medical Center

There are no words for me to express all the thankfulness I have in my heart for this hospital. If anyone would have told me a year ago that I would have gone through this storm in my life I would have laughed at them. Stan and I were so happy. We had been together for many years and finally had decided to get married. We had gone through a year long class at church to become commissioned ministers to serve our church and we were taking all the premarital classes to be married July 4, 2016. However, God had other plans for us.

In June, Stan got a diagnosis of having a small 2 cm tumor in his liver. We were told that it would be ok because the treatment was a liver transplant and he would go to the top of the list. We were so happy, but we also knew we had to wait to be married until 2017 because of insurance reasons so that he would get his liver transplant. I continued planning the wedding and we both were so excited for what the future held for us.

It was a blessing and honor from our Lord that he was getting a new liver. In 3 weeks time the CT results came back and told us a different story. The tumor was now 7 cm and it appeared to have gone out of the liver and into the abdomen.



Deborah Durbin-Arceo and her husband, Stan

Off to Stanford we went where we were told that the prognosis was very poor. Stan was such a faithful man. His outlook was “Hey, I can only have one woman in my life, so Bertha - she’s got to go.” He told me it would be fine, he would fight this battle and win and get rid of this tumor he named Bertha. He also told me this: “Babe, it will be ok. I am in a win win situation here. If I die I go to heaven. If I live I spend it with you.” He also told me, “Babe, you are in a lose-win situation though, so you have to promise me that if you lose and I die that you will be ok and stay

“

He worked diligently to get the right amount of pain medication for Stan to make him comfortable. Can I just say there is no greater gift you can give a patient and their loved ones than being pain free, or at least tolerable.”

was always so positive, no matter what the situation was. There were no beds at the time, but that didn't matter because the care we were receiving was amazing. They asked if we needed pillows, blankets, water, and so much more. I knew they were busy but they never let us really know how busy they were. They treated us like we were the only patient they had at the time.

We then arrived on the 5th floor. Let me just say this - those nurses on the 5th floor were so incredible. They gave Stan and I care that I will never ever forget. As Stan got sicker and sicker, they went out of their way to make sure they could make him comfortable. They even got a pain consult with pharmacy.

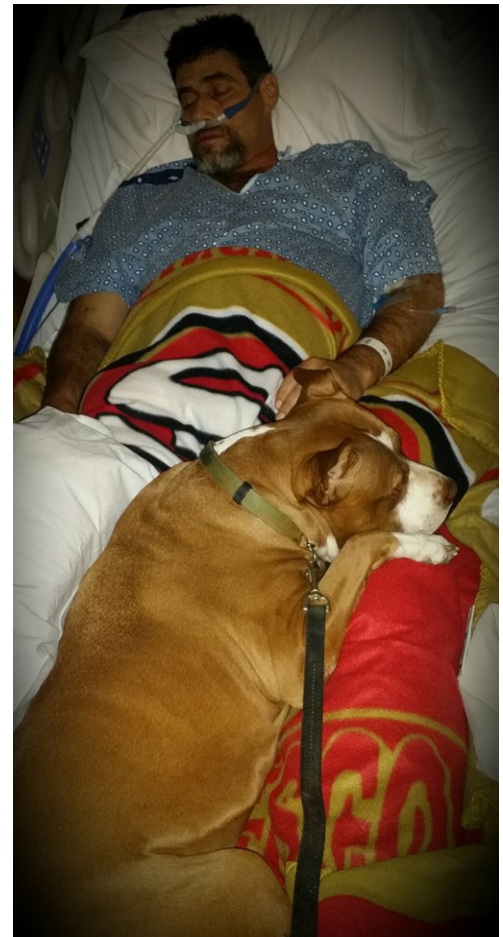
And that introduces Brian Elmore. Man what a blessing he was. He worked diligently to get the right amount of pain medication for Stan to make him comfortable. Can I just say there is no greater gift you can give a patient and their loved ones than being pain free, or at least tolerable.

As Stan got worse I could tell this may not turn out like we had planned. I talked to my boss, Dawn Arnsberg, and said you know it would really be cool if he could see his

faithful and know God is with you and knows what he is doing.”

I never knew how much those words would be needed in the months ahead. We went to Stanford on September 9th and finished the 1st phase of treatment. On September 15th I was told by the amazing Dr. Sugimoto that Stan needed to come to the hospital now.

His labs came back and his potassium was 7.1. We arrived in the ER and that is when the walk with the most incredible people started for me. I will never be able to remember all of the names, but they each know who they are. When we got to the ER we were taken to the back right away. He was cared for with love and compassion by everyone. Everyone loved Stan because he



Stan and his baby girl, Cassie.

Forever Grateful - Hello Humankindness

dog. He loves her so much and it would put such a smile on his face. I told her about FaceTime with the dog and how happy Stan was to see Cassie. Well don't you know Dawn went and talked to Bob McLaughlin, Director of Marketing, and guess who got to come visit Stan? That is right, Cassie got to see her daddy one last time. Stan was so happy. She laid with him for a very long time. They both slept. I will always remember that night. What a gift you gave us. What a blessing it was.

As Stan showed signs of getting better, the next day I sat and talked to Annette and Stan. Stan had made it very clear that if he was not going make it he wanted to make sure he was married to me. It was so important to him. He did not want to die and not have gotten married. So we talked and decided it was time and a call was made to our pastor. He was gone for 2 weeks though, and could not come to the hospital until he got back in town. So we then talked to Chaplain Steve. It was all set up. That is what would happen: Chaplain Steve would marry us if Stan took another turn for the worse before our pastor got back.

Well, that night things took a turn for the worse and by morning they were calling a Rapid Response. He was transferred to the ICU and his kidneys were shutting down.

Greg Rouleau, our hospital's CNE, arrived in the ICU and what an angel he was. It was as if God sent me a guardian angel to make sure everything was as it was to be before Stan died. Greg got a hold of Chaplain Steve and in front of Greg, family, nurses, doctors, and other staff Stan and I were married. I became his wife and let me tell you, he was so happy!

Shortly after that they had to intubate him. Greg stayed with him the whole time making sure he was ok for me. I asked him to please make sure he was not in pain and he was ok. And he did that for me. I know there were others with me at that time and I apologize if I forget stuff, but let me just say - Greg, you are amazing and I will always remember you arranging that for Stan and I.

The care we received in the ICU was so incredible. They treated us with so much love and compassion. I knew that when I had to leave to just go to the restroom that they would make sure he was ok. They treated him as if he was their very own family. With the doctors we had I could not have asked for a better team. They were so understanding and really helped us through this journey. They took time to take us in the family room and answer all of our questions. They guided us in every decision we had to make.

“

Greg Rouleau, our hospital's CNE, arrived in the ICU and what an angel he was. It was as if God sent me a gaurdian angel to make sure everything was as it was to be before Stan died.”

Forever Grateful - Hello Humankindness

“

Dr. Sugimoto was our biggest protector of Stan. The love he showed my husband will always be remembered. What a great example of how we should all treat our patients.”

Dr. Bruland came in on her day off to be with us in the final time we had left with Stan. I will always remember that. She was so incredible and truly another guardian angel there for Stan.

Dr. Sugimoto was our biggest protector of Stan. He had been with us through all of this. I could have never made it through this without him. He treated Stan as if he was his brother. The love he showed my husband will always be remembered. What a great example of how we should all treat our patients.

And so on September 24, Stan won! He went to Heaven. He was home with our Lord, his mom, dad, and sister. I don't remember much about that time as he passed but I remember this - the nurses, each and every one of them, were there for me and his family. They cried with us. Tricia was like a sister to me that day. They all surrounded us with their silent presence. The night nurse who prepared him did such an amazing job. I will always cherish that memory of him at peace with his 49er hat, blanket, and most importantly the Bible she put at the foot of his bed on top of his blanket. I will never forget that. She knew how important our faith was to us and she did just one small random act of kindness to show she knew us as people. The staff let us stay with him until the funeral home came.

As I sit here and type this I just want everyone to know this. First of all thank you to each and every one of you that crossed our path while Stan was here. And to all of you that, as my days go on without Stan, stop me in the hall to just say you are thinking of me and give me a hug, I thank you for that. Stan won that day...but so did I, because you all gave me a gift I will never forget. You treated my husband with such love and respect. He died with no pain and so peacefully. As Stan said, I may lose in this situation, but I think maybe I was also in a win-win situation because the love of my life is now in Heaven watching over me and no longer suffering.

I want to thank you all so much for everything you did. I am proud to be a part of such an amazing hospital. I love and miss you Stan...but we will be together again someday in Heaven!