

McGuire



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Monthly

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VETERAN SPOTLIGHT



Timothy Koch, left, and his wife Dottie pose with Redskins center Kory Lichtensteiger at Redskins Training Camp on Tuesday, July 28, 2016.

Meet Timothy Koch

Which branch of service did you serve in?
I served in the U.S. Army.

Years of service?
I spent 15 years as a Cavalry Scout, from 2001-2015.

What was your most memorable experience while serving active duty?
The most memorable experience was shooting Top Gun on the MK-19, a 40mm automatic grenade launcher.

Tell us something about you that most people would not know.
I coach middle school football.

What does being a Veteran mean to you?
To me, being a Veteran means I served my country honorably and proudly.


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3. Donate to charities supporting your favorite causes


4. Charities receive and use funds throughout the year


5. Help is given to those in need



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All content within McGuire Monthly was written and compiled by the editorial staff unless otherwise noted.

On the cover: McGuire staff member Patricia Sutton shares her support for cancer research as part of the 2016 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC): "My family received the gift of time because of the research that goes into cancer treatment and therapies. I care for cancer research because I want another daughter to be able to keep her dad just a little while longer!"

On the back: Fort Lee Color Guard during the McGuire Veterans Day Ceremony.

MCGUIRE VA PATIENT IS A WALKING 'MIRACLE'

During a performance at a local comedy club, Norris McMiller entertained the audience with jokes about his past—particularly an event that happened exactly one year earlier. Comedians often use life experiences as material and for Norris, that experience came from his heart transplant performed at McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond.

Even Norris will tell you it's a miracle he is alive.

At times, it could have gone either way, explained Norris, which is why he uses the stage name Miracle the Comedian.

"My wife and I made the best choice coming here, without a doubt," said Norris. "This is our family. We think this is the most wonderful place. My care was phenomenal here. It was just phenomenal. You can see the passion in the way they cared for me."

Norris discovered he had an oversized heart in 1988 and later learned about VA transplant options by a newly-assigned primary care doctor in Florida - where Norris resides.



Veteran Norris "Miracle" McMiller received his heart transplant at McGuire VA Medical Center, Nov. 16, 2015. Exactly one year after getting his new heart, McMiller performed at a local comedy club in Richmond. McMiller uses the stage name Miracle the Comedian.

Norris sought treatment at McGuire and first received a left ventricular assist device – referred to as an LVAD. The LVAD is a battery-operated device that creates a continuous flow of blood throughout the circulatory system—ensuring oxygen-rich blood reaches vital organs. LVADs are often used as a bridge in treatment while awaiting a donor heart.

After the LVAD operation, Norris spent 25 days in a medically-induced coma, which is significantly longer than most patients' experience.

"I kept asking the doctor for one more day," said Patty McMiller, Norris' wife. "They attempted to wake him one last time before placing a (tracheotomy) in him. He must have known what was going to happen. He woke up, and it was a very happy day."

Awake and doing well, Norris returned home to resume routine check-ups. Being a jokester at heart, Norris said he loved to go visit the doctor back home because the LVAD's continuous flow creates a lack of pulse in his body.

"I would love to see the nurses check for a pulse," Norris said with a grin. "I would let them try to feel for a pulse with their finger. After a while I'd say, I know! I'm the best looking zombie you've ever seen."

The Call Finally Came

Norris missed the call he had been waiting on for 15 months at 8 a.m. on Nov. 15 of last year. As soon as he saw the missed call, he said he knew exactly what it was. As predicted, his donor heart was available.

"How do you prepare for that call?" Norris asked. "No matter how much you are prepared for that phone call, you're not prepared, you're just not."

The house filled with excitement and panic as Patty, frantically searched for winter clothes to restock his ready bag.

CFC CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

The McGuire VA Medical Center's 2016 Combined Federal Campaign kicked off with great enthusiasm this year. This annual workplace giving program gives uniformed and federal civilian personnel an opportunity to help those in need, at home and abroad, by embodying the spirit of the 2016 campaign: Show Some Love. The campaign supports more than 2,600 national, international, and local organizations that work to address the critical needs of those most vulnerable throughout the world. Some of these organizations provide support for military families, disaster survivors, Veterans in need of aid, and animal welfare programs.

We are all working hard to reach our goal of raising 100,000 dollars by the end of the year. To date, the facility has raised more than 24,000 dollars for charity. Donating is easy. Donors can take advantage of "CFC All-Around Giving," which allows contributors to pledge to any of the CFC charities around the United States. Donate now or search the complete charity database at www.cvacfc.org.

Here are just a few of the ways your donation can make a difference:

\$50 provides a comfort kit to a service member in the hospital.

\$75 supports technology to keep service members connected to their families.

\$150 helps military families keep a roof over their heads.



Wallace Satchell, LPN, Podiatry, displays his personal CFC cause of Veteran homelessness.



Contributors may make their pledge in one of three ways:

- Electronic payroll allotments through DFAS myPay, or EEX
- CFC Nexus payments using a credit card, debit card or electronic bank transfer
- Traditional paper pledge cards



Show Some Love to charities you care about by making a pledge through the CVACFC today. For more information, visit www.cvacfc.org or contact Ruben Santos Colon, the facility CFC Chairperson. •

VETERANS HONORED AT McGUIRE CEREMONY

Veterans Day originated from Armistice Day, which recognized a cease fire that was declared in World War I on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918. In 1954, Armistice Day was replaced by Veterans Day to commemorate all Veterans in conflict.

At the McGuire VA Medical Center, the Veterans Day program sought to honor Veterans of the past, present, and future. More than 300 people attended the program, which was held Nov. 10.

“I always enjoy seeing all the veterans and family in the audience. The pride they display; it’s really something special,” said Associate Director Alan Lombardo. “It really reaffirms the mission of the VA. It reminds us how important it is every day to service our Veterans and families.”

The support from nearby Fort Lee was evident with Army members from the base providing the Color Guard duties, music from the 392nd Army Jazz Band, and our featured speaker, Maj. Gen. Darrell Williams, commander, Combined Arms Support Command.

During the ceremony, retired Senior Master Sgt. Terry Taylor sang the National Anthem and the Military Medley.

“Singing for Veterans Day does not showcase my vocal abilities, but my love for my country,” said Taylor. “I’m a big time flag waver. This is my country; this is the place I love.”

“All of these freedoms, they weren’t free. They came at a price, and all these men and women paid that price,” said Chaplain Dewane Stone, Chief of Chaplain Service, who delivered the invocation and benediction at the ceremony. “To me, Veterans Day recognizes the sacrifice of service that all men and women have given to us throughout the years.”

Veterans Day is a reminder of those who devoted their lives to keeping our nation free. It is also a reminder to fulfill President Lincoln’s promise, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle,” by continuing to honor and serve our 22 million Veterans in America. Not just on Veterans Day, but every day the McGuire VA works diligently to fulfill this mission. •



Keynote speaker, Major General Darrell Williams, commander, Combined Arms Support Command, Fort Lee, VA, speaks to more than 300 attendees. To Maj. Gen. Williams' left is Lonette Ott, from the Band of Brothers and Sisters, a Vietnam Veterans support group. Lonette led the Pledge of Allegiance.



Terry R. Taylor, retired Senior Master Sgt., U.S. Air Force, performs the National Anthem.

“Here it is, November, and all the clothes in his bag are summer clothes,” Patty said. “I was running around like a maniac for an hour. He was so calm and collected it was unreal.”

Within hours, they boarded a jet to Richmond to meet members of the transplant team at McGuire.

“I knew when we got that call for the transplant,” Patty said with a crack in her voice. “I knew he would get the best care. I knew he would not be alone.

“I worked at a lot of places as a nurse,” Patty said. “The care here can’t be beat. They would check up on you and keep you informed. We could not ask for anything more.”

New Heart, New Habits

His new heart beat for the very first time in the early hours of Nov. 16, 2015, melding the two individuals as one.

After his surgery, Norris said he noticed some odd changes in his behavior.

“I never drank coffee before,” Norris said. “Now, I love it. I discipline myself to one cup per day, but there is something inside of me that has to have it. The doctors call it cell memory; [the donor’s] body remembers.”

Also, Norris said, he now likes chocolate ice cream, when vanilla used to be his preference.

Adjusting to his new life, Norris said there are times when he sees things from his donor’s perspective.

“At first I was scared,” Norris said. “It freaked me out. Now, we’ve bonded, we accept each other.”

Norris said he only knows the donor’s age—38 years old—and the fact he was an Army Veteran. Norris and Patty hope to one day meet the family of the donor, whose heart beats on.

“Hopefully some day they really want to meet us, because we really want to meet them,” said Patty. “We are forever grateful.”

Always Funny

Exactly one year after his heart transplant surgery, Miracle the Comedian performed his comedy routine on stage and discussed his heart transplant experience.

“I want to get up on that stage and tell what happened to me and make it fun,” Norris said. “I’ve always been a funny man. I’ve always been a driven person. I have changed. There have been changes in my personality. I do feel like my donor is alive. My donor is a part of me.” •

On Tuesday, October 18th, during National Health Care Quality week, the Medical Center held its 2nd Annual Quality on Parade Event. Quality on Parade is an annual poster presentation competition where teams from throughout the Medical Center come together to showcase their performance improvement projects. This year, 13 teams presented projects from their services to over 100 employees in attendance.

The posters were judged by senior leadership on quality criteria, including alignment with the facility’s strategic plan and demonstrating significant measurable improvement.

Congratulations to the following teams:

1st Place: Chronic Congestive Heart Failure Readmission Rates

2nd Place: Improving Outpatient Flow in Surgical Specialty Clinics

3rd Place: Transitional Care Program C-TRAC Telephone Clinic

Director’s Choice: Chronic Congestive Heart Failure Readmission Rates

People’s Choice: Recovery Focused Practice for the Woman Veteran in a Mental Health Crisis

We would like to thank all of the teams for their participation on this year’s event and for their efforts to improve the quality of care for our Veterans. We look forward to seeing even more teams present their own posters next year!

MCGUIRE OPENS NEWLY RENOVATED INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY SUITE

On Friday, Nov. 18, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to commemorate the newly renovated Interventional Radiology (IR) suite at McGuire VA Medical Center. The IR suite provides treatment to Veterans which are minimally invasive and allow for an accelerated recovery time.

Excitement filled the air as guests were eager to see the redesigned space. What was once a room filled with filing cabinets and X-ray films was now a state-of-the-art space dedicated to serve Veterans.

Once a medical resident at McGuire, Dr. Jonathan Ha said he saw a need for the use of interventional care, and he knew it would be great to come back to help Veterans.

Ha did return with aspirations to grow the IR program to be the best it could be.

“We’ve had a steady increase of patients, and the complexity of patients is growing,” Ha said. “We needed to invest in the department for the patient’s sake and our own.”

Since 2015, there has been a 300 percent increase of IR cases, and the staff works daily to keep wait times down to an average of two days.

“In the big picture overall, this space is going to continue the projector of growth to improve access to care for efficiency,” Dr. Ha said.



Hospital leaders and those closely associated with the IR program officially cut the ribbon to applause. The doors to the newly renovated 2,800 square-foot space opened up for tours of the control room, patient recovery area and procedure rooms.

“Seeing the new IR labs and holding area come to fruition is going to enable us the ability to better care for our Veterans and provide exceptional care,” Jennifer Farrell, IR nurse coordinator. “I am proud of this team.”

Through the use of imaging-guided equipment, IR offers an option for patients who otherwise would require surgery, said Ha. With a small incision about half of one centimeter in size, patients experience less pain, faster recovery, a lower rate of complications, and better overall outcomes. •



The McGuire VA Medical Center recently opened a state-of-the-art Interventional Radiology suite, November 8, featuring two operating rooms, a centralized control room and dedicated recovery area. Pictured here is one of two Siemens Artis Zee ceiling-mounted fluoroscopy unit.



Veterans Health
Administration

