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Dee Sockol-Frye and her husband, Wayne

DEFYING THE ODDS

After an uphill battle against cancer, this Aberdeen woman is a survivor and a superstar.

SEVENTY-YEAR-OLD ABERDEEN RESIDENT DEE SOCKOL-FRYE is, in her own words, a miracle.

In the words of her neuro-oncologist, Sumul N. Raval, M.D., founder and director of the David S. Zocchi Brain Tumor Center at Monmouth Medical Center, Dee is a superstar who is a seven-year survivor of a brain tumor so deadly that the typical life expectancy after diagnosis is about 14 months. Diagnosed in April 2010 with a glioblastoma, the most aggressive cancer that begins within the brain, Dee underwent surgery performed by Monmouth Medical Center neurosurgeon Ty Olson, M.D. That procedure was followed by chemotherapy and radiation treatment. After her initial treatment failed, Dee was treated with different chemotherapy that put her brain tumor into remission. Today, she has no evidence of recurrent disease and remains in remission under Dr. Raval's care.

Brain tumors like glioblastoma are difficult to treat and involve caring for not only the patient, but for the whole family, according to Dr. Raval. A diagnosis can turn the patient's world upside down, and he wants his patients to know that they can call him day or night with any concerns. "I'm your quarterback," he tells them.

"This is a very difficult disease, and I try to do all I can to

make my patients' lives, in terms of treatment, as easy as possible," says Dr. Raval, who was presented with the GBM (Glioblastoma Multiforme) Heroes Award in 2016 during the 21st annual Scientific Meeting of the Society for Neuro-Oncology. The honor recognizes individuals who have dedicated their lives to helping patients with GBM and their families.

Despite treatment, the most common length of survival following diagnosis of a glioblastoma is 12 to 15 months, with less than 3 percent to 5 percent of people surviving longer than five years. Initially, signs and symptoms of the disease are non-specific and may include headaches, personality changes, nausea, seizures, weakness and symptoms similar to those of a stroke. For Dee, her symptoms were initially attributed to vertigo. One winter night, rushing to leave her house, she slipped on ice and hit her head. Her husband, Wayne, took her to the local emergency department, where X-rays were negative. Over the next few months, her symptoms did not improve, and a diagnosis remained elusive until she mentioned one curious symptom to a co-worker.

"I was telling a friend at work, whose husband had died of a brain tumor, that I had this lingering bad taste in my mouth that was like barbecue sauce, and she said that was similar to what her husband experienced," Dee recalls. "She convinced me to tell my doctor I needed an MRI with contrast."

The MRI revealed the tumor, and she was referred to Dr. Olson, who observed a membrane around the mass. "He told us that glioblastomas send out 'fingers,' but my tumor hadn't spread, and he believed he got the whole thing," she says.

Despite this encouraging news, Dee said she learned from Dr. Raval that her cancer was considered terminal, because glioblastomas do recur. Defying the odds, Dee has been in remission for five and a half years, and while she continues to see Dr. Raval every two to three months for follow-up visits, she has had no treatment during this span and takes only anti-seizure medication.

She said that overall she is feeling well, although a stroke she suffered several years ago affected the left side of her body, limiting her mobility, her short-term memory and peripheral vision. She said this, in turn, affected her balance, and that a couple of falls left her with injuries, including a broken shoulder and a broken bone in her lower back. Despite these setbacks, she has recovered each time, and both she and Wayne have maintained an incredibly positive attitude. Dee praises Dr. Olson, who she said was amazing, and Dr. Raval, who referred to her at one recent office visit as his superstar and told her to keep doing what she is doing.

"Dr. Raval was looking at my MRI, and suddenly said to a medical student who was in the office with him: 'This is my superstar—she had the most aggressive brain tumor there is. Essentially, most people don't live more than 14 months, and here she is, seven years later,'" she says. "All he wants to do is find a cure for this deadly disease during his lifetime."

While her quality of life has clearly been affected by the disease, Dee and her husband remain as active as possible, traveling to Florida in November for Wayne's niece's wedding and to monthly brain tumor support group meetings. Dee calls Wayne a saint and says he is an amazing caregiver.

Dee has been unable to work since her diagnosis. A book seller her entire adult life, she owned her own book stores and served as manager of children's departments for a number of chain stores in the New York metropolitan area. Her influence in the world of children's literature is reflected in a book acknowledgement by *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* author Jeff Kinney, who invited Dee and Wayne to New York for the debut of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon of Greg Heffley, the protagonist of his books.

"I miss working—it's something I was passionate about, and I really miss the kids," Dee says. Her love of children and reading was passed to her two daughters, who she raised as a single mother. Her grown daughters Ellen, a mother of three children, and Judy, mother of two, are both teachers.



Sumul N. Raval, M.D. and Dee Sockol-Frye

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—Sumul N. Raval, M.D.

To learn more about the David S. Zocchi Brain Tumor Center, visit mmccancer.com.

{ IN GOOD HEALTH }

BACK IN ACTION

Once slowed by arthritis, an avid kickboxer is leading an active life thanks to surgeons at MMC.

AT JUST 37 YEARS OLD, MATAWAN RESIDENT AND MOM OF TWO YOUNG children Michelle Bocchieri could barely walk. A former high school softball star and avid kickboxer, Michelle had fought through several knee injuries and pain until it crippled her. Unable to walk and in constant pain, she turned to Harry A. Bade II, M.D., FACS, orthopedic surgeon and joint replacement specialist at Monmouth Medical Center, for help.

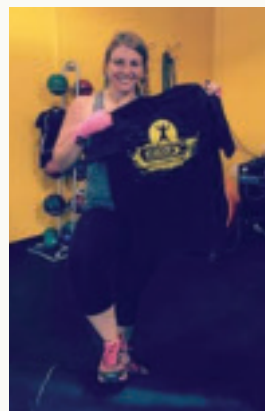
Dr. Bade determined that Michelle suffered from patellofemoral arthritis, which affects the kneecap (patella bone) and causes pain in the front of the knee, making it difficult to perform everyday activities such as walking, kneeling and climbing stairs. The arthritis coupled with her past sports injuries and young age made Michelle's case a unique one.

Dr. Bade worked with Mark W. Gesell, M.D., a practicing orthopedic surgeon and joint replacement specialist who pioneered robotic total knee surgery at Monmouth Medical Center, to perform a patellofemoral replacement, a minimally invasive kneecap replacement surgery, with the assistance of the Mako robotic-arm.

Monmouth Medical Center was the first in the region to offer Mako robotic-arm assisted partial knee and total knee replacement surgery. Mako robotic-arm assisted technology helps surgeons to provide patients with a personalized surgical experience for those who require a hip or knee replacement. A 3D model of the knee or hip is used to pre-plan and assist the surgeon in performing joint replacement surgery. It uses a surgeon-controlled robotic arm system to precisely align the placement of the implants. This results in a smaller incision, less pain and a quicker recovery.

In just three months, Michelle recovered completely from her surgery and is now back to her regular routine, including running around with her kids and kickboxing. She is thrilled with the results. She calls her joint replacement surgeons "lifesavers" and is passionate about the fact that the patellofemoral replacement changed her life.

"I feel better now than when I started kickboxing—I have no pain whatsoever," she says. "I am 100 percent loving life."



Michelle Bocchieri turned to doctors at Monmouth Medical Center, who used the Mako robotic-arm to perform kneecap replacement surgery.

To learn more or to inquire about ongoing free patient education sessions, call 888.724.7123 or visit barnabashealth.org/mmcjoint.

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HEALTH

Let's be healthy together.



A recent Zumba fund-raiser hosted by Jackson resident Sharon Comire raised more than \$2,000 for breast cancer research.



PARTNERS FOR LIFE

Longtime patient teams with MMC's Wilentz Breast Center in Howell to spread message of good health.

MAMMOGRAPHY IS WIDELY recognized as the gold standard in detecting breast cancer. But despite its benefits, many women feel that going for a mammogram can be very stressful. For Jackson resident and mother of two Sharon Comire, a lot of her stress about making and keeping her mammography appointments has been nearly eliminated by the exceptional experience she continues to have at Monmouth Medical Center's Jacqueline M. Wilentz Breast Center.

"All of the staff is great," says Sharon, who has been a patient at the Wilentz satellite center in Howell for nearly five years. "Everyone is so positive and helpful, from the doctors and technicians to the receptionists. I always feel comfortable and welcome."

Like any mother, between pickups from school and homework projects, time is very valuable to her. Fortunately, the Wilentz Center has always respected her time too. "I have never had to wait for my appointment, and that sounds like such a small thing, but it's refreshing to have your time valued as much as everyone else's."

In fact, getting her regular breast screenings at the Howell Wilentz Center has been such a pleasant experience that she wanted to spread the word. Like so many, Sharon knows many people whose lives have been affected by breast cancer, and she wanted to do something to help and to raise awareness about the importance of regular screenings.

Sharon works as a Zumba instructor and has used that as a platform to help

educate women on the importance of regular screenings. She hosts a yearly breast cancer awareness fund-raiser, and proceeds from her Zumba class go to breast cancer research. She has even partnered with the center to co-host her annual event and provide her clients with the most up-to-date information on breast health, screening options and prevention. In addition to information, the Wilentz Center also provided goodies like pens, pads and other office supplies. At the event, pink cupcakes and pink hair extensions were sold, and there was even a manicurist painting pink nails with breast cancer decals. This past Zumba fund-raiser alone raised more than \$2,000 for breast cancer research.

What made the program even more remarkable was that right then and there, decked in pink and ready for Zumba, each woman was given the opportunity to book an appointment for their yearly screening at the Wilentz center. Sharon estimates that through her fund-raisers, more than 40 women signed up to make their screening appointments. She is proud of the success of her Zumba events. Establishing a pattern of annual mammography is one of the best ways to take an active role in maintaining good breast health, and her event along with the help from the Wilentz staff helped do that for countless other women.

"The Jacqueline M. Wilentz



Comprehensive Breast Center at Monmouth Medical Center's Long Branch campus opened in 1994 to bring together, under one roof, all preventive, diagnostic, treatment, rehabilitation, psychosocial and educational services for women concerned about their breast health," says Bill Arnold, president and CEO at Monmouth Medical Center. "Since that time, we have expanded to several satellite facilities to increase access to screening mammography, and the opening of this newest Wilentz location allows us to offer western Monmouth County residents convenient access to screening mammography services in a comfortable and compassionate setting."

Thankfully, Sharon has never had to use any of the expanded services, but she finds it comforting to know that all of the services to maintain good breast health are offered under one roof in several convenient locations. That includes the main breast center at Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch and satellite locations that, in addition to Howell, incorporate Colts Neck and Lakewood.

For an appointment at any Wilentz location, call 732.923.7700.

CORRECTION: The Welcome Letter, "The New Standard in Mammography Screening," on page 6 of the October issue inadvertently stated that Monmouth Medical Center's Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center had a satellite location in Holmdel. The breast center has satellite locations in Colts Neck, Howell and Lakewood.