



National Nurses Month 2020

Thank You Nurses!

Thank you Ladonna!



Ladonna Aherton | Registered Nurse 3 | Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Nominated by: Vicki Ford

“I first met Donna Atherton on February 14, 2018, when I drove from Florida after six months of numerous doctor visits; where the Florida doctors could not determine what was wrong with me. I was hurting, scared and frustrated, when Donna walked in the examination room and saw how upset I was. She took time, sat down with me, calmed me down and explained in detail what to expect with the numerous tests that I was about to endure at Vanderbilt Medical Center. Two days later, I was diagnosed by Dr. Fabian Maldonado with Mesothelioma Lung Cancer and was told I had 18 to 24 months to live. It was a life changing event where the news took my breath away. On February 28, 2018, my birthday, I had a scheduled surgery to explore if the cancer had spread to my lymph nodes. Donna came to see me in pre-op and brought me a birthday present. WOW! I was so touched, and humbled by her loving way to make me feel cared for, and loved. She was such an inspiration for me to keep moving forward. She took my hand, consulted with me, smiled and told me everything was going to be alright. Donna gave me her contact information and checked on me after I returned home to Florida. After three months of Chemo, I went back to Vanderbilt for a Pleurectomy / Decortification Surgery scheduled on June 22, 2018. When I arrived to prepare for the pre-op testing, Donna met me with a smile and walked me through everything, once again easing my nervousness. I was so touched because Donna was not my assigned nurse.

The day of surgery, June 22, 2018, she came to pre-op with a hug and words of encouragement that I could and was strong enough to do this! I was in the hospital for 10 days and Donna would regularly pop in my room to check on me.

On October 24, 2018, I went back to Vanderbilt where Donna was part of the celebration as Dr. Erin Gillaspie, Dr. Leora Horn and Dr. Fabian Maldonado informed me I had no evidence of Disease; what a celebration we had!

During all the visits Donna and I became friends. I was so impressed when she told me she was getting ready to go on vacation, late October 2018, and was taking her travel camper to the panhandle of Florida to volunteer as a nurse for Hurricane Michael's victims. I had the pleasure of seeing Donna on February 6, 2019 where she updated me on the devastation and need the people in the panhandle had from the storm. She said that she felt honored to have been a part of the recovery efforts.

I could not have made it through my miraculous journey without the loving care and thoughtfulness of Donna Atherton, the nurse that has become my partner for life! I believe Donna is beyond deserving of the DAISY award for her care, attention, and love she has shown me throughout my journey from diagnosis to healing.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." John 15:12
Respectfully submitted, Vicki Ford"

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