



David and Judy McCullough have a lot to smile about, thanks to KMC!

Kettering's heart team saved my life—twice!

David McCullough's story is a little unusual. A firefighter for the U.S. Department of Defense in 1974, McCullough had just undergone a full firefighter physical exam. He was an active sports enthusiast, and the physical rigors of his job kept him in great shape. McCullough fared well in his exam, learning he was in fine health and his heart was normal.

But, two weeks later, McCullough, then 38 years old, experienced chest pains and asked his wife, Judy, to take him to Kettering Medical Center (KMC). "A heart attack killed my father when he was 49 years old," says McCullough. "So, I knew I was in trouble."

McCullough credits successful intervention by Farouk Tabrah, M.D., of Cardiology South, for saving his life. "He was such a caring man. I felt I was in safe hands," he says

McCullough retired from firefighting 12 years later with no further heart problems. Twelve years passed until one day in the summer of 1998, McCullough returned to KMC for a routine treadmill test. Although McCullough thought he was in great shape, Frank Handel, M.D., of Schuster Cardiology Associates, Inc., recognized that McCullough had a life-threatening arrhythmia and immediately ordered emergency cardiac care.

McCullough says the last thing he remembered before losing consciousness was being hooked up to a defibrillator and shocked four times. The heart team at KMC recommended McCullough have a defibrillator-pacemaker implanted to keep his heartbeats steady.

McCullough credits the teamwork of Drs. Tabrah and Handel as well as Saleem Ahmad, M.D., of Premier Integrated Medical Associates, for saving his life—for the second time! "They really cared about me as an individual. I wasn't just another person with a heart problem to them. They explained my options to me and answered all my questions patiently," he says.

KMC Cardiac Service Line Director Michael Koerting says McCullough's experience is why KMC is the best place to treat anyone's heart problems. "The collaborative spirit of the physician groups is tremendous and one of the primary reasons for our reputation as the place to be if you need heart surgery," Koerting says.

Would McCullough recommend KMC to others? "Most definitely," says McCullough. "They really cared about me and the follow-up care after surgery was great!"

Next issue, we'll introduce you to the KMC support group that helps McCullough and many others with their emotional recovery. ♥