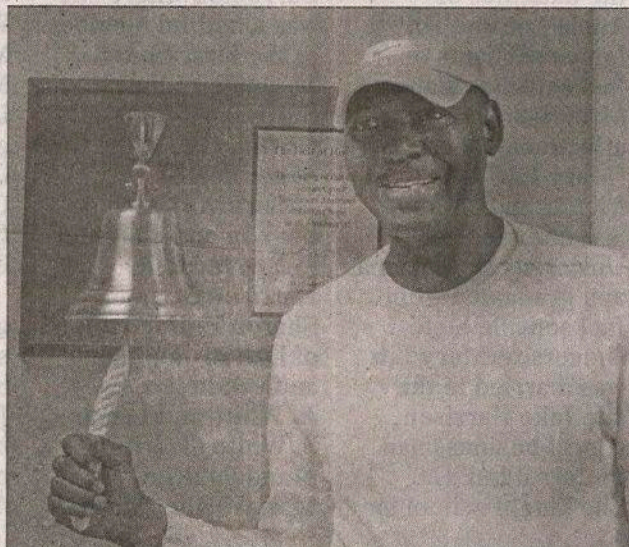


Bell signals hope to cancer patients

Charlie Reese paused before becoming the first cancer patient to ring the new "Bell of Hope" at Northwest Georgia Oncology Centers P.C. in Carrollton.

"Here it goes, y'all," he said to the gathered patients, staff, physicians and guests before taking the rope attached to the clapper and sending several unmistakable rings throughout the facility.



Following 18 weeks of treatment for kidney and bladder cancer, Charlie Reese became the first patient to ring the Northwest Georgia Oncology Bell of Hope.

This Bell of Hope remains silent until a patient finishes his or her treatment. When patients finish their treatment, they ring the bell to signify their move into the survivorship phase, sending a loud, clear message of hope to their fellow patients.

The dedication ceremony took place on June 21, the last day of Reese's 18-week treatment for kidney and bladder cancer. Moments later, Pearl Brooks became the second patient to ring the bell to celebrate her last treatment for lymphoma.

"They are the best — the staff here," said Brooks, who will turn 91 in August. "It's like family from the front to the back." This is the second time Brooks has successfully battled lymphoma, having been treated at Northwest Georgia Oncology Centers in 2001.

Northwest Georgia Oncology Centers is represented in west Georgia by Drs. Bradley Larson, Randall Pierce and David Shepard.

"Dr. Pierce, this is twice he's brought me through," said Brooks.

"He is such a caring doctor. He does so much for his patients. You know, people who have brought you through it twice — you don't forget them."

Both Reese and Brooks have long ties to the community and to Tanner Health System. Both were born here and have lived all their lives in Carroll County. Reese briefly worked at Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton as a young man, and Brooks remembers construction of the original Tanner Memorial Hospital. Like many community members, her parents donated money for the "new" hospital.

While she fondly recalled the days of doctor house calls, Brooks expressed awe at how far the health system has come.

"I'm just thankful that we have a place like this in Carrollton," said

Brooks. "When my sister had cancer, I had to take her all the way to LaGrange for radiation treatments. I am proud that we have this in Carroll County."

The bell was donated by the Tanner Oncology Advisory Council and is inscribed with a special message: "The Bell of Hope... The ringing of this bell celebrates your last cancer treatment and offers hope to all who hear it! Donated by the 2013 Tanner Oncology Advisory Council."

The council is comprised of local cancer survivors, caregivers and medical staff whose mission is to improve the patient experience and the quality of outcomes; propose and participate in new programs and services; promote cancer awareness and education to the community and promote patient involvement.

"It should be a celebration when you complete your treatment," said Linda Picklesheimer, chair of the Tanner Oncology Advisory Council. "We are



The Tanner Oncology Advisory Council donated a Bell of Hope at Northwest Georgia Oncology Centers P.C. in Carrollton. From left are Jessica Triplett, Carole Eddleman, Linda Picklesimer, Linda Wise, Shellie Sherrod; Brenda Auger, Jan Robinson, Venita Steed, and Rose Holley. Other contributing members were Joe Neal, Bill Wise, Susan Moore, Tommy Thomas, Jane Baker, Alison Jiles and Rachel Varner.

always looking for projects that will help make a cancer patient's time through treatment a better time."

Once the council decided to raise funds for the Bell of Hope, within seconds wallets were out and checks were written that more than covered the cost of the bell. Many members of the council attended the ceremony and a few

rang the bell themselves to commemorate their survivorship.

The bell ringing is a very special event that attracts a lot of attention from families, patients, physicians and staff. Donations to Tanner Medical Foundation also have made possible the installation of Bells of Hope at the Roy Richards, Sr. Cancer Center and the Tanner Infusion

Center. When asked what she would like to say to others fighting cancer, Brooks simply responded "Just don't give up. It will always be better tomorrow."

To learn more about the Tanner Oncology Advisory Council or to discuss Tanner's oncology services, call 770-812-5946 or e-mail cancer@tanner.org.



Tanner cancer survivor Pearl Brooks rings the Northwest Georgia Oncology Centers' Bell of Hope following her final treatment. The bell was donated by the Tanner Oncology Advisory Council.