

Morris County women begin new friendship under unique situation

Liver transplant patient and surgeon hail from local area

By Neil Abeles
Monitor Correspondent

When Holly Dougan awakened from her liver transplant surgery, she was looking into the eyes of surgeon Dr. Tiffany Anthony.

That's not too unusual, but what followed is.

The two started talking. "She spoke really good English," Holly said.

By that, Holly meant really good Northeast Texas English.

Dr. Anthony understood Holly, too. For, as it turns out, Holly from Daingerfield

was meeting Tiffany from Naples.

It was like one Morris County, Northeast Texas girl saving another.

"You're from down where I used to live," Tiffany said.

"Can't be because Daingerfield is a small town," Holly said.

"I'm from Naples," Tiffany said. "Smaller town."

"I was in Naples a few days ago," Holly said.

And thus it went. A liver was being transplanted. A long time goal was being fulfilled. Lives were being

changed. Fulfilled.

Dr. Anthony was 16 when she decided she wanted to be a doctor. A short time after that, she decided to do transplantations. Twelve years later she returned.

She came to see her patient Holly in Baylor Hospital in Dallas two to three times a day where they talked.

After hospitalization, Dr. Anthony gave Holly her private number for text messaging. Saturdays. Sundays. Any day, any time.

"She wonderful. Not only as a surgeon but as a person, too," Holly said.

And the transplant surgery has been wonderful ever since. So wonderful, Holly wants to give out a message.

First, she wants to befriend her friend Tiffany.

"The only transplant surgeon that will text you, even on a Saturday, and let you know lab results. She's human. Got that down in here (pointing to her heart) like we all do."

Second, as for transplantations, both Holly and Tiffany want to say, "It's a shortage of donors. Not a shortage of people who need them."

Holly was born in Lone Star. She has two older brothers. Her dad, Bill Dougan, worked for the phone company and Billie, her mom, taught art. They moved to Sulphur Springs when Holly was a sophomore.

In her growing up years, Holly spent a lot of time and activity with Tina Crocker and family of Marietta. That friendship was important in her transplantation journey.

Holly was 18 and going to

Tyler Junior College when she tried to donate blood one day and was told, as she remembers, "We definitely do not want your blood."

"They found out I had Wilson's disease, genetically based and very rare. One in million. I became very sick and went into a coma. I was told it got down to 12 hours."

It was 1988. Transplantations weren't so common. But there was no time. To save her life, to give her time, she was given a mis-matched liver transplant.

She was, however, a strong candidate for successful transplantation. She was an artist, motorcycle rider, horse and barrel racer and would become a veterinary employee.

The mis-matched liver lasted six months. That did become time enough to find a liver that did match. With that organ gift, she's lived 24 years.

Then, in December of 2012, that liver developed an abscess.

Again Holly's life hung in the balance. While the world of transplantation has advanced so far that optimism for life is high, availability of organs is limited.

"The general public is not well educated about the need," Holly said.

But by this time, an angel had entered Holly's life. Her friend of six years, Linda Coppedge, took over Holly's care.

For nine months, Holly was too sick to care for herself as they waited for a donation. Linda took care of everything.

"When I lost my job due to



DOCTOR AND PATIENT VISIT AFTER SURGERY

a company closing, I didn't care. I knew my job was to take care of Holly," Linda said.

Being sick from liver dysfunction is highly debilitating. The liver is a filter for the body.

Linda said she had to fight for Holly. All decisions. All care to meet and follow health concerns and not give up.

Holly was so sick she could not comprehend all that was needed.

"A liver has only hours to be transplanted. When the phone call came for me, I said, 'Hello,' and then, 'Let me give the phone to someone else.' I couldn't comprehend that one had been found for me," Holly said.

Holly had the transplant May 23. She's doing well.

"My liver's doing really good. My body just needs to catch up. I'm used to being all go, no whoa."

Meeting Dr. Anthony of Naples was not Holly's only hometown surprise in this ordeal.

While at Baylor Hospital, the site of her first liver transplant 25 years ago, she saw again people who remembered her.

"It felt like coming home," she said.

That feeling was even stronger this last time because of the girl doing her lab work every morning.

"She's Candice Fountain. I went to school with her in Sulphur Springs," Holly said.

The world of transplantation is so unique that almost only those who give or receive organs really understand.

But, looking forward, Holly and Linda boil it down to a heartfelt message.

"People in need are just waiting and waiting. By all means, try to save someone. Donate. It's a gift of life," they said.

"And then meet someone like Dr. Anthony," they added.

Tiffany was the salutatorian of the 1991 Pewitt graduating class and is the daughter of Linda and John Anthony of Naples.

Presently, Dr. Anthony is

known as one of the top transplant and hepatobiliary surgeons in the U.S. of A., and is based at Baylor Hospital in Dallas where she has served for a year.

She was at Methodist Hospital in Dallas for four years prior to transferring to Baylor.

Following her high school graduation, she attended medical school and earned her degree in medicine.

She completed both her medical degree and general surgery residency at University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, a renowned institute for health science education and research involving more than 100 affiliated hospitals, clinics and health care facilities in South Texas.

Dr. Anthony is a transplant and hepatobiliary surgeon specializing in liver transplantation and the surgical treatment for congenital and acquired diseases involving the liver, gallbladder, bile ducta and pancreas.

Pursuant to her medical degree and residency, Dr. Anthony completed a research fellowship from Yale University Medical School in New Haven, Connecticut as well as a fellowship in transplant surgery from the University of Chicago Medicine in Illinois, one of the world's premier academic and research institutions.

She is a published author and seasoned lecturer contributing comprehensive research findings and clinical experience with living donor liver transplants and laparoscopic liver resection to nationally recognized associations and societies.

Dr. Anthony is dedicated to delivering quality and compassionate care to patients in need of hepatobiliary surgery and transplantation.

Certified by the American Board of Surgery, her professional memberships include the American Medical Association, the American Society of Transplantation, the American Society of Transplant Surgeons and the International Liver Transplant Society.



A cell phone photo is important, even vital, to Holly Dougan, for it's of her transplant surgeon Dr. Tiffany Anthony and even links to Dr. Anthony's private number in case of need.

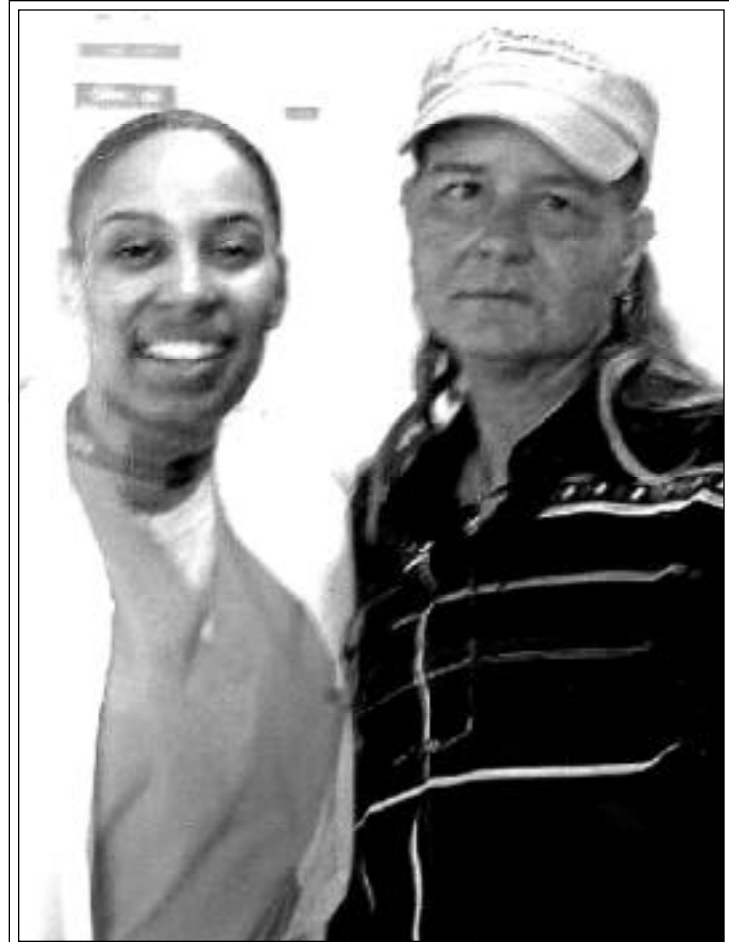


Best Friends!

Friends have helped to make Holly Dougan's liver transplant and recuperation successful. Linda Coppedge, left, provided continuous care for nine months leading up to the surgery and Tina Crocker, right, a lifelong friend from Marietta, made frequent travel plans and other arrangements to help.



BUSY IN THE OPERATING ROOM ... DR. TIFFANY ANTHONY, THIRD FROM THE LEFT, IN HER EARLIER DAYS



FORMER CLASSMATES HAVE MINI-REUNION