



Grace

A Connoisseur of Life

Reginald Gatlin

"Stage Four Kidney Cancer."

Reginald Gatlin remembers hearing the words. But he's still alive, and he makes a positive impression on every person he meets.

"How Reginald looks at the world amazes me," says Jason Alexander, hotel manager of the Disney Paradise Pier Hotel. "For one man to continue to make a positive impact on visitors from all over the world in the presence of his own challenges and struggles with cancer gives us a perspective that we all take home with us each day. Here's to you, our dear friend."

Reginald, or Reggie, as he is known to his friends, is amazed at how life continues to take care of him, or – as others say – he takes care of life.

"I remember the day I was in the hospital," Reginald says. "It's a memory I care to keep tucked way back in my mind, but I remember hearing, 'Mr. Gatlin, you have Stage IV kidney cancer and there is nothing else we can do for you.' When I heard Stage IV kidney cancer, I was thinking, 'Does that really mean I can not go on living?' It is the love in my life that does something to me that makes me not want to lie down."

"And then I met Dr Quan ..." says Reginald.

The rest of the story gets better.

Reginald smiles and waves the next car into the driveway. Excited children are all about him. He confesses in a theatrical tone, "OK, maybe I am blessed with an inspirational focus on life, on people, and on the world. I'll tell you who I am amazed with – my doctor, Eleanor Quan, in Huntington Beach, California. She saved my life. She was willing to take one step ahead of me and stands beside me today. That makes a great leader.

"I am working as the greeter for Disney Paradise Pier Hotel and feeling good. I know I have many challenges ahead of me. I always have hope when I struggle. I reach in deep within myself to find that wee bit of more strength to again absorb life and love it. And I don't want to lie down."

by Eleanor Quan, MD

Reginald Gatlin's story is yet another example of why patients and doctors should keep fighting – tomorrow may bring exactly the treatment that is needed.

"When I first saw Reginald in January 2003, he had very advanced renal (kidney) cancer," says Dr. Quan. "At the time, there were only limited treatments available for Stage IV kidney cancer. They came with considerable side effects. He tried his best to be compliant, but sometimes the side effects were

overwhelming. At one point he could not continue treatment with the biologic agent and he was not a candidate for the vaccine protocol. We had to tell him there was very little we could do for him. During this most difficult time we continued to support Reginald, by calling him at home and checking on his needs. This made all the difference in the world to him.

"As a physician, I know that it is difficult for a patient to endure the physical challenges that come with cancer and its treatments," Dr. Quan says. "But it is the doctor's role to encourage the patient, to reassure them, to stand with them, to help them realize that their treatment – although difficult – means hope for their future."

"We are always looking for new therapies and investigating clinical trial options," Dr. Quan says. "There are new molecules and 'targeted therapies' being developed now. We told Reginald, 'We need to find one that will work for you.' Then Sutent® became available, and we tried it. It was like a miracle. He started to feel good one week after being on the drug."

Dr. Quan says Reginald's quality of life has completely turned around. "Six weeks after starting on Sutent®, he came to the office excited, jumping up and down, thanking everyone in the clinic. This was a big change. Remember, three years ago, he was unable to work," Dr. Quan says.

"It is important that patients don't lose hope, that doctors don't lose hope, because it was a miracle for him to go back to work, to enjoy his family, to enjoy his life and do so well."

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Kidney Cancer



Patient: Reginald Gatlin



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