

Sudden Cardiac Death—My Story

By Dr. Ken Anderson

It was the hottest day of the year on September 26, 2010. My wife and I were playing tennis with our friends Todd and Sue Sprague. We were the only ones at the tennis club. Suddenly I dropped over on the court due to a cardiac arrest. I am a physician and would have known what to do immediately. Unfortunately, our friends and my wife had no idea what to do. Suddenly Sue remembered that there was an AED in the Clubhouse and she ran to get it. Todd attempted to do chest compressions as his daughter had described to them when she took a first aid course. When Sue brought the AED back to the court, they opened it and it began to direct them on how to use it. After Todd and Sue figured out how to place the pads, the device shocked me twice back into a normal rhythm. The paramedics arrived shortly and transported me to the nearest hospital.



Dr. Anderson and his beautiful wife, Sandra.

Upon arriving at the hospital, I was taken to the heart catheter lab and had one stent placed. I was kept in a coma for 5 days as my wife waited to see what kind of function I would have. Finally, it came time for them to extubate me. My wife left the room with me attached to many wires and tubes. When she returned half an hour later, I was sitting in a chair like nothing had happened! What a miracle! I went home a day later and felt fine.

We then learned that the AED at the tennis club was there due to a program from an organization called Project Heart Beat. We found out that the woman who donated that device was named Bobbi Cohen. We went to meet her and thank her for the gift of life. That was the beginning of a beautiful friendship. We later learned of her incredible story and how she became involved with Project Heart Beat. That is a great story for another time. We have since been involved with the organization and try to give back to it whenever possible.

On the first anniversary of my arrest, we wanted to host a party to thank all of our friends who came to our aid during that stressful time. We had Project Heart Beat come and discuss CPR and AEDs. It was a great success and we have had a similar event every year since. Over time this event has become a small fund-raising event for Project Heart Beat. This year we celebrated the 10th anniversary but due to COVID there will be no party. We have still had generous donations to fund more AEDs. I have had no further problems with my heart, and I thank God, Todd and Sue, and Project Heart Beat for that.