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At Westwood, artist honors cancer strides

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The Parade of Hearts' "KC Conquering Cancer" is on display near the entrance of the Westwood campus's Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Care Pavilion

Before the 156 [Parade of Hearts](#) sculptures are bundled up in coming days and removed from their locations throughout the metro, take note of the colorful, abstract piece in front of the Westwood campus.

The heart was created by Lynn Meredith, who has faced prostate cancer and continues to see an oncologist at The University of Kansas Cancer Center. He's also witnessed one daughter – GI Endoscopy's Kelly Vanbecelaere, RN – battle thyroid cancer; another daughter has survived Hodgkin's lymphoma.

So it's fitting that Meredith's Parade of Hearts creation is called "KC Conquering Cancer." The heart is creatively splattered with the 24 colors of cancer awareness ribbons, including the base color, gold, for childhood cancers.

"This disease is devastating to families, and this piece starts with the importance of never having children dying from cancer," Meredith explains in his [heart design write-up](#).

"As a person with cancer and father to two surviving daughters of cancer, eradicating this disease is especially close to me," he adds. "I know Kansas City is becoming a strong center for cancer research and this piece exemplifies our fight and coming successes in conquering cancer!"

The design features a curious twist: a white dove of peace flits near the top of the heart, a blob of white running beneath it. The purpose? The heart's many colors "are in distorted shapes, depicting the mutated cancer cells," Meredith explains. "The abstract dove spreading

white represents hope and spiritual, physical and emotional healing as it spreads over the cancer cells.”

You can purchase a [pint glass](#) (\$15) showcasing Meredith’s heart design. The glass also displays two other Parade of Hearts images supporting healthcare – “We are Better Together” and “[Heroes in Healthcare](#),” which is by graphic designers on Marketing Communications team.

Meredith’s heart was an obvious choice for the Westwood Campus, though Parade of Hearts organizers weren’t aware of his direct connection to our cancer center.



Artist Lynn Meredith has faced prostate cancer and continues to see an oncologist at the Westwood campus. He’s also witnessed one daughter survive Hodgkin’s lymphoma; another daughter has battled thyroid cancer.

Meredith, 70, who lives in Pittsburg, Kan., visits the Westwood campus every nine weeks for checkups with oncologist Elizabeth Wulff-Burchfield, MD. Every time he visits, he says, he notices patients and their loved ones spending time with his eye-catching heart on display.

Inevitably, when they learn who he is, they share their appreciation of his work as well as their own stories battling cancer. He also receives messages from people about how his Parade of Hearts message is inspiring them through their cancer treatments.

[Meredith is a colorful figure](#) in his own right. He’s not only an artist but was a founding member and original lead singer of the band Kansas. He then coached football at several Kansas colleges (“a natural progression” from rock singer, he jokes), including as Kansas State assistant coach. He also managed the Andy Williams Theatre in Branson and was inducted into the Kansas Music Hall of Fame in 2015.

Meredith says it’s an honor knowing his Parade of Hearts creation, celebrating our region’s dramatic strides toward beating cancer, is on display at the very place he is, in fact, beating cancer.

The abstract design, the splatter of colors, the bird spreading hope and healing – it’s all kind of bold and crazy, like life itself. Or, as Meredith’s write-up explains: The colors are “vivid and numerous as they intertwine in a chaotic effect.”