

Ricky Bretherick
8329 Birch Run Ln, Knoxville, TN 37919
Phone: 615-861-0979

Jason Little, President & CEO

350 North Humphries Blvd, Memphis, TN 38120
Phone: 800-422-7847

Mr. Little and the Executive Board of Baptist Memorial Healthcare,

I am writing to you shortly after experiencing the loss of both of my parents to pneumonia caused by the COVID-19 virus. Both ended up in the intensive care unit at the Walnut Grove campus where they both succumbed to this horrible virus. In the midst of my siblings and my worst fears realized, there were two shining stars who acted above and beyond for the three of us as we prayed for healing when our mother was admitted on October 17th and our father on October 18th and then peace for our mother when she passed on October 29th and our father when he passed on November 10th.

First, I would like to recognize a nurse in the ICU, Kelsey Fiveash. Kelsey was personally responsible for both our parents at points during their stay. I know she was one of the first nurses working with my dad when he was finally admitted to the ICU because she met me outside the main entrance when I brought his Bi-PAP unit for them to try on him to ease his confusion with the one they tried to use on him. We were unable to visit either parent since they were COVID-19 positive and we were losing our minds because we wanted to be with them. One morning, Kelsey was on shift and she helped us facetime with our mom. She was intubated and sedated but it helped us to talk to her. Kelsey offered to move down to our dad's room and do the same even though he wasn't her patient. We facetimed with him then with her holding the phone for us to talk to him as well even though he was intubated and sedated. She did this several times for us including when we mom was improving and had been removed from the ventilator. We got to hear our mom tell us she loved us one more time the day before she arrested and the code team couldn't revive her. Kelsey made this happen for us. No other nurse ever offered. There is more praise coming for Kelsey a little later.

Fast forward to November 10th when the ICU doctor on staff told my sister to call my youngest sibling home because we were going to lose our dad too. We got to the hospital at about 6:30 that night during the shift change period. The three of us came down to see our dad while he was still alive. The chaplain came and took my sister down to see my dad since there was another family in the unit. My youngest sibling and I sat and waited for the chaplain to return. Our parent's palliative care doctor, Greg Mullinax, had been communicating with my sister on and off for a couple of weeks by 11/10. After he finished rounding, he left the hospital and called back into the unit to see if we were on our way in. He was told that we had arrived and were waiting to come down to see dad. Dr. Mullinax turned his car around and came to meet with my brother and I to review what was currently happening to our dad in his last minutes. He was so kind and so personable. He said one of the nicest things I have ever heard to the two of us. We told him it was hard knowing that our dad never knew our mom passed away since he was intubated and sedated. Mr. Mullinax said without hesitation that dad would be "very

surprised when he met Jesus standing at the gates of Heaven and his wife was waiting beside him for dad". It helped me allow this one thing that had bothered me for some time become ok. He was kind enough to walk us down with the Chaplain to the ICU so we could say goodbye to dad. One the way down, we happened to walk past Kelsey as she was leaving her shift for the day. With everything going on, I did not see her and my brother had never met her so we passed her and the other nurses without thinking about it. She doubled back and asked us in the hallway if we were the Bretherick children because she recognized us from the Facetimes with our parents. We confirmed her suspicions and she kept walking with us as we told her we were there to say goodbye to our dad now. We joined up with our sister outside of dad's room and Kelsey stood with us telling us everything that was going on. Dr. Mullinax stayed too. We asked a few questions here and there but mainly we noticed that since we arrived, Dad's vital signs were dropping fast. Within a few minutes, he was gone. Kelsey told us she was sorry for our loss and that she knew our parents were special people just by the way they treated her. She left us to grieve together.

After we left the hospital that night, all three of us were astounded by the actions of Kelsey and Dr. Mullinax. They both went above and beyond for us during the most difficult time in our lives. Both stood with us when we said goodbye to our 2nd parent in the span of 12 days. To not share their above and beyond actions would be a slap in the face of our dear parents and the way they raised us. If you can recognize them in any way for their actions, please do. If we can be present for the recognition, my siblings and I would be there in a heartbeat. We all need more Kelsey's and Dr. Mullinax's in this world.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ricky". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a prominent "R" and "y".

Ricky Bretherick
November 20, 2020