

Sandra Lee Engelhart's Super Bowl Victory

Getting to Know You

A monthly feature about the people in your
On Top of the World community

by John Koning

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During the pre-game show for this year's Super Bowl, On Top of the World resident Sandra Lee Engelhart was seen by more than 100 million television viewers.

Sandy wasn't there to sing the national anthem like Idina Menzel, and she's not a nine time Grammy winner like John Legend, so it begs the question, "Why her?"

It's because she's a winner, like the other stars of this Super Bowl spectacular and a local medical student who gave her a special gift.

Sandy had been fighting an epic battle against an insidious enemy since Friday, June 13, 2014. It was a battle that took her to the darkest places imaginable, but it was a battle she ultimately won.

Sandra is a survivor of breast cancer – the same aggressive strain of the disease that took Susan G. Komen, the inspiration behind the pink ribbons that remind us of the threat.

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady's Super Bowl victory was a united effort by a well trained and highly motivated squad of players and coaches. Like Tom, Sandy was surrounded by a top-notch team who was dedicated to providing her with the highest level of support possible as she pushed forward toward her personal goal line.

Like the Patriots, Sandy suffered setbacks and pain. She underwent a double mastectomy and was injected with a cocktail of drugs so lethal that the administrators were gloved and masked to protect themselves from contact with one of the drugs, nicknamed the red devil.

Super Bowl champions rely on world-class support from their fans and Sandy was no different. Her fan club was led by her husband Richard. The couple has been married for three years this past Valentine's Day. Sandy was helped through the tough days by the strength and goodwill of her daughter and grand-daughter and she was buoyed by the solicitude of

her On Top of the World friends and neighbors.

Finally, like this year's New England Patriots, Sandy can now bask in the thrill of victory.

As she celebrates, Sandy is aware of others who have faced the same vile enemy. She has a new level of respect for those who have won, a prayer for those who are still battling and special place in her heart for those who are no longer with us.

But what about that Super Bowl XLIX pre-game show?

While Sandy was under the care of Moffitt Cancer Institute in Tampa, she met a student doctor whose professionalism and warm bedside manner impressed her. His name was Ed Woodward, a 39-year-old father of two, a former member of the US Air Force and a Pat Tillman Military Scholar.

Pat was an NFL linebacker, who turned down a \$3.6 million contract offer from the Arizona Cardinals to enlist in the U.S. Army in 2002. He was killed in action while serving in Afghanistan.

Pat's family and friends formed the Pat Tillman Foundation to carry on his legacy of giving back by awarding scholarships to deserving military veterans.

In 2006, Woodward was five flights away from graduation as an F15 pilot when he developed a blood clot in his brain and was rushed to a hospital. There, he endured a long and arduous recovery. Once he healed physically, he was faced with the awful truth that he would never fly again. He was retired by the Air Force.

In his darkest hours Ed's grandfather suggested that he finish his brother's work.

Ed's twin brother, Gene, was killed in 2002 when a drunk driver traveling 120 miles per hour struck the car Ed and Gene were in as they celebrated completion of Gene's first year of medical school.

Gene was trapped in the wrecked car and Ed was unable to free his brother. Ed lost his brother and his



Sandy Rings the bell at Moffitt Cancer Center to signify the end of treatments.

sense of self-worth on that tragic night.

Ed is now putting grief into action as president of his class at the University of South Florida Medical School. Sandy's breast cancer case was one of many assigned to him as a student. He told Sandy about the Pat Tillman Legacy scholarship and asked her if she would be willing to be his patient for the television feature. When she answered yes, NBC gave her a contract

on the spot which she immediately signed. Within minutes, a waiting camera crew was taping Ed and Sandy for the Super Bowl pre-game feature.

As you can see, several victories were celebrated during Super Bowl XLIX and Sandra Lee Engelhart is happy to be one of them.

You can watch NBC's encouraging story by typing "Pat Tillman's legacy inspires others to strive for greatness" into your browser window.