



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Neurosurgery
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

For Immediate Release

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Mom Thanks Neurosurgeon for Saving Her Son FIVE YEARS AGO!

AURORA, CO (June 22, 2021). Dr. Kevin Lillehei, Chair of the Neurosurgery Department at CU Anschutz, was recently surprised to find a note of gratitude in his email inbox. "You may not remember me, but today is the fifth anniversary of my son, Steve's anaplastic oligodendroglioma diagnosis at CU Anschutz." Jennifer (Steve's mom) went on to explain that her son had fallen three stories and broken several vertebrae, ribs and a foot (among other injuries). These injuries led to the incidental discovery of a large tumor in his brain,

"I sought you out to do his surgery because I was really impressed with your CV that I found online while accompanying him in the hospital during his recovery from the fall. You performed his craniotomy in late July 2016 after giving his injuries some time to heal. You were in surgery about 14 hours and didn't come out to see us until the wee hours of the morning. You had to go back in to remove a larger margin after scanning him in the operating room." The family is profoundly grateful that Dr. Lillehei didn't leave that OR until he was sure he had taken as much of the tumor and surrounding tissue as he possibly could. Although Dr. Lillehei wanted to follow Steve's case after he left Anschutz, the family lives in Oklahoma and this is the first time he has heard from them.

Dr. Lillehei wrote back immediately, "Thank you for the wonderful note. I am very happy to hear that Steve is doing well. I particularly like the picture you sent. It is great to hear that he will be able to get back to his music."



Jennifer went onto explain that Steve has had "zero deficits and is still playing guitar and soaking up as much knowledge as he can get his hands on." Steve is currently living in Austin and eagerly awaiting the reopening of music venues so he can resume playing to in-person audiences. "I wanted you to know that we will never forget you. Thank you for taking the time to be so thorough for my son!"

It's always wonderful to have a happy ending!

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