

WALKING AWAY

from a Trauma



Wynand and Mary Clare Egberts

W

ynand and Mary Clare Egberts always dreamed of coming to the islands.

"We had a two-week trip planned, but the second week took an unexpected turn," said Wynand.

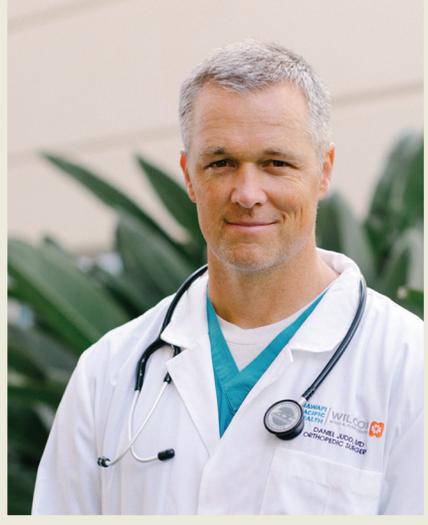
Their Hawai'i adventure included stays on Maui and the Big Island, right before they reached Kaua'i. On their second day, Wynand and his son, Adam, decided to try skydiving. Wynand jumped tandem, but in the air, something went wrong.

"We had a sudden crash landing," Wynand said. "We fell two to three stories from the sky."

The 61-year-old took the brunt of the fall. He broke both of his ankles, damaged his spine and was rushed to the hospital in terrible pain. Wynand's wife, Mary Clare, was on her way to the pool with Adam's wife, Amy. The phone rang. Looking at Amy's face, she knew something was wrong.

"Your heart sinks because you knew it was a possibility, but you didn't think it was going to happen," Mary Clare said.

She went immediately to Wilcox Medical Center's Emergency Room. There, she reviewed her husband's x-rays and met with the trauma team. Mary Clare is the president and CEO of a four-hospital system in Canada. But in that moment,



Dr. Daniel Judd

she was simply a worried wife watching her husband go into surgery. The staff at Wilcox was there for her.

"I started to cry and whoever walked me out to the waiting room, sat me down and said, 'He's going to be fine,'" she said. "I know this is going to be tough on you, but we'll keep you informed."

The family was also impressed with the orthopedic surgeon. Dr. Daniel Judd had just begun his shift that day and decided to take the lead on Wynand's operation. It was fortunate timing for the active family. Dr. Judd is an ankle and foot specialist and worked for nearly seven hours to ensure his patient would regain as much mobility as possible.

"It is a privilege to work with so many skilled providers, when complicated cases like his come in," Dr. Judd said.

"It is very reassuring to know that there is a strong team backing you up, everyone striving to provide the highest level of care possible."

The operation went well. Recovery was going to take some time. Dr. Judd came by every day to check on Wynand, taking the time to change his patient's bandages and to remind him that this was a life-altering event.

Wynand left Kaua'i in a wheelchair and had to stay off his feet completely for three months. But back in Canada he felt even more confident in what was done at Wilcox.

"My orthopedic surgeon is blown away with what he saw in x-rays and what my healing incisions look like," said

Wynand. "Even the physical therapist can't believe the range of motion that I have in those joints, and they attribute a lot of that to the skill of Dr. Judd."

Mary Clare echoes the accolades, both from a professional and a personal perspective.

"I'm impressed that there is that type of trauma care on a small island like Kaua'i. It's unbelievable," said Mary Clare. "The caring and compassion was simply incredible. I hope to inspire my

staff to function at that level because of the difference it can make in both the family's and the patient's experience."

While he still faces challenges, Wynand is moving forward. He is now walking, driving, cycling daily and has even hit the golf course twice. He still has to elevate and ice his ankles three times a day to reduce swelling. Wynand will likely never run again, but that isn't keeping him from his next big goal—getting back on skis with his family. And another trip to the islands may also be in the Egberts future.

"For the first month or so, we couldn't talk about going back to Hawai'i," Wynand said. "Now I can actually say I want to return to Kaua'i and walk into Wilcox. My goal is to come back and shake Dr. Judd's hand, standing!"

Excellence in Emergencies: Wilcox Trauma Center



AS THE LARGEST NOT-FOR-PROFIT HOSPITAL ON KAUA'I, Wilcox Medical Center recently earned recognition for its excellence in emergency care. The emergency department is the first in Hawai'i to earn verification by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) as a

Level III Trauma Center. The verification recognizes a center's dedication to providing optimal care for patients in several categories, including prompt assessment, intensive care, surgery, resuscitation and stabilization of injured patients.

The ACS verification process is distinguished by the rigor and breadth of its requirements. A team of ACS trauma experts visits hospitals for an on-site review. The experts who examined the 20-bed department meticulously reviewed everything from readiness and resources to commitment and patient care.