

FREEDA

RECIPIENT OF: STERNUM ALLOGRAFT



STERNUM ALLOGRAFT RECIPIENT LOOKS FORWARD TO NEW BEGINNING

As Freeda herself says, she has “had an interesting life.” Now she’s able to write a whole new chapter because of a unique type of tissue donation – a sternum allograft.

One of Freeda’s former jobs was working as an ordained minister in a hospital. She counseled people going through unimaginable circumstances and worked with families who were considering organ, eye and tissue donation for their loved one.

“I worked with many families who were faced with horrible situations,” she said. “It is so hard to lose someone, but the decision to donate can and does matter to so many people. They need to know it’s going to be a blessing for someone who might be without hope.”

Freeda could never have imagined that one day she would be the recipient of a stranger’s generosity.

After undergoing open-heart surgery, the bones and fixation wiring in her chest were fragile. About a year after her surgery, she fell and broke some of the wiring in her chest. She took another serious fall and pulverized the remaining bones and wiring.

“I became wheelchair-bound for five years because there was nothing to protect my heart,” she said. “My back was healing, but it started to twist because the front of my body wasn’t stable. I went to see so many doctors and they told me there was nothing that could be done.”

Freeda went to see Dr. Archibald Miller, who presented a solution. He wanted to

perform a sternum transplant using an allograft to help provide stability on the front side of her body, as well as protect her internal organs. Because of her previous experience with donation, Freeda was immediately grateful to her donor and donor’s family.

After waiting for nearly six months for the allograft, Freeda underwent surgery.

“I went from having a pain level every day of 8, with pain medication, to basically a 0 when I came out of surgery,” Freeda said. “Now I’m working on rebuilding my strength.”

No longer wheelchair-bound, Freeda is able to enjoy a life with few restrictions.

“I feel so blessed because I’m truly starting my life over again. I feel doubly blessed because I’ve seen both sides of donation. I hope my story can help educate people about the potential of donated tissue.”