

Heart Transplant



Gene Moniz, a heart transplant recipient, spoke at the Treynor Optimist Club on April 12. He was originally from Rhode Island and now lives in Oakland. Gene was in the Air Force for five years, flying B52s. He attended graduate school in Monterrey, California.

Gene was a workaholic. He was working 1000 hours per week in May 2003 when he had his first three heart attacks. He was the same age as his father when he had his first heart attack. Recovery took ten months.

He sold his business in July 2003 and bought the house his wife had lived in.

In 2005 he had another heart attack. Gene said that he had much better treatment here than in California for this heart attack, because people really cared.

In 2007 he enrolled in a stem cell research trial in Minneapolis. At that time 2/3 of his heart was not working. This opened other avenues for him later.

In 2009 he was not doing well and in 2010 he was doing poorly. On 8 November 2010 he had another heart attack while in Jenny Edmundson hospital.

He was put on a heart transplant list in February 2011 and had to be within 4 hours of the hospital in Minneapolis. On Monday, June 13, 2011 a heart was ready for the transplant from a 32 year old. He woke up Thursday afterwards and the first thing he noticed was that his hands and feet were warm for the first time since 2003.

Although many people have problems with rejection, Gene has had no problems. He had a biopsy six weeks in a row to check for rejection, then every two months. Now he has a full checkup every six months and blood tests every six weeks. He continued to get stronger for the first year, but his legs still aren't as strong as they originally were.

Gene is still battling diabetes. He said that when you have diabetes, you don't have normal heart attack symptoms. He didn't have any tightness in his left chest from any of his heart attacks.

His surgery for stints after his first heart attack cost \$100,000 and was covered by a grant. His transplant was \$1.1M and covered by disability.

Gene says that he has learned not to sweat the small stuff.