

Colonel Raymond Holmes

Col. Raymond Holmes is a delightful man with a hearty laugh, a proud history of service to his country, and two units of umbilical cord blood from babies he will never know.

He is able to enjoy life anew because two birthing mothers made the selfless decision to donate the umbilical cord blood on the chance it might someday save a life.

Diagnosed in 2000 with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Col. Holmes underwent intensive chemotherapy, which brought his cancer into submission for almost five years. Then it returned with a vengeance and he sought in vain for a bone marrow match. Ray said, "As an African-American, it was like searching for a needle in a haystack."

Ray was referred to the Texas Transplant Institute. Two weeks later, they found a cord blood match. Now his donors – two children and their moms – are big heroes in this man's eyes. He carries their gift of life in his blood and carries them all in his heart.

Col. Holmes is retired from careers that include service in the US Air Force, and with the USO-San Antonio and Fisher House at Lackland AFB. Col. Holmes celebrates each day with Evelyn, his wife of 45 years, their daughters, grandchildren and a circle of family and friends.

"My prognosis is good," he says. He continues to schedule regular appointments with his oncologists. His energy isn't what it used to be, but he is grateful to be alive. And thankful every day for his heroes – two babies and their moms.



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