

# DAILY GLOBE

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## Chronicling the long walk back

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Reporter

Rick Fay took the walk of his life. Well, it was almost the last walk of his life.

Atchison's building officer doesn't remember much about the walk. That's because, to paraphrase Shakespeare, Rick walked off this mortal coil. And was brought back by people he'd never met.

Rick moved from Atchison back to Topeka this past summer to be near his daughter, who had health issues.

Rick, too, had some health issues, but he was unaware of the particular one that brought him down the evening of April 29. He is also unaware of what happened after about 8 o'clock that evening and for several days thereafter. His wife, Pam, has a little notebook with a timeframe of Rick's amazing journey.

Rick recalls painting a deck for an acquaintance that day, then going home to shower and go for a walk.

"I decided I had time for a walk before Pam got off work," he said. Pam was on duty at a Topeka nursing home until 10 p.m.

Rick said he was walking near the corner of 17th and Stone in Topeka, and from there his memory fails. He relies on Pam and her little notebook to complete the story of a miracle.

"At about 8:27 p.m., Beth Kelly, surgical assistant for a Topeka oral surgeon, and her husband, a retired pediatrician, stopped when Beth saw someone lying face down near 17th and Gage Boulevard," Rick related.

He said he learned later he had fallen about a foot off the roadway onto some soft earth. He was totally unresponsive.

"Then an MD, Betsy Johns, stopped (her vehicle)," Rick said, "and Beth knew her."

Dr. Johns is a family practitioner in Topeka, and Rick said Beth asked the doctor



**Rick and Pam Fay and Pam's little notebook that literally records her husband's walk out of this world. And back. It's a timeline from when Rick had a heart attack that wasn't fatal due to the quick action of strangers.**

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what she wanted Beth to do.

"Check for a pulse," Dr. Johns said. There was no pulse.

A call was made to 911, Rick was turned over onto his back and Dr. Johns began chest compressions - very hard chest compressions, for a very long time.

"She did chest compressions until 14 minutes later when emergency services arrived and 'shocked' me," Rick said. "Then they took me to the hospital (Stormont Vail) and put me on ice and into a drug induced state."

Rick has this information from his rescuers and Pam's little notebook. The Fays noted that 14 minutes is "a long time to do chest compressions."

While he was being worked on, Rick's cell phone became active. His phone was retrieved from a pocket, and someone, most likely Beth, determined the number that had tried to reach Rick and called it back. It was Rick's daughter, who was apprised of her father's collapse and was able to go to his side.

Then another number in the cell phone log was called, and that reached Pam at the nursing home. Her notebook records that she left work for the hospital at 9:04 p.m. and arrived there at 9:20.

Rick remembers becoming lucid a couple of days later. Pam said he didn't even open his eyes for 24 hours after he arrived at the hospital. She said dirt was cleared from his mouth, nose, eyes and ears, caused by his face slamming into the ground.

"His eyes were bulging," Pam said, "and his forehead was swollen and he had what looked like horns growing out each side of his forehead."

Those conditions, as well as extreme bruising and soreness in Rick's chest, were caused by the force of Dr. John's determined chest compressions - the compressions that saved Rick's life.

His chest is still bruised and his ribs extremely sore, and Rick said, "it felt like Dr. Johns had jumped up and down on my chest, but had she not done that, I wouldn't be talking to you."

Pam said it was determined that Rick's left arterial descending artery (or LAD) had become 100 percent blocked, causing what would have been a fatal heart attack if not for those guardian angels passing by.

He has short-term memory loss and a permanent stent in that artery near his heart, but Rick hopes to be back on the job at City Hall in a few weeks. He said his doctors found recent tests to be satisfactory, so he feels he's recuperating.

*Atchison*

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He added his saviors took "a heck of a risk, stopping at near dark to check on a body lying on the ground."

Pam noted the area where Rick fell is not well lit.

She said Dr. Johns and Beth Kelly continued to check on Rick until he was released from the hospital, and the Fays are forever grateful to his rescuers. Pam also feels there was intervention from higher up.

"I'm back from the grave," Rick said. "There's something I'm supposed to be doing."

Right now that something is safely completing the long walk back.

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