

Founder of Wish-Granting Nonprofit Says to Dream Big, Seek Collaborations That Foster Great Relationships



Peggy Gibson Carroll – Founder of Fill Your Bucket List Foundation

When Peggy Gibson Carroll was able to fulfill her father’s last wish on his bucket list in 2008, it created a burning desire within that would transform many people’s lives in the years to come.

Chuck Gibson’s bucket list wasn’t long or extravagant – he simply wanted to watch his grandchildren’s band competition at their football game. Her father was in his late stages of lung cancer. She sensed that he was soon going to lose his battle.

Already being in a career that focused on connecting cancer patients to resources, Carroll’s wish experience with her father has further planted a seed – a dream that would nurture into what is now known as her heart business, the Fill Your Bucket List Foundation. The Cary-based nonprofit from North Carolina focuses on enriching and celebrating the lives of cancer-stricken families – taking pride in creating lifelong memories that are deeply cherished by the heart, mind, and soul.

“We’re the lucky ones,” Carroll said when reminiscing on the joyful moments throughout her career. “Helping cancer patients blesses us the most because it ultimately gives us a chance to see them live a dream through the help of many angels.”

A Career Founded on Three Principles – Heart, Passion, and Drive

In addition to the nonprofit, Carroll co-founded Pinpoint Patient Recruiting, an oncology consulting firm that seeks to connect pharmaceutical companies to nonprofits with this goal to help cancer patients find out about clinical trials. She is also a passionate premier level consultant at Rodan and Fields, a company that aims to give people the best skin of their lives and bring dermatology-inspired skincare to everyone.

“My life is a crazy juggling act of phone calls, trying to connect into potential donors, companies, or supporters who could help us spread our mission. As my two kids always say, ‘Your life – your schedule – is scary!’ But I love bringing people together who can help us take the foundation to the

next level,” Carroll said when reflecting on the joys of her job that allow her to pursue her passion. “I just keep doing it all, because I realize that it will ultimately help other people.”

Starting a nonprofit is not an easy task to conquer – especially when the lack of other organizations resources may hinder them from collaborating. It ultimately requires a person to utilize their skills of running a business while trying to generate an income from donations, Carroll said.

“Our first wish, a Disney cruise, was granted to a single mother of three,” she said. “After reaching our seventh wish, we realized that we didn’t budget. It was just something that I wanted to do, but it’s hard to have to continue to raise your funding.”

Make-A-Wish Foundation, which grants its wishes to cancer patients younger than 18, did not have the necessary resources to take on any further requests.

Early wish-granting successes through other means of collaboration have been critical factors in channeling Carrol’s inner desire to continue to help other people.

One of her favorite memories goes back to one of the first 10 wishes. The organization granted a young man with a brain tumor a wish to watch the Denver Broncos against the Carolina Panthers at the 2014 Super Bowl Game in the San Francisco Bay Area. Partnering with the National Football League (NFL) and through the help of generous donors, he was able to fulfill his dream. Although his doctors told him that he had a minimal chance of survival three years ago, his positive attitude allowed his cancer to go into stable disease – he now actively [volunteers](#) for the nonprofit’s fundraising events.

“A lot of people think that our wish recipients have to be terminal to get a wish, but we made a clear decision early on – this would never be part of our conversations because your mind is such a powerful part of your treatment,” Carroll said. “We have a lot of patients who go into a stable disease, or even remission after their wish as a result of such a good experience.”

The Pathway to Success – A Business That Creates Smiles and Priceless Moments

The foundation was destined to enjoy its fruits of labor after being founded in 2014. Generous donations from a close-knit community of about 500 passionate supporters and motivated volunteers have helped 112 Triangle people realize a dream in the face a cancer diagnosis.

The nonprofit’s most recent wish recipient, Brian Brown, a huge Tar Heel fan, was able to witness the epic contest between longtime rivals Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill on Saturday, March 9, at the Dean Dome in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Getting access to such high-priced tickets was no easy task since die-hard fans gladly hand over big bucks to see the battle of the blues’, as they face each other on the Dean Dome’s hardwood floor.

“Of course, there was no ticket to be found other than on StubHub, which at that point was thousands of dollars the week of the game,” she said when discussing her options to help Brown fulfill his dream.

It happens that Adam Lukas, a prominent North Carolina Tar Heels sports reporter, started a Twitter contest for his two season tickets. Although there were about 1,000 people who submitted, they were surprisingly one step closer to making Brown’s dream come true.

“My daughter Megan, who also submitted, won the two tickets for us,” she said.

Driven by her passion for fulfilling bucket lists, Carroll pretended to work at the Carolina Inn as a greeter when Brown and his best friend, who nominated him to the foundation, walked into the lobby in an attempt to watch the game later on that evening. It was there when Carroll gave the wish-recipient a tourist bag and persuaded him to open a clear container that contained a special gift inside.

“Are these tickets for today’s game?” she passionately recalls Brown’s words and the feelings of excitement that suddenly immersed into the atmosphere. “This exactly sums up why we do this.”

Following UNC’s win – making it one of the most magical nights for Brown, Carroll points out two statements he made on his ABC interview. He had forgotten that he had cancer and he was surprised that all of these people had done all of this for him.

Final Advice – Surround Yourself with People Who Add Value to Your Life

To be successful one must acknowledge the importance of upholding mutual beneficial relationships. Delegating and letting other people help in ways that answer their passions in their heart, and learning from mistakes are ways in achieving this.

“If you have anchors who are sucking all of the life out of you – it’s OK to let them go out of your life. You want to be a light that is adding to other people’s lives because then together you can do great things.”

Watching wish recipients’ expressions on their faces when they learn about their wishes becomes one of the most rewarding elements of her heart business.

“Just being part of their world and helping them through the toughest time in their lives by making it a little brighter and lighter,” she said. “It’s probably my favorite part about Fill Your Bucket List Foundation.”