



## **The Heart of Mardi Gras Nocona Style. The Rick Keck Story**

Mardi Gras Nocona Style has been known for years as a “Small Town BIG Fun” event. For over 12 years, this event has brought visitors from all over the United States and as far away as Europe. The anticipation for this annual event is felt far and wide.

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual, 2022 Mardi Gras Nocona Style, started off as it always does with a pancake breakfast, 5K Fun Run, Kid’s parade, and many activities in the downtown area. As the floats began to line up at the high school, the excitement was building for the BIG parade. Something happened that would affect this community forever...

It was a normal Mardi Gras Nocona Style parade day for Rick Keck and his family. As they’ve done in previous years, their float was ready to go – decorated to the hilt in yellow, gold, and green; Cajun style music playing on the speakers, with riders ready to throw trinkets. As their float began its journey to line up in the parade, Rick was making sure everything was good to go before he hopped on to ride down Clay Street entertaining the crowd.

Suddenly the unthinkable happened, Rick clutched his chest and fell to the ground!

Parade entries ahead of the Keck float continued to roll down the street, unaware of the horrible incident; those behind them sprang into action. The family following the Keck float had a nurse on board as well as first responders who acted quickly – one began CPR and the other called 911.

Rick was in full cardiac arrest. The ambulance was on its way, but things were not looking good for Rick. When out of nowhere, one of Nocona’s doctors, who was riding in the parade a few floats behind, flew in beside Rick ripped open his shirt and took over CPR until EMS arrived. He was taken to Nocona General, where he was stabilized sent to Fort Worth hospital via Med Flight.

Rick was sent to North Hills Medical City ICU where he struggled to stay alive; his heart stopping four more times. Rick's diagnosis was "widow maker heart attack" and less than 1% survive this trauma. Rick awoke from a coma after 18 days and realized he couldn't move his muscles. He spent over seven weeks at two different rehab centers gaining his strength. Rick was released in June 2022, four months after his full cardiac arrest. He was basically an infant who had to learn to eat, walk and take care of himself again.

God was with Rick from the moment he had the heart attack until present day. God made sure the right people were where they needed to be to save his life and then nurse him back to help. He would not be here today if it wasn't for the swift action of Donny Fenoglio and Dr. Kelly Roden and the hundreds of prayer warriors that started to pray that day.

Rick stated "There is power in prayer, and when you have an entire community praying for you, miracles do happen. God heard your prayers and that is why I'm here today. I'm proud to have grown up in Nocona, a little town with a big heart – as big as all of Texas. To God be the glory."

This is amazing and miraculous story stands synonymous with what Mardi Gras, Nocona Style embodies – A Community that loves BIG, celebrates BIG and most importantly shares BIG Faith and Unity!

The Mardi Gras Committee chose to honor Rick Keck as the Grand Marshal of the BIG parade on Saturday, February 18, 2023. He and his Glory Train Krewe will lead the parade and celebrate life!

Full details at [Nocona.org/events](https://Nocona.org/events)