

Bethesda, Maryland

[» Back to Testimonials](#)

Walter H. Fanburg, M.D.
Arbor Place
4413 Muncaster Mill Road
Rockville, Maryland 20853

Dear Walter:

I wanted to let you know how grateful my brother Mark and I are for the wonderful care that our father has received at Arbor Place since he first arrived a year ago. You've mentioned that our search for a care facility was the most thorough you've ever seen since you started Arbor Place. Perhaps this reflects my background as Managing Associate General Counsel at GAO, the U.S. Government Accountability Office ("Congress's watchdog"), where our practice is to conduct thorough "hands-on" investigations, ask hard questions, analyze the facts, and make bottom-line judgments. That's how my brother and I approached looking for a place for Dad, and we know we made the right decision in coming to Arbor Place.

As you know, Dad was diagnosed with vascular dementia about 2 years ago and was living at home in N.J. with our mother. When Mom died unexpectedly last year, we were suddenly faced with the terrible choices that too many families are facing these days: deciding whether Dad would be best living at home with assistance or else moving to assisted living, and, if assisted living, figuring out how to find the right place. Having decided that assisted living was the right option, we investigated many facilities. In fact, we ultimately visited 20 facilities: 15 in 4 different states initially, then 5 more a few months ago when Dad temporarily needed additional medical care. Having no prior experience in this, we checked out a wide range of facilities: national dementia care facilities, small group homes with little supervision, large institutional nursing home-type facilities, and everything in between. We spoke to family references, read books and articles, and consulted with geriatric care managers and the local government Long-Term Care Ombudsman. You've kidded me that I could write a book myself.

In all of this, one facility stood out: Arbor Place. As we've said many times, there's no place like Arbor Place. Not only do we think that it is the best place for our father but that it is truly unique in the things that matter most. You and your wife, Eileen, have created a safe haven for families in this very difficult situation and you've been generous and accommodating on a number of occasions. Arbor Place is at the same time extremely professional and also deeply caring on a personal level. In fact, it doesn't feel like a "facility" at all but, as my father sometimes calls it, the Arbor Place Club. With just 16 residents and a staffing ratio that is literally unparalleled, every resident gets personal attention. Staff virtually always have their eyes on the residents to ensure their safety and welfare, something we found nowhere else. There are a relatively high number of male staff, which is important when assisting our 6' 3" father to move about and in respecting his privacy. Staff get to know each resident personally and they interact with them as individuals,

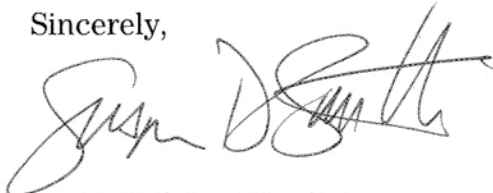
appreciating that each person has their own history, personality, and preferences. The focus is on the residents, not on the demands of "the schedule." Even the outside drivers who take my father to medical appointments (and who see a lot of dementia care facilities) have remarked on what a clean and bright place it is.

The high quality of Arbor Place's staff also sets it apart. The care staff are intuitive, patient, and creative; the activities staff are energetic and flexible; and the LPNs and medical technicians are caring and knowledgeable. Equally important, everyone has heart, something you need a lot of in this situation. In addition, staff truly work together as a seamless team. Everyone supports everyone else and morale is great. While staff have assigned responsibilities and specific staff have particular certifications and training, everyone pitches in. Turnover seems very low; Judy, for example, one of the pillars of Arbor Place, has been there 11 years, and Jackie, the primary LPN, has been there 9 years. Everyone takes pride in their work and seems happy to be there, and I appreciate the staff sharing details of my father's day with me when I arrive to visit him.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of Arbor Place, and something we've really come to rely on, is that you have a dedicated, hands-on RN who's there full-time 5 days a week and is always on call evenings and weekends. Previously this key professional was Patty McCabe; now it's Hester Bausback. They've both been wonderful and it's hard to praise them enough. Hester, for example, is skilled and experienced as a nurse, organized and effective as a manager, and compassionate and gifted as a care giver. She is a single point of contact we can always call or e-mail to find out what's going on. Likewise, she is a critical link with Dad's doctors and other medical personnel, serves as their eyes and ears in between their visits, and coordinates my father's care. Hester pays attention. She provides accountability. If she doesn't know the answer, she gets it, and she takes personal responsibility to make sure things don't fall through the cracks. When my brother and I were leaving with our father recently at 5 AM for some outpatient surgery, the phone rang—it was Hester, calling to make sure everything was all set. When we arrived at the hospital, the nurse told us Hester's pre-op notes were the best she'd ever seen, and the surgeon has since told us that the excellent post-op care from Hester and the other staff has helped Dad recover quickly ("not everyone is good at that," the surgeon noted).

When Dad returned to Arbor Place this past January after a few months away, it felt like we were coming home to a safe place where people knew him and paid attention to what he needed. I can now head home after my frequent visits knowing that my father is being well cared for. My brother and I certainly remain concerned about our father's well being, but we have invaluable peace of mind knowing that Dad is at Arbor Place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Susan D. Sawtelle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "D".

Susan D. Sawtelle, Esq.