

Rockingham health care heroine's \$20K luxury bedroom makeover revealed

Susie C. Spear Nov 25, 2020



A glamorous new retreat in calming gray tones with muted gold artwork flanking the bed.

E DEN — For the past eight months, Linda Dillard's voice has been the steadfast and kind reminder to umpteen COVID-19 patients that they are not alone.

As an operating room technician at UNC Rockingham Health Care and the first of her division to transfer to the COVID-19 ward, Dillard, 55, understands the fear and loneliness such patients have faced, isolated from their families due to the high contagion.

Outside the hospital, Dillard has lost friends to the disease – friends her age. And some of her own family members have struggled to defeat the novel coronavirus.

On Friday, though, a Triad design team lifted the gravity of this tough year from her shoulders and richly rewarded Dillard's kindness to her fellow man.

After seven months of measuring, computer mapping, consulting and shopping, Marta Mitchell Interior Design, a leading Greensboro firm, unveiled Dillard's \$20,000 luxury bedroom makeover Friday afternoon — their morale boost for a health care warrior facing the grueling pandemic work season.

Last spring, the firm sought nominations from Guilford and Rockingham counties for the prize, titled: "A Haven for a Healthcare Warrior."

Dillard emerged early in the nominating phase as a beloved friend to patients and a valued staff member at UNC Rockingham where supervisors say she goes beyond her duties. Dillard was chosen for the makeover honor in June by a panel including top area physicians.



"It is just great. It is wonderful, and I love it all, Dillard said after the big reveal. "They got all of my favorite colors worked in!"

What had long served as more of a utilitarian bedroom for the grandmother of five is now a posh suite, complete with a dressing area and remodeled bathroom.

Work crews from the design firm and subcontractors took over the house for the past two weeks while Dillard and family stayed with relatives.

"It is relaxation when I get home here," Dillard said with a happy sigh. "They made me a study, and I can come in and sit and close my door and have my moments and just wind down from the day," she said of the ample dressing room.

Marta Mitchell, Peter Mitchell, and helpers, spent last week ripping out tan carpet, prying apart walls, and hauling and painting to ready the modest room for its transformation.

"We completely gutted the existing space," Peter Mitchell said via email.

"Apart from a new bedroom, we ended up also creating a dressing room and renovated her bathroom. New carpet was installed. Walls and ceilings were repaired and painted. All new furniture was installed, including lighting, TVs, cabinets, rugs, bedding, chairs, window treatments, vanity"





The result: a serene boudoir featuring soft gray tones with neutral accents in muted gold and ruby rose.

A tufted headboard of gray tweed anchors the bed, bouyant with pillows and velevery throws. Airy prints of tropical leaves in gold flank the bed, while a darker gray carpet complements.

A renovated bathroom features handsome white cabinetry and feminine accessories.

And perhaps Dillard's favorite addition is a curvy plump chair upholstered in an abstract gray floral motif for her dressing area she likes to call her "study."

But providing comfort to patients is still Dillard's prime aim, she said.

"They come and go and it's been a joy to me ... being able to talk to the patients who are there ... some for a long time with COVID and no visitors. I'm a people person, and I love to meet people and to make people laugh. I love to be of comfort to them," Dillard said.

As Thanksgiving approaches and the disease rate skyrockets in the region, Dillard said she hopes citizens will "wear their masks at all times and make sure they sanitize their hands and stay away from large crowds of people."

The thrill of the new bedroom suite continues to catch Dillard by surprise, she said.

"I still come in now, after a few days, and I still can't believe this has happened to me," she said. "I don't even want anything for Christmas because I've got it all right here."



Linda Dillard was the first in her tech team to clean her hospital's COVID-19 ward where she has a knack for comforting patients.