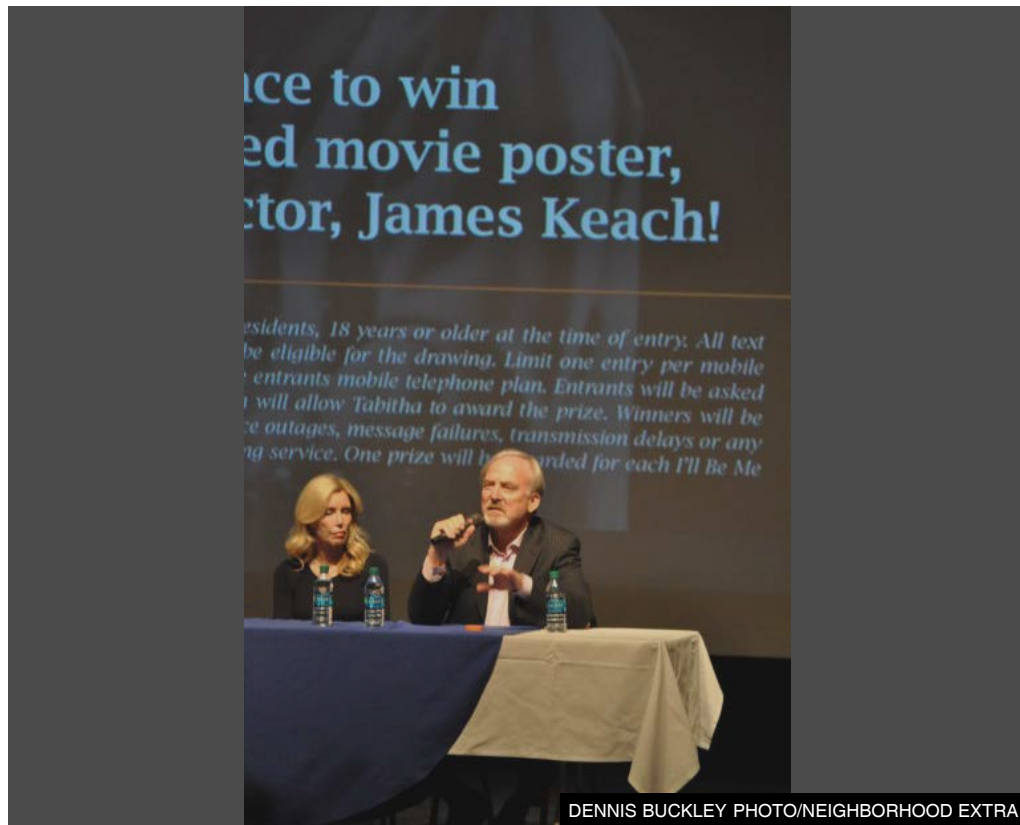


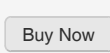


# Glen Campbell's disease hits home with many



DENNIS BUCKLEY PHOTO/NEIGHBORHOOD EXTRA

Kimberly Woollen-Campbell, wife of singer Glen Campbell, and director, producer and actor James Keach field questions during the memory care forum held between two showings of "Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me" last week.



February 24, 2015 3:10 pm • By Dennis Buckley

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Glen Campbell and his road manager were at a bed-and-breakfast gift shop, browsing before breakfast, when the country music legend saw a sign reminding shoppers of Mother's Day.

Campbell, whose battle with Alzheimer's disease is chronicled through the 2014 documentary

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"Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me," pondered what to get his wife for the occasion when it occurred to him: *She loves pink*.

Scanning the store shelves, the country crooner promptly grabs a bottle of Pepto Bismol and proceeds to pay for it. Puzzle by her husband's hasty purchase, Kim Woollen-Campbell put the bottle back and the three proceeded to breakfast, where the road manager later pulled her aside and said in hushed tones, *"It's Mother's Day ... Glen wanted to buy you something pink."*

Touched by the sweet gesture, Kim Woollen-Campbell – the singer's wife of nearly 33 years and mother of three of his children – looks back now at her husband's attempt to make her happy and says it was a moving moment. It was a humorous anecdote shared with those who gathered for a free memory care forum presented by Tabitha Health Care Services at the Rococo Theatre last week.

Asked for a light-hearted spin on a difficult subject, the singer's wife said it was a lesson she wished to share with the audience, many of whom face challenges of their own as caregivers of loved ones with Alzheimer's.

"Take the time to find out what's going on," she advised. "It could be something beautiful, as it was in my case."

Telling their story

Glen and Kim Campbell's decision to go public with the singer's battle is an effort to de-stigmatize the disease and increase awareness by putting a high-profile face on a disease that has become all too common. "It's just like any other disease," said Kim, whose husband first announced in June 2011 that he had been diagnosed six months earlier.

The discovery led to a "Goodbye Tour" in which Campbell and a band that included three of his children played 151 sold-out shows over 18 months, wrapping up the tour Nov. 30, 2012.

The Campbell family's decision to heighten the awareness of Alzheimer's is the first film of its kind, said director/producer James Keach, who joined Mrs. Campbell and four local health care specialists on a panel at the memory care forum Feb. 18.

The Campbells' plight has triggered some productive conversations, said Keach. "Once the Campbells decided to go public, so many people seemed to take note and say 'That happened in my family, too.' This experience has turned me into an associate for making change," added Keach, whose directorial credits also include the 2005 film "Walk the Line," a look at the troubled life of Johnny Cash.

## Initially hesitant

Keach said when he was first approached by the Campbells about filming the documentary, he admitted to being hesitant because, "well, it was Alzheimer's to be honest."

Keach is happy to report that his initial reluctance couldn't have been more misguided. "This changed my life," said Keach, speaking after the first of the day's two screenings of "Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me." The message resonates with all ages, he said. "I like to call this 'Rocky with a guitar,'" said Keach. "Even my teen-age son sat through it and then said: 'Wow ... that's what Alzheimer's is?' People are discovering that the documentary is not sad and depressing, although most people think it will be."

It was reported last April that Glen Campbell, now 78, had become a patient at an Alzheimer's long-term care and treatment facility.

## Other panelists

Also serving on the panel for the memory care forum were Julie Kaminski, MGS, executive director of LeadingAge Nebraska, the state's premier advocacy group for non-profit Elder Care providers; Dennis L. Molfese, Ph.D., director of the Brain Imaging Center at UNL and director of UNL's Developmental Neuroscience Laboratory; Cameo Rogers, CTRS, CDP, CDCM, a certified therapeutic recreation specialist and certified Alzheimer's disease and dementia care trainer through the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners; and Kristine Dykeman-Schoening, vice president of continuum of Tabitha.

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