

10-9-2019

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by Robyn Oro on October 9th, 2019



Students and visitors to the KCU campus who approach Smith Hall from Independence Avenue might notice a life-size statue of a cow on the front lawn. On closer inspection they might also notice that the cow is covered in buttons. Those buttons have a special significance in October, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The cow's name is Buttons and Bovine and she was decorated by local artist and breast cancer survivor, Teresia Harding. The artist's statement, "This cow is a proud, beautifully ornamented beast meant to be a celebration of life. She is covered with thousands buttons arranged in intricate patterns embedded in polymer resin. Buttons of all kinds were gathered from breast cancer survivors and the families of others touched by the disease. I want everyone who looks at this cow to be reminded of the beauty of life and inspired with hope."



Originally installed at 47th and J. C. Nichols Parkway on the Country Club Plaza, the sculpture was one of 216 decorated fiberglass cows that were placed around Kansas City for its 2001 Cow Parade. "Buttons" was sponsored by the University of Health Sciences (now KCU). The proceeds from the cows raised over half a million dollars to benefit the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, the American Royal, and the Kansas City Zoo.

Here Buttons is being beribboned by students for National Breast Cancer Awareness Month in 2002.



Over the years some of the sculpture's bright colors have faded, but it still stands as a representative of breast cancer awareness and the hope of survival.